

AN INSPECTOR'S TESTAMENT

By the Same Author

GUIDE TO ECONOMICS
HOW WE ARE GOVERNED
SIMPLE ECONOMICS
INDUSTRY AND SOCIETY



THE AUTHOR

AN INSPECTOR'S TESTAMENT

By

F. H. SPENCER, D.Sc., Ll.B.

LATE CHIEF INSPECTOR (EDUCATION) THE LONDON
COUNTY COUNCIL AND SOMETIME H.M. DIVISIONAL
INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS



THE ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES PRESS LTD.
WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON E.C.4

Published January 1938



*Printed in Great Britain for the English Universities Press, Limited,
by Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, Bungay, Suffolk.*

PREFACE

I BEGAN to write this book at the suggestion of friends, but in fact I have written it for the best of all reasons: because I could not help it. Of course it is an account of the life, chiefly of the external life, of the writer. Were it no more than a personal record it would not have been worth writing, nor, in such a case, would it have been worth reading. It is offered as a "document": for I belong to a rapidly dying class. Never again will anybody become a Pupil Teacher. No one with my history, which, in its essentials, is that of thousands of others, will ever again fill the posts I filled. Our type of our generation is probably worth a record.

The first half of the book has interested me most. It records what, at last, I see to have been a struggle; but it was not at the time a conscious struggle. The second half, dealing with a maturer and more self-conscious share of the movement in education, and with a small share in administration, national and local, is, I modestly claim, worth the scrutiny of all engaged or interested in teaching and administration. I shall be happy if some who desire a decent upbringing for the children of the ordinary people on whom we all depend will read carefully the last chapter.

I crave, therefore, the charitable attention of the reader to this attempt, under the guise of memories, to record the truth as I remember it, to extenuate nothing, nor set down aught in malice.

F. H. S.

December 20th, 1937.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BEGINNINGS	9
II. INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD .	33
III. LIFE IN A LATE VICTORIAN BOARD SCHOOL	48
IV. PUPIL TEACHERDOM AND THE OTHER INFLUENCES	74
V. THE TRAINING COLLEGE IN THE 1890's	119
VI. TRIAL WITHOUT TRIUMPH IN NOTTINGHAM .	155
VII. WOOLWICH AND FAREWELL	166
VIII. RESEARCH AND THE SIDNEY WEBBS	196
IX. BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN	225
X. OLYMPUS AND LANCASHIRE	241
XI. LONDON CALLING	274
XII. FINAL MUSINGS ON SEA AND LAND	305

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

I WAS born at 4 York Terrace, New Swindon, on 9th September, 1872. I say New Swindon because at that date and for more than twenty years afterwards there were two Swindons: New and Old. They were not yet grown together. In front of my birthplace, where the Town Hall now stands, there was Sawyer's field, in which, as a small boy, I walked on Sunday mornings with my little sister as she picked a nosegay of familiar flowers. There also, after Sunday School on summer afternoons, I played 'Stick in the Turf' with the sons of railway guards, smiths, and even moulders, each in turn throwing an open pen-knife in flights of advancing difficulty and burying each other's noses in the turf when we missed. But this is to anticipate my account of a free, a happy, an enviable youth spent in conditions of a poverty I never then realised, and do not now regret.

I do not now regret the conditions of my childhood. That, I think, is true, except during those black moments when, in retrospect, I envy, almost to the verge of fury, the cultivated, comfortable middle class. A chapter on the theme of my youth, a restrained, an accurate, a wholly truthful chapter will be well. I will start with my father and my mother, and then I will write about the house. But first, perhaps, about the town.

For a thousand years at least Old Swindon had stood

where it now stands on an outlying spur of the Marlborough Downs. For at least three hundred years it had been a market town. When I was a boy the market was still held in the High Street and in the Market Square. Every Monday morning chains were hung on posts along the High Street pavement, and the street itself was filled with steers and heifers, milch-cows and calves. Pigs and sheep and farm tackle of all sorts filled the adjacent Market Square. Amidst these moved the auctioneers; one, I remember, tall, grey, gentle-voiced and intimate; one short, fat, scarlet-faced, bulbous-eyed and raucous. Hidden behind the High Street was the great house, beautiful, secluded, with a magnificent outlook to the green and pleasant South, built by Inigo Jones, inhabited then for over four centuries by a family of the indigenous county gentry. The outlook of Old Swindon was to the Wiltshire countryside, to the Vale of White Horse, to the Downs and their old entrenchments joined each to the other by the older Ridgeway. The stone-built High Street was dignified, almost stately, with its calm and friendly freestone fronts, soft and warm, so unlike the cold, hard, stone-built towns of Yorkshire. A mellow place. A little town in a setting, as it were, of milk and calf-skin, beeves and beer. There, still, were the hiring fairs, and the hired labourers with beribboned caps spoke the soft Wessex speech, enriched with dialect words, still used to-day, I find, in the villages; for all Wiltshire villages are remote, and most of them unspoilt.

I grew to love the old town; but I was not of it, though only last year I sauntered sentimentally along the two or three of its older streets, reconstructing among strange people a dead past. I belonged to the

new town. For in the early middle years of the nineteenth century the Railway had chosen land to the north of Old Swindon as a site for its works. The works had grown and grown, turning out locomotives and multitudinous rolling-stock. The locomotives are still the best and most beautiful in the world. The difference between the Great Western 'King George V' or 'Caerphilly Castle' and the bulking, ugly engine of the Canadian Pacific or the New York Central is the difference in dignity and grace between Europe and America. By my time the works employed men by the thousand, and the new town, still physically separated from the old, was nine times its size. To achieve this manufacturing end men had been imported from all parts of our island—from the Tyneside and the Clyde, from Lancashire and Yorkshire, from Bristol and from Birmingham, from Cornwall, from Wales, young men, vigorous and skilful, without respect for squires, or farmers, or parsons, men bred by an industrial revolution which, at last, had infected this beautiful piece of North Wessex, bringing, as I now see, energy and ideas, but ugliness and confusion in its train. The Company (for in Swindon the G.W.R. was always 'the Company') built a few rows of houses in the local stone, a pseudo-Gothic church, a school, a Mechanics' Institute, some baths, and then left the place to enterprising, speculative builders and to Providence. But Heaven itself could not cope with the speculative builders, who no doubt nobbled that manifestation of Providence and Parliament which between 1848 and 1894 was called the Local Board (of Health). Anyhow the town of 20,000 grew up without design or control; and a fine mess it looks to-day, now that it is nearly 60,000,

with its unplanned, monotonous, inconvenient, unrelievedly ugly streets of working-class dwellings.

Among those imported into this improvised and tumultuous life were my father and Old Charlie. Old Charlie (I know his patronymic, but I will not tell it, for he is dead long ago, and was no worse than the others) built the house I lived in for sixteen years and my father and mother, I suppose, for thirty. Old Charlie had himself been a skilled mechanic, who had made money in the works, when jobs were put out to workmen 'contractors'. He was a Yorkshireman. I remember him well: he was tallish, thin, and grey, with hard, clean-cut features. He used to bring me calculations to do when I was about thirteen. These generally related to the charges necessary in order that he might certainly make a minimum of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on a gross outlay in cottage property. We owed him rent, I know, so I did his sums for nothing, and took my reward out of the tribute his requests paid to my vanity.

For Charlie had bought an old farmhouse to which six little stone cottages were attached, and to the northern (or New Town) end of these he built on a small shop and six brick 'houses'. In the fourth of these we lived. The six houses formed a terrace. They were raised above the footpath level, and we ascended four steps to the front door. Ours were houses, not cottages, for the front door opened into a passage, and not directly into a room. There was a tiny front garden, and, on the front of our house, facing south-west to the oasis of fields which lay between the Old Town and the New, there was a vine. It produced annually a few small sour grapes. But no other house had a vine. It had been planted by a

previous tenant, legendary and mysterious to me, a Tynesider, engine-fitter by day and reputedly a poacher by night, who sat, I was told, in the 'front parlour' with a gun across his knees, swearing to shoot anyone who came to steal his flowers or the tiny bunches of grapes his famous vine produced. But if I linger on these 'characters' who crowd upon me, I shall never even begin the story of my youth.

The house was on two floors. On the ground floor there was a 'parlour', hardly used on week-days until as a big lad and a pupil teacher I used it as a kind of study. Besides a chair or two, and a small table covered with an ancient green table-cloth with a silver pattern on it—the acanthus leaf divine!—there was a horsehair-covered sofa, the end of which as a little boy I bestrode, cane in hand, flogging my horse to victory. For before the window, almost every afternoon, race-horses from Wroughton tripped daintily down to the station. It was furnished, too, with a family Bible, and a few books; Shakespeare, and the remnants of the books my father had bought in Lancashire. For there, as a young man, he had been reared in an atmosphere of mid-nineteenth century 'improvement'. There was a big illustrated, wide-margined *Ancient Mariner*, upon the pictures in which I dreamed and doted. And I remember too, as an entrancing source of interest, *The Principles of Elocution*, from which I read the tragic "Mary the Maid of the Inn", or wept over the Queen of Scots:—

"No wonder that the lady wept,
It was the land of France,
The chosen home of chivalry,
The garden of romance."

"Were I but once more free,
With ten good knights on yonder shore.

To aid my cause and me,
This parchment would I scatter wide
To every wind that blows,
And once more reign, a Stuart Queen
O'er my remorseless foes."

And my boyish sword leapt from its scabbard. From the same book I learned by heart passages from the speeches of Chatham, and immense sentences from Sheridan on Warren Hastings. I also read much of the Old Testament, including, naturally, those chapters discreetly omitted at Sunday School. But this was later.

The front-door passage ran past this 'parlour' and opened directly into the room which was at once living-room and kitchen. There, summer as well as winter, burned the fire set in its place between a miserable oven and a scanty hob. For a generation my mother performed miracles of cookery in that little, ancient oven, or with gridiron or frying-pan on the fire itself. It was a small room, with one window looking on the back yard, which I loved to swill, pumping bucket after bucket of water to dash over its muddy stones. The yard had whitewashed walls to which, at infrequent intervals, I gave new coats of their sanitary covering. Mixing lime in a bucket, what fun! There were two rocking-chairs, one on either side of the fireplace. Opposite the fire there was a sycamore-topped dresser, large and untidy, bedecked with a tea-caddy, my mother's principal wedding present, and a few scattered books. The drawers, seldom opened, into which I surreptitiously peeped, were full of junk. And if you say "How untidy!", I reply, "You bring up successfully four children, and do all the cooking, the washing, the cleaning, including engineer's greasy overalls, with no labour-saving,

devices and no help, and the shopping, on less than two pounds a week, and see how you get on". Especially if you are a little dreamy, and artistic in temperament, and given to reflection on religion, and to reading, though you can read but slowly and with difficulty. My mother was all this. She was no Martha, but a Mary, with no special love for house-work. Untidy, unmethodical, and sweet, intellectually curious, though unlettered, careless but not slovenly.

Behind this living-room there was a so-called scullery, with a copper requiring its small coal fire. And a pump. There was no other water laid on in the house. No water-pipes. No tap. There was a sink, and there you filled a tin with water and washed yourself in cold water with best yellow soap, winter and summer, man, woman, boy and girl. And you washed your neck, and behind your ears. The washing-baths were fifteen minutes' walk away, and the children (when old enough) were sent there once a week. What happened before that, or to the adults, I do not know, except that I can remember seeing my baby sister washed in the living room in hot water boiled on the fire. Washing babies, only four, and all healthy, in this family, under such conditions must have been a task. No water from the pump could be drunk, for it derived from a small well, in the middle of 'the backs', common to the six houses, and decorated with an ever-growing ash-heap. An evangelical water-monger sold us drinking-water from a spring in the Wroughton Road at a half-penny a bucket, selling also living water in the form of tracts, and *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. I think it must have been from him that we purchased *The Lamplighter* and *Jessica's*

First Prayer, two classics, upon which my sisters and myself were nurtured. The scullery opened by the back door upon a small yard, stone paved, against the uneven but convenient walls of which I practised fielding with a gutta-percha ball. To its left was the coal-place, in which every fortnight I stacked four hundredweights of the coal—rather inferior coal with a good deal of ‘soft’ or ‘slack’—which the Company sold to its employees at tenpence a hundredweight. And that was three and fourpence ‘stoppages’ every alternate week. I loved to build the ‘lumps’ into a front retaining wall for the coal, and then shoot the rest over that wall, pretending that I was firing on the rocking footplate of the up ‘Dutchman’. I was always pretending. I hardly think I have lost the habit, though the vivid pleasure of pretence has diminished.

Between the kitchen–living room and the parlour the stairs ascended to the first floor. On this there were three bedrooms. On the right of the landing (four feet square) was the front room occupied by my mother and father. In this was a chest of drawers surmounted by a looking-glass. And there was a washstand with a rather handsome blue-flowered ewer and wash-basin, which were seldom or never used. They were symbols: an assertion of respectability. On the other side of the landing (over the kitchen) was the bedroom used by my two sisters; and *through* it (the only way) you walked to the small room over the scullery. This was the bedroom used by my brother and me for some fourteen or fifteen years, until he had finished his apprenticeship and had gone north. It was just big enough to hold one double bed and give us standing room on one side and at the bed-foot

in which we could undress and dress. There was nothing in it but the bed.

My brother and I slept in blankets. This, now, makes me wriggle! But fancy the winter in that little exposed room, fireless, of course, a few laths and slates over our heads, a thin brick wall and a little window between us and the cold. Sheets may be clean: but they are cold. For six months in the year blankets, however infrequently washed, were snug, if hairy comfort to us. And many were the nights when we warmed a brick in the oven, and wrapped a bit of old blanket around it so that our feet at least should be warm. Over the blankets was a heavy cotton counterpane. It could not be too heavy for us. So we undressed to our shirts (we had no underclothing), retaining the day-shirt for night (I was sixteen before I had a night-shirt, and pyjamas are a modern innovation), and, at least in our early boyhood, sank at once into an animal sleep.

Such, in its physical aspects, was my home. And this was the house, not of the poorest of the poor: but of a respectable, decent, skilled workman of great intelligence, with many intellectual interests, and much public spirit. In these conditions we were brought up to be clean, to be proud, to respect learning, to read, to remember that there were great works of art in the world (though none to be seen in Swindon), that we must never take a penny as a tip except from relatives or personal friends, and that we must remember that our name was Spencer, that we were as good as anybody else and better than most, that there was a county called Lancashire which said to-day what everybody else said to-morrow, and that no Tory could be a good man.

In this miserable house, certainly never painted nor decorated from the date of my birth until we moved, when I was sixteen or over and a pupil teacher, my father lived for most of his adult life. In that house I felt no discomfort, for the dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in; and I had known nothing other.

To write of my father moves me, even to-day, to a white heat of indignation against an ill-ordered world. As I remember him, he was rather under middle height, inclined to corpulence, slow moving, but with an unconscious dignity of carriage and gravity of demeanour which compelled an inevitable respect from his hierarchical superiors and an affectionate respect from his 'mates'. He knew his forebears for the four generations which took him back to those who owned their small copyhold farm on the Lancashire slope of the Pennines. And he was the first one of them to be a mere employee. I think that this to him must have been some humiliation. He was a quiet, thoughtful man with an unexhibited pride at the root of his nature: he disliked 'orders', and after his death I was told that, apart from routine written orders, the foreman's communications to him always took the form of requests. Physically he was not strong, and factory life, with a working day which involved his rising soon after five in the morning, leaving the house at half-past five and returning from work at six in the afternoon, aged him prematurely. He died at sixty-one, not of any acute disease, but of old age. He was an excellent mechanic, the old-fashioned fitter and turner who was a really skilled worker of precision. Unlike my mother, he was scrupulously tidy. He hated disorder; and I remember to this day his fastidious cleanliness. To wash

his hands after the day's work took him ten minutes, and at the end there was no trace of the oil and dirt which are the inevitable accompaniments of his trade. Soap, scrubbing-brush, and pumice stone had been used to the utmost. His hands were no workman's hands. They were shapely, white hands, and but for a certain hardness they might have been those of a Canon of the Church. His passion was for books and for Church Architecture. In his scanty holidays, ten days in the early summer without wages, he had visited many of the English Cathedrals and the great Abbey Churches. At work he was a charge-man—that is, the principal member of a group of some half-a-dozen workmen who turned out a defined piece of work at piece-work rates which, if they worked successfully, yielded them a fortnightly 'balance' over their time wage. They were, as a rule, successful; and, after 'stoppages' for sick club, institute subscriptions, coal, and the like, my father brought home one week a little over thirty shillings, and it might be less, and next week, which was 'balance' week, a little over two pounds.

A family of six in all had to be housed, clothed and fed, and to be maintained at a standard of cleanliness and respectability. How was it done? I do not know, but done it was; and we bought a second-hand piano, which I will tell you about later; and my brother had a violin. And all four of the children always had their Sunday clothes! It seems incredible. We were slightly in debt. The rent was always a few weeks in arrear, and there was an ancient butcher's bill incurred during the long stay of convalescent relatives in a distant past, which we gradually liquidated by occasional half-crowns, but which was not

quite paid off when my father died. The £20 insurance money, paid for at twopence per week, more than covered the debts this sensitive and proud man had never quite been able to meet whilst growing children were kicking their boots to pieces and tritulating their garments.

His great interest outside his work, his reading, and his architecture was the Mechanics' Institute. As a young man he had been elected to its Council, and he remained Chairman of the Library Committee and of the Evening Classes Committee to the day of his death. He resented the Institute dancing-class, and was not friendly to the idea of a billiard-room. Anyhow, there were plenty to look after this side of things. He was undoubtedly the working-class puritan highbrow by nature and by nurture. Only to a few intimate friends was he 'Tom'. To his superiors at the works, his fellow-members of the Council, and most of the great body of workmen he was always *Mr. Spencer*. As a boy, and still more as a growing adolescent, I was proud of my father and his peculiar position in our community. I am still proud. And I resent the fact that circumstances of necessity placed him before a lathe, and made him turn injector rams and such-like things for the better part of forty years.

He could easily have got elected to the Local Board (as the governing authority of New Swindon then was), but he disliked publicity, and nothing would have induced him to ask for a vote. To the Council he was always elected without any act on his part. He would sometimes say to his great friend 'Old Brass', "They'll have me out this time, old lad". And Old Brass (his surname was Money) would always reply in his emphatic formula, "Damn it; never!"

In fact my father was always re-elected rather above the middle of the list, but never at the top of it. He died, as I have said, worn out, of old age at sixty-one. Many workers of that day, especially boiler-makers, died of old age earlier than this.

My mother I remember with a peculiar affection. Always I remember her beautiful, fine white hair, which covered a small, well-shaped head. She was thirty-five, and my father was a year older, when I was born. But her once fine auburn hair was already pure white in my first recollections of her. Her maiden name was the typical Lancashire name of Scholes. And she was the only daughter and the eldest child in a family of six. *Her* mother's name was Hamer, another pure Lancastrian name. And her family came from the hilly regions between Bury and Bolton. The story handed down was that they had built a chapel, a pestilential Nonconformist's meeting-house, with their own hands somewhere in that region—Bradshaw or Four Lane Ends or thereabouts. Later on I knew her brothers, my uncles, all house decorators, all skilful, all unbusinesslike, half of them with raven-black hair, half with flaming red, all artists, all full of ideas which they never carried out; and the liveliest and most talented of them was given to drink, eloquence, and generosity.

It was with my mother that the tradition of piety persisted. What she looked back to in the Lancashire she had left was not the cotton-mill, or rather the weaving-shed, where for a time she had worked, not the smoke, the grime, the granite of the streets, nor the countryside, still beautiful in her youth, but the Sunday School. As I have said, she was the eldest.

She had to help with the children, and I never heard that she went to any school. She could read quite well, though slowly (in those days they were taught to read in the Sunday School), but she wrote with great difficulty, and with no knowledge of spelling or punctuation. For, as her brothers grew up and were sent to school, a neighbour had taken *her* off to the weaving-shed to be her 'tenter' and to earn a few meagre shillings a week until she, still a mere girl, got some 'looms of her own'. It was the ordinary fate of the Lancashire girl, where, outside Manchester, the shawl and the clogs, though less common than of old, still carry no social stigma. All this, of course, belonged to a period beyond my memory because before my existence. I remember her chiefly as the guardian of our symmetrical family, my elder brother, myself and two younger sisters. She was an intelligent woman; but, I repeat, she was no house-dragon. I can see now that she was not really interested in the housework. She was conscientious, and she desired to make a good home. In non-material things she did this. But the eternal round of cooking, scrubbing, cleaning, mending, to be satisfactorily accomplished required persistent, methodical and unremitting effort. And she was not persistent, nor methodical, nor unremitting in these matters. She was casual, given to reflection and to dreaming, given, therefore, to procrastination. This my father abhorred. His mother had been a house-dragon, an efficient, unrelenting scrubber and cleaner. Though, I perceive, there was real affection between my parents, and an original love persisted, indeed rang clamant at his dying hour, there were days when he found the temperamental differences between himself and my

mother almost unbearable. Things were not as they should be: the floor had not been scrubbed, the regular dinner which he expected and generally got was lacking, and there was a makeshift meal; his children had been sent to school unmended; words passed and recrimination; and, hot-tempered as I was, and mother-like in my sympathies for untidiness (which I must distinguish from disorder) and for dreaming, I, as a big lad, joined in.

And for days after an outburst there would be a black time for all except my elder brother, who was too good-humoured to bother. But such periods were rare. By and large the family life was happy rather than tolerable, and my mother, with a good heart and an unclouded mind, except that the continuous small indebtedness troubled her, could go to chapel, enjoy her sermon and pack her willing children off twice on Sunday to Sunday School.

For the Sunday School was the centre round which our social life, such as it was, revolved. My mother, with her healthy, spare frame, her clear grey eye, her uneasiness that she had not made her husband as comfortable as might have been, her Bible, her Chapel, her unreasoned but invincible Radical prejudices, her pride in, and her troubled conjectures about her children, survived my father for sixteen years, and for ten of them she lived with me. Her life was no smoother than most lives lived on the same plane. My father's sisters away in Lancashire, proud, house-proud, and efficient, considered he had married beneath him. My father had been and had remained their idol. He had not got on. Unlike *his* father, he was a mere workman. They resented this. They attributed the lack of emergence to an improvident and unsuitable

marriage. They patronised and despised my mother. She knew it and resented it. And as I grew up and became a promise for the future, a big boy, a strong boy whose brains and originality they exaggerated, they regarded me as the unassisted product of my father. I was a Spencer, and to be a Spencer was a privilege. There were no commonplace Spencers.

Moreover for my two maiden aunts, struggling along in impoverished lower middle-class respectability, I was a promise of support for the future. I failed them. But they could not predict this. I wish I could put into a play this proud, pernickety, unsatisfied, uneasy, coldly adherent family, with all its concealed affections, its unacknowledged plots, its unachieved ambitions, its unjustified, unspeakable pride in a third-rate, but unforgotten past, its unconscious snobbery, founded on a kind of false self-respect. But it would take Tchekov to do this, and I am not he. So I will go on to the story.

Or rather, before I return to my childhood, interesting, not so much because it is mine, as because it illustrates the life of an inarticulate and moribund class, the intelligent children of the upper artisan class, who nowadays get scholarships to Oxford and to Cambridge, but whose only avenue towards literacy in the late nineteenth century was through pupil teacherdom and the training colleges for teachers in elementary schools—before, I say, I return to the typical upbringing, I must tell something of my forebears in the male line.

The first of these ancestors of whom I am aware (I have made no research) was Thomas Spencer,

born in the middle of the eighteenth century and living to the first quarter of the nineteenth. He lived and was probably born at Holcombe, some three or four miles north of Bury, under the brow of Holcombe Hill, an offshoot of the Pennines, nearly 2,000 feet high, and he was a small yeoman farmer. At any rate, from a conveyance still in our possession, he was a copyholder in the Manor of Tottington, and is described as 'of Wood Hey Gate', in that Manor. He lived to the age of seventy-seven, which was not bad for those days, and he was well-enough off to own half-a-dozen cottages, and to lend £50 to a relative. His will shows his painful endeavour to be just; for all his children male and female (there were six) got equal shares in his little estate, including a cottage each; and the son of a son who predeceased Thomas was specifically left his equal portion. So Miriam (married to an engraver named Yates) and Ruth, Jonathan (my great-grandfather) and Mark, John, son of the deceased son, and finally the famous Jael (the youngest daughter, who late in life married a rascal, who fortunately predeceased her) all got their share. As it happened, most of these, except Miriam, died early, and most of the little property was gathered again into the hands of Jonathan, the eldest son. Jael, unmarried, had kept house for the old man in his later years. She it was who collected his little rents, for, apparently, the cottages were let at half-a-crown a week! She it was, to use the Lancashire phrase, who 'penked' stones at boys trespassing upon his little fields. And, as the old man insisted on taking a walk as soon as it began to rain (there was always a touch of eccentricity, it appears, in these older Spencers), she it was who forced him into an overcoat, and armed

him with the fat old umbrella which he shut as soon as he was out of range of Jael's overbearing personality. She it was who, invited to a neighbour's funeral, got into 'the first coach'. With much argument and (so I was told) some physical force, she at last yielded up her place to a minor member of the deceased's family, remarking "Ah'll goo. Ye've gotten me aht o't coach. But goo i't second! Nay! will ah hec as laak. I'm other in't first coach er none". And she held firmly to the spring at the back of the first coach and was dragged, grim and unyielding, to the churchyard. I have seen an old account-book displaying her bitter comments on Jacob Horrocks, "who says he cornt pay, but means that he worn't". And a note that Israel Greenhalgh is to have no more till he's paid. No more what, I do not know. I think it was milk. Some time after her father's death she married her ne'er-do-well. And I wish I could remember the stories my uncle (who just knew her) told of what she said and did to her husband. He dare strike her, or try to, only when he was drunk. But he is said to have succumbed at last to drink and to her bitter tongue. This is all I know of the collaterals, except that Richard Yates, the husband of Miriam, lived long and prospered greatly as an engraver in Manchester.

For some reason Thomas was the last of the yeomen of the family, as well as the first forebear known to me. For his son Jonathan, my great-grandfather, went to Manchester and learned to be an apothecary. I know little of him except that he, too, was a character. He married a wife at the Collegiate Church of Manchester, now the Cathedral, and lived successfully in that city for some years, returned to his native hill country, took over the ancestral cottages, and kept the

apothecary's shop in what was then the little town of Ramsbottom, close to his ancestral Holcombe. He was more than an apothecary. I have seen his book of prescriptions, beautifully written in an eighteenth-century Italian hand, and some of his account books, and my brother still possesses his medical books, chiefly of the encyclopædia order, and some instruments, including some formidable forceps with which he extracted the teeth of Ramsbottom and the neighbourhood. From his accounts it is plain that he prescribed for his customers as well as compounded their medicine. His brothers and sisters, as I have said, predeceased him, for there is a written family record which he started, and it was continued by his son Charles, who was my grandfather. We have always had a very strong family feeling, and my immediate ancestors felt important enough to keep an account of the constitution of the clan. Charles was an only son, though he had sisters, and, singularly enough, he marks the transition from a middle-class 'owning' family, though the scale of ownership was small enough, to the wage-earning proletarian, who, however, still retained some middle-class tradition.

My grandfather, Charles, was, at least in the beginnings, well educated for his time. He was sent to the Grammar School at Bury, an early seventeenth-century foundation; and he used to walk in and out four miles each way morning and night. But he got into the clutches of the Industrial Revolution. He was born in 1811, and, at a date of which there is no record, he was apprenticed as an engineer in a factory in Bury, still living, I was told, four miles away, up under the shadow of Holcombe Hill. He must have been an able and intelligent man, for at a very early

age he became a foreman, and, shortly after, the responsible head of one of the two departments of what was then considered a pretty large foundry. There were two sides to the foundry, the one, the 'light' side which made textile machinery, the other the 'heavy' side which manufactured in the early forties (*i.e.*, when my grandfather was in his thirties) the new locomotive steam engines for which there was a growing demand. My grandfather was in charge of the 'light' side, and so continued for well over twenty years, until he was in his late forties. Then the crash came. I know the story, of course, only at second hand, and cannot vouch for it. My father, normally a silent and reserved man, especially with his children, never mentioned it, and this is a little suspicious. But my maiden aunts, when as a boy I visited the manufacturing North for a holiday, were never tired of repeating it. A large order for textile machinery was executed. On delivery it was found that it would not fit into the spinning-room for which it was intended. There was a big row. The family story is that the work was executed according to plan; and if my grandfather could hold his responsible post for well over twenty years, this seems likely. The allegation was that the drawings were destroyed or secreted by a wicked draughtsman, but this seems to me not very convincing. Anyhow, as a result my grandfather threw up his post. It was definitely told me that he was never discharged—indeed, the row being over, he was asked to stay on. Whatever the truth, he left at nearly fifty to start life again. His great friend at that time was a boyhood companion, also an engineer, the two cronies habitually going their Sunday morning walk together. I had better not

name him, for the firm he founded still exists. "Come and be my partner, Charles," this crony is said to have exclaimed, "and you'll not suffer." But my grandfather refused. He was full of the unreasoning and rather stupid pride from which his descendants have, I am afraid, only partly freed themselves. He said he would never be driven out of the town in which he had been known as schoolboy, apprentice and manager for more than forty years. He would show that he could manage in Bury. So he did: but it was as a 'charge hand' in the repairing-sheds of the East Lancashire Railway. His friend went off, founded his new factory, and after a bad time during the cotton famine, prospered vastly. He got another partner, and their descendants are now among the class which complains that its million is reduced to half a million by 'death duties'.

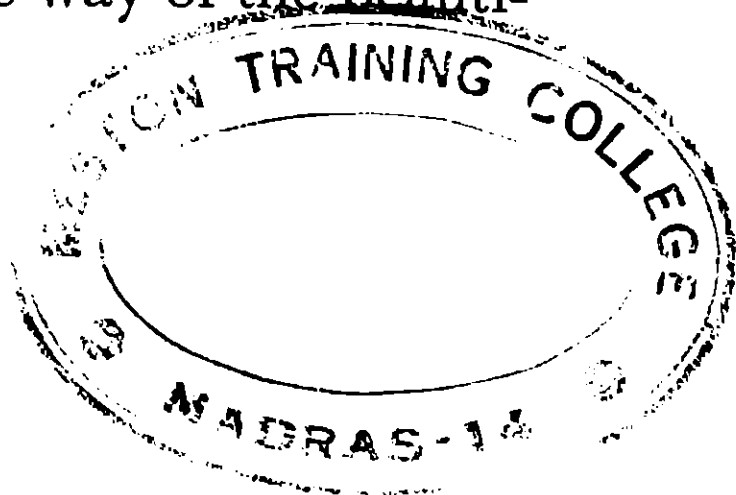
My father, Thomas, himself apprenticed under his father, attained the age of one-and-twenty at about the time, shook the dust of Bury (there is a lot of it and it is black) from off his feet, and easily got a job in the new Railway Works at Swindon. Some years after he was followed thither by his youngest brother. But three sisters and one brother remained in or about Bury, which to me as a boy was a distant place where men were great and vigorous, and cotton-mills were romantic holiday sights. We were now a family of wage-earners. And my father's quixotic conduct in the matter of property dissipated finally his small inheritance. He was the eldest son, as you may have noticed, of a family of six, three brothers and three sisters. My grandfather died intestate some ten years after the economic disaster, at the age of fifty-eight. My father inherited the little property of copyhold

land and the cottages built by his great-grandfather. After a short period, in which he distributed the income, urged, it is said, by some of his brothers and sisters, he sold the property and divided the product into six equal portions. These were small enough. The thrifty Lancastrians saved their portions, but lost them in the *débâcle* of a local building society. My father lent and lost his portion in a futile effort to prevent the bankruptcy of some of his temperamental and charming relations-in-law. And his youngest brother, my favourite uncle, is said to have ceased work at once on receiving his portion, and resumed it when the last penny of his share was spent. So far as I can discover, no benefit of any kind accrued to any one of the six from my father's generous but quixotic sale and division of property which was legally his. The reader may draw morals if he likes. I think my father was quite right to abandon the legal privilege of primogeniture. Anyhow, being what he was, he could have done no other.

So I was born in the working-class home which I have described, and passed from the dame school for which my parents paid the shilling a week they could ill afford, to the elementary school where they paid threepence a week as long as we were in Standards I to IV, and fourpence a week thereafter, for Lord Salisbury's Government abolished school fees in elementary schools too late to relieve them of the charge. And, as I say, I passed a happy, free, interesting boyhood, had always clothes (of a kind) to wear, lived on the simplest food (lots of bread and home-made jam, especially rhubarb jam) and never went hungry nor very cold, went twice to Sunday School

on Sundays (though there again I once played truant out of temper) and twice to Chapel, was successively a Junior Templar (being diverted into that for a time by some Primitive Methodist friends) and then a blue-ribbonite at the Band of Hope organised at our own eminently respectable Congregationalist Chapel, walked with chums across the pleasant fields to Liddington Hill on Good Fridays, munching hot-cross buns, and stealing turnips from the fields which mounted up the hillside to the old entrenchments, played primitive cricket, and became boy secretary of a home-made cricket club which played, or attempted to play, less primitive cricket, became a pupil teacher, a prominent and, I fear, all-too-vocal member of the Sanford Street Young Men's Friendly Society, read the *Boy's Own Paper* from its beginning (what a wonderful glamorous paper it was!), saw the Town football club grow up, invincible in its early years of genuine amateur soccer, lived at the age of fourteen to twenty during the great period of Gladstonian attempts to give Home Rule to Ireland before it was too late. What a magnificent time it was! For the period of my boyhood and early youth I certainly envy no one.

Resentment of the world and its organisation came later. And that bitterness has now passed. At least, there is no personal element in the regrets of an elderly man, that the world has failed—failed so very badly—to live up to the possibilities of civilisation which seemed opening up to all of us at the end of the nineteenth century. At all events, of the 'eighties and the 'nineties I can truthfully say, life was well worth living. And I was alive, young, healthy, strong, popular with my fellows, unconscious of all these benefits, conscious in a vague way of the beauti-



ful North Wiltshire country, quite oblivious to the common-place ugliness of the growing town in which I live, and sharing to the full the vigorous social life of the young and lusty community of which I was a member.

CHAPTER II

INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

No doubt we enter this world trailing clouds of glory. But of this we are unaware. Of the wonder with which, doubtless, the awakened infant regards the strange, inexplicable world into which he emerges, few traces remain. And these are overlaid by the laminations of experience. For me, the recollections of boyhood are vivid: those of infancy died long ago. I have, of course, the stories of others: the kind told one in later years, with insufferable iteration, by tiresome aunts.

I was the second child of our even family, and my elder and only brother was some three and a half years older than me. My two sisters were respectively two and four years younger than myself. I cannot remember anything about my brother until both he and I went to school; and, as I was about four when I first went to the dame school, he must have been nearly eight before I recollect him in any significant fashion. He had a family reputation, fully justified, for being a bright, sociable, friendly spirit, quick of understanding. He was fair, ginger-headed, sanguine, loosely built, and good-tempered. I was a brown-haired boy, inclined to be dark, with grey eyes and the typical pink-and-white complexion proper to a pure Lancastrian ancestry. I was shy, secretive, felt a real timidity which, as I grew, I painfully endeavoured to conceal, and I suffered

from an unsociable disposition which took the form of an intense hostility to strangers. In the later years of boyhood this secretiveness and shyness disappeared within my circle of friends, in whose presence, indeed, I was enthusiastically expansive. They formed, as it were, a new and a larger family. I remained, however, timidly hostile to strangers, and even to-day sixty years of a far from private life have not made it easy for me to meet new acquaintances half-way. I can just remember, however, that in my four or five pre-school years my chief refuge against the stranger was the comfort of my mother's skirts. But inside the family I had moments of temperamental exaltation; I shouted and sang. I would make eloquent speeches imitated from Nonconformist sermons. For this purpose I remember mounting the sycamore-topped dresser. Above it there hung framed an outline map of Asia, painfully and beautifully drawn, coloured, and lettered by my father, and labelled "Hermitage School 1848—Thomas Spencer". I made this the centre of my discourse. I improvised astonishing fictions as to the meaning and significance of the shapes of India, China and Persia, and their map colourings. It was these moods of temperamental and hyper-vocal expansiveness sandwiched infrequently between the shy and somewhat moody and taciturn normal behaviour, especially to 'outsiders', that earned a merely intelligent lad a reputation for genius in the family.

In fact, by similar demonstrations, I aroused great expectations in each community I penetrated. I entered first school and then college as a quiet, undemonstrative, rather timid person, certainly a shy one. About this there was no affectation. I

was as I felt. But, once accustomed to people and atmosphere, the hour would come when this feeling of repression (as I suppose it would now be called) would suddenly vanish, and I would burst out into voluble talk, gibe, sarcasm, flights of eloquence, indulge with naïve and unaffected vanity in the use of a vocabulary quite beyond boys of ordinary British stolidity, who read nothing, partly because they had nothing to read. In these moments (and then only) I *was* clever, amusing, interesting, formidable and fearless. For I was always big and strong for my age, and though I had only about two real fights, both in the midst of these moods of outburst, in their conduct I fought like one possessed, careless of consequences, desiring only to batter an opponent to death, and utterly indifferent to the bitter blows I might and did receive. So if I railed at my companions, or those of them outside the compact of my intimate friends, as a rule, with the sound instinct of their birth and blood, they stood by and listened (with smiling, *opaque* indifference) as I abused or derided them, saying as they drifted off, "Gormy! Coo it's on'y 'im. 'E's a'right. 'E don't mean nothin' " ! My eloquence was the water which ran not off a duck's back, but was sprayed over lumps of granite or balks of teak. In later life my own belief is that these hours were often periods of real inspiration; I could see into things of my humble plane, and then I would try to persuade executive persons to do this, that or the other, and to do it nobly. Again I was trying to overcome the indifference of granite, teak, or even, I fear, ordinary imported soft wood. The soft wood became even softer. They were realists, they said. At any rate they splashed

off or absorbed into their unresilient mass quite intelligent and intellectually unimpeachable ideas.

To give a modern instance. Mr. Fisher, with the approval of Parliament, put clauses into the Education Act 1918 which have never been administered. There is always the blank inertia of the mass, *until* some one big, a Chatham, a Gladstone, a Morant, a La Pucelle or a Mussolini, electrifies it. Then it moves. And then we know the realists. In England to-day we have no such force, except perhaps Winston Churchill, who is secluded, and the little old Welshman, who is marooned. But let me recall my few definite recollections of infancy.

One incident of which my mother frequently and pardonably told me is perhaps important from my point of view, as it might have resulted in my death. It happened almost as soon as I could walk. My mother was 'washing-up' in the sitting-room kitchen within reach of the kettle, always kept full, on the permanent summer-and-winter fire. For remember that in the scullery there was only the cold, non-potable pump-water. She had filled the large basin on the table and was washing the breakfast things, when a knock came to the front door.

It was 'Mr. Smith', the greengrocer, from the shop a few doors off, with his morning cry of "Taaters", which I came to know so well. For the earliest game I can remember is 'playing at Mr. Smith' and driving his horse from the seat of my mother's rocking-chair, stopping at intervals at doors and invariably calling in a hoarse voice "Taaters". Well, on this occasion Mr. Smith knocked; and my mother walked to the door, wiping her soaking hands, reddened by constant

immersion in hot water. No sooner was she out of the living-room than I reached up to the table and pulled the basin of boiling water over me. I was badly scalded. There was doubtless cotton wool and oil. In accordance with my vociferous reputation, there were certainly high-sounding yells. I recovered, but the incident is vouched for by the marks I still bear. I relate this to illustrate the chances of working-class domestic life. The woman is always busy. She cannot be still. She has her work to do: the door must be answered; a shovelful of coal must be fetched from the backyard; the washing must be hung out; the beds must be made; clothes must be mended, and three children (there must have been three of us by this time) cannot always and every time be taken with her or left in complete safety. Life is a risk from the beginning. The street or 'the backs' was at least as safe for us as the house. If my brother, so considerably my senior, had been a sister I might have been 'looked after'; but the eldest girl 'minds the baby', not the eldest boy; it is against nature.

Another great incident of this period was that my elder brother, then probably aged about five and 'going to school', was bitten by a dog. It was the big yellow dog owned by the tenant of the field which lay, then, in front of the house. I remember little about it except the fact; but it made me afraid of dogs, especially the big, yellow, indeterminate mongrel type of dog that seems to have been fairly common in those days. The fact that my brother was bitten affected me more than it did him. He was a cheerier, brighter soul than I, and apparently soon forgot. But it made a mark on my mind, just as did the

mice which my brother caught, handled and teased me with. He filled me with a terror of these tiny creatures from which years have not entirely freed me. Apparently in this case, if not in others, if a boy of five or six tries to put a live mouse down the back of a boy of two or three, the latter, though in most things not a coward, can be affected with an unreasonable fear of the creature long after he is a grown man, a fear, or rather an aversion which is gradually transmuted into a cruel hatred.

Actual recollection of early infancy, therefore, in my case, amounts to nothing. In fact, of the time before I went first to school at five or just under I cannot recall any definite memory. It may be that after four or five one is sufficiently acclimatised to this earth to remember things, that then or thereabouts the trailing clouds of glory we brought with us vanish; we accept the earthly, workaday world, and, being now a conscious part of it, remember it. Or it may be that the mere fact of school, and its more intimate and enduring relations with contemporaries, traces a deeper groove upon consciousness, and we remember. I wonder what happens to those fortunate people who do not go to school at five? Do they remember anything of infancy?

Thus my earliest definite recollections are of school. It was a 'ladies' school. It was kept by a woman, whom I regarded as old, who indeed must have been well advanced in middle age. She belonged indubitably to the upper reaches of the lowest middle class. None of the pupils except my brother and myself were the children of manual workers. Both Mrs. Orpington and her husband belonged to our Chapel—that is, to our social centre. Mrs.

Orpington looked like the typical housekeeper of some great house. Tallish, full-figured, straight—perpendicular, in fact, though amply rotund—of carefully affected genteel speech, she was the embodiment of lower middle-class dignity and respectability. And she had brains. She must have had; for she had two daughters, one much older than I and one somewhat older, who were neither of them commonplace. The younger was a talented musician, a violinist of great local repute, and later on to the fore in all the agencies for self-improvement characteristic of our vigorous but almost isolated town. To the mind and character of these daughters Mr. Orpington or his ancestry may have contributed something. But he did not look like it. He was a short, spare, desiccated man with long, untrimmed grey hair and a scanty, wandering, unevenly distributed grey beard. He was a clerk in the great railway works, busy with his entering and checking and casting from nine o'clock (lucky clerks who had not to be at work by six!) until half-past five, with five minutes grace at midday and evening in which to get clear of the works before the great stream of the black-handed commenced. He was Mrs. Orpington's husband, and no more. He 'escorted' her to Chapel. He brought her home. I have no doubt he handed over his 'salary' and received his pocket money. To us he was the tenuous, negligible accompaniment of his impressive wife. He was a type; but he goes from the story.

There were about a dozen of us under the tutelage of the majestic woman. My brother was one: but as he had preceded me in the seminary, he went off to the elementary school soon after my arrival. I

remember a boy of my own age, son of a Scottish draper, whom I knew well in my adolescence, stalwart, intelligent, public-spirited, and mild. He started to be a Scottish draper himself, but in a year or two asserted his intellectual leanings, won a scholarship at Bart's, and became a first-rate medical man. There were various others, chiefly the children of small tradesmen or clerks. Of these one was outstanding to me then and so remains. She was a Jewess, daughter of the benign old Jew who kept the only jeweller's shop in the 'New' Town. He and his brother-in-law, who kept a furniture shop, were, at that time—that is, through the last years of the 'seventies and all through the 'eighties—the only Jewish families in the place. The father of my Jewess was a fine old man with clear-cut Jewish features of the aquiline type, plentiful grey hair and beard, and a rolling, deprecatory, guttural speech having marked traces of his German upbringing. He sold watches to the workmen, chiefly on instalments. A watch cost you two guineas or fifty shillings in those days. You paid it off half-a-crown down and a shilling a week; and if you were in difficulties and respectable you were not pressed for the instalments.

The daughter was, even then, to me very beautiful. She was some years older than I, and seemed to be a very big girl indeed. She was by far the most intelligent of the dozen or so pupils, and when I was sixteen and she was twenty and we attended Extension lectures, I knew that here was a rare creature. How rare I did not then fully realise. For hers was a beauty of mind and manners, in a perfect physical setting; it is only now that I realise her

courtesy and her forbearance. Socially she was far above me, and old Mr. Schmellering had amassed money, and was about to retire to Bristol, where there was the consolation of a Synagogue. But we were rival essayists in the 'class' of a series of Oxford Extension Lectures. I was never in love with her, as, of course, at sixteen and later I was from time to time, secretly, with others. It would have been like falling in love with a silver moon, or, to keep on the human plane, with a princess of the blood royal. I was not foolish enough for that.

To return to Mrs. Orpington and her school. It was the kind of school which still exists. A bare room in a small private house furnished with a few chairs and tables. School was from nine to twelve and from two to four, and you learned to read, to write and to cipher. I do not remember learning to read. I think I learned from my mother, who constantly read to me out of the Gospel and simple, pious story-books. At any rate, whilst I distinctly remember learning at school to write and to figure, I have no recollection at all of learning to read. I did not like the school. Mrs. Orpington to my childish eyes was too enormous to command affection; her stateliness was merely a cause of fear to me. I learned without any difficulty to write and to add and to subtract. But all the time I was afraid. In fact the earlier recollections of childhood are almost universally the recollection of *fears*, chiefly, of course, unreasonable fears: fear that I should some day not be able to read to Mrs. Orpington, that I should not be able to add or to subtract, that I should forget the six-times table or the like. None of the fears justified themselves. But there was the

haunting uncertainty of the future, half an hour hence, this afternoon, to-morrow morning. For might I not then be faced by some tremendous task impossible of my accomplishment? In adult life I think these infantile fears were one source of a tendency to preparedness which has not been without its uses. The childish fears have been transmuted into a disposition to 'neglect no means' and, in solving a doubtful problem, to try not to forget any possible contingency. I was redeemed from those fears even then, as now, by the salvation of a certain laziness and, probably, by a tendency to dream.

So after a period of careful and fearful thought about the tasks which might be set me by Mrs. Orpington, I would suddenly lapse into an imaginative indifference to her and to all her concerns, sink into a blissful unconsciousness of the present or the future, and contemplate in an inner and peaceful mind perhaps a piebald circus horse, or the great red-and-yellow gipsies' van which had passed that morning up the hill to old Swindon, or dream of who or what might be on the other side of the boundary wall that separated our 'backs' from some disused clay pits, though I knew perfectly well that on the few occasions when, unable to climb the wall itself, I had viewed that untravelled land from the lofty summit of the ash-heap, there was nothing there but a disused brick-kiln. In my dreams, however, it was at least possible that over the wall (if only I could climb it) I might see the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain or the Japanese juggler who walked barefooted up a ladder of sharp swords.

At that point I was awakened to the reality of a

desperately real world by a 'pat' from Mrs. Orpington. It was awful! Not the things I feared had happened, but something outside my expectations. I had not finished my large hand copy. The measured accents of Mrs. Orpington, sounding all her final consonants, assured me that I was bad and lazy: very probably, indeed, beyond redemption: that I must stay in after twelve and write out a dozen times that matchless sentence from the Reader "I want my dinner. I want pudding". Fricka had spoken, and I was condemned. At mid-day others departed. I was left painfully to copy a sentence by which I was reminded unintermittently of the mordant hunger which afflicted me. I remember considering painfully whether the task would be done more quickly if I copied whole sentences or wrote the single words in vertical columns, and the dreadful uncertainty whether, if I adopted the second method, I should be able to complete each sentence in the space of one line or be left with a huddled mass of words refusing the vertical arrangement. This I had to *think* out. I make psychologists a present of the fact that it never occurred to me to try a full sentence first and see. I refuse to consider this an evidence of stupidity. On the contrary, it was a preference, unconscious or sub-conscious, for the reasoned rather than the empirical. But the agony of this process of thought was great. I do not know how I concluded, only that the interminable task was at last finished and I walked gloomily home. For the first time a dreadful contingency had actually occurred, though it was *not* one of those I had pre-figured. Thus, besides the fearsome possibilities I could imagine, there were others which I had never conjectured; and the

future, therefore, was full of terrors which I could not by foresight provide against. Moreover, I should be late home, and my mother would ask anxious questions. I should be convicted: a boy who, at school, failed to do what he was set! My hatred and my fear of Mrs. Orpington and of school were magnified many times.

It was this, I believe, which was the cause of my great adventure. My mother had indeed sympathised with me. This I felt, though in form she had reproved me with the reproof of affectionate insincerity. I remember no definite process of thought, but must have reasoned, subconsciously perhaps: if Mrs. Orpington is so formidable, if school is so repulsive, why go to school at all? The word truant I had never heard. But one fine morning I was sent off at the usual time. Instead of walking straight down Regent Street to Mrs. Orpington's, I turned off to the right and spent the morning in the yet-unbuilt-on fields. In the straggling, half-formed town there were all sorts of spaces to be explored. In less than ten minutes a very small boy could be sitting at the hedge watching the grazing cows. He could wander up the half-formed road towards the Old Town and sit and play dreamily amongst the heaps of sand and the discarded stones workmen had left behind. All sorts of signs, and the passage of people, especially of boys, would remind him of the time when, to escape detection, he should return home. So I played truant and played it with the innocent cunning necessary to success. Granted the end, I learned, there is generally a means. I had, of course, no sense of guilt. No one had tempted me to my fall. It was my solitary resolve to spend time plea-

santly rather than painfully in the open air with cows to watch in one place, and sand and stones to shape in another. Might not Joseph and his brethren come down this sandy, half-made track with a string of camels?

I do not know how long the truancy was successful. The legend is that I kept it up for a fortnight, which I very much doubt. My mother's credit with Mrs. Orpington was good. If I was absent from school there would be a good reason. So no enquiry seems to have been made. As I returned quite happy at all meals, no questions were asked at home. Then the inevitable and crushing catastrophe of discovery ensued. It was Emma Irons, the red-headed daughter of a neighbour: to me an enormous creature twice my height, and probably thirteen or fourteen years old. She found me in mid-morning ruminating appropriately in Cow Lane. I remember her astonished questions as she seized me by the hand, and dragged me, blubbering, I expect, but certainly madly angry, home to an astonished mother. My credit was gone. I had lied in action, probably in words. My mother did not recover for years, perhaps not until a few years later at the big boys' school my school reputation was established. I remember that in my heart I did not worry about the disgrace which followed discovery. For a time I had outwitted these enormous grown-up strangers. Even Mrs. Orpington had been defeated. And had it not been for the treachery of that red-headed, pale-faced girl—I can see her carrotty head, and her pale blue eyes, and her freckled creamy face to-day—I thought I could have succeeded indefinitely. They had found me not by a plan, but by an accident. I began

dimly to see that the possibilities of *accident* must be imagined and precautions taken. For the future the wiliness of the then unknown Ulysses must be the model. And it was many years before I forgave Emma Irons.

This is practically all I remember about the very early years of life, save a few indefinite and confused domestic recollections, dim remembrances of the visits of relations, of neighbours, and of casual callers, of playing games in the back and stealing cabbage-heads from Mr. Smith's garden. And such recollections as I have of the period, which ended when, at the mature age of six, I left the dame's school for the ordinary elementary school, are purely personal and egotistic. At this period I had consciously, I believe, no interest in anyone but myself. My father was a dim power, a *force* rather than a being, of great importance, wisdom, and beneficence. I was hardly conscious of him, however. He was off to work long before I woke. I went to bed soon after he returned home. My mother was to me an institution. She was an arrangement for seeing that I had food clothes, a bed, and the best yellow soap. My elder brother by nearly four years was not yet (or ever fully, such is the gap of years) a chum. By the age of six I had two younger sisters, but at this period I remember nothing much about them, and strong as our family affection was, at this early period I was hardly conscious of their existence, except as the centre of much washing.

The great change came. I left Mrs. Orpington and, with no little foreboding, went to the big boys' school. And I was to remain in touch with it for some thirteen years, a much longer period of influence

than any other. All through boyhood and adolescence to the verge of manhood I was actually inside this school for over five hours a day, five days a week, for about forty-six weeks in the year. The only influence of the same (or even greater) magnitude was the Chapel. On the whole I think I have been growing out of these influences ever since, but at sixty-five the process is still incomplete.

CHAPTER III

LIFE IN A LATE VICTORIAN BOARD SCHOOL

THE reader will remember that New Swindon was an entirely new industrial settlement. The new town was provided by 'The Company' with a decorated Gilbert Scott church, and, close to the church, with a school—the G.W.R. School. In 1878, when I went to it, it was the only boys' school in the New Town; the girls and infants had been moved to a newer school some half-mile away in one of the newer streets. No one, I suppose, ever goes voluntarily to Swindon: if one did, he could see the evidence of the early settlement—the huts, so to speak, of the pioneers: the grey-stone factory (Portland stone crops out at Swindon), presenting a blank, unwindowed wall to the streets, the grey-stone church, the rows of grey-stone cottages arranged in neat streets named after the principal stations of the old line, London Street, Bristol Street, Bath Street, and so on, and the shell of the old grey-stone school. It was replaced by a new Board School about 1880 or 1881. In the old G.W.R. School, trembling and apprehensive, one morning in 1878, I was left by my mother to take my chance with the half-educated schoolmasters of those days, and the vigorous, ill-clothed boys of an industrial town. I was put higher in the school than my age warranted. This happy chance I owed to Mrs. Orpington's plan of operations in arithmetic. She had

taught me simple addition; then addition of money; simple subtraction (five from three you can't, borrow ten), and then subtraction of money. Consequently on entry to the G.W.R. School I could do money sums. But under the famous revised Code of Robert Lowe, money entered first into the scheme of things for Standard II, and as a test proved that I could already do subtraction of money (seven from five you can't, borrow twelve), and therefore was a sure 'pass' in the annual examination, I was placed in Standard II, and found myself at least a year younger than all the boys in my class. This was a factor of considerable importance in my school life.* It meant that right through the school I was the youngest member of my class. I was regarded, therefore, as a Board School *intellectuèl*, and, as I was by no means the smallest member of my class, being a fast grower and big-boned, my relative youth caused me no trouble.

I am writing at greater length than I anticipated about my childhood because I find it interesting, and also because I am attracted by the problems of trying to recover the truth as fully and state it as accurately as I can. Moreover, very few literate people of my generation went through the kind of life I did, or would write down that experience. It seems right to produce this record.

I remember very little about my first day at school, but remember that little clearly. I know I was put into the care of a very respectable and conscientious, though rather dusty-minded assistant master, who

* Mr. Middleton Murry, who graduated in a London Board School, says that at seven he was in Ex. VII. I believe that was quite impossible, and that his memory has misled him.

taught us all that we had to learn. Of what order were his administrations on that first day before play-time no recollection remains except dealing with large numbers in arithmetic. But I remember vividly the mid-morning play-time. At 10.45 we were all released into a gravel-covered yard, the whole 500 or more of us. Accustomed as I was to the dozen pupils (both sexes) of Mrs. Orpington's 'ladies' school, my first play-time was a terrifying experience. The noisy shouting, the clatter of feet, the rushing of these enormous boys (very few of them were over thirteen, but I was only six), the games of tig, or of coxy-doodle, or of hunt the stag, or widdy warner, that went whirling all over the place, one lot hurtling into another or dodging skilfully, or cumbrously, past another, caused me to cower against the stone playground wall with my head in a whirl. The weaker and smaller were perforce swept on one side. Had I been a six-year-old journalist I should, doubtless, have referred to "this maelstrom of boys." No one cared. In general the boys were tough. If a boy of ten were hurled off his feet by another of thirteen, he got up again. Perhaps they were not as rough as I, in my uninitiated innocence, thought them to be. But clearer recollections of later years tell me that they were both rough and tough. I know I am right in saying that accidents were few. These lads came, most of them, from good artisan stock. Their fathers were smiths, and boiler-makers, and engine-fitters, and carpenters working at hard physical labour for more than nine hours a day. When they fell they just rose again. And in 1878 there was no football among the lads, and therefore no kicked shins. This play-time stands out in my mind. It seemed interminable.

But at last it ended. The whistle blew. The seething mass stood impressively still. Short and sharp would be the punishment for anybody who moved within ten seconds of that whistle. It blew again, and each standard formed up smartly in its line. Another little interval of silence, and the whole school turned right, and then each master marched his class back to the forbidding classrooms. I went with my class back to a room, and from 11 to 11.30 that morning there was singing; first very simple modulator practice, for we were very young, then we practised one of the three songs we should have to sing to the inspector in October. Is it not *The Ash Grove*?

“ Down yonder green valley
Where streamlets meander. . .

I remember that I liked it very much. Mr. Dark, the dusty master who first taught me, conducted, as I perceive, without inspiration. Nor in the school was there piano or harmonium for accompaniment. That came much later, and the school, not the School Board, bought it from the proceeds of a concert. There were truly no frills in an elementary school fifty odd years ago. The system imposed upon the popular schools by a remote and cultured Education Department I will presently describe. For the moment I recall that the arithmetic of Standard II gave me no difficulty, that we had plenty of repetitive reading aloud from the same three old readers which was the number prescribed for us. For in the annual examination we should have to read aloud from one of those books for Her Majesty's Inspector or one of his humbler assistants. We read nothing silently in school, for amusement or for information. We had

lots of writing, either in our copy-books or transcription from one of the inevitable readers. Apart from this, all we learned was geography and 'grammar' and singing. Geography! In Standard II we learned definitions. "An island is a piece of land surrounded by water." "A peninsula is a piece of land nearly surrounded by water." And, to make us realise these important facts, there was an oleographic diagram of each: a yellow quadrilateral of land (*a*) surrounded and (*b*) nearly surrounded by pale blue water. Similarly the 'grammar' taught to these tender babes was definition: "A noun is the name of something"; "a proper noun is the name of some particular person, place or thing"; "an adjective is a word qualifying a noun." This was what we were taught, for, as is evident, I remember it. We were practised in picking out the nouns, verbs, and adjectives from the wearisome readers.

How clearly I remember those readers, especially the Royal Reader No. 2. From its historic pages I learned my first poem. Everybody did. It was 'Little Jim', that cheerful set of verses which begins:—

" The cottage was a thatched one
The outside old and mean,
But every thing within that cot
Was wondrous neat and clean.

" The night was dark and stormy
The wind was howling wild
A patient mother knelt beside
The death-bed of her child."

But this did not depress our youthful spirits, rather it 'struck a chord' in our hearts: the same chord, no doubt, which accounts for the sentimental musical proclivities of the common soldier in the War: for

many of them were nurtured on this type of English verse.

I will spare the reader a detailed description of my progress through the elementary school of that day. But I cannot spare him everything. I became conscious of the iniquitous system which affected the lives of our whole working population for more than thirty years when I was a pupil teacher, and I will defer what needs to be recorded about it until the next chapter.

In surroundings no worse than those of millions of others I passed year by year up the school. The rough artisans' sons were my daily playmates, though the chapel and its Sunday School were the real social centre of my early life and the source of the more intimate friendships, some of which have persisted for more than forty years. But the secular, the working life, centred round the day school.

When I had been for little more than two years at the G.W.R. School, it was replaced by a brand-new Board School, for the town had grown beyond the capacity of the Company's School, and a School Board was formed, I suppose about 1879, and opened its first school about 1881. Not long before I began school my only head master was appointed to replace Alexander Braid, the legendary Scottish head, whose name was never mentioned by his pupils, my elders, save with affection and respect. But my head master was a Welshman and a character. I now judge, indeed towards the first years of adolescence we boys found out, that he was a man of inconsiderable attainments, with little real affection for the learning to which he paid lip-service. He was a small, insignificant man, ill-built, round-shouldered, bespectacled,

who carried his head at a permanent angle of some 75° to his right shoulder. He was asthmatical. In the afternoon he smelt of beer. His Christian name was John, and, as he was Welsh, we called him 'Shonnie'. Nevertheless, he was a man of enterprise and ideas; and he was full of histrionics: a magnificent actor. He it was who exposed, derided, deflated and finally deposed the school gangster 'Colonel Belsher'.

A purely working-class town like New Swindon of over fifty years ago was a rough place. Not so rough perhaps as the Lancashire towns whose gruesome stories of genial brutality were a topic of conversation among some of my Northern relatives. But I can remember in Swindon the General Election of 1880, when hardly a public-house window in the town was left whole, and I saw the famous policeman, Bobby Strong we called him, sent staggering from one side of the main street to the other by a blow from a great muscular rivetter's fist. The boys of the lower reaches of the artisan class were rough too. There was a persistent feud, concealed or eruptive, between the Old Town and the New. For some obscure cause the G.W.R. School boys became rioters. A great horde was formed. The boys came to school with sticks concealed in their trousers, stones and catapults in their pockets. The latent dislike boiled up into active hostility against the boys of the National School in the Old Town. Probably it all grew out of a subconscious resentment against the slightly patronising attitude of the Old Town to the New, and to the correlative fact that the National School boys looked down upon us, or we thought they did. Anyhow, under the leadership of a big lout of a boy probably only some thirteen years old, a large part of the

school marched up the hill to the assault, singing their song.

“ The Old Town kids are very good kids
The New Town are much better.
The next time we meet the Old Town kids
We'll give 'em cayenne * pepper.”

I was too young to take part in the actual fighting. But excitement was in the air, and I hung on the skirts of the crowd, an interested, indeed a thrilled spectator. Battle followed battle for some days. I cannot now understand why this was permitted, for stones flew, the dangerous catapult was used, and cudgel blows were heavy. Then action, on our side at least, was taken. One morning ‘Shonnie’ assembled the whole school. By some means he had found the ring-leaders, and he was sardonically aware of Belsher’s rank. *Colonel* Belsher indeed! He would Colonel him! The school stood crowded, silent and expectant in the large schoolroom. Each class was marshalled by its teacher, and we knew that the first boy who spoke or perceptibly moved was destined for a caning severe and ignominious. I think it was ignominy, not pain, we feared. Half a dozen or so of the ascertained leaders stood lined in front. How were they known? Had Belsher ‘told’? In front of them, alone, stood Belsher, a boy of thirteen, perhaps five feet two in his shoes; for he was a big lad, and to me enormous. ‘Shonnie,’ his head inclined at its inevitable angle to his round shoulders, adjusted his spectacles, and stood regarding the whole assembly for a moment or two in contemptuous silence. There he was, our master, and we felt diminished in stature, small, mean. We stood still, feeling sulky, hostile,

* Pronounced ky-ann.

and afraid. The silence was a pain to us. At last it ended. 'Shonnie' stroked affectionately the long, lissom new cane which he had placed conspicuously on his desk. What would Belsher do? It was common for a boy every now and then to 'check' a master: to refuse to hold out his hand for punishment, to threaten to tell his father. Such a boy was a hero, and the condign, sometimes severe whacking which followed was no ignominy. He had at least rebelled, and some of our masters (though by no means an athletic set of men) were big and strong: and one of them, Sid Simmons, who played three-quarter back for the Rangers (predominantly an Old Town and therefore a 'select' team), was formidable. Had not Ernie Willis shouted across the room, even to Sid, to let his brother alone? There was audacity, if you like. Willis had some pluck. But Belsher, who certainly had led us, had laid into the National School boys good and hearty, what would he do? The cold silence ended. 'Shonnie' readjusted his glasses. He was speaking. "This school is disgraced. You boys, with all the advantages of modern education" [it was 1880 and I have given you some notion of its progressive character!] "have behaved like savages" . . . and so on. There was, of course, no originality about it. But from the histrionic point of view it was first-rate, with its pauses, its deliberation, its occasional hissing sarcasm. "And now," said 'Shonnie,' "*now, Colonel Belsher. Colonel Belsher, you are the leader in all this. What have you to say?*" There was silence. "What have you to say?" Silence again. "Have you *anything* to say, Belsher, Colonel?" 'Shonnie' had a good resonant Welsh voice and he could use it. "Nothing! You could shout loudly

enough yesterday. Say something now, boy, *before I flay you!* ” and he bent his new thin, lithe cane, with a maleficent ease. Still silence, but, Godstrooth! Belsher was sobbing! There were tears in his eyes! “ You are a coward, Belsher, a bully. Cry! cry! You were vocal—very vocal—yesterday. I have had enough of this,” said ‘Shonnie’, with a histrionic ferocity which sent a shiver down most of our spines. “ I will punish you formally, here and now, in front of all your fellows, your dupes, and then,” his voice dropped to a stage whisper, “ I will punish you *in my room*—severely, severely!” Godstrooth! ‘Shonnie’ was going to take Belsher’s trousers down in his room and lash his bottom! There was ignominy, if you like. For the working-class boy has not the public-school tradition of being thrashed. “ Hold out your hand, sir.” It was Belsher’s last chance. If he refused, even if he had put his hands behind him without saying “ shan’t ”, we should have retained some respect for him. He would have failed, but failed nobly. But he was done. He had collapsed with fear and shame. His hand went slowly out, and the snaky cane descended. “ Again.” And there was another stroke. “ Again. You are to have six strokes here.” Once more the hand came tremblingly forth, but we heard him blubber something about “ I’ll tell my father”. “ Tell your father, boy! *I have sent for your father.* Here, this is enough. Mr. Simmons, please take *this Colonel* to my room.” And Sid Simmons reached out one sinewy arm, lifted poor Belsher by the collar of his coat, and our Colonel disappeared. ‘Shonnie’ knew too much to prolong the scene. He looked at us, almost benevolently, and merely said, “ Work will be resumed”. He

noddled to the senior assistant, and off we were marched to our respective places. 'Shonnie' was a great man—five-foot-two, round-shouldered, asthmatic, short-sighted, but a great man. There were no more riots in my time.

This was the last great event in my recollection of the G.W.R. School before it was closed and replaced by an immense Board School to provide for 800 boys. It was a good thing that there was still plenty of land to spare in the corridor between the Old Town and the New, which included the main shopping street of the New Town. And it was a good thing for me, for instead of being twenty minutes' walk from my home, the school was only seven or eight: a matter not without importance on wet days, when there were no arrangements for drying clothes at the school and you couldn't change your boots because you had only one pair. For instance, I well remember struggling home from the old G.W.R. School through the bitter wind and snow in the great winter of 1879-80. I remember the thick red comforter, which was the only fortification of my clothing to keep out the worst storm (I suppose) of fifty years. I remember how the snow lashed my face as my brother, aged about ten, and I, aged about seven, literally fought for half-an-hour or so through the deepening snow, and arrived breathless and (in my case) in tears to thaw before the sitting-room-kitchen fire, blazing with the Company's cheap coal.

So these school years went on. To the three R's and the two class subjects, grammar and geography, at the top of the school an elaboration was added.

When I reached Standard V in the senior part of the school, two 'specific' subjects, *i.e.*, subjects on which a special individual grant was paid on those who passed, were taken by the better third of that big 'standard'. The subjects we took were algebra and mechanics. In mechanics we had a little text-book written by 'Shonnie'. We learned Newton's Laws of Motion by heart. We studied from diagrams the three orders of pulleys and the inclined plane. We neither saw nor performed any experiment. But most of us passed. The algebra was a kind of game with *a*'s and *b*'s and *x*'s and *y*'s; as a game I enjoyed it.

In due time, and a year early, I reached Standard VII, depleted in numbers; for boys who could 'pass' Standard V and were thirteen years of age could leave school; and they did. In Ex. VII there were few indeed of us left. The remnants were formed into a 'science' class taken principally out of school hours, and chiefly by a very able pupil teacher, who became a man of some note later on, and was indeed head of an important Secondary School after 1902.

The science classes, characteristic of their age (it was now 1885-6), are worth a word. We 'took' the elementary stage of three sciences, mathematics, physiography and agriculture. Agriculture was an easy subject to cram from a text-book, though our teacher could not tell a mangel-wurzel from a swede. I grew some green peas in a flower-pot. By way of original experiment I covered them with soot to neutralise inimical grubs. These subjects were chosen because 'Shonnie' or some of his assistants had obtained Advanced Certificates in them from South Kensington; subjects on which, therefore, some one could earn 'grants' and 'Shonnie' as head master

could pocket the produce. For these science classes at that date and in this instance were private enterprise. We were neither clever nor well taught. But somehow I managed to scrape first classes in all three subjects (stage 1), and was awarded a 'Scholarship' of £15 for earning more marks than any of the other half-dozen boys. It was paid in cash. I handed the money to my father, and with this windfall, and my complete approval then and now, he bought a second-hand piano. He bought it from Johnnie Andrews, a smith who played the double bass in the Choral Society's Orchestra. The object of the purchase was that my sisters might learn at once to play. It was a good investment; one of my sisters became an excellent player, and we made much music, and good music, at home.

The mention of this 'scholarship', however, leads me to that side of school life which was a real education, of still unexpended force. One thing of great moment in the school was music. 'Shonnie' had the Welsh feeling for music, and (in the days when music was an essential in the training of every trained teacher) a school staff which numbered over twenty invariably included several men of considerable executive ability. 'Shonnie' himself always took the music of the upper division—practically all the boys of twelve and upwards. He knew a good deal about voice production, and he was an enthusiastic, often a fiery conductor. So we learned to sing most of the traditional national music, and not a few excerpts from the oratorios and from Mozart's 'Twelfth Mass'. Every year, too, a choir from all the elder pupils, girls from the school across the road as well as boys, was formed. This went by the name of 'The Singing Class', and

was held in the early evening. Attendance purported to be voluntary, but distinctly-felt pressure was such that few lads or girls who could sing in tune stayed away, however inclined. It was moreover a way of filling in the evenings of the late autumn; and it was for us a piece of social machinery. So every year we were trained to produce a concert proudly given just before Christmas in the Great Hall of the Mechanics' Institute. Parents paid their shillings and sixpences; three hundred boys and girls were the ticket-sellers; and the audience was always large. Prominent members of the School Board, including the editor and proprietor of the local paper, the manager of the Gas Works, and even some magnates of the G.W.R., would attend. The profits were applied to school purposes: the purchase of music, for instance, and of the school harmoniums. Out of these concerts also came the money for the science scholarship of which I was the first winner. And I have no doubt that the little Welshman's 'Singing Class' was the foundation of an interest in music for many of us.

For the rest, my school training, which would necessarily have ended at the mature age of fourteen, and in any regular sense did terminate at thirteen, when I reached Standard Ex. VII, the ultimate 'Standard' was uneventful. Besides the ordinary curriculum we did drawing of a kind. It was prescribed and examined by South Kensington, and was about as feckless and uninteresting as a central and remote authority could make it: freehand line-drawing in the flat, chiefly of copies from minor and debased Renaissance ornament; model drawing from geometrical models, cubes and cylinders, and triangular

prisms and the like. How painfully we boys were made to toil at this dull stuff, and how few of us, when all was done, could do a decent drawing even of that kind! Contrasted with the joyful, eager work of to-day it was miserably, criminally dull. We were entered for the elementary stage of South Kensington examinations, and the drawings were sent up, and examined wholesale, I suppose by the better students (heaven help them!) or the minor graduates of the Royal College of Art. In my last year as a pupil the drawing, mitigated only by the introduction of scale-drawing in Standard V, was examined on the spot by 'Drawing Inspectors' sent down by the South Kensington Department. They were, usually, half-pay officers of the Royal Engineers. But ours, as I remember, had been a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Buffs. I know this because Sergeant Harford, a sun-scorched veteran of sixty-three, who drilled us, told me so, for he had been one of the rank and file of that famous corps, and mutual confidence had been created between the old Inspector Colonel and our desiccated old drill instructor, who had fought in a minor battle at Punniar in the Gwalior Campaign of 1843!

For 'Shonnie', with characteristic enterprise, had induced the School Board to let our school have a drill instructor for Friday afternoons. There was no nonsense about physical education: it was just straightforward army drill. The first instructor was another ex-sergeant of the 62nd or Wiltshire Regiment. He was the town attendance officer, and doubtless a good one. As an ex-army man he was an enthusiastic volunteer. He came to his new job full of zeal and vacant of ideas. He was short, broad, and fat, and

in his new occupation had cultivated red side-whiskers to adorn his brick-red face. Poor man! At the job of controlling a hundred or more boys in the playground of a Board School he was a failure. The more he shouted and spluttered, the more we giggled and made rude remarks to our neighbour or to the rear-rank 'man'. In the absence of an assistant master, our disorder became patent. They said he had faced the Zulus: but he could not control us, and in a few weeks he resigned. In spite of this failure, 'Shonnie' did not give up the drill. He thought drill was good for us; and it was his contribution to development of a proper patriotism. So the rubicund ex-Sergeant departed, and the lean, grey, wizened figure of an Indian veteran came to us. He could neither read nor write efficiently. Though he was called 'Sergeant', I believe he never attained non-commissioned rank in the regulars. But he had been born into the army. The former instructor of the Old Town company of volunteers, he was the supreme example of the natural disciplinarian. He looked at us; and we instantly obeyed. He chewed tobacco when off duty; and his private vocabulary was magnificent, though to us it was oathless. As a pupil teacher, a little later, I used to walk home with him, and I knew.

We fell in. He walked slowly up and down our lines, front and rear, and most of us stiffened up and felt rather proud as our heads went up, our chests swelled with an inflatory arrogance, and our fingers became rigid on the seams of our trousers. A boy tittered, and old Harford turned on him like an old panther. In thirty seconds the titterer was off into the school, crestfallen, for an awkward and probably

painful interview with Shonnie'. What was worse from the offender's point of view, was that our general sentiment was "Serve him right, the fool". I recollect no further instance of a boy being sent for punishment by Harford. He interested us, dominated us, and worked us hard. There was no time for mischief.

So we formed fours, and moved to the right in fours, and all the rest of it. As we wheeled into line, each company was as straight as a wheel-spoke. Within a few weeks we were an armed force. The arms were broomsticks each with a red pennon; and every boy had bought his own, though pence, God knows, were scarce enough. It was a triumph of morale. Faith triumphant. It explains the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler. Within a few months we had got past forming squares in the playground and preparing to receive cavalry; we had attained proficiency in bayonet exercises and we were skirmishing in open order round the neighbouring, and then almost trafficless streets. No doubt it was Crimean or even Waterloo drill. But we enjoyed it. Each company was officered by boys. Finally, to my eternal joy, I was made either major or sergeant-major, I don't know which. Probably I was both. Experts will know when I say that on appropriate occasions I rushed to see the alignment perfect, and shouted "Markers—steady!" And when the battalion of four companies marched through the streets to the Park on the Queen's Jubilee, to be reviewed by the Major of the Volunteers, I marched at the head of the battalion, unarmed, but with a swagger cane in my hand, followed by red-pennoned companies of boys. I was proud and confident then, as I have seldom since been.

We drilled in the park before admiring crowds, not with militarism, but with overflowing pride in our hearts, and a fierce determination to show the miserable volunteers what drill was. We got cake, oranges, and ginger-beer as our reward. The reviewing officer was the Locomotive Superintendent of the Great Western, a remote and legendary potentate, the real arbiter of fate for all Swindon; and we did well. Englishmen always do well when screwed up to the pitch of honour and well handled. Old Harford told us that we did well. Next Friday (drill day) he formed us in a hollow square and said "Oi'm proud of yer. Ye did better than them 'Guards' [infinite scorn] as never goes on foreign service, an' s'elp me if yer not almost as good as the Buffs." For the first time we laughed at him. But when Colonel Palmer stopped the drawing examination (poor old man, the drawing examination was a trial to him) to see us go through our performance in the school yard, we didn't let our old Sergeant down. Not we. And the dear old Colonel, in pathetically polished tones, gave us a simple address on the desirability of military virtues.

It was all crude, and unsuitable, calculated no doubt to arouse a military spirit, which, except for pure externals, it did not. But it was good for us; of that I am sure. My father, a John Bright Liberal, didn't object. Everybody outside Bedlam is against war and its foolishness and waste. But as a training in smartness, in the instant obedience which some situations in life demand it was justified. Our boys would have behaved well in a shipwreck.

In other ways 'Shonnie' was better than his times. The annual examination and its payment by results

could not effectively limit him. We read *Henry V* in a bowdlerised version. We learned much poetry, including Gray's 'Elegy' in Standard V (general age eleven to twelve). We gave a performance of the Trial Scene from the *Merchant of Venice*, and I got the nick-name of Shylock, being greeted, as I remember, by that endearing name more than twenty years afterwards at a chance meeting with a school contemporary (coach-body builder by trade) in St. Paul's Cathedral, of all places.

In this way one did learn something, and have a path opened to much more. Looking back, of course, I regret that my early education was not more generous; but I have few really unpleasant recollections of it. To me it was a spacious time, and, after all, I was in a school which comprised nearly the whole social gamut of the town. The sons of some high officials and some fairly well-to-do tradesmen were pupils, as well as the boys of the skilled workmen and the labourers; and there were also the children whose fees were paid by the Guardians of the Poor. We segregated ourselves socially a good deal. But we were all there together; and though the working-class element was stratified into many layers of social level, our associations were not entirely determined by the rather rigid distinctions which working-class snobbery imposes on its members. Among my friends were some of the bourgeoisie as well as some children of scandalously poor parents.

There was, of course, a debit, perhaps an evil side to it. In speech I acquired the accent and the intonation of the common people. That is, sometimes, a trifling inconvenience. And though the population was of so diverse an origin, so strong is the local speech of the

countryside that we all spoke the mid-Wessex speech, the speech of Gloucester, Berks, and Wilts, which thickens into Somerset as you go west, but is essentially different from the Devon speech. Fifty years of intercourse with people of all kinds and much travel have seemed not entirely to dissipate all traces of that speech. That is probably a good thing. The grammatical peculiarities of the Wiltshire yokel (I use the term with respect) were not, however, ours. We did not say "Her be gwaain whoam" for "she is going home". Nor did we use 'thic' or 'thuc' or the dozen other locutions still in common use in North Wiltshire. But most people who know the vowel sounds of the English provinces, and can recognise the Wessex *r*, would place me to-day as a native of mid-Wessex. So much the better!

Worse than that, I learned, of course, all the bad language of the common people. My father never swore. My mother would have been shocked at the vocabulary I acquired. In the school circumstances it was inevitable that I should hear, learn, and among my companions use effectively, indeed with a certain distinction, the ordinary imprecations of the people. Naturally, as years of sense approached I dropped it. But I know that, with what my contemporaries certainly regarded as uncommon gifts of speech, I was often the centre of a small but well-accomplished circle, who stood round to hear me swear, for their amusement, as a really gifted exemplar of the art. Later life has taught me, however, that Eton and Oxford might have infected me with a vocabulary more offensive if less robust, and sanctioned it to a later age. Cambridge would probably have been worse still! We of the skilled working classes become

respectable earlier than the products of the public-school system.

At thirteen and fourteen I was almost the biggest boy in the school: and a writer of autobiography must not be too modest. He must tell the truth as he remembers it. So I say I was popular. I was still very shy with strangers and elders: but not with my fellows. With them I was companionable; I was good at games, and romantically fond of them. I think I was reasonable, and certainly was far from quarrelsome, but I was known to be capable of an almost berserker fury when driven beyond the limits of boyish self-control. Consequently, I had few fights. In fact, I remember coming to blows only once. Probably I was thirteen at the time. At any rate I was near the top of the school (at the *top* of the school when upper middle-class boys are just leaving their prep school for Rugby or Marlborough!). It was the 29th of May. We called it 'Shick-shack Day'. I don't know why; but this is what we did call the day on which that pleasant, clever Charles II came into his own again. We had to wear oak leaves in our coats, though in fact leaves from ash trees would pass too. I had my leaves, though not a large bunch, and I was busy playing marbles with another, when Bill Ody, a robust and weighty lad, son of a boiler maker, approached me from behind. The penalty for not wearing 'shick-shack' was to be stung by stinging nettles. I was on my knees taking a shot at my companion's marble, for we were playing 'little ring', when Ody approached me from behind, shouted "Show yer shick-shack!" and, without giving me time to turn and display my leaves, stung me in the back of the

neck. There was no fight. There was nearly murder. Stung by the nettle, and more by the atrocious injustice, I sprang from the ground, giving the astonished lout—for he *was* a lout and the son of a boiler-maker too, of lower status than mine, and stupid, older than I and in Standard IV—giving him, I say, no moment to prepare, I sprang straight at him and bore him to the ground. I pounded him wherever I could. I had him down backwards; and, minutes later, I was pulled off his prostrate body by our one athletic teacher, whilst feverishly engaged, without thought of anything but insult to be avenged, in banging Ody's head on the asphalt surface of the playground. I certainly would have killed him if I could. Murderers in hot blood, if there are any, have my full sympathy to this day. Fortunately, Ody's skull was conveniently thick. He was of Wiltshire stock, and was possibly of high descent, for was not the manor of Swindon originally granted to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux? And there is a tribe of Odys in North Wilts.

We were both formally punished. One cut of 'the stick' and a brief lecture. But Ody left me alone for the future. He was sore and badly mauled; but general opinion was with me. I never fought again. The bully at the 'backs' behind our houses, who twisted my sister's arm, slunk off when I marched up to him with rising fury. This is small beer, but it was life to me at the time.

So school days drew to a close. In my fourteenth year I was one of a small group who stayed on at school in a casual sort of way because we did not leave. Most boys left at thirteen and went into 'The Factory', or to put it in the local phrase 'went inside', at thirteen-and-a-half. Our little group at school in-

habited a small room known as 'The Manager's Room'. Two of us acted as 'Shonnie's' messengers and sat for a time in his room, where he charged himself to superintend our very miscellaneous and fragmentary studies. His surveillance was nominal. We did odd jobs such as 'taking the numbers', *i.e.*, going to each class in the school and putting down numbers in attendance on a slate, so that 'Shonnie' might know the attendance barometer in each class and come down on the class where it was low. On Mondays we took the school pence to the pawn shop where coppers were welcome, to exchange into gold, bringing back the ten or eleven sovereigns, which 'Shonnie' banked. We also took the opportunity to run round the cattle market held on Mondays in the High Street of the Old Town, and into Deacon's Horse Repository, where just before and after the hunting season we could see the hunters tried, often in charge of Irish stable-boys, whose tricks and manners we much admired. For Swindon was on the edge of the V.W.H. Country, and a meet in the Market Place at that date was not uncommon.

After some desultory months in the manager's room doing nothing in particular, though we did more or less master, by ourselves, two books of Euclid and got beyond quadratic equations in algebra, I became before I was fourteen a 'monitor'—that is, I was put to teach others and paid two shillings a week; at first I assisted Charlie Lionel an ex-P.T. (ex-Pupil Teacher, now termed an uncertificated assistant) who taught Standard I. Charlie was, in a way, a character; in fact rather an alcoholic character. He had been a pupil teacher somewhere, and had completed his four years' apprenticeship in that capacity. Then

he ran away and enlisted in a Cavalry Regiment, I think the 7th Hussars. Out of the army at twenty-five, he was still eligible to be employed as an ex-P.T. He knew nothing except how to read and write, but he could write 'large hand' beautifully upon the blackboard. Academically (and the care of children aged about seven was for us purely an academic task), Charlie was equal to the work of Standard I, and not more than that. He would set the children to copy fifteen times a few words written on the blackboard, then he would settle at his desk and pass his time in thought, probably reflections on beer at Colchester or sun at Sialkot, where most of his seven years with the Colours had been passed: or possibly he passed his time in contemplation of his pay as an ex-P.T., which was at the rate of £50 a year, rising by increments of £5 to £60. As to which it may be remarked that the country usually gets what it pays for, and even Charlie, as an instructor of youth, was worth £50 a year gross.

Suddenly he would rise from his desk and do sentry go up and down the length of the classroom. For he had sixty or seventy small boys in long, eight-seated desks occupying two-thirds of the room, whilst I, not yet fourteen, had forty on the gallery which covered about one-third the area of the same large room. As he marched to and fro, his cane hung by its semi-circular hook from a trouser pocket. His trousers were well fitting and narrow, showing the line of his rather shapely legs. For Charlie, like a true ex-cavalry man, was always smart, well-brushed, and ostentatiously clean. Suddenly he would stop, and, like the crack of a whip, would come the order "Pennns—*down*". Down they went, and woe betide

the unlucky child who was one-tenth of a second behind the rest, for Charlie's cane was slim and, with the flick of his wrist, he would sting some fleshy part of the laggard's back and make him squeal with sudden pain. Then Charlie would crash out "Folllld —*arrms*". And every little youngster would fold his arms, elbows on desks, and in the perfect silence of these nurslings Charlie would walk along the back of each row distributing instant but not very severe punishment—a flick of the cane, a pinch on the ear—to those whose writing was below standard. Poor Charlie! In the school reforms which took place some two years later Charlie was dismissed. I was told that his next and last post was that of a potman in a London public-house: and it is not unlikely to be true.

I had one further experience of 'teaching' before my regular apprenticeship began at the age of fourteen. For some reason I was replaced as Charlie's assistant by a regular pupil teacher, probably relieved because the top of the school was thinning out after the annual examination. The twelve or thirteen boys in the lower part of the school who were undoubtedly mentally deficient were then picked out, and they were put in my charge in order to be taught such reading, writing and arithmetic as I could impart and they could assimilate. One of them was only partly articulate, and the favourite amusement of the rest, which, with the cruelty of youth, I did not sufficiently discourage, was to mimic his poor attempts at speech.

Sometimes I could not resist the fun of it myself, and I mimicked him, apparently to his own puzzled amusement. There they were, all dull, most of them

deformed in some physical as well as mental particular; and some dirty and evil-smelling. Most of them were poverty cases, their fees being paid by the Guardians. I had my little 'stick', as it was always called. It was a penny cane which I bought, and, for economy, cut into two halves. Half a cane would go up your jacket sleeve if a manager or the head came in. Every single teacher of every rank had his cane. And we used these canes, not often brutally, but commonly, without much discrimination and without scruple; indeed, without thought. This was against the regulations, which confined the power of corporal punishment to certificated masters.

My 'idiots' class', as it was called, was held in one of the cloakrooms, and there, surrounded with caps and poor and usually ragged overcoats, sometimes streaming with wet, I instructed the Mentally Defectives, in the hope that one or two would be able to score a pass at the next individual examination of Standard I. Whether any passed, I cannot say, as before the next examination I became a regularly apprenticed pupil teacher, at a salary for the first year of ten pounds a year, and I moved to another part of the school.

CHAPTER IV

PUPIL TEACHERDOM AND THE OTHER INFLUENCES

THE early autumn of 1886 witnessed my apprenticeship. I still remember walking with my father, who had to take a half-day off work for the purpose, on a Saturday morning up the hill to the office of the dignified old solicitor, who acted as clerk to the School Board. We saw, not the great man, who may, for all I know, have been shooting partridges with some of the squirearchy of the neighbourhood for whom he acted, but the respectable little man of the managing-clerk type, who ran the School Board business for him. There were regular indentures, and I had to put my finger on a red seal and give something or other, I knew not what, as my act and deed. So did my father. Then I was a pupil teacher. And except for an interval of four years, spent chiefly in historical research, I have been connected with the State-aided system of education ever since—for more than forty-seven years.

No one asked me whether or not I wished to teach. If they had asked, I should probably have said “No”, the natural answer for a boy of fourteen. But ‘Shonnie’ had spoken to my father, pointed out that I should become an educated man—should, in fact ‘go to college’—and that a schoolmaster’s job was clean and respectable. He spoke to one all too willing to listen. My father was one of the type of skilled artisan not by any means uncommon, men of intelligence with

intellectual interests which they are only partly able to exercise. 'Going to college' appealed to him, and he hardly discriminated between Balliol or Trinity and a Training College for Teachers then in the back streets of South London. Moreover, I should not have to tumble out of bed at 5.15 in the morning in winter to be 'at my work' by 6; and there would be more than a week's holiday in the year. So a pupil teacher I became. It was for me a natural avenue of employment. I had no overweening desire to be a fitter and turner, nor even a pattern-maker. An engine-driver, willingly. But the would-be engine-driver must begin as an unskilled 'cleaner' on a lower social plane than the skilled mechanic, so that career was barred by unquestioned social convention.

A pupil teacher was precisely what the name implies. The pupil teacher was the pupil of the head master in things academic, and he was a teacher. No doubt the theory was that he was trained to teach. In fact, he taught as best he could, his practice being based on what he remembered of how he had been taught, and on the tricks of the trade picked up from those among whom he worked. In these respects at fourteen he was like the normal public-school master of twenty-three. In the circumstances of those times the system was not without its advantages. You sank or swam. Either you could 'hold' a class of thirty, fifty, or sixty boys or you could not. If you could, and you passed an annual examination of a rudimentary 'Secondary' level, you survived, and, in due course, at the age of eighteen to nineteen, proceeded to a training-college to take a two years' course, principally concerned with the content of a

decent secondary education, or, in some directions, rather more than that, with a tincture of actual training for the work of teaching.

So far as the academic side was concerned, my pupilage was largely a fraud. The Code laid down that a pupil teacher was to have at least one hour's instruction a day from the head master, who apparently could delegate this duty, or part of it, to certificated assistants. In our school these 'lessons' purported to take place every day from Monday to Friday inclusive from seven to eight in the morning. 'Shonnie' himself was down for Wednesday mornings. One or other of the assistants attended on the other four days. In fact, 'Shonnie', who took English, chiefly grammar and the reading of a play of Shakespeare, could be relied upon never to arrive before 7.30. On the other mornings things varied according to the conscientiousness of the various masters, of whom the more intelligent were, as a rule, the less conscientious. On Wednesdays, therefore, I would often struggle to arrive by 7.30; but I was not infrequently late. On the other mornings I turned up chiefly according to my interest in the subject taken and the degree of respect which each particular assistant master inspired. Sometimes sleep or laziness would ensnare me and I would not attend at all. Should this happen on 'Shonnie's' morning, I should be summoned to see him, or he would speak to me in the classroom during his round of the school. Re-proof was invariably more in sorrow than anger: sorrow that I was throwing away opportunities of learning. This was rubbish. 'Shonnie' knew that it was rubbish, and he knew that I knew. For I knew Mason's English Grammar better than he did,

and I could parse and analyse better. All that I missed was twenty minutes' Shakespeare, but I read Shakespeare at home with the eagerness of any intelligent youth. Again, he would point out that absence or lateness was disrespectful to him. So it was; and I confessed my sorrow, which, though limited, was genuine enough. For, though I no longer respected 'Shonnie', I liked and admired him, and still cherish his memory. Sometimes he would threaten mildly and half-humorously to report me to the managers; but he never did, and I knew he never would. During the ordinary school hours, 9-12 and 2-4.15, I was quite a useful teacher; and after school hours I could be relied upon to play games with the boys, only too eagerly, and to take at least my share with all sorts of out-of-school activities, including odd jobs for 'Shonnie'.

For two of the assistants—those who successively took mathematics and could really teach me something—I usually arrived by 7.30. The first of these was a really clever man of two- or three-and-twenty, who had a fine academic mind. Had he got to one of the old universities, I am sure he would have been a distinguished scholar. I admired him also because he was one of the best and most capable handlers of boys I have ever known. Unfortunately he remained during only half of my apprenticeship, securing a better post in one of the growing suburbs of outer London. A hundred pounds a year in a London suburb was a very great improvement in livelihood and life on £70 a year in Swindon. We lost our more capable men to London and the large towns. But this is by the way. For X, therefore, I had great respect. But to the morning lessons he was a late

comer. I came mainly to show work, to hear criticism, and to be set further work. And he would ask me round to his lodgings in the evening, where we did algebra and trigonometry together. In this way by the end of my first year I had done much more in mathematics than was required by the trumpery programme for the whole four years of pupil teacherdom.

It so happened that X was succeeded by Y, who had not the same genius, but was intelligent, very hard working, very anxious to improve his 'qualifications', and, partly by way of practice, anxious to make me work with him; which I did. To these two men, though I became no mathematician, my ultimate interests not lying in that direction, I owe much. By sixteen I had far outranged in this subject all that would be required from the certificated teacher of twenty-one in his final examination.

On no other side did I get any real education. There was no one to teach me any language but my own, though I picked up some French in an evening class, and one of 'Shonnie's' assistants started a rather futile class, after school hours, in Latin. This was abandoned in a month or two because four out of the five of us could or would make no progress, and our teacher himself had but a fragmentary and fallible knowledge of the language. In history we just learned facts out of a date-book. And I got some background out of Scott's novels. Geography was a thing of names, meaningless, wearisome names, and our instructor was dull, stupid and conscientious beyond words. We learned topographical fact by teaching: so I usually cut the instructional geography morning. I can still recite all the rivers of Asia from the Obi and Yenesei

round to the Euphrates, for didn't I drill the list into Standard VI in the year 1890? As an education, therefore, the instruction of the pupil teacher was a futile sham. And the Government programme of annual P.T. Examinations was far too easy, unambitious and dull for any lively-minded lad. Many, of course, in other schools were better taught than I was.

Pupil teachers, however, were regarded not as pupils or students, but primarily as teachers; and I was plunged into the pedagogic business at once and at the top of the school. The 'science class' of a year or so earlier had enlarged itself into a class of thirty, who had stayed on, though eligible to leave school. The class was just one of the old grant-earning Science Classes held under the South Kensington Department, long before its amalgamation into the Board of Education. Anyhow, it was taught by a respectable and hard-working assistant, who had several 'first-class advanced' South Kensington certificates, and whose business it was to get as many elementary 'passes' as possible out of his present pupils. For each pass was worth 30s., and thirty passes in two subjects would mean £90. In the achievement of this high aim I was to assist. The class did elementary algebra and geometry, and, as a separate subject, 'Practical Plane and Solid Geometry', science subject 1 in the nomenclature of South Kensington, if I rightly remember. They also took physiography, as I had done, a subject (and not a bad one) invented, I believe, by T. H. Huxley to cover a general study of the external physical world. I could easily coach part of the class in the 'science' which I had 'done' a year or so earlier. And, you will notice that 'Agriculture' had been dropped as too blatantly unsuitable

for those whose certain future was an engineering workshop. So we plodded on. I helped those boys, a year younger than myself, to solve simultaneous equations, and I supervised their practical plane geometry, and I did odd jobs, such as giving out papers, correcting exercises, and multiplying test papers on a jelly-graph. Occasionally the class was left to me; and little disciplinary trouble arose: for the master, a serious and efficient person, if not present, was in the offing, I was not unpopular, for I was still sergeant-major of the school battalion, was 'Shylock' in the Trial Scene, a good cricketer, and an effective if clumsy footballer. Moreover, I was by this time a big, boney lad, and the tendency to manslaughter exhibited in the playground a year before was not unremembered.

This, however, lasted only a few months, and was my last experience as a helper rather than as the responsible teacher of a class. In each succeeding year I had a class of my own; and I remember very clearly that in three successive years they were Standards III, V and VI. Our 'standards' (years or forms we should call them now) were large, usually numbering, until the top of the school was reached, some 120 boys.* This number was divided, unequally, into three classes, taken respectively by a certificated assistant, an 'ex-P.T.' and a pupil teacher. Practice varied somewhat. But a typical arrangement was that the P.T. took about thirty of the best boys, who would in any case be likely to pass the annual examination, the ex-P.T. would have about fifty of the medi-

* The effect of the law of school attendance at the time was this. In Standard V there would be 120 boys, in VI about eighty to ninety, in VII and Ex. VII together about thirty.

more pupils most of whom would probably pass, and the remainder, the forty worst, who needed real hard work, would be taken by the certificated master. To the least-experienced and least-qualified teacher the best boys. The best-qualified man usually devoted himself to the hard but necessary task of getting 'the duffers' through the examination. That was how things worked out in a large school under an annual examination and payment by results.

For one third of the year we slacked more or less. Our examination was in October. From October to Christmas, therefore, we took it fairly easy—at least, I am certain that I did. But from January onwards it was a stern business, and from the summer holiday (early in July and three weeks long) until October the pressure was raised to the safety-valve point. Happy days!

By these methods, and by a good deal of 'keeping in', which is the elementary school version of 'detention', we managed to get pretty good results, generally rather over ninety per cent., but I can remember the percentage for the school sinking below the ninety at least once. Some schools got better results, and particular teachers in our school were consistent in obtaining over ninety. This was especially the case after the purgation of staff which took place, I think, in my second year. Why it occurred I still do not know with any precision. I think there was some reduction in salaries. At any rate, in the result there was a financial saving; for four or five older assistants left, one at least going to London, the others chiefly to small headships in small towns or in villages, and the new-comers came straight 'from college' at £70 a year. A couple of ex-P.T.'s (the

technical term, which puzzled the Duke of Devonshire when head of the Education Department, has already been explained) left also, among them was Charlie, the ex-cavalryman. So, altogether, we had some five new certificated assistants (at £70 a year) and a couple of new ex-P.T.'s (at £50 a year). Among those who left was our quondam Rugby three-quarter, more popular out of school than in it. We had a rhyme descriptive of him.

“ Long nose and pickéd chin,
Enough to make the devil grin.”

Those who left were a queer assortment. They were all of them very second rate intellectually; some of them, I believe, were too interested in racing results—a less universal and a less fashionable interest then than now. Anyhow, it became known that they rushed down to the Mechanics' Institute after school to see the telegrams, for as yet no evening paper reached Swindon. I understood that this interest in betting, and the taste for beer which was not uncommon with one or two of them, had some influence on their departure. The main reason, however, I believe, was a reduction in salaries. Some of them were actually getting more than £100 a year—£120 it was rumoured! And we may as well note that 'Shonnie's' salary as head master of a school with an accommodation of 800 and a roll of nearly 900 was £250 a year. The problem that puzzles me still, however, is how the ex-P.T.'s, on a salary of £50 a year rising to £60, managed to live, most of them, in lodgings.

So we had a set of younger men. Two of them were ambitious and appropriately industrious. On no account were their classes to fall below ninety per

cent. As, for varying periods, I worked classes in the 'standards' taught by these two, I learned what school pressure meant. Things must be ground in, dictation mistakes must be written out again, again and again. Every boy with fewer than three sums right out of four must 'stay in' between 12 and 1 until at least 'three right' was achieved. And a miserable remnant of ciphering incompetents would be sulkily scratching their heads at one o'clock. I hated this. It halved my mid-day interval. It interfered with mid-day cricket or football on the asphalt playground, with a gutta-percha ball, and with wickets or goals chalked up against the school wall; or it interfered with the perusal of Scott's novels or the *Boy's Own Paper*.

To be placed, therefore, with a less strenuous assistant was a high ambition. I liked best, I think, the six months or so I spent with 'Dumpy', which was our nickname for the ablest of the new assistants. Full of energy as he was, and of cleverness, he electrified even the dullards in school time, but did mighty little 'keeping in'. He was dramatic in his discipline, as dramatic as 'Shonnie', but less histrionic. In that day there was always a sub-current of mutiny among the boys, especially among those whom it is neither inaccurate nor unfair to describe as loutish, whose parents, moreover, were definitely against the school. They resented having to pay fourpence a week school fee for boys of thirteen who ought to be at work, and they rightly resented the physical chastisement, the inevitable lot of their offspring, administered not only for mischief, but also for intellectual incompetence. Not infrequent were the visits of boiler-makers, smiths, or the rougher fitters, or coach-body builders to avenge on the teacher the caning of a child. There

would have been more had factory hours allowed it, or had complaint by the tough youngsters been more frequent, or the continuous canings more severe. They were not severe, they were just odd 'cuts', as a rule, and were taken as part of the natural order of things. But even in my time as a pupil teacher this form of punishment, and the inevitable occasional acts of mutiny, tended to diminish.

'Dumpy', in fact, did not cane much, but did it well when he started. He was a little, compact man, full of muscle, who could lift me by the elbows when I was about fifteen and weighed $10\frac{1}{2}$ stones. Only once did a boy defy him. He was promptly taken by the collar, lifted swiftly over the desk and thrown contemptuously, breathless and sobbing with fright, into a corner by the classroom cupboard. So in Standard VI we got on pretty peacefully: I had to work hard in school with 'Dumpy', but I was free, thank goodness, from the 'keeping in' which was characteristic of his more commonplace and more industrious colleagues. We did pretty well.

Afterwards I enjoyed my time with Standard V most. 'Dumpy' had gone, and in 1888 I took one of the two classes into which that standard was divided. The other and lower half was taken by Billy Baker, a lame man, and an 'untrained' but certificated teacher. That is to say, he had passed the Government Certificate Examination, but had not 'been to college'. I call him Billy, familiarly, because he *was* always called Billy. He was a good teacher and a decent, obtrusively cleanly, middle-aged, quiet man. Though lame, he could bowl very cunning lobs at cricket; and he was greatly, almost passionately, interested in County cricket. Remember that I was

now only about sixteen years old. The Football League had been going for a year or two, Association football had become the popular game with the Swindon proletariat, and I caught the fever. I must explain that in Standard V the class 'did' very simple fractions, the rule of three, or proportion as we called it, practice, and 'bills of parcels'. It was the year in which Preston North End had the invincible team and won the League championship without losing a match, and the English Cup without having a goal scored against them. Through the newspapers, the *Football Star*, the *Athletic News* and the rest, I worshipped them. I knew the team, their heights and weights, and their complexions and personal characteristics. I could write down the names of their Cup Team to-day. So I used to set 'bills of parcels' with

J. Ross

bought of R. Howarth

or J. Goodall

bought of N. J. Ross

at the bill head, and the boys, some of whom knew about these heroes, grinned sympathetically. They were good days. Billy Baker was more than tolerant of my romantic interest in sport; he shared it, and we chatted after school hours, of W.G., whom we had both of us seen play for Bedminster against the G.W.R. at home, and of Arthur Shrewsbury and William Gunn (who once played for the M.C.C. against Wiltshire at Swindon), of Lohmann and Bobby Abel and Richardson. Billy had seen more than once the bank-holiday match between Notts and Surrey at the Oval when these great men not forgetting the florid Wilfred

Flowers, and Barnes and Lockwood, had all been in action. There are other heroes to-day, and I expect they are as great.

So I went on for nearly five years, in the matter of knowledge owing almost nothing to the farce which was called instruction, getting some fragmentary knowledge of mathematics and science by working with assistant masters anxious to get more 'sciences' to their credit, devouring literature, chiefly classical novelists, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, not forgetting W. H. G. Kingston and Talbot Baines Reed, because I found these entrancing, picking up odd knowledge from the *Boy's Own Paper*, and from *Whitaker's Almanack*, learning a little French at an evening class (one night a week attended intermittently), failing to learn to play the piano, but becoming passionately interested in such music as was available at that date in that town; withal teaching hard five-and-a-quarter hours every day, and subconsciously absorbing the craftsmanship of the trade, I was without proper intellectual discipline or any scholarly criteria, or any standard of comparison except with two fellow-pupil-teachers of the same vintage as myself, who were decent, companionable lads: but I somehow realised by occasional intercourse with others outside my elementary school world that there were lamentable deficiencies about my kind and me.

Here I ought to record what the process of elementary-school examination was before the annual parade was finally abolished in 1895. The system had been invented about 1861 by that intellectual aristocrat Robert Lowe. During the whole of my time as pupil

and pupil teacher—that is to say from about 1879 * to 1891—every pupil in the school was individually examined in reading, writing and arithmetic. Writing meant actual copying from a blackboard in Standard I, then dictation, and, finally, in Standard V and above, dictation and English Composition. Reading was reading aloud from prescribed readers, three in number in the upper standards, one a general reader, one dealing with history and one with geography. Arithmetic was tested by a written examination on the rules prescribed for each standard. In the later years it was preceded by questioning in mental arithmetic.

The examinations were conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and their Assistants. The inspectors, of whom Matthew Arnold is, at least to the world, the most famous, were educated men, in most cases graduates of some distinction or at least of respectability from the Universities, of Oxford and Cambridge. In the earliest days they had been, almost without exception, clergymen. At the period of which I write, few if any clergymen were appointed, but a minority remained as a legacy from the past. In my early pupil teacherdom the local H.M.I. was the Rev. C. F. Johnstone, Chief Inspector, as the title then ran, for the South-West of England. My last inspector in the second portion of pupil teacherdom was R. F. Currie (I hope the initials are correct), whom I shall always remember with respect. By his courteous kindness, and obvious desire to help and to do right, he inspired me with some reverence and with such affection as a humble P.T. of seventeen years of age or so could bear to a man of fifty, the

* The system operated under "The Revised Code" from 1862 to 1895, or a little later.

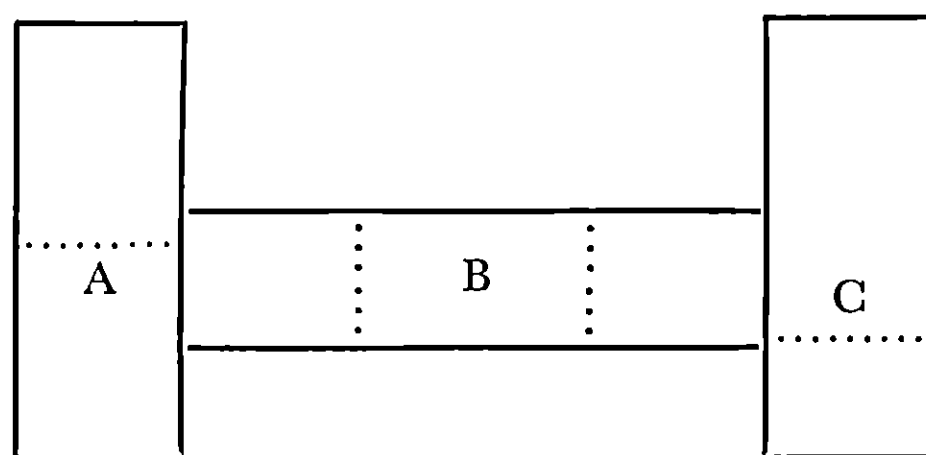
loftiness of whose position seemed tremendous. He was a good man, and an able man (as I believe was his predecessor, Johnstone), and he did much good in his area in spite of the system he administered. Among other things, just after my day he got the School Board to found a pupil teachers' centre, where at least some regular instruction at reasonable hours was provided. One little detail about Currie stands out clearly. I remember his *boots*. They were very thick, very black, enormous, solid, efficient, costly. And they remain in my mind to-day as a symbol of his social elevation. They, as I now realise, were symptomatic of the great gulf fixed between the educated upper middle class and the 'working class', the upperworking class from which I sprang, who hardly knew what it was to have anything *good* in the material world.

The inspectors' assistants were recruited from the best or the most efficient of the elementary-school teachers. They were expert examiners of all kinds of elementary knowledge; and they did most of the work. They varied, of course, in character and in ability. Some were men of first-rate natural gifts, quite as able as the H.M.I.'s they served, but without their intellectual background or social resources. In later years I knew some of them very well indeed, and respected most of them more than a little. But most of those I remember as working during the examination régime were uninspired, formal and narrow, though Currie had one assistant who was a genial, unassuming, reasonable, decent, and a very efficient workman.

These inspectors, of course, pursued the business of examining more or less all the year round. Consequently each area had an examination season which determined its school year. Our examination date was

early in October, and all the schools in our area were examined during that month. Our school year, therefore, ended and began about the middle of October.

Ours, as I have said, was a large school, of over 800 boys, and often nearly 900. So H.M.I. brought with him all three of his assistants. I say brought with him, but this is inaccurate, for they preceded him. Due notice of the date of this great ordeal had been given. Schedules of the boys for examination in each standard had been sent in to H.M.I. At nine o'clock punctually on the first morning of the examination the assistant inspectors arrived, arrayed in frock coats or black morning coats and top hats, with Government satchels filled with examination schedules and arithmetic 'cards'. Our school was divided into three divisions: the third division (Standards I and II), the second division (III and IV) upstairs on the first floor, and the first division (V, VI and VII) in its wing of one storey only on the ground floor. I should have explained that there was no such thing as a self-contained classroom in the school. Classrooms are modern innovations, almost exclusively post-1900. For instance, the third division was the ground floor of a block planned thus:



Room A was occupied by Standard I in two great classes, separated by huge jute curtains. In B were

three such classes of Standard II. Three teachers working in one room, divided only by jute curtains. C was occupied by Standard Ex. VII and the overflow of III from upstairs. Standards III and IV occupied three rooms on the first floor exactly the same in plan and arrangement on this block, and so on.

The whole school, amply warned and well drilled, with clean faces and necks, in Sunday clothes if they had any, for week-day clothes were too often neither clean nor respectable, with shoes duly blacked, assembled not later than 8.45, all agog and expectant. In fact, except for a few nervous and excitable children it was a greater ordeal for teachers than for taught. Most of us, after all, had been through it before. The few were strung up beyond reason, the mass regarded it as a rather stimulating change, and a fraction—probably almost a third—were quite unmoved and indifferent, coming from an ancestry which had no nerves, and produces the workman who walks across a girder sixty feet above ground level with nonchalance, or calmly lays bricks high up on a factory chimney thoughtless of the death which awaits a false step.

As a boy I had belonged, I think, to the middle group who were stimulated by the occasion, though I bordered on the class which took the occasion too seriously. As a pupil teacher I was not unduly excited or anxious in my first and second years, being then still under sixteen and not taking the world seriously. It was 'Shonnie's' show, not mine. If the school did badly, that was his lookout. I should not be very much affected; my salary would still be £15 a year; so why trouble? In my two later years as a pupil teacher I developed some professional conscience and was concerned that my class should do well.

For Standard I and, I think, II, the inspector's assistant gave the teacher sums to write on the black-board and the classes set out to grapple with the first four rules. I describe the arithmetic, as it always seemed to us the most important subject. For the other standards the inspector's assistants came around with packets of printed cards printed on paper of various hues, yellow, blue, or what not, always comprising four sums, three 'straightforward' and one a 'problem'. In order to pass, one was expected to get three sums 'right', *i.e.*, to give the correct answer, and to have tackled the problem so as to show an understanding thereof. Two sums 'right' might or might not pass. The 'cards' were on the whole not ill-suited to our attainments and abilities, and the ten per cent. or so of intelligent boys would get four 'right' without undue difficulty. The papers were collected at the end of about three-quarters of an hour, and there was a few minutes' interval. The poor assistant inspectors had to take off these hundreds of papers and mark them in the afternoons, at the second-rate hotel they patronised. Only H.M.I. himself stayed at 'The Goddard Arms'. He seldom arrived at the school until 10 a.m., and often did not appear until the second day of the examination, doubtless because he had reports to write and other things more important to do than the hack-work of examining written arithmetic and dictation. I remember that in my later years as a P.T. the inspector's assistant (they are now assistant inspectors, which is a difference), when the arithmetic papers were collected, sometimes gave me the papers to mark for him. I would mark the answers to the blue cards whilst he did the papers of those who had worked the

yellow cards, and Billy Baker or another did the white. Doubtless he checked our marking at least by sample. In any case, we marked them for him quite willingly, and honestly. And he could go to lunch with the arithmetic, at least, ready marked. Incidentally we copied down the contents of the cards if we conveniently could, both as useful material for the future, and to pass on to friends in other schools not yet examined in order that they might put in some quite useful practice. This was quite fair, so it appeared to us. Towards our colleagues in other schools it was, indeed, chivalrous, for it gave them a chance of out-doing us; towards the inspectors we also considered it to be cricket: they were our examiners, and it was lawful to outwit them, if we could, by any device not plainly in the nature of a verbal lie. It would be tiresome to relate the whole proceedings in all subjects, in an examination which lasted, in this instance, for three days.

The H.M.I. left the arithmetic, dictation and composition to his assistants, but he often took part in the actual examination in reading. I well remember seeing the Rev. C. F. Johnstone, Chief Inspector for the South-West of England (he would now be called Divisional Inspector), examine half of our Standard I in reading. There they were, sixty boys of about seven years old, sitting huddled, ten in a row, on a gallery. An assistant was examining Charlie's class whilst the ex-cavalryman stood by, in his close-fitting striped trousers, twisting his little moustache with a kind of nervous boredom and with some apprehension about the proceedings, for his was the lower half. I stood by, as the great man, in semi-clerical attire, heard one very small boy after another read a few

lines from the Royal Reader No. 1. If a boy read fluently a single line of the book they had conned repeatedly for a year, a cross went down against his name on the schedule, and he had passed. If another stumbled, he was encouraged to go on for three or more lines, and if he blundered through, the cross went down. If, however, as happened with a few, the process of reading a few lines of the prepared book was a complete failure, the great man, after one or two promptings, put down the fatal O, and John Smith, or Granville Cavendish Eaglestone, in spite of his resounding name the dirtiest and most neglected boy I ever saw, had failed. This Eaglestone was an epileptic whose mother (he 'had no father') lived, I think, in the one common lodging-house of the town, and I still wonder how and why he got his grand name. In London such a boy would have been in a school for defectives: but even to-day in many towns teachers still struggle with the Eaglestones of their time and place, as one of forty or fifty in an ordinary school class. The Chief Inspector, who, I believe, was a rather distinguished man, high in the counsels of the Education Department, was a thin, tallish old fellow, with the type of red nose that goes with a poor digestion, and he always gave a little titter when he failed a boy. This was merely a mannerism, and no indication of joy in the proceedings, for, if distant and aloof, he was a fair and even kindly examiner. But how he must have liked his job! For all the 800 boys in the school had to be heard in this fashion, by his assistants or himself. There was no reading of 'unseens' in any standard, though, of course, the school readers were progressively more difficult as one went up the school.

By efficient organisation, therefore, H.M.I. and his three assistants managed most of the examination in the three R's by the end of an extended morning school. For the school might be kept as late as one o'clock, until the job was finished. Then the inspectors left for lunch and the correction of the hundreds of papers they had not passed over to us.

It is perhaps worth recalling that in Standard V the 'writing' examination took the form of a composition. The inspector, or at his request one of the teachers, read out some trumpery anecdote or one of Æsop's Fables. It was read twice. Then the class were set to reproduce the story in writing, without too many mistakes in spelling or grammar. In Standard VI the anecdote gave way to a little essay, and the task was to write at least ten lines of original composition on some such subject as 'Ships', or 'All is not gold that glitters', or even an abstract subject like 'Perseverance', or 'Punctuality'. Most boys would manage to get down ten lines of something on these succulent topics. Needless to say, therefore, that most of the *instruction* in English consisted of the reproduction of anecdotes and the writing of these dismal essays.

Next day, the three R's being cleaned up, examination in 'class subjects' took place. The class subjects were those in which there was no individual examination, but in which each class was examined collectively and, as a rule, orally. You could earn a grant on two such subjects; and the two we took were English grammar and geography. This meant that no history was taught, for no one contemplated teaching a non-grant earning subject. The grammar meant, in the lower standards, picking out parts of speech. At the top of the School (V and upwards) parsing and

analysis of sentences were required. So the inspector would pick out a few sentences from the readers, get boys in turn to parse each word; and finally in Standard V they would be required to analyse a simple sentence such as 'The boy kicked the ball skilfully' into subject, predicate, object, and extension. In VI and VII this delectable process was extended to compound and to complex sentences, and the parsing was more difficult. It was a lovely programme. It is, I hope, needless to advert to the effects of this examination programme on the teaching of English. I say teaching, advisedly, for there was no study.

In the examination of class subjects, obviously much depended on the skill of the examiner. In technique the assistants were nearly always the superiors of the H.M.I.'s. They were skilled practitioners and, as a rule, tried to make the best of the class and its poor little bits of knowledge; frequently they succeeded. Occasionally there was a severe, or a crusty assistant, or a mean one. But my recollection is that the large majority of them were nothing of the kind. What we disliked was the competence with which they exposed weak spots, for they were poachers turned gamekeepers. They knew the game. The great man, their master, might offend us by his incompetence in a technique of which he had no knowledge, which, indeed, he not infrequently despised. It was the competence of his assistant which we at once dreaded and admired. It was the social superiority and the occasional complete lack of sympathy which were disliked in H.M.I. himself.

The only way in which literature came within our range of vision was that each year each class had to

present a piece of poetry for recitation. It was examined as a class subject. The inspector asked a sample of the class, in turn, to recite the whole or some part of the piece, and the degree of success, not in style, enunciation or pronunciation, still less in comprehension, but in literal memory, helped to determine the rate of merit grant. The younger children learned 'Little Jim' or 'Casabianca'; but I remember that in Standard V, when still a pupil, the piece chosen (age of the class about eleven on the average) Gray's 'Elegy'. At the time few of us knew really what it was about; certainly I did not. But I have never forgotten a word of the poem itself. Children should certainly learn by heart much poetry which they cannot possibly understand. In some classes the result of this demand for one poem a year was that one, and not more than one, was learned. In most of the classes I taught we learned several. Soon after I became a pupil teacher the upper standards were provided with a poetry book, as we then called an anthology. In this way, in Standard VI most boys read 'Young Lochinvar,' and part of 'Horatius' and the like, or learned Wolsey's speech to Cromwell or Henry V's oration before Agincourt.

Music was also examined as a class subject. Each class had to be prepared to sing songs; three was the number, I think, out of which the inspector chose one for hearing. He then examined the class in the use of the modulator, in sight reading from the blackboard, and in the upper classes he gave occasional ear tests. The use of the tonic sol-fa notation was universal. And its use tended to separate elementary-school music—that is, music for the people—from other music. Needless to say, as a pupil teacher, a pupil,

or an adult teacher I never came across a full H.M.I. who examined in music. But all the assistants were expert examiners in tonic sol-fa, as in needlework. I suppose the Lord President of the Council tested their qualifications. At least, some one must have done. For they could hear time-tests and give ear-tests like shelling peas. They had other accomplishments, for no woman could deceive them as to the quality of button-holes, herring-boning, cross-stitching, or generally the proper construction of 'garments'. At this time, though two-thirds of the pupils in elementary schools were 'infants' or girls, no woman inspector was appointed by the Board. In its personnel the Board reflected too closely the then attitude of the majority at Oxford and Cambridge on the place of woman. Even to-day women H.M.I.'s, though they exist in numbers, are not yet the equals in rank or pay or function of their men colleagues. And there are certainly difficulties in assimilating them in function.

The class subjects were examined orally. Geography was mere topography and consisted of lists of names. Rivers were easy; anybody knew the Thames and the Severn, and it required no great discrimination to distinguish between the Avons of Salisbury and Bristol. The bother was that beastly group of rivers flowing ultimately into the Humber. It was all very well to know such names as Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe and Aire, but it required a clear head—uncommonly clear—to tell which was which. And these remote and hostile strangers who examined the boys seemed to know.

Occasionally the inspector would defeat the class. We had taught the boys their lists of capes and bays

and rivers. They could point them out pretty well on the map; and most of them knew that cotton was manufactured in Lancashire and wool (as we indiscriminatingly called it) in the West Riding. The inspector got on to wool, and at least a majority of the Standard IV all lumped together could tell him of Leeds and Bradford, and even of Huddersfield and Halifax, though neither he nor I, nor Mr. Warwick, certificated assistant as he was, knew that Leeds could not be compendiously dismissed as a 'woollen' town. "But," said the inspector, "where does wool grow? No, don't speak: hands up!" This was a poser. Neither Warwick nor I had ever contemplated that our classes would be asked such a question. Nor had we thought it possible that boys, even in this railway town, but only three or four miles away from one of the principal sheep-farming areas, would have doubts. But the class looked blank. A slight smile illuminated the face of Purser, the inspector's assistant, and he repeated: "Where does it grow—on the hedges or the trees or where?" My heart sank within me. Half the class—chiefly Warwick's half, as they were the stupid half—jumped at the suggestion and replied, taking the even chance offered, "Hedges", "Trees", "Hedges", "Trees", half-a-dozen times, till one little hero said decisively, "On the sheeps' backs". The hands of the rest of the class wilted and fell, and their faces expressed one unanimous, unuttered, "Gosh!" They had been '*had*'. Nothing much happened. The class knew examiner's topography pretty well. We got the second best grant, whatever it was, for class subjects. But we did not like Purser. A *suggestio falsi* with two alternatives cannot be described as a good question. And Purser was an

expert. Unlike the average business man on a Royal Commission or a Departmental Committee, he knew how to ask a question, and this question was a piece of pure Puckish perversity. It was the occurrence of trivial indiscretions of this kind, with or without their financial results, which made us chafe against a system to which all of us, teachers and taught, had been habituated. We were in the man's power we felt: nor had we any remedy. 'Shonnie' had he been present would have protested. But Warwick was fresh from College and under twenty-two. And I was a callow pupil teacher. So we grinned and bore it.

Most of the examination was finished by the end of the second day. On the third the selected boys from V and upwards who sat for specific subjects were examined in algebra and mechanics, as I had myself been examined. What was of more account to me was that on the third day the great man, H.M.I. himself, heard the pupil teachers read and 'say their poetry'. He took a school book, or the newspaper, and we had to read aloud to him. And we recited our bits of Shakespeare. As we could at least all read fluently (there were five pupil teachers during most of my time), and no attention was paid to anything but fluency, the process seemed to be useless. But it was the epilogue to the written examination in English which we took annually. I remember H.M.I. Mr. Currie, the beneficent giant whose boots I so much admired, congratulating me on my essay written at the examination. I was very pleased.

In the last two years of our apprenticeship also H.M.I. heard us give a lesson. He was generally and rightly bored with the proceedings. We knew, and he knew, that in actual ability to hold a class and

expound some simple facts (and, quite possibly, one or two ideas) we could do better than he could. Few of that generation of H.M.I.'s had even a theoretical knowledge of the art of teaching, still less of its practice. We certainly had no formulated principles: but we had the tricks of the trade, and most of us, I think, were craftsmen, though not more.

You will gather from all this that the education of a pupil teacher in the eighteen eighties was very limited and ineffective. It was designed to enable a mediocre head master to prepare an unintelligent pupil teacher for a very easy examination. Any lad or girl of energy and intelligence could have passed the fourth-year examination before the end of the first year. It was criminal in that it allowed the best part of our youth, the age between fourteen and eighteen, to pass without intellectual discipline and with no sufficient demand for even a minimum standard of culture.

The only good result of this neglect was that if intellectually undirected and undisciplined we were free, we had time for games, cricket in the summer and football in the winter, and we played them vigorously. We played in the dinner hour, and, so long as light lasted, after school. We were without instruction, but acquired the traditional skill as we saw it exemplified by our elders the local heroes. It is the system or lack of it which still preserves the traditional games in the thousand small towns and villages in England. It means health and much manliness to many young people. It means that whilst other nations can, of course, produce eleven or fifteen highly-trained gladiators to beat our national teams once out of twice, or twice out of thrice, we can produce ten thousand lusty youngsters playing hard for the fun of

it. I write once again in Wiltshire, in a small town, and as I wander over the downs from village to village, there are games, games everywhere.

We formed all sorts of mushroom clubs, even when I was still at the 'damned Board School'. As a pupil teacher I played for various teams got together by individuals. There was Bill Everitt's team. In other circles they would have been Mr. X's team or called themselves the Zingari or the Cock Sparrows. But we were, for the time being, Bill Everitt's team, with a few odd bats borrowed from the permanent clubs, or from friendly individuals, a pad or two, for we wore them on the left leg only and chanced it. And we trusted to the home team for a ball: we paid a shilling each for the hired wagonette, and went hilariously off to Wootton Bassett or Faringdon to play the local teams. An exciting match on a bumpy pitch, with the village blacksmith or wheelwright pretty well throwing at you—for those were the days of bodyline, if you like—ended with a heavy 'tea' at seven o'clock and a sing-song, a drive back in a one-horse wagonette (driven by a lad we knew), and home to drop into a hard bed and sleep for ten hours.

Games and the opportunity for playing them were directly connected with the inefficiency of the education provided from above for the pupil teacher. More important, however, than the day's work, the ill-directed academic programme, and the untutored but not ineffective athletics was the social life which centred round religious organisation. For in my days in a small artisan-class provincial town there

was little social organisation other than that provided by the Church and the chapels.

My father, whose early attachment had been to the traditional Established Church, had moved with his Radical father to Unitarianism, and thence by physical fatigue and natural scepticism to a respectable and unaggressive indifference. But my mother was devout. This was natural to the offspring of a family which had built their pestilential conventicle on its northern moorland. There was a stone-built Congregational Chapel in the Swindon Old Town which had sheltered her piety before my memories begin. But in my day we attended the New Town Congregational Chapel, a forbidding building constructed of corrugated iron. A small Sunday School, built of the same architecturally deplorable material but lined with pitch pine, was at the rear of the church. It was used for prayer meetings (Mondays), the week-night service (Wednesdays), Band of Hope (Tuesdays) and, greatest of all, the Young Men's Friendly Society (Saturday evenings). When I was about fifteen or sixteen a new, solid, creditable brick building was built in place of the old tin tabernacle. And this was my spiritual home for the remaining and very formative years at home.

Sunday School was my destiny from my earliest youth. Nor did I ever resent or question it. For people like me it was part of the established order of things, which we took for granted. Sunday School was at 10 a.m., Chapel at 11-12.30. Between 12.30 and 1 o'clock we paraded the streets and gossiped. At 2.30 we were back to Sunday School, which lasted till nearly 4. There were still fields facing our row of 'houses' when I was young, and after Sunday

School in the summer, as I have already said, we played there chiefly at an interesting game called 'stick i' th' turf', which we reduced to 'sticky turf' or a ruder name. At five o'clock we were due at home for tea, and at 6.30 back at Chapel till 8 p.m. Then came the real street parade until we returned home to supper at about 9 to 9.30 and were packed off to bed at 10. Such was Sunday. It sounds rather forbidding. But to my generation it was, I think, agreeable. I recollect having no sense of boredom or injustice; and as most of my companions went through the same routine without complaint, I think their experience must have been the same. It was all part of a completely full life.

When I was ten to twelve years old I sometimes was deprived of evening Chapel; why I do not know. On such occasions I got out the old family Bible, put the purple bookmark ribbon in, took it out again as I had seen the minister do before he read the previously marked lessons, and solemnly and slowly read a chapter to my congregation, which consisted of one younger sister. Then I preached her a short sermon, to which she listened with the air of devout interest interrupted by polite, hand-to-mouth coughs copied from her observation 'at chapel'. Our private ceremony being concluded, we turned to our library books, or played some childish game, hoping Chapel would soon be over, and the house re-peopled.

Only once do I remember being absent without leave from Sunday School. But that was a matter of temper, not a revolt against either religion or routine. I was in some trouble, I forget what. No doubt I had been mischievous or ill-behaved; my

father ordered me out of the house and off to Sunday School. I left the house, resentment in my heart. I would *not* go to Sunday School. Nor did I. I went down to a railway crossing and sat on the gate, watching the trains go by. If, on a Sunday morning, there were few—very few—interesting passenger trains, hauled by golden-splashed broad-gauges of the 'Lord of the Isles' class, at least there were goods trains—one, for instance, full of early cauliflowers from Cornwall. I hoped, but failed to see 'The Balaklava' driven by old Bill Anderson in his Scottish bonnet. I returned home cooler, a little touched with fear, but really unrepentant: and my father thrashed me for the first and last time. I spent the rest of Sunday in bed. It took long to re-establish our relations. It grieved him sore, with a sorrow far other than the conventional schoolmaster's regret, and there is no more to be said. Later, however, I recognised the provocation of this direct defiance; and certainly from fourteen onwards my sympathies were all with him, and I recognised myself as a little fool.

As time went on, the Chapel more than the day school gave me my friends. There was a day-school and a Sunday-School pattern of friendships, and the last was the more important. The social significance of Chapel was far greater and more permanent than its religious influence. During later adolescence I was often moved by the evangelical religion preached and practised by the 'minister' and the better Chapel folk. It was less extreme in form than the blood and fire which the Salvationists of that day preached in the streets. This made its appeal to the ignorant and the highly but crudely emotional, as it was

meant to do. It captured drunken navvies and lusty blacksmiths' strikers. To the sober skilled men and their offspring it made no appeal. Nor did the revivalist methods of the Primitive Methodists. These religious movements appealed to certain lower, simpler strata of the highly stratified working class. Religion in a provincial town, even an almost purely working-class town like ours, like everything else, is stratified; it has a horizontal classification which very largely coincides with the social levels of the skilled and unskilled trades. The fitter and turner and the pattern-maker must be enabled to look down upon the moulder and the rivetter. And this snobbery is, or was, especially visible in the Nonconformist bodies.

The first minister I remember was a gentle, benevolent old man, in the later years of middle age. He had lived in Canada. He was too refined, I think, for a working-class Chapel, of which over eighty per cent. of the members were skilled workmen of all sorts, fitters and pattern-makers, forge-men, and a few Welshmen from the rolling-mills, a railway inspector, an odd driver or two and so forth; these of course separated into their several cliques. The smaller element included the chief clerk in the railway works, a man of eminence and ambition who was Superintendent of the Sunday School. He became a principal official of the G.W.R., was Chairman of the School Board, and did great good in his day. He stood by himself; though one or two underlings followed him to our Chapel. But this smaller, bourgeois element was principally made up of shopkeepers: the grocer with whom we dealt, and the butcher (or, principally, the butcher's wife), and the fine old Scotch draper, whose sturdy young

men made the rounds, not merely of Swindon, but of the villages, on work days, selling ready-made suits, or real good cloth for making up, to the working people, who paid weekly or monthly, and, if respectable, were never pressed. The grocer and the butcher made a competence and retired to Bath or to Clifton. The butcher, his fat wife, and his enormous son, who soon defected from Chapel to drink, were characters. I wish that I had the space to describe them.

It was a vigorous but unsensational atmosphere of this kind in which my family, or more accurately my mother, brother, and sisters, worshipped. I was too young to benefit from the ministrations of 'pastor' I have mentioned. He was too scholarly and refined, too little inclined to dominate, and therefore to succeed with this congregation. In fact, he was a Christian; and I can still remember the pain on my mother's face when a fat, vulgar daughter of one of the Welsh puddlers or rolling-mill men was gossiping against him. He and his clever son and daughters, one of whom made a name as a violinist, went; and I knew them no more.

He was replaced by a man at once the intellectual superior of any of his congregation, filled with religious zeal, and unquestionably determined to rule. Originally, as a Wesleyan, he had been a missionary in India. His physique was magnificent and he was tireless. Why he came over to our connexion I do not know. But he was just the man to dominate a congregation like ours. He was a scholar, competent in both Latin and Greek, and he had acquired an intense interest in biological science, and could and did give lantern lectures on insects, birds and beasts.

My father respected him, but still as a rule stayed at home. I listened to the new man with enthusiasm only faintly tinged with doubt as he preached to us with unconquerable zeal, real eloquence, and knowledge for forty-five minutes on forty-eight Sundays of the year, morning and evening. Had I remained in the town I have little doubt that I should have become a 'Church member' and stayed to the Communion services with my mother. But before nineteen I was whisked away by the educational machine, never to return except for a few vacations. And, as is not uncommon, I took no religious root elsewhere. I faded from and grew out of the evangelical religions. Where, how, and when are the religious instincts of intelligent men to-day to be satisfied?

The new man saw that the tin tabernacle would not do. Out of the 250 to 300 regular adult attendants (which soon included the Radical solicitor of the town, another man of local eminence and great public spirit) not twenty were even moderately well-to-do, and none was rich. No one in our church at that time, not even the School Board Chairman, earned £1000 a year. And the income of the work-people who attended would not average two pounds a week. The new minister secured small weekly or quarterly contributions from his flock; but for a new building money had to be begged. The congregation could realise a few hundred pounds; but never the necessary thousands. He wrote begging letters with his own hand, but he got me and one or two others to make handwritten copies of these, which he signed. For months I used to make three or four copies every evening before commencing evening study. Within two years there was a respectable

brick-built chapel, opened with great ceremony, and preached in by the Rev. Guinness Rogers (who remembers *him*?) and Dr. Clifford.

I was never 'converted', however, though often penetrated by a desire for goodness which I hope has to some extent survived the wear of active worldly life. The social organisation of the Chapel did more to educate me than anything connected with day school or pupil teacherdom. In boyhood there was the Band of Hope, with its pledge of teetotalism, which it took me years to break. And there were the entertainments of that organisation, at which, being considered talented, I recited 'Mary the Maid of the Inn', or 'The Combat between Fitzjames and Roderick Dhu'. I remember at a twopenny entertainment given in the chapel on a Thursday night (it was the old iron building, and I could not have been more than twelve), breaking down, not from lack of word-perfection, but from emotion, as I recited 'Casabianca'. The emotions of boyhood are genuine enough, and in that moment I would willingly have died with 'Casabianca'. Torn him from the ship or died! The tears, which hushed the audience, and caused some of the girls to cry too, were as much the tears of impotent rage at an irremediable situation as tears of grief at his fate.

But in the vital years of later adolescence, the years in which if a public-school boy I should have been a fifth- and sixth-form boy, there were two institutions which to me were of great concern. There was the Young Men's Friendly Society. This met on Saturday evenings, and was principally a debating society or discussion society, though once a month or so it converted itself into an 'entertainment' at which

the choir or individual members of it, male and female, sang their songs, or at which the rest of us, too shy to sing except in chorus, when certainly we sang lustily, gave the trial scene from *Pickwick*, or *The Merchant of Venice*. It was in this *milieu* that I played Brutus to the Cassius of a lad a year older than myself, now a peer of the realm and the leader of his profession. This comforts me.

The Society had existed with not too vigorous a life before the new minister had come to brace us all up. For instance, I remember taking part in impromptu debates before the age of pupil teacherdom. It was run then principally by a dull Sunday-School teacher, a fitter, working on the dirty locomotive repair work. He was a fanatical teetotaller. His best helper was the gentlemanly and humorous, kindly soul (whom I then thought to be very learned) who ran W. H. Smith's bookstall at the station. At these impromptu debates subjects were written on pieces of paper. In your turn you drew a subject from the hat. A few minutes' reflection followed, and then you had to speak for five minutes, and die of shame or laugh with mockery as your temperament dictated. But the Society grew with the reinvigoration of the Church life, and in later years we read one another papers, on historical or literary topics. A few public-school boys who were 'pupils' or premium apprentices in the works joined in, and read papers on scientific subjects; for they had to attend classes organised by the Mechanics' Institute, and some of them were as seriously interested in their profession as they were in the social questions we wished to discuss. So even before the Dock Strike of 1888, which livened us all up, for its reverberations

were heard even in Swindon, we discussed Capital and Labour, Socialism, though we had not read or heard of Karl Marx, and the *Fabian Essays* were as yet unknown to us; indeed, were yet unpublished. At the age of sixteen to eighteen we debated whether or not life was worth living. The able lad who now adorns the House of Lords, I remember, defended the thesis that if this present earthly life of ours were all, then it decidedly was not worth living, but that the future life which he was convinced existed made the struggle worth while. I remember that I was much less confident about the future: either that it existed or that if it did it would be a great improvement on the present. I spoke defending the thesis that the question ought not to be asked, for unless we were all prepared to go out and hang ourselves, live we should, and we had better make the best of it. We discussed wages, and the methods of paying them, *free* education and all the topics of our day. Party politics were taboo. This was as well, for at that time we were a highly political town and the Home Rule controversy was at its height. In any case, as nine-tenths of us, being Nonconformists, were Liberals (or more accurately Radicals), a party-political discussion would have been too one-sided.

It was not only in the formal meetings that this process was good for us. It led to interminable discussions among groups on the way home, or on the morrow, which was Sunday. It led to some serious reading which would not otherwise have been undertaken. And, of all the influences of these times, I think for me it was the most important. It liberalised and awakened such mind as I had, a mind in danger of atrophy from the banal programme of study out-

lined for pupil teachers by the Department of Education, and from the grim triviality of getting boys only a few years younger than myself through the universal examination mill of that day. Above all, it practised me in speaking. Of the forty or fifty who attended, only some eight or ten did the talking, and my particular chums expected me to talk. I had to speak, as it were, in a representative capacity for my group, and to see that the sons of drapers and the premium apprentices did not carry off all the glory. So I learned to think on my feet, and to lose the fear of the sound of my own voice, to pick up the thread of an argument, if thread there were, and to snap it at its weakest place. The experience thus acquired has been, I think, of greater service to me than any other part of my adolescent training, formal or informal, that I can call to mind. I discovered that if one had anything to say and could arrange three or four headings in one's mind and had the pluck to get up, the words came all right. A literate person who cannot speak to a moderate-sized audience in a friendly or accustomed atmosphere is, as a rule, one who has not had the temerity to take the initial plunge and even to fail once or twice. He will not fail oftener than that. To address a big, strange, or hostile audience is, of course, another matter.

It was the Chapel connection of that kind, therefore, that provided me with society, and even with intimate friends from about fifteen years of age onwards. It helped to keep me decent; it kept me conscious that there were forces outside the material world which I did not understand, which, however, powerfully influenced the minds of people I was bound to respect; and it provided some sort of

intellectual battle-ground, stimulated intellectual curiosity, and demonstrated to the subconscious mind of youth that there was a courage quite distinct from the courage required in fighting or in games. It set me to work on miscellaneous reading of the non-text-book order, and occasionally to the definite reading for a specific purpose. And it brought me into touch with a much wider range of people than any public school could have done. There was the minister who usually, though not invariably, came, the erudite representative of W. H. Smith & Son, the smith, the puddler, two assistant teachers, the speculative builder and his son, a budding medical student, two educated engineers, very often the chief clerk to the Locomotive Superintendent, several draftsmen of superior rank, a carpenter, and various girls and women occupied and unoccupied, married and single, who in those days sat appropriately silent.

I have long ceased, therefore, to regret the absence of any further school training, or even of an orthodox University education. For I believe this early life brought me into closer touch with the characteristic people of my day and country than another and a more gracious upbringing could have done. And, as I hope to show, it has led to a more interesting and varied life. The educated, cultured upper middle-class never really understand the people. This is true even of those who live in settlements. They have no *inside* knowledge. They are saved, so far as they are saved at all, by the fact that they are as British, and therefore as insular, as the people they control; they share, on their other plane, the peculiarities of our reasonable, humorous and unconquerable race.

During the whole of this nonage I had at my disposal the whole literary forces of the Mechanics' Institute. In the Institute there was a library containing, even in the 1880's, more than 20,000 books. There was, too, a reading-room in which almost every journal and magazine, daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly, was available. Membership was confined to the employees of the G.W.R. But my father was always a member of the Council, and Chairman of the Library Committee; and I walked in and out without let or hindrance. The news-room was as good as that of any London club, even the Athenæum.

Moreover, whilst still a boy I had served in the library as an assistant, being let out of school at 4 instead of 4.15 for the purpose. I used to walk down to the library, sometimes going home first to pester my mother for an apple or a piece of bread and jam, and then run off to the Institute, which was a good ten minutes' walk from my home. I then 'gave out books' till 6 o'clock or helped to put away on the shelves the books returned. The rush hour was from 5.30 to 6, when the window was crowded with a queue of mechanics eager to change a book, often none too free from the usual oily grime of the engineering shop. Of course, most of the books taken out were novels, and the women and girls who were the principal customers from about 4.30 to 5.30 used frequently to ask simply for 'a good novel'; and we handed out without undue discrimination what seemed likely to suit them, or the three volumes nearest to hand. In this way I earned for nearly two years the high remuneration of one shilling a week, paid quarterly.

This experience, not without value to me, whilst still a child, was of most significance during those years between fourteen and eighteen. Of course, I remained on good terms with the little librarian, who, on the merits, was most friendly quite apart from the fact that my father in his representative capacity was in authority. So all through pupil teacherdom I could go into the library by the private door and take what I wanted in the way of books. And I used this privilege freely. In fact, the son of a duke could have been little better off in the matter of access to English books. And the same was true of newspapers and 'periodicals'. I could and did read the sober magazines, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly*; and all the papers, including the fine old illustrated weeklies, were at my disposal. I have been the slave of newspapers ever since. And the slavery really dates from the early days of the mid-eighties, for we always took the *Daily News* at home, and a newspaper was worth reading then, for it was 1884-5-6, and things were happening. There was the Franchise, and the Soudan. The G.O.M. was rampant; and there were speeches by Harcourt and John Morley to be read. Morley, like Labouchere and T. P. O'Connor and others, I heard speak in the Drill Hall or in the Corn Exchange.

Hadn't we a song in the election of 1885 (before the Liberal Unionist split)? And had I not helped to sing it?

"For Chamberlain's the Porter,
Lord Hartington the Guard,
John Bright's the Stoker,
And they all are working hard.

"The name of the station's England,
The carriages are full.
And GLADSTONE is the Driver
For old John Bull."

How we thundered out the great name! I think I hardly missed a political meeting, and there were many between about 1885 and 1891. And I read the other side. My father was wont to repeat the saying of his father, that there could be no such thing as a good Tory. But all the same he encouraged me to read what Salisbury and Lord Randolph had to say; though we came as near hating Churchill as we hated anybody. But Liberalism has gone too.

The local weekly paper was full of politics, personalities, and thrilling local news, not only of the town, but of the villages around, and the doings of the police courts, the Local Board, the Quarter Sessions, which then governed the County. There was no need to talk in my town and in my youth of civics; we loved them.

So in this environment of an outwardly monotonous town of small working-class dwellings, run up higgledy-piggledy by speculative builders, but set in a beautiful country which was on no side more than ten minutes' walk away, a town in which there were, in fact, the means of enlightenment, with lectures and 'dramatic performances', books and papers, societies, vigorous cricket and football clubs of all levels of equipment and skill, many attached to churches and chapels, a recreation ground and cheap fields to be hired collectively for those who overflowed from it, a swimming-bath, and washing-baths long before the era of municipal socialism—in this place, dull as death to the strange eye, and during the week-day almost unnaturally silent, I spent the most formative years of life. I do not regret it. And I warn those too apt to sympathise, not to be unduly sorry for the offspring of the decent artisan class in such towns as mine, at least so long as their parents are in regular

work. The unfortunate sediment of contemporary life on the material side is to be found in large slums of the great cities, and in the casual, seasonal, semi-skilled classes of those cities. It is better to be born in Crewe or Swindon, Northampton or Derby, than in London, Liverpool or Birmingham. It is the failure to deal with slum housing in London and great cities, and the failure to give hope and decency to the inhabitants of those slums that are dangerous. Doctrinaire Communism and tinsel dictatorships have no attraction for the great mass of English provincial working people. They resent bitterly, even those who themselves are poor and rough, that the dregs should exist in such disgraceful masses, without the possibility of hope, decency, cleanliness or self-respect. As I look back upon my early youth, I find two lessons more and more confirmed. No cost can be too great if the slums are abolished and if employment for the habitually casual workers can be regularised. Leave these problems unsolved and a spiritual disease, parallel with the smallpox or the cholera of an earlier day, will continue to exist as a perpetual infection of the State, and may bring it down in ruin.

At the age of almost eighteen I was, of course, unaware of this problem, acute then as now, in the populous cities. What I had to think about, in the intervals of cricket, concerts (chiefly 'The Messiah' and 'Elijah') and the visits of opera companies who sang those great works, 'Falka,' 'The Bohemian Girl', 'Maritana', or 'La Fille de Madame Angot'—and the excitement of politics and the pull of evangelical Nonconformity, was the Queen's Scholarship Examination. For at the end of his four years'

apprenticeship every pupil teacher who wished to become a trained certificated teacher had to take an examination based upon the trumpery programme of pupil teacherdom. For this examination, in the early nineties, some 2,000 candidates sat annually in the summer. In the result the whole 2,000 candidates were set out in two classes and in an order of merit based on marks. Before sitting you named the Training College of your choice, and if high enough on the list you were admitted. The Colleges in and near London were the most in demand. All the men's colleges save two were denominational; and, except for a Wesleyan and a Roman Catholic College, membership of the Church of England (which might, of course, be acquired *ad hoc*) was essential. I was a Nonconformist, and neither my parents nor I would consider for a moment a formal and hypocritical entry into the Established Church. I sat therefore for the British and Foreign School Society's College, still called Borough Road, though removed in 1890 from that uncomely spot to the then almost rural beauties of Isleworth. Free from any religious restrictions, the College had acquired a great reputation both for indiscipline and for securing the intellectual pick of pupil teacherdom. In my day (I qualified in 1891 and entered in 1892), unless you managed to pass not lower than the first 200 in this competitive examination of 2,000 candidates, it was very unlikely that you would get into 'Borough Road'. I had acquired a certain intellectual reputation among the pupil teachers of my school and town, and, indeed generally, based principally upon the desire and the capacity for omnivorous miscellaneous reading, the ability to speak, the acquisition under the pressure of

industrious assistant masters of certain certificates for science, particularly mathematics. I was expected to emulate an effulgent hero at my school and get into the first ten. I did not. And I know now that I never was equal to this. I had neither the capacity nor the inclination nor the pertinacity to put on the necessary trade finish for the highest ranks of examinees. Of course, I crammed. But I was incapable of cramming quite hard enough. Moreover, the pupil teachers in the large towns, and especially in London, were being trained for this examination in pupil-teachers' centres, and they taught in school only half time. I was a whole-time teacher, and so far as I was crammed I had to cram myself.

Eventually it was all right. I got in. About sixty students were admitted, and I was two-thirds of the way down the college list. The College secured six students out of those occupying the first ten for the whole country, and good and able fellows they were. The examination, however, marked for me the end of a period. I spent the autumn as an ex-pupil teacher; and on a freezing day early in January I left home for Isleworth, never permanently to return to the vigorous and friendly workaday society which had nurtured me.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAINING COLLEGE IN THE
1890's

LEAVING home and going to a famous Training College for Teachers was not so simple a thing as it sounds. One of my purposes in writing this is to record truthfully the life and struggles of the particular class into which I was born. Let us take the question of money. It is true that the major part of the actual cost of training was met by State grants to the College of which I became a member; and, a further small part by the endowments of the Society administering the College. For my parents, however, much remained. Their big, boney son had cost during this nonage much more than he earned as a pupil teacher. Even in those days a growing lad could not be kept on earnings which, beginning at £10 a year, rose to £20 in the fourth year.

Remembering as I do my enormous appetite in those years of growth, and the fact that a pupil teacher had to be clothed in outwardly decent garments during his period of rapid physical elongation, I know I must have been a tax on the £2 a week which was a high estimate of my father's average earnings; and there had been an elder brother, now it is true, 'out of his time', keeping himself, and already back into the Lancashire of our tradition. Before he left home he had been self-supporting for less than a year, and there were two younger sisters. How the

family managed I know not! Twenty pounds entrance fee to the College in one lump sum had to be paid. It was paid: partly out of what I earned as an 'ex-P.T.' in the months between the expiry of my apprenticeship and the Christmas at which I entered College. Beyond this incredibly large sum I had to be kept for two years in railway fares, in pocket money, little enough in all conscience, clothes (including some clothes for games), and to be maintained at home for some eleven or twelve weeks of vacation each year. Of course, I was penniless sometimes during these two years, but my only borrowing was from one of my Swindon chums, the generous son of a successful speculative builder. He lent me three pounds one year and five pounds in the next. I never repaid him. I hope he will read this. I know he neither needs nor desires the money, and I always knew that the loan was his form of wishing me to share in his relative prosperity. The thought of what that eight pounds was to me, fills me, even to-day, more than forty years on, with gratitude and the assurance of Heaven for him. Without it I should never have been able to buy the books I needed. Even to-day, it is not uncommonly through such incredible sacrifices and feats of economy as those I have described that the teachers in the common schools are produced. I think I belonged to the poorer, if prouder, half of my fellow-students, some of whom came from the class of schoolmasters, clerks, and shopkeepers, more comfortably off than I was. So far as I can recollect, however, this poverty, except for the occasional week or two in each term when I had not a penny and could not buy tobacco at fourpence half-penny or even shag at threepence an ounce, did not oppress me.

For I had shelter, clothes to cover me, lashin's of plain food—and youth.

Departure had its ceremonies. The school staff and the upper boys subscribed in sixpences and pence to buy me a morocco-bound gilt-edged Tennyson; and 'Shonnie' made a speech about me, and said I ought to have had a higher place in the Queen's Scholarship Examination, and that I must work harder—not in school—he admitted I was a good teacher—but cram harder. Then I should be a great and successful man. Alas, I have never crammed harder: and I must take the consequences. The young men's Bible class at the Chapel devoted most of an uncomfortable Sunday afternoon meeting to me, and praised me too much for a righteousness which, if at all apparent, was far from real, and too little perhaps for the public spirit which had lavished time on odd jobs, leaderships and secretaryships, time which, I suppose (though I am not quite sure), would have been better spent in disciplined study. The minister gave me good wishes, a little but not too much advice, for he was a discerning man who knew how little advice to the young is regarded or is worth. The book-stall manager, who had just been able to leave the chill terrors of his 'east-to-west' railway-station platform and to acquire a small stationer's shop, wished me sincerely a pleasant and enlightened future, and there were the usual hearty good wishes of my boyhood friends, who were indeed many. They were (and are) a good lot. I had no girl friends. I was afraid of girls. At this age my girl acquaintances were that and no more; and, ignorant as I was, I regarded them as of another order; free from evil, they belonged to another and a better world than mine,

far removed from the gross masculinity, with its black pits which might at any moment open beneath the likes of me.

My undemonstrative family said little. All our tradition was against any display of feeling. My father said: "Good luck and do your best," and my mother looked me in the face with a sad smile and simply said, "Be a good lad". They knew that I should never permanently return. And that was all. A casual porter took a big yellow trunk, tied round with clothes-line, on his barrow to the station, at the cost of sixpence, and in a cold and forbidding early afternoon in January I caught the express to Paddington and, in time for the 5.20 tea (any amount of bread and butter, which you cut for yourself from the loaves freely scattered on the long tables), I entered in my residence for two years at Borough Road College, Isleworth. In the truest and most literal meaning of the word I have been a member of that society ever since, though I left it forty-four years ago. This will sound strange to those for whom only externals can be described. These, except in a few particulars, were austere, forbidding, and to the gently nurtured, perhaps, would have been repulsive. But it is true that this institution was and, I hope, is, a fellowship which binds its members into a solidarity which, after much intercourse with others having very different associations, I believe to be almost unexampled.

In January 1892, when, as I have said, I arrived, the College stood in surroundings which, if a little tinged with suburbanity, were still pleasantly and predominantly rural. It stood half a mile or so back from the then Bath Road, in its own grounds, since ex-

tended, but even then ample in our eyes. We approached from the station, along a chestnut avenue in which there were, at the station end, a very few middle-class villas. To the north, behind the College building, there were the fields of a farm; on the western side there was, though separated from us by several fields, the nucleus of a middle-class suburb; to the east there was a lane leading to Osterley Park, which formed part of our northern hinterland, and across the lane there were market gardens, and orchards for the more adventurous of us, half school-boys as we still were, occasionally to raid.

The main building was a four-storeyed structure of which the eastern wing was the inconvenient house of the Principal. The building was of yellow brick picked out with black tarred pattern and showing an elevation in the worst possible modern pseudo-Gothic style, which, I am afraid, we rather admired. The ground floor consisted mainly of classrooms, bare and ill-furnished, a tutors' and students' common room and the House Tutor's study. The second floor was like it, though it was dignified by rooms for the Principal, the Vice-Principal and the Senior Tutor. The two other floors were filled with wooden cubicles for the students, with tutors' bedrooms at each end of each landing; for all the junior tutors and the House Tutor were necessarily resident. The students' cubicles varied a little in size, those on the highest floor and those in the wings being in some instances a little above the normal size. The standard size was just large enough to contain one single bed, one small chest of drawers, a wash-basin and one chair. There was just room to stand up and no more whilst making

one's toilet. The landings were closed at 9 o'clock (after breakfast), were open from 1 to 2 and again at 5 p.m. before tea, which was at 5.20. The two cubicle landings on which slept some 130 students and half a dozen tutors were entirely without any attempt at decoration or amenity, the provision of which would, in fact, have been most difficult. The woodwork was painted what is best called 'beastly banal brown'. And one walked down central avenues with cubicles (numbered) standing some seven feet high and with another seven feet or more of clearance to a ceiling. These alleys or avenues were lighted then by a few gas 'chandeliers', each with two naked lights. Inside the cubicles there were no lighting arrangements, though most of us possessed a private candle, often secured by its own grease to a handy piece of best yellow soap. There were shower baths on leaden-floored bathrooms at each end of each floor. At least we could be clean, and nearly all of us were.

The two lecture-room floors had rooms opening out from one side only of a narrow, chocolate-painted corridor. The corridor itself was bare except for photographs of former 'years' which adorned its sides. Inside the lecture-rooms there were a few good engravings or photogravures, for the new Principal was struggling, with little money and probably less support, to introduce some tincture of civilisation into the barbaric atmosphere to which about three years before he had been introduced. The tutors, of course, had their own decorations and some touches of comfort in the common sitting-rooms which most of them shared.

Naturally, I knew nobody in the place except, very

superficially, two or three whom I had met during the examination week of the previous summer. These happened all to be Londoners, and at least two of them were examinees of great distinction in our world. We were allowed a couple of days in which to settle down, get our books, arrange our few poor 'things' in our cubicles, learn the topography of the building and note the time-table of lectures and private study. We new students were given places at the long dining-tables, according to our standing on the list of entry. Most of my London acquaintances were higher on the list than I, and chiefly sat in remote grandeur at one end or the other of the tables which ran the length of the Hall. I sat near the middle, with a nice little Cockney on one side, and a lad from Blackburn, who became an international football player, on the other. Opposite me was a fair-haired youth from the outer wilds of the West Riding, and a rubicund, ginger-moustached man (some two or three years older than most of us) from Lincolnshire. He proved a sound fellow, and subsequently went to Cambridge and acquired real merit. In the same neighbourhood were one or two other of the less well-trained but highly groomed Cockneys, a couple of little dark Welshmen, and a tall, brown-haired, lissom youth from Warrington, a great athlete, who seemed, appropriately to his origin, to be built of steel wire. As our cubicles in the first year followed this table order of precedence, most of my neighbours at table slept not far away from me on Broadway. For all the avenues of cubicles had their names: Broadway or Utopia, Arcadia or Angel's Court, Purgatory or Rotten Row.

It took us some time, perhaps a fortnight, to get sorted out into the inevitable groups. But after a

night or two of peace our rest was disturbed by the organised raids of seniors upon the cubicles of those juniors who, it had been decided on the experience of a few days, in college meetings, at meals, at trial games, and in the kind of miscellaneous intercourse of early days, required to be put in their proper places. The ground of selection were in detail unknown to me. But it seemed that the crime of one youth was that he wore spats, of another that he was too voluble, that one displayed evidence of an antisocial spirit, another a conscious sense of intellectual superiority or a too-ostentatious loftiness of culture. The 'rooms' of such were raided, their bedsteads taken down, and the component parts together with the bedding scattered on the floor: and, generally, such personal property as they possessed, especially if it displayed signs of a preciousness or demonstrative righteousness or snuffiness or stuffiness, was disarranged, dismembered or destroyed. One or two were 'smacked'—that is to say, they were held down by a superior force and beaten with slippers. On the whole, I think, it was the less desirable of the new community of entrants who were so chosen; though on some of the landings everybody had his bed thrown down in fragments, and in some individual cases mistakes were made. Fortunately I escaped completely, and there were many—certainly more than half of my year—who were left undisturbed. I had heard rumours that this kind of horseplay was part of the 'tradition' of the place, and I well remember sitting on my bed in my little room, not yet undressed, hearing the sounds of a not very remote riot, fully determined not to submit without violent resistance to any indignity. In my ignorance I had brought with me a pair of dumb-

bells then used in the physical jerks of the times, and I held one in my hand nervously, but finally resolved to bash in the head of anyone who laid a hand upon me. It was not courage. I felt desperately afraid, though with a kind of subconscious assurance that my friends (I had some, of course, within forty-eight hours) and I would be left alone. It was an instinct typical of the respectable upper-working class against any handling of my person. But not much harm was done. I disliked this kind of physical violence, and thought we were too old for it. I stopped it on my landing when, next year, I was in a position of minor authority.

We had meetings. Besides separate meetings of the seniors and the juniors, there were general meetings to decide all those little things within the prerogative of the students as a body; for instance, the newspapers to be taken in the Common Room, the revision of subscriptions (for in theory these were settled annually), the adoption of caps; even college colours, though never changed, were determinable annually by the students in full conclave assembled. At these meetings I took the floor with the confidence inspired by the Young Men's Friendly Society training, and by the poor level of speaking ability and general information displayed by both seniors and juniors. Only a very few of them could speak to a meeting, competent as I subsequently found them to be in getting up chemistry, or mathematics, or the ossified detail of history for examination purposes. So, with a becoming modesty and the experience born of the Swindon Reading-Room and Library, I told them that if they hated the *Spectator* and the *Fortnightly Review*, as the Tynesiders and the men from the Rhondda or from Heckmondwike and Cleckheaton

undoubtedly did, they could substitute the *Speaker* (of which as a Liberal I was fond) and the *New Review*, upon which short-lived periodical I had sacrificed a shilling a month at home under a Church-magazine scheme. On such topics I acquired some reputation for modest speech and perspicacity. But generally these meetings were fun, and the chief contests were between the advocates of rival provincial papers, which could not all be purchased; so the gentle process of ousting the *Bradford Observer* in order to get in the *South Wales Daily News*, which, as a fervant Welshman declared, "covered the whole area of South Wales", was conducted in terms of the characteristic humour of our race.

We soon settled down into the little groups and sets and cliques characteristic of clubs and colleges. Like was attracted by like, and rubbing shoulders with our fellows resolved itself, as it always does, into the intimacies of sets of kindred spirits.

Borough Road, being 'undenominational', had, in fact, been predominantly Nonconformist, and it was teetotal and hitherto non-smoking. But times had changed. At least half my fellows were Anglicans by upbringing. Practically all of them smoked. Few of them drank; for the college provided no alcoholic refreshment, and we had neither time nor money for its purchase elsewhere; and our class is very temperate in its youth. On the other hand, a tradition of a certain amount of rowdiness had sprung up, chiefly during a weak régime which had been ended some two or three years before my entry by the appointment of a new Principal bringing with him a new tradition. The rowdiness which took the form, not only of the noisy initiation of juniors, but of chair-grinds on the

landings, or the tossing of handfuls of horse-chestnuts from one end of a cubicle avenue to another, chestnuts which pursued a rattling and it seemed interminable course down these long, ugly wooden alleys just as the righteous were sinking to sleep—all this hobbledehoyish mischief he had been able only partly to suppress. But he had seen that the chief defect of the men he now had to handle was a certain crudeness of outlook and manners, an intellectual narrowness, born of the examination-haunted lives prescribed to us by the remote gods of Whitehall, born also of excessive hours of lectures and nominal hours of supervised study. The College was no longer, however, in dirt and grime of nineteenth-century Southwark. It was in surroundings more than semi-rural, with its own ample playing-field immediately adjoining the building. The river was a short walk away, and the flat Middlesex country, not without its own charm, nor without its lanes and parklands, orchards and fields, was at hand. One of the greatest reforms, therefore, of the new Principal, P. A. Barnett, a man who profoundly influenced, first by his example, and then by his teaching, the Training College world—a world, by the way, of great national importance—was to abolish work in the afternoon, to concentrate all lectures and private-study periods in the morning and evening, and leave us free in the afternoons. One result of this was that we rapidly became the best Training College at games and athletics, as we already were at the business of passing examinations.

Barnett did more than this. He introduced a new element into the College staff. Before his day it had been recruited exclusively from old students. The late Principal had been a student of the College with no

other academic training than that he had gained in his day—a distant one—in the institution of which he was the head.* Barnett, whilst retaining openings in the junior staff for men of mind and character produced by the College itself, originated the practice of recruiting also from Oxford and Cambridge. In my day the result was admirable. The staff consisted of a nucleus of permanent lecturers and tutors of senior standing. The junior tutors, recruited from the most brilliant of the students, were not expected to remain on the staff for more than some two or three years, when they moved on to all sorts of openings in the system of public education at home and abroad; some of them to positions of considerable responsibility.

The senior staff of the College, the Principal, the Vice-Principal (affectionately known as Teddy Barkby, or just 'Teddy'), the Senior Tutor, T. H. Miller, and the Master of Method as he was called, G. E. Buckle, formed a group of men, strong enough in learning, though no doubt we, in our ignorance, may have overestimated the breadth and the profundity of their scholarship, but especially strong in character and in their truly magnificent power as teachers. For this power at least we could, and still can estimate. I have never since known a group of men as able to lead, to inspire, and to give young men of our type precisely the kind of guidance and instruction they required. We had all enjoyed or suffered four or five years' experience of teaching in elementary schools before we entered (you *enter* and *leave* a training college, you do not go *up* or come *down*), and we knew

* A common question with those somewhat senior to me was, "How did X [the former Principal] get his degree?" To which the proper answer was, "Brute strength and bloody ignorance".

the tricks of that trade. But every lecture and every lesson we had from those four men was an unobtrusive lesson in the arts of exposition, didactic, dialectic, which I know did in fact affect not only our conception of what teaching could be, but also our minds and our outlook on life. Barnett himself was a born teacher, and it was not unfortunate for us that he affected an 'Oxford' manner and speech, and was a past master at 'putting over', as I suppose we should now say, the sub-acid humorous and the lofty calm *motifs*. Beneath it all was a real feeling for literature and, indeed, for words, just as words, and a real contempt for anything shoddy in speech or writing, and an inflexible insistence on accuracy. He was a man of the world, who realised our shortcomings probably only too well, but, with an insight at once searching and tolerant of what it found, he regulated the pace of his effort to civilise us to what we could profitably bear.

Miller was a great 'character'. Tall, straight, healthy, pleasantly rubicund, and in his own way, which was the rowing way, still athletic at forty, he was a Cambridge Wrangler, but by no means a mere mathematical specialist. He had studied at Paris and Heidelberg as well as Cambridge, was a linguist and a musician, as well as mathematician and oarsman. In his lectures he affected a bland innocence which merely reinforced the deadly irony with which he treated the impertinent and self-important. '*Parcere subjectis*' was his motto, and the modest and the meek never suffered under what was occasionally an urbanely biting tongue. His natural dignity forbade liberties. But he could be, and was friendly as well as distant, as those who really wanted or needed help or advice

discovered. We regarded his learning as enormous, and he could help a student with Greek as well as with hydrostatics. The legend ran that he was mastering the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, so as to have no need for works of reference, and that in 1892 he had reached the end of letter 'M'. He played the violin in the College Orchestra and he lectured to the literary society on 'The Alphabet: its origins and significance' and such-like topics. His last years were a tragedy which he bore with silent courage: and he took to his grave the affectionate and humble benedictions of hundreds of men whose lives he had enlightened.

I must say a little of 'Teddy'. He, Edwin Barkby, was a sturdy, rather portly, bearded man, in my day probably just under fifty. He was a product of the College, and had neither academic nor teaching experience elsewhere. He was grave and fatherly. But no one could doubt that he had a first-rate mind. Up to our standard he could lecture on almost anything, though his subjects were geography (on which he gave us beautifully compiled notes having neither hiatus nor superfluous word) and physiology (which subject I avoided). He taught singing, for we all took music; even the few who had neither ear nor voice had to take the Government music examination; and naturally he led the Choral Society, which was excellent, and the College orchestra, which was, to use our characteristic national term of eulogy, 'not bad'. He was the clearest and the best class teacher I have met. He smoothed our complications, and had the great gift of setting each thing into its proper category. He taught me more about Latin Prose in less time than I believe any other teacher then alive could have done. Every lesson he gave (and he

taught rather than lectured) was a work of art, perfectly proportioned. From his example we could have derived, and as subconscious knowledge—if such a thing there be—we did derive, all that now is comprehended in the *Principles of Education*. He died some years ago. But every old B.—and we are a loyal lot—cherished the memory of this grave, simple, fine old man.

The fourth member of this group of senior men was Buckle. He was a tall, spare man of athletic build, and in his youth a notable boxer. He was, like Barkby, a product of the College. He was Master of Method. That is to say, he lectured to us on what would now be called the *Principles of Education*. In my day it was called *School Method*. He, again, was a man of character, and of austere bearing. His smooth, accurately parted flaxen hair, his large, light grey eyes and his healthy, fair complexion would have satisfied Hitler himself that here was the true Nordic strain. Indeed, he hailed from Norfolk, and his great recreation was fishing, and sea-fishing for preference. There was no need to speak of discipline in his lecture-room. He walked in, serious and self-possessed, and there was silence. He taught us what was then the best knowledge in logic and psychology, bare and arid as that best was. And he taught us what was then the best knowledge of the principles which underlie the art of teaching. But I think we profited far more from his example than from any precepts. His note was a calm, self-restrained seriousness, no haste, no fuss, no irrelevance or wandering, few asides, no eloquence, strict and unhurried attention to a sober business; a sense of humour, grim, but not forbidding, not unkindly, was always in the background; but

nothing temperamental, no flashes, no frivolity, no ascents to the skies or descents to common earth. He was perhaps less lovable than Barkby; we did not *enjoy* him as we enjoyed Miller; our note was that rather of unquestioning respect, and a satisfying feeling of admiration. Again it is possible that he was not so great as he seemed to us; but for us, then, he was a great man. None of us, as we ripened into young manhood and middle age, could ever fail to feel in his presence something not far removed from awe. I remember at the age of nearly fifty, after I had become a Divisional Inspector of the Board of Education, having a chat with Buckle, and how it gradually dawned upon me that he was actually being respectful to *me*: while I felt still his pupil, under brief but desolating reproof for coming down to a seven o'clock (a.m.!) lecture in red-carpet slippers. The tone of respect which he adopted made me feel that the earth ought to open beneath me. I spoke with him humbly, and tried to make him realise how valuable we all thought him to be, and how deep was our respect for him.

Buckle's lectures were on four mornings a week (two for juniors and two for seniors), at the incredible hour of seven in the morning. For Barnett had not gone so far as to abandon the pre-breakfast lectures and study. There was no chance of cutting the seven-o'clock attendance here, as I had so often done as a pupil teacher at home, nor any chance of being later than the five minutes grace allowed. Looking back, it seems now a little inhuman, but it would be false to say that we did not benefit by early morning lectures. On two mornings out of the six, I remember, I had no lectures and had to do P.S. (which means private

study) in the seven to eight period; but this was done in a lecture-room, under the supervision of a junior tutor, with a register which recorded unrelentingly any absence. So there was no escape. The before-breakfast study, however, was of little use, unless in a subject one really liked.

I must return to the staff. The great men were as admirable as I have tried to picture them. The junior staff, recruited chiefly from the best of the past students, all of them resident, all hoping to qualify, during their temporary tenure, for posts of some importance, were an able lot. They were, in fact, as far as brains went, the picked product of a picked assembly. The one or possibly (though rarely) two in each year who were retained as junior tutors—posts which on a humbler plane resembled college fellowships—were at least the possessors of first-rate brains. I will not describe these men in detail. Most of those I knew are, fortunately, still living. But that three-quarters, at least, of those I knew were competent and helpful there can be no doubt. They varied in character. One was rather portentous, and was not very popular. He had little faculty for managing men, and many students made themselves a nuisance to him in the ways well known to students and undergraduates. We were unjust, I think. At any rate, he became a University Professor, and to that extent a success in life. Another, whose line was mathematics and physical science, was admired for his precision and decision of character. No flies, as the saying goes, rested long on him. He could sit on the relatively lazy or stupid without causing resentment, for among other things he was a first-rate football referee, and had the interest in games which not in-

frequently accompanies a complete inability to play them. A third was a friendly-spirited as well as a sincerely religious man, known affectionately always by his Christian name. Somewhat of an athlete, and a man with a real love of humane learning, he became ultimately Principal of another Training College, and was deservedly liked and respected. The fourth of those I remember was mild and negligible, and I fear the students bullied him somewhat.

There was, in my first year, a newcomer. He came to us from Oxford with firsts in Mods. and Greats, a Chancellor's prize, and a great fund of interest in us and much good humour. Small of stature, but big of brain and heart, he was a success, for the dourest Yorkshireman and the most acidulated Welshman melted in his genial presence, and loved the sight of him flitting like a butterfly, with ballooning gown, down the windy winter corridors. He became a leading light in the Inspectorate of the Board of Education; which for a period, and to its great advantage, was recruited from Oxford via Borough Road. Herbert Ward was not supremely good at cramming us for the Certificate Examination, or even for the pass degree of the University of London. But he taught some of us what scholarship really meant, he tolerated our manifold shortcomings—so, in short, we liked him and still like him. In my second year Miller married, became non-resident, and ceased to be, as he had been, the House Tutor, responsible for discipline, though he remained Senior Tutor for the College. His removal from residence was like the passing of a legendary hero from his post. The hero was replaced by our winsome classical cherub, who ruled effectively by methods of his own.

Such were the men with whom as a pupil I was in daily contact for two years. I have heard many complain how little benefit they got from a training-college life, on the academic side. All I can say is that, so far as I failed to profit by it, it was chiefly my own fault, to a certain extent the fault of the system, but never of the teaching. The annual certificate examination, with its array of relatively unambitious programmes in numerous subjects, was not the work of the College or the staff, but of a Government department at that date still very largely regarding the preparation of men and women to teach in the popular schools as a technical matter requiring no very high standard of culture or attainment. I took the ordinary certificate course. Had I taken what was then the new alternative of a course for a London pass degree, things would have been hardly better. I did, however, matriculate, and this very fact opened up paths for the future. But for the rest I could mug up all that was necessary for the Certificate Examinations, and have what was, according to my then standards (and perhaps relatively to any standards), a good time.

For a good time I certainly had. My comrades, the whole sixty-five or so of my year, were a decent lot, with hardly any wrong 'uns among them. And as we split up into our sets I settled down principally with some seven or eight kindred spirits, more than half of them my superiors in power and staying power of mind, though not my superiors in imagination and public spirit or interest in human affairs, men for whom I had a lasting affection and the survivors of whom I count among my best friends to-day.

I do not propose to describe this college life in

detail. It was a real co-operative life 'conjoint and collegiate', but in its essentials very like any other college life. Our first winter term was a cold and physically forbidding time, in the bare, comfortless, unamenable building. But that mattered little to us. The food, if monotonous and unrefined, was plentiful and good. Every afternoon and from Saturday mid-day until Sunday night we were our own masters. We played hard at football and ran very successful Soccer and Rugger teams, four of them altogether, and anyone could, and most of us did, kick about at large to our great physical benefit. We could walk and talk, and we did. We had our concerts; occasionally big wigs and lesser lights lectured to us, and we had our own debating society. We were alive, and we were well, and, above all, we were young. Our ideal was the man who was clever, but not too industrious, who worked hard but not long, and was a good fellow and a good athlete. And, indeed, a good half of those in the football and cricket teams were men of brains who did well in the pervading world of examinations, which surrounded but did not dominate most of us. Our soccer team was perhaps, by the accident of its possessing one future international player, and at least three or four of League standard, a first-rate one. Not only did it never lose a match, but it emulsified the other training colleges and the local teams. I remember their winning one match by 17 to 0. The Rugger team recruited from the Yorkshiremen and the Welshmen was not so eminent. That came later, when A. R. Smith was a tutor and R. T. Gabe of Cardiff a student. How many Oxford or Cambridge Colleges, may I mildly ask, could put two internationals in the

field at one and the same time? For, remember, we were only 130 all told.

So unlimited, if plain food, and two or three hours a day of hard exercise, at once sent up our weights and hardened our frames. We were all poor. But we were fed and lodged, and people at home somehow managed to clothe us. It was a natural economy. There was no opportunity to spend money. A little tobacco, for most of us, and no drink. Daring spirits might have a glass of beer in the "Hare and Hounds" half a mile northwards on the lane which passed the wooded boundary of the College. Some, it is true, went to Richmond on Saturday or Sunday evening. But, as far as I could make out, they simply paced the terrace with girls of the *petite bourgeoisie*, casually encountered, to whom the ceremony of pacing the Terrace up and down, back and forward, was an excitement for both sides. It stopped at that; and it was an amusement confined to our lightweights. My own group, I can truthfully affirm, did not partake even of these innocuous and inane pleasures. We walked to talk about heaven and earth, and Gladstone, and Shelley and William Watson, or about Preston North End or Sunderland, Notts or Surrey.

Of course, there were College rows. We rebelled against the predominance of broken crockery, insufficient as well as defective. This we did by waiting until the House Tutor and others had assembled at the high table, and then all rising, at a given bang on one of our tables, walking out of the dining-room in procession, and returning, after a solemn peregrination to the cubicles, with the little mugs in which we fetched matutinely our shaving-water. There were no scouts or gyps for us—and a good job, too.

On boat-race day we behaved, I think, like hooligans if, in fact, that particular Irish clan does behave in unseemly fashion. We 'lined up'—that is to say some eighty or ninety of us marched in double line to Isleworth Railway Station and took tickets to Barnes Bridge. There we formed up and marched again, opening out as we met a harmless young man and his girl so that their path lay within our ranks and they made an embarrassed progress between our files. My recollection is that we made no remarks, but merely raised our caps, grinned and left it at that. And the sometimes blushing pairs took it all with good humour. We bunched together for the race, and did a deal of pointless simultaneous shouting in the fashion of American Colleges, though our cry was "Buck up, B's", and no elaborate war cry. Then we marched back, took the train again to Isleworth, refused to give up our railway tickets on principle, and rolled the fat porter down the twenty wooden steps which led from the platform to the street. It is true we made a collection for him, and he considered the ten shillings (we were poor, remember) ample compensation for two minutes' horseplay. This did not prevent the station-master making complaints. The Principal justifiably lectured us on manners, and asked the station-master to identify the leaders, but they were not to be found. They were at school practice in Brentford nearly two miles away; and we believed he *knew* they were.

With the station-master at Brentford, who disliked our inoffensive but inconvenient rowdiness, as each cricket or football team or 'school section' (I will explain this term anon) passed through, we were on bad terms. For we shouted or sang, and for some

undefined historical cause we habitually made rude remarks about that respectable official. The station-master's name was Mist. So we changed the name of the song one of our Welsh tenors invariably sung at College sing-songs, and sang harmoniously in Brentford Station "Foggy, where art thou?"

Such were the rather stupid but not evil ways in which we expended some of the superfluous energy of youth. As Barnett told us, undergraduates at Oxford would do worse things, but not these things. What we did belonged to the rowdiness of the lower orders, not to the sins of gentlemen, which are forgivable. Our demonstrations were to him the index of an attitude he strove to change, an attitude exemplified by his advice to my seniors on leaving, that the first charge on their initial earnings ought to be a dress suit, clothing which it is certain only one or two of us (and they were Londoners, of course) possessed as students, though, in accordance with the times, we had black morning-coats and top hats for Sundays. These hats tended to disappear in our second year; and I remember, on the last night in college, not only was most of the bedroom crockery ruthlessly destroyed (and paid for out of our five shillings a head caution money), but we made footballs of our top hats and kicked them hilariously up and down the bedroom corridors.

I mentioned 'school section', and this brings me to the professional side of the Training College of that day. The reader will have gathered that nine-tenths of our working time was given to academic studies, or rather to preparation for the Certificate Examination, which consisted of two stages taken at the termination of the first and the second years.

For the first year London Matriculation could be substituted, and for the second the Intermediate Examination for the London pass degree. I was not eligible for the degree course, for I matriculated in my second year, and was forced to seek an external London degree after I left College.

Buckle lectured to us, of course, principally with the Certificate Examination in view, on professional subjects: school management, psychology (such as it was) and logic. This was all the theoretical instruction (two hours a week in all) we got on the professional side. But in each year each student had three weeks' school practice during term. It must not be forgotten, however, that all of us had had four years' experience of practical teaching, and some of us more than that. This teaching, too, had been not merely the supervised practice of the present-day student, but, as a rule, the responsible and unaided charge of a class. In fact, most of us, in an empirical way, were already competent practitioners; for the failures of pupil teacherdom left or were thrown out, often to their worldly advantage, before they reached the training-college stage.

The three weeks each year of practice under skilled supervision, had it been taken in anything like proper surroundings, would, I think, have been ample. The supervision, though in amount insufficient, was in quality of the best; for it is difficult to imagine a better 'Master of Method' than the unaided Buckle was at this, the prime of his life. But school practice could only be given in the accessible schools, and of these there were but three: the British School at Brentford, the Blue School, as it was called, at Isleworth, a Church School with some ancient and

small endowment, and the little Board School in the suburban part of Isleworth, known (quite appropriately) as Spring Grove. It is very safe to say that in every respect—premises, staff, equipment—these schools were worse than those, bad as they were, which the great majority of us had known as pupil teachers. Certainly they were nothing like so good as my old school in Sanford Street, Swindon, had been.

I practised in my first year at the Blue School. On the staff there was indeed one splendid practical teacher, afterwards Buckle's assistant at the College, and subsequently a Professor in Birmingham, and Secretary of the Teachers' Registration Council. I had not the good fortune to be planted on to him, and during school practice hardly met him, though I heard the legend of his professional skill. I assisted an ignorant ex-P.T. with little boys in Standard II, and I had three weeks of fairly easy work, gave my lesson before Buckle—I suppose with ordinary credit—and hoped that I suffered little from the example of my daily mentor, who had all the defects of the cavalryman I had laughed with in my earliest days, without the redeeming interest of his personality. The only incident I clearly remember is perhaps worth recording as a reminder of the evils long passed away, and as a mark from which to measure the distance the elementary school has travelled. Payment by results was still the order of the day in 1892. In arithmetic they still practised from the 'card' of four sums, and three must be 'right' for a safe pass. So this ex-P.T. (let us call him Wright, which was not his name), like all his contemporaries, took arithmetic first lesson after the morning scripture.

The cards were duly given out. Five minutes before playtime the two of us scurried round, answers in our hands, and marked the fifty papers. Then the ceremony began. "Boys with four right, on the form." These geniuses proudly stepped on to the benches of their desks. "Good boys! Three right." Up sprang a larger number of youths, who were told to get four right next time. "Two right." The 'twos' elevated themselves. "Well, ye know as well as I do that two won't do; not good enough," and then (to me), "Take their names. You boys'll stay in after school till you've got 'em all right. One right." Some seven or eight miserable boys of seven to eight years of age stood on the forms. Out came Wright's stick. They got one cut each, were also told to stay in; and I listed them to insure against the flight of the enterprising among them. Finally: "None right." Some four or five, apparently accustomed to ignominy, raised themselves, miserably or stolidly—in one case, I am glad to say, almost insolently—to the required prominence. They, of course, had the stick all round; and this, I regret to say, neither surprised nor shocked me. But I was not prepared for what followed. 'Stick' being rapidly completed, Wright returned to the front of the class. "Boys, *point the finger*," said he. Every member of the class turned, scornful or indifferent, to point an index finger at these reprobates. Then, "Hiss," said Wright, and the class in unison hissed the exhibited urchins. "Strike me blue," I thought, in the vernacular of my youth, "I've never seen anything like this before. And a practising school, too!" Even a hardened student, with over four years of large classes behind him, stood aghast at this crime; and

when we discussed it, after a return to College delayed by Wright's miserable 'keeping in', it was received with a bitter hilarity by my friends. Indurated as we were, most of us were disgusted. And the provincials, especially the northerners, regarded it as more evidence of metropolitan inferiority.

"You should be at my place," said Ike Bowen from the grimy atmosphere of Warrington, who was 'doing' practice at Spring Grove. "You should hear my specimen *talk*." Then, with great powers of mimicry, he repeated what the ex-P.T. who was supposed to be teaching *him* to teach said to his class. "Wen Oi sez 'Paat yer 'aands aap,' y' paats 'em dahn; wen Oi sez, 'Fowld y'r ahms,' ye tawks: 'owld yer jawr.'" "That," said Ike, "is how they talk in the sunny south."

I believe I saw the Blue School at its worst; for the head was a decent, well-mannered man, who probably knew nothing of the delinquencies of Wright.

In my second year I spent my three weeks 'on school section'—for we spoke of it as if it were three weeks on the treadmill—at the Brentford British School. Having been in charge of a low class in my first year, I had to take a small top class of 'Ex. VII' here. These boys had no regular teacher; they were taught by a succession of students throughout the term. They had given trouble to many of us; and I remember how pleased I was when Buckle noted the fact that I seemed to have no struggle with them about discipline.

This school, in very old buildings, was held principally—that is, to at least three-quarters of its total number—in one huge room. The head was a vigorous little man, who was an English version of my old

Welsh head master 'Shonnie'. Probably he was a little less of a humbug, but he had as nearly similar histrionic gifts and temperament as were possible to a Saxon. My chief recollection of this huge classroom, with some six or more classes all going at the same time, was the great ceremony of desk drill. The old-fashioned desks, each seating eight pupils, were ranged down the length of the room, with an interval of perhaps, four feet, between each of the classes in the rooms. To render any assembly possible, the room had to be cleared by piling the desks one on another at the back of the room. This was done by the pupils, through the machinery of desk drill. At a given command "Stand," every boy stood at attention behind the benches. Then: "Desk drill by numbers! One," and so on, "One, two, three, four." Sixteen boys seized each desk. The backmost desks were moved against the wall, others were thrown lustily on top of them, and by the end of the drill all desks were moved, backed, and piled 'by numbers' against the wall; the floor was free, and the boys from the one other schoolroom were able to march in to the assembly of the whole school, often for the collective singing of which the head was very fond. It was an amazing piece of drill, demonstrating the standing of the school, a school pre-eminent in the magnificent mechanical discipline of the times. Apart from this, as a factor in the professional education of training-college students, it was negligible so far as it was not positively noxious.

In fact, it may generally be said that in all three of the practising schools we found little to imitate and much to avoid. The situation was saved in part by the visits of counsel (and condolence!) which

Buckle paid, and by his criticism of our efforts. From the School staff, with the notable exception already mentioned, we learned nothing. Even when less crudely cruel than Wright with his 'point-the-finger' methods, the teachers in these practising schools were as a rule inferior intellectually to most of us; and any original light in their minds had been extinguished by years of grinding out annual examination results from children of tender years, if often of far from tender dispositions.

We went on 'school section' as if we were going to penal servitude, and at the end of the statutory three weeks we returned to the College routine, celebrating the close of what would now be called a foul and filthy time by consuming tins of pineapple at the 5.20 'tea' which was our principal later meal. It is perhaps an index of our financial status to remember that tinned pineapple was a gorgeous delicacy untasted in my Swindon days, and the shilling spent on it was an indubitable extravagance.

There was one other feature of our professional training: the criticism lesson, or, as we called it, 'the crit'. Once a week a selected senior student gave a lesson on a subject chosen by Buckle to a small class of boys brought to the college for the purpose, and surrounded by an assembly of tutors and students. In these artificial conditions the chosen students taught away on 'A Watershed', or 'A First Lesson on Decimal Fractions'. The lesson lasted half an hour or less. Then the specially imported class marched away and the students were called upon to criticise. Very often this was done whole-heartedly, and, by the more mischievous, even wickedly. Then old Teddy Barkby would make some

wise and kindly remarks, or a junior tutor, according to temperament, made acid comments or mildly deprecatory remonstrance on the major defects of the performance. Finally, Buckle himself would sum up, appreciating where he could, and dealing severely with the inadequate, or even impertinent performance which occasionally occurred, but always saying something noteworthy. Occasionally *he* gave the lesson himself, and we then saw how the real artist, with no waste word and the most supreme economy of effort, could lead the young a little way towards knowledge. He was a great teacher, could simplify anything and reduce the gulf between himself and these little fellows nearly to nothing.

The professional training therefore was inadequate, and the school practice worthless, where not positively harmful. But our real concern was the academic instruction. Though necessarily this connoted preparation for examinations and little more, I have no doubt at all that the teaching we got was generally good, often stimulating, and sometimes inspiring. As for the Certificate Examination, especially in the first year, its programme resembled what we should now call a general secondary education of the non-specialised sixth-form order. In the second year it was rather more than this, and, very rightly, a good deal of specialisation was possible, especially on the side of science. Those taking the degree course specialised in a narrower field, and took only the professional part of the Certificate Examination. Looking back, I am glad I did not take the degree course. It enabled me to take the Certificate Examination, which was not difficult, without great effort, and gave me time to browse along intellectual

paths which interested me. The Latin and the Greek, and the mathematics or mental and moral science, which I should have taken for the then London pass B.A. course would have been nothing but a grind, issuing in no adequate knowledge of classics (which I much admire) nor mathematics, for most of the pass mathematics I had already mastered as a P.T. I was able to read the literature, the history and the economics which really interested me. In economics, already begun at the Swindon lectures, I thought a solution to the problem of social injustice might be found. For of social injustice I was becoming very much aware. There I was clothed, fed, lodged—not sumptuously, but at least sufficiently—with the time for study and time to exhaust myself on playing-fields. My father, now in his later middle age, was rising from a comfortless bed on these cold mornings, working in a comfortless factory from six in the morning till half-past five at night, getting home about six to scrub the engine dirt from his fine hands and eat his monotonous tea, glad if it could be garnished by some lettuce or watercress, or even the tasteful shrimp. Then, if it were not Council night, when he must change into clean clothes and go out, he would attempt to read, often only to fall into an inevitable but unrefreshing sleep. And one week's holiday in the summer without wages! Whilst I could laze it out for eight weeks or so in the summer. Here was a science which purported to explain how wealth was produced, exchanged and shared; I would try to master it.

These two years were, I think, the happiest, though not the most fruitful, in my life. Companionship was easy. Like others, I was friendly with many—

with most, in fact—intimate with a few; and for one, long ago dead, for he died on the boat at Singapore, at the beginning of his final voyage home after thirty years of teaching and administration in Siam, I had feelings for which the only right word is love. I suppose a young man, even surrounded with strong family affections, has much emotion to lavish upon his chosen fellow. It is a better and, I think, a higher affection than, as a youngster, he can give to any woman, for it is more disinterested. Love between the sexes requires, it seems, for its fullest expression, a maturity impossible for the young, and is seldom disinterested. His was the stronger nature and the more adequate self-confidence. But he loved me too. We certainly never said this: we should not have dreamt of applying that word to our relationship, and I have never used it until to-day. But we were happy together. We had much in common, intellectually and spiritually. And our interests and abilities were sufficiently diverse to induce a mutual appreciation. Even on the side of sport we differed. He was in the College football team. I never was. I was in the cricket team. He never was. He had a greater passion for poetry, and a finer critical sense—Shelley was his hero; whilst, with Nonconformist sesquipedalianism, I announced that Shelley could never have written ‘In Memoriam’ with what I took to be its profundity of thought and music of expression. Alas, reader, it was 1892! My passion, however, was for fine prose; and I loved the oratory of the eighteenth century. He could write well, and did in fact edit, with distinction, the College magazine. I could, and (God forgive me) did speak; and, on my feet, could expose the fallacies and lavish

irony on the crudities and sentimentalities of my fellow-ornaments of the debating societies. We were happy always to be together. We said we would get a job in the same town. We did. And we parted—such are the frustrations of life—before a year was out. I can say no more. Our affection, which lasted whilst he lived, I think almost entirely unaffected by a physical separation of 10,000 miles, was the finest thing in my life. And, perhaps, his spirit is not quenched.

The two summers and the two winters of our brief two years, long as they seemed then, passed away and the dissolution of our pleasant fellowship was in sight. The conjoint and collegiate life which I believe most of us enjoyed, the relative freedom from care, the long separations from the narrow troubles of home, the stimulus of close association with our fellows, were to cease. The final test was at hand in the darkness of December. We should scatter no longer to live a corporate body of friends, but singly, in dismal lodgings, we should suffer our individual fates.

Looking back, I could see I had had a good time: pedestrian work, but great liberty, and in the second year, when I was a 'prefect' and took my private study in the prefects' room, much possibility of healthy laziness, time for games and a strong collective social life—all these I had liked. Academically I had done well, though not as brilliantly as some. I had played in the cricket team, and in my first year had been first man in and last man out in the trial match against the seniors. I had been chosen as the Principal's prefect, and had been in closer touch with him than any other student, doing his odd jobs, and

giving him (I was rather good at this) a line on what the students were really thinking. I had been secretary of the Debating Society, I had many friends and few enemies; and I rejoiced in the close friendship of the man universally recognised as the choicest spirit of my time. Buckle considered me a good practical teacher. It was not so bad.

At Easter in my second year Barnett, to our sorrow, departed to become the Chief Inspector of Training Colleges for the Board of Education. We liked him, for he understood and tolerated us, and we regarded him as a broad-minded man of the world: a good scholar and a good leader. He had a way with the rowdy and the wayward which both subdued and amused them. In any change we feared that we might fare worse. He was succeeded by H. L. Withers, a distinguished product of Balliol, with a first in Mods, and a first in Greats, still a young man of twenty-eight, who had moved from his first post at Manchester Grammar School, with Glazebrook, to Clifton. From Clifton he came to us. In at least two meanings of the adjective he was too good for the post. I acted as a sort of secretary to him, as I had to Barnett. I believe, certainly I hope, that I was a help to him. He could not comprehend our uncultivated, if often vigorous minds. And, unlike his predecessor, he was apt to mistake our mannerless barbarity for wickedness. More than a student could expect, he confided in me, and used to discuss, within reasonable limits, personal and college problems. I believe I saved him from some mistakes which would have made him more unpopular than he was. Rightly, he sought no popularity. But in my two terms with him he failed, by his very good-

ness and his almost remote austerity, to capture the affections of those he ruled.

He asked me to stay up a third year. About half a dozen students were chosen for this extra year, which was a privilege rather like a fourth year at Cambridge. If I stayed a third year, he said, it would be with a view to my appointment subsequently as a junior tutor. He told me—and I knew it to be true—that on exclusively academic grounds I had not earned this: there were other reasons why he had made the offer. I did not accept it. For a time I left him to wonder why, being shy of disclosing the real reason. For the domestic situation at home, with my father ageing rapidly and two younger sisters to be cared for (one of them also a teacher, not yet at College, the other a musician in great need of training), and a family income of about £2 a week was serious. How could I in any conscience take a third year at College? To stay meant a charge for clothes, pocket money, and vacation keep for another year. I knew my father would have consented. Indeed, I knew better than to disclose the offer. Finally, unable to say it face to face, I wrote in vacation to Withers and gave him some hint of how things stood. He agreed that I was right.

A deputation from Nottingham came to select men. I was offered a post; and during the mirky December days I sat for the final Certificate Examination with a job in my pocket. Within a week the Examination was over. I had already given a lesson under the discerning eye of the then Chief Inspector for Training Colleges. He heard one half of a thirty-minute lesson on geography to a much-

tried Standard III at the Blue School, maintaining an imperturbable and motionless silence, stoically enduring thirty such lessons inside a week, as Matthew Arnold had done before him, and consoling himself, doubtless, that £900 a year and a pension, gained by service to the State, which might be useful and was certainly harmless, was well worth while to a married ex-Fellow of Jesus, Cambridge. There was a final night of exuberant disorder. I abstained from joining in the crockery-smashing, holding, as I did, a position of trust. But my top hat went into the common stock of silken blackness we kicked joyfully the length of the landing. The compact fellowship of the College was over; and, a little sadly, I took the train with three or four Welshmen to the West. A few days before Christmas I was at home again, glad to be there and to see my own folk, conscious that this time it was a mere junction for a working life elsewhere; and this future I surveyed with misgiving.

CHAPTER VI
TRIAL WITHOUT TRIUMPH IN
NOTTINGHAM

COLLEGE days were ended; the happy days of freedom without responsibility were over. There was a short Christmas holiday at home; then, with a pound or two which my people could ill spare, and at least the prospect of a settled job at £80 a year, which was £10 more than the initial rate in Swindon, and £5 above the minimum for Nottingham, whither I was bound, I set out on a January morning for my first job as a trained certificated teacher. I well remember that journey. It froze hard. The cross-country journey was long and the trains were not heated. The journey took all day. I arrived in Nottingham long after dark, and grudgingly spent two shillings on a four-wheeler, to the lodgings which had been recommended to me by a thoughtful clerk in the School Board office. Even a four-wheeler was above my status, and two shillings was recklessness; but I could not carry the tin trunk which held my books and clothes.

It was a Saturday night; the fat little Scottish landlady welcomed me with a specious cheerfulness, and her thin, old, bearded, useless husband, the traditional McNab of the contemporary comic papers, helped feebly to carry my trunk upstairs to a bedroom which was at least more spacious than any room at home. The lodgings were clean, but cheerless; and I shared a sitting-room with a bank clerk much older

than myself. There was, however, the prospect that my great college friend would come within a month, for he too had been engaged by the Nottingham School Board. The bank clerk, like the landlady, was a Scot, and a real good sort, kindly and helpful. And as I thawed over none too bright a fire and a cold supper, my spirits, lowered by the long, cold journey, revived.

I confess that I looked forward to the renewal of teaching work with little enthusiasm. I was shy. In this town, ten times as large as my native town, where I had known most people, I knew nobody. The noisy collective college life was gone for ever. What would this school and its teachers be like? Should I succeed or fail? I was full of foreboding. Next morning the Scottish bank clerk went out to spend his day with friends; and though I was interested to explore this ancient and famous town, solitary rambles on an English Sunday cheered me little. But necessity is necessity. This or nothing was my start in life. I spent part of Sunday, therefore, locating the school, and measuring, in time, its distance from my lodgings.

Thus, on Monday morning I walked the mile or so to the school, and arrived in ample time. The school was a survival from the pre-School Board period when most churches and chapels ran a denominational school, or an undenominational 'British School'. This one had been attached to the big Unitarian Church of the town, but though still conducted in old and scandalously unsuitable buildings behind the church, it was now a Board School, and a 'Higher Grade' school at that. For the Unitarians are the most respectable of 'connections', and in that day

were still one of the wealthiest as well as the most intelligent. The school was 'select', and in the days of school pence had been a sixpenny, not a twopenny or threepenny school. It was, therefore, one among the three or four 'Higher Grade' Schools in the town, and perhaps the most famous of them; for famous, at least in the local sense, it was. The educated middle-class public has no notion how famous some 'Board Schools' were. Grown men to-day will talk of Ithaca Road, or Stenhouse Street School with insolent pride. It was because the school was 'Higher Grade' that I was paid £5 a year more than the ordinary teacher of my standing.

Its fame was due at least in part to the head master, long since dead, whom we will call James Walter, as his surname was a not uncommon Christian name. And at 8.50 a.m. on that January morning in 1894, I saw the great man for the first time. In his way he *was* a great man. He must then have been well over sixty. There were no pensions in 1894. He was tall, rather corpulent, had thinning iron-grey hair brushed well back, and a close-cropped beard which concealed the determined, rather brutal jaw. He was intellectually able. He had snatched but a few months' training in the old Borough Road College, but had industriously acquired a London degree, and, by a series of accidents, a really good working knowledge of French of which he was inordinately proud.

At our first interview he was as pleasant as nature allowed him to be. He told me he had had a very good account of me, and he did his best to be friendly and encouraging. But even in this moment I felt I was not his sort. He introduced me to my future class, which was a mixed class of boys and girls, and

the highest save one in the school. I had never taught girls before, still less boys and girls together at the difficult age of nearly fourteen. I was somewhat dismayed. Most of the rest of the staff introduced themselves to me; except for one dark-eyed, red-cheeked girl, the only ex-P.T. on the staff, they were all much older than I was. I was twenty-one; the next in age save the ex-P.T. was probably over thirty, including the able, business-like, clever, blue-eyed woman who was the fiancée of the soft-spoken, adequately self-assured first assistant, then at least forty. He, as the reward for fifteen thrifty years of respectable and respected, self-controlled, and staid attention to business, had permitted himself to be captured by this rather charming and very competent blonde of thirty. This couple were indeed so efficient at the job of filling pupils with information from 9 to 12 noon and from 2 to 5 p.m. (for, as a 'Higher Grade' school we worked an extra half-hour) that they were indispensable, and could be lectured and bullied only at the rarest intervals. On the whole they got on quite well with Mr. Walter. Others, I soon discovered, did not. The engaged and super-competent couple could tolerate Walter. But no one else could. I got no time to find my feet or to settle down. As a pupil teacher I had the prestige of years of success in the old school. Last month I was one of the top men of my college, liked by the powers above me, and by my contemporaries, and holding offices of a certain dignity. Here I was nobody. I had to teach more than fifty boys and girls every subject of the curriculum, and a 'Higher Grade' curriculum at that: this I expected. But I was also condemned to hold them down by an iron discipline, with no backing

from the head. Indiscipline of the pupil—an indiscipline measured by his standards—was in his eyes the fault of the teacher, and his only. There is enough truth in this doctrine to make it specially unpleasant to a lonely novice, friendless, and always too prone to self-criticism. I began to fear failure: certainly I lost self-confidence, and was much afflicted by the melancholy of youth, which I then thought was peculiar to me, though, of course, it is a very common complaint of people at my then age, thrown friendless into new and formidable surroundings.

This pessimistic melancholy was probably the root of my half failure. Two or three of the staff confided to me how they hated 'the old man'; how he was on the look-out for any sign of failure or weakness; how I could expect no support: the children and their parents would always be right, and these were chiefly, not the hardy artisan parents whom I had known, but the little bourgeoisie of a large town. I set my teeth and tried violently to master the situation. But my spiritual condition grew worse. I succeeded only in part. In many things I could interest the pupils. One or two boys, however, could torture me with silent insolence, and one or two girls could sail off with an indefinable impertinence; for they were by instinct past masters in the art of knowing how far they could go without being culpably and provably wrong. I see now that I was far from incompetent, and that patience would have solved the situation. But in my old school and in the practising schools I had been successful in no tentative sense; and the most I could claim here, even of an indulgent judge, was that I was not a complete failure. I suffered anguish, as, with a too-anxious introspection, I

reflected that, at the outset of independent life, I was little good. The last half-hour of the afternoon often saw me dead tired. And not the sympathy, sometimes expressed crudely in words, oftener in friendly gestures and the little friendly acts of most of the staff—not these could free me from my forebodings or salve my shattered pride. This hard time was, of course, what is called ‘a salutary experience’. And I have never forgotten it when dealing, as in later years I have so often had to do, with half-successful young teachers, especially with those whose partial failure largely arises from the very sensitiveness which redeems them from the commonplace, and may enable them (if temporarily they can be saved) to be artists rather than competent craftsmen.

Work in school, therefore, was one long, irritating grind. The boys and the girls played their respective tricks upon me. I could have managed either, I think. I could not manage both. I felt there was no justice in the situation, and little in the world. The penalties of failure would be terrible. My elder brother was married, on an artisan's wage. At home my father was worn out and rapidly ageing—a fact which I felt subconsciously rather than clearly realised as an objective fact. I knew the continuous and bitter struggle which went on in the home where there were still two dependent sisters, one training as a singer and earning odd shillings by teaching music at fifteen shillings a quarter, the other a pupil teacher needing to be respectably dressed and well fed on a wage of ten or twelve pounds a year. If I failed, where were they? All this was added to the *welt schmerz* of a youth reduced from the dignity of leadership in a collegiate life to the junior place in a hard school

where he was almost a failure, where friendliness, inspired by pity, of some of his elder colleagues, especially two of the women, was as bitter in its cause as it was kindly in its intention. The two women were both my elders. If they still live they are well over seventy. I hope the world was kind to them, and that they are now the most charming of God's creatures, kindly, tolerant, intrepid old Englishwomen.

If the day in school was almost invariably black and passed in straining hard against a collar which I thought would never be unloosed, there were compensations. My college friend had come to Nottingham, had a comfortable job in the quite tolerable atmosphere of the Daffodil Hill Board School. He shared our lodging, so that there were now three of us in the dingy little sitting-room with its skimped winter fires, whilst he and I shared a bedroom. He returned from school half an hour before me. And, except when the great settling days came along, Logan, the bank clerk, was 'home' before me too. We had great discussions at 'tea' over a boiled egg or a kipper. My friend and I talked at one another, chaffed and abused one another for the delectation of Logan. When we had a spare shilling or two we went to the theatre, or to a concert. We had sworn to settle down to study and to complete our London (external) degrees, but we did no such thing. We just talked and walked, and did such school preparation as was inevitable.

We were sufficient for one another. No woman disturbed our friendship. On Saturday afternoons there was always the football match, for at that time both 'The County' and 'The Forest' were in the first league. I can see David Calderhead to-day as I

write, tall, slim, imperturbable, always in the right place, the very pivot of the County Team, and, again, the little thick-set Adam Scott in the red shirt of the Forest repelling the raiders of Aston Villa. It was good fun and a healthy interest; and from Friday night till Monday I could forget old, bearded, teak-bodied, bull-necked Walter with his corrugated parchment face and the wretched over-driven school. Sundays we spent as a rule in long walks. It was easy to get into the country, and the Trent Valley was not without its beauty. We stayed in Nottingham for the Easter holidays, for my stable companion had only 'joined up' in the middle of February, and his home was as far North as mine was South. Then, as May came in, there was another resource, as to which I was then as lyrical in feeling, but not in utterance, as Mr. Neville Cardus now is—namely, cricket. By the commencement of the cricket season I had determined to leave my school if I could, so I joined no cricket club, and, indeed, could afford neither subscription nor outfit. But these were the last great days of Notts supremacy in cricket. Arthur Shrewsbury, though beyond his prime, was not yet a spent force. The great and graceful William Gunn was still at the height of his powers at the wicket and in the field. Barnes had gone; but there was the cunning Attewell, and the great, lumbering Wilfred Flowers with a face like the setting sun, and fat Mordecai Sherwin, who 'feared nowt', not to mention H. B. Daft and Johnnie Dixon. And when county matches came to an early close, some or all of these great men would play on Saturdays for Notts Castle against local teams—Lord help them!

Somehow, we got books. How precisely I do not

remember, except that some, like Shakespeare and the poets, we owned—and read. Some, like Emerson and Carlyle (in whom we believed!), we had won as prizes or bought in cheap editions. By one means or another we did enjoy, in a certain measure, an intellectual life of sorts. For, though my soul was possessed with bitterness, and I was haunted by the fear of failure and the chagrin of a wounded self-respect—or vanity—against this background, I held on.

But not for long. The daily tyranny was becoming unbearable. I had started wrong, and my present class, with the undiscerning and ingenuous cruelty of boys and girls, perceived my uneasiness and lack of confidence, and up to certain limits (prescribed by the skill I have already described) they did their innocent best to make my life a misery. My classroom was at the extreme limit of the upper floor of this bad old school building, and beyond an outside stone staircase was the head master's detached little room, the room in which, by a comfortable fire, he spent most of his time with the newspaper or with his thoughts, emerging perhaps twice a day (having finished the clerical work which was practically the only work he did) with a cylindrical black skullcap over his bald head to walk round the school and nag at those who were naggable, of whom, of course, I was one. But if he required attention in his room he struck the gong which decorated his table, and I, as the assistant whose room, or half-room, was nearest the old man, was expected to run down to see what he wanted.

One afternoon he had remonstrated with me on the slow progress of my class in French, and on the fact that the visiting French mistress found my class

difficult. She was an old lady whose appearance and manners would have disturbed any class but the most highly disciplined in the presence of their master. On both counts, of course, I was guilty, though I could truly have pleaded extenuating circumstances. But he had left me sulky and smouldering, and, the *malaise* of self-depreciation forgotten, ready for a row. The spirit and blood of one and twenty asserted itself, and I was primed for conflict. The bell rang. I was busy expounding something to a class which, for the moment, was evidently interested. I took no notice of the bell. It rang again. Again I ignored it. Within a minute or two the old man entered, in a condition best described as sitting on the safety-valve. "You heard the bell, Mr. Spencer," said he, with what calm he could command. "Of course," said I. "Very well, Sir, and will you please come to my room at the interval?" "Certainly," said I. The class buzzed with suppressed excitement. I had defied the famous Walter; and whatever the ultimate result, my prestige had gone up—at least temporarily. We met in his room a little later; and we had the kind of interview which might be expected. His fury grew; he accused me roundly of incompetence and added impertinence to the charge. Part of my courage had evaporated, for I was a young man at the outset of life; he was an old man at the end of a successful career of its kind. But only part had gone. I denied the incompetence, attributed what element of truth existed in the charge, in part at least to the environment he himself had created, said I would answer no more bells, and that, as evidently we were incompatibles, I would go. He hardly liked this. I was not the first to go after a relatively short stay; and he

had some inkling of the fact that the School Board clerk was getting a little uneasy. But I was, at least, firm in my intention, and saw that a longer stay might bring worse consequences. I had no place to go to. Fortune, however, plays a strong hand in most of our lives, and I had a stroke of good luck. It was within a few days of the Whitsuntide holiday, and there are two Englands, one North of the Trent, the other South. In the North, Whitsuntide means a week's holiday. My friend and I, therefore, journeyed to London (having spent Easter in our lodgings) and went to the College Reunion, which was, and still is, held on the Saturday of the Whitsun week-end. There one of my old chums, whose father was a head master in Woolwich, or, to be more precise, in Plumstead, told me that the old man wanted an assistant. I jumped at the chance. The old man saw me; and subject to the managers' approval, which I guessed would, in his case, be formal, I was promised the job, to start within five weeks. Mercy of mercies, I should only be out of a job for a week! I returned to Nottingham in good spirits, and worked out my notice. The clerk to the School Board sent for me and tried to get out of me my precise reasons for leaving. I could not deny that I had been uncomfortable, in this, my first school, but naturally I said as little as I decently could. I left with the outspoken congratulations of half the staff on so rapid an escape, and the discreet good wishes of the rest. I had a week's holiday (or unemployment) at home, and, early in July 1894, after a stay of almost exactly six months in Nottingham, I emerged in the dusk of a summer evening from Woolwich Arsenal Station into the dirty, cheerless streets which surround it.

CHAPTER VII

WOOLWICH AND FAREWELL

THE smoke-begrimed, sickly yellow bricks of the semi-slum adjacent to the station were no inspiring sight. But to a teacher the school is what matters, and I consoled myself that things might be better, and could not easily be worse. Not every escape from a frying-pan is into a fire. Things *were* better. My new head master, old George Webb, to give him his true name and to record it with respect and gratitude, was both a Christian and 'a character'. He was what he looked to be, a stalwart old Kentish yeoman who had emerged into school-mastering and local public life. He was short, sturdy, and rotund. His face was fringed with that truly rural beard which in the 1890's still so often framed the firm jaws of the shepherd or the ploughman. Out of the leathery rotundity of his face there peered a little, hawk-like nose from between two intelligently luminous grey eyes. He must have been seventy. He had been a rural pupil teacher less than twenty miles into the Kentish hinterland at Eynsford. Sometime in the 1840's he had had three months' training at the inevitable Borough Road. He had been one of the earliest head masters under the London School Board; for Plumstead, incongruously enough, was and is politically, though not socially nor economically, part of London. Erect and healthy, brimming with good humour and

vitality, with a head full of gospel, teetotalism, drains, and free libraries, he looked good enough for ninety.

He was the typical nineteenth-century Liberal-Nonconformist teetotal non-smoker. But he was a merry soul. He ran his school comfortably, never teaching himself, and seldom interfering with those who did, and his real interests were his Sunday sermons—for he was a local preacher—and the local politics of the Plumstead Vestry, of which he was the Liberal or 'Progressive' leader, and of which he had been chairman.

His school lost nothing by his *laissez-faire* policy with his staff. For his staff was a thoroughly sound one, except for me, who came to its membership after self-confidence, never too prominent in my make-up, had been thoroughly shaken. The whole tone of the place was cheerful, however, and I felt that, at least, I should have a fair chance. I gathered myself together and had a go. I was given the top class in the school, small in numbers, but far from bad in quality. I took trouble with them, and I was young enough to play games with them: at this season of the year cricket on an asphalt playground with wickets chalked against a wall and a gutta-percha ball! Later in the year I took charge of the football, for no one else had any interest in the games, and on many a Saturday morning, and in the early evenings until the late November days grew too short, I did my best to keep them up to the mark at soccer, on the gravelly Slade Common some fifteen minutes' uphill walk from the school.

So I began a period of about five reasonably happy years teaching ordinary boys of one 'Standard' or another in an ordinary Board School. I saw the end

of payment-by-results and the examination system; for by this time, 1894-5, examination was no longer individual, but by sample. My last experience of its inelegancies and terrors was witnessing the examination of our VIth and VIIth Standards in history by an able H.M.I., who retired not so many years ago. He had been sent to the Greenwich Division of London (of which we were a part) to act as an emollient in place of a regular old Tartar who had driven all the teachers of the neighbourhood into almost open rebellion. The new (and nice) man was a Cambridge mathematician, and I remember how my heart sank to hear him examining orally our two top classes in history. He had no notion of how to question boys of thirteen, and though he meant to be genial, his very presence, and the social gulf which separated the plane on which he lived every part of his life from *their* plane were quite enough to stupefy them. And it did. Fortunately he was conscious of this lack of touch, and he asked us to try our hands, and of course the class responded quite decently. This was due almost as much to the mere fact of our social propinquity to them as to our skill.

So the five years went on.

A new régime of liberty in the schools and the substitution of inspection for examination were beginning. The old hands suspected it, though as a body, through their Union, they had advocated the change. As individuals some of them openly preferred an examination system with its definite evidence of 'success' or failure, and its annual and well-notified recurrence, to the casual and unannounced visits of inspection. That the change has been enormously

to the benefit of popular education, however, there can be no doubt. And the new system has enabled the inspector, in the normal case, to become the trusted adviser, if the friendly critic, of the teachers.

The interest of my life, such as it is, arises chiefly because I represent a class now moribund and never to be reproduced. That class, however, I think, deserved well of its fellows, and some record of it should be made. Hence I set down only those incidents and personal happenings which have a representative character.

The school itself was affected not unimportantly by the sudden and lamentable death of old George Webb. I was grateful to him and to his kindly household for much good company and good cheer. Besides their elders there were one son (now also dead) and several daughters at home. All the eligible ones were already engaged to be married, so that I could enjoy their fun, indeed their wit, as well as their high spirits, without danger of capture. They were to me, indeed, sisters, with the added piquancy of non-relationship. And one of them, when I went to supper of an evening, as I sometimes did, always bade me farewell by pointing to the door, and quoting "Out! Damned spot." Young George was mad on Irish terriers, used to buy half-a-crown's worth of rats for Saturdays, and, though I took only a qualified pleasure in the proceedings, I often helped him in training the terriers to bring the expensive rats to a bloody and mangled end. But old George fell ill with bronchitis. One night he reached to a shelf for his bottle of medicine, but his uncertain hand selected instead a bottle of liquid ammonia. He drank it, and died. It was a tragedy, and the jolly, kindly

household was never the same again. Viewed selfishly, its principal effect on me was to bring a new head master to the school, a man in his early forties, no transcendent yokel, but a real Cockney-pseudo-gentleman, with a large ginger moustache and sandy hair. He was embellished with all the daily dignity of a frock coat and a top hat. He was not a bad sort; he was technically a good schoolmaster; and we got on pretty well, but he was no 'character' like old George. Nor was he a force in the neighbourhood, for he lived miles away from the school, illustrating one of the chief drawbacks of London education. He had a flair, of a kind, for music, he was a competent draughtsman, though no real artist, and he had a good eye for the main chance. The change of heads was, on the surface, good for the school, for the new man was a modernist. But the change of tone and spirit was far from entirely good. He got on pretty well with the old hands on the staff, and indeed with me. But the school was reduced to the commonplace; and we became good artisans who did not quarrel very much, nor were we more than that.

The Webbs were my only real friends. I met other teachers, of course, but was intimate with none of them. I was still shy and (it sounds a little priggish, but it is true) they were without intellectual interests and indifferent to the things I was more and more coming to value. Moreover, I wanted to complete my degree. Hence I lived in rooms alone. They were excellent rooms. For ten-and-sixpence a week I had a bedroom and sitting-room all to myself in the house of Mrs. Champion; God bless her! If this book is ever read, the mention of Mrs. Champion

will be justified. I was her only lodger. She was well over seventy, had saved a little money, and she desired no more than one man to look after—a light job. She had been a lady's maid in a great family, had married an artisan—rather a come-down—had been widowed fifteen years before I appeared, and had let rooms to teachers for all those fifteen years. She looked after me better than a mother, because less sentimentally. No meal was ill-cooked: in fact, she first exhibited to me what English cooking at its simple best could be; no sock was undarned, and (humiliating memory that she should ever have cleaned my shoes!) no shoes shone with such a lustre as mine then did. She was quiet, dignified, no gossip. And what a pleasure it was, when her brother, a tall, thin old gentleman of seventy, just like the Squire Goddard of my youth, came to pay a visit! His manners may have been servant's manners: but they were fine; and no living person could have taken a liberty with him or with her. She was a kind, efficient, honest Englishwoman of the type, I think, impossible to find outside the southern part of this island, and she liked me because I had the habit of a cold tub every morning, and ate largely on Sundays of her prune-and-apple tart—luscious memory!

In these quiet lodgings I could work. I did work: better and harder than in my college days. My contemporaries, or the more intelligent and industrious of them, were busy getting the external degrees of the University of London, then, solely, an unredeemed and unreformed examination syndicate. So I started to work for my Intermediate London B.A. There was no place within reasonable reach of Woolwich

where I could get any tuition. Family affairs in Swindon were in no flourishing condition; my father was approaching sixty and, never physically robust, he was still compelled to turn out before half-past five on cold and raw winter mornings, and to stand at his lathe from six o'clock in the morning until half-past five at night. I had to help a little at home when I could, and my salary was now the gorgeous sum of £95 a year, rising by £5 annually. I think I could have scraped together a correspondence college fee, and thus enlisted the unrivalled services of Mr. Brigg's University Correspondence College. That flourishing institution drilled many able teachers for the London degree parade, and thus opened up careers to lots of praiseworthy people of my calling and estate. It was partly poverty and partly pride which caused me to reject their services. So I worked by myself. I had done little Latin, and no Greek. I tackled the Greek Grammar from an old-fashioned book, bought of course second-hand, and later I ploughed my way, somehow, through a book of Xenophon and a play of Sophocles, and I started on Horace, *Odes and Satires*, and tackled Arnold's *Latin Prose*. It was hard going. Then there was the mathematics; not more advanced than I had done years before as a pupil teacher studying for South Kensington certificates, but on different lines. There was the English, too, dusty old books of Dryden which interested me not at all, and Hudibras, which was more entertaining, but quite irrelevant to life in Woolwich in the 1890's. Moreover, I was diverted from the examination path, perhaps all too readily.

The Labour movement was in its infancy, Keir Hardie and Philip Snowden were heard in the land.

The *Clarion* was in the hands of Robert Blatchford and sounded its weekly call to the working people. I used to wander about on Saturday nights and Sunday nights listening to the local I.L.P. orators. I never joined the I.L.P. Had I been an artisan I probably should have joined. But between the college-trained certificated assistant master and the orange box there was then an inhibitory gulf. The spirit of the orators, if not always their arguments, appealed to me, but the traditional respectable Liberalism of my family still held me.

Gladstone and the Irish question were still, in 1894-5, the things which interested people of my origins, affected though I was not only by the street orators, but also by vague hearings about mysterious folks called Fabians. Then the University Extension Movement reached Woolwich. The first lectures which caught my attention were to be on Economics by J. A. Hobson, a man I shall always remember with affection and respect. I had been in this movement at Swindon as a boy. Never a good crammer, the vision of a degree which would pay me receded a little, though vanish it did not. So I joined the University Extension class of some sixty to eighty people, and wrote papers, chiefly on Sunday evenings, for J. A. Hobson. This was a real intellectual discipline, besides giving me the sense that I was now working at something that mattered. The lecture audience was of course heterogeneous. It included a few officials from the Arsenal, a few officers from the garrison, more of their wives or daughters, and a majority of workmen from the Arsenal, closely akin, of course, to the Swindon people among whom I had lived my first eighteen years.

The leader of this movement was C. H. Grinling, still living (I hope) at Woolwich, an Oxford man, who, without renouncing his orders, had resigned his curacy. After a period at Toynbee Hall, he was trying to organise social service, and to promote intellectual life on a non-party, non-sectarian basis in Woolwich and Plumstead. I became one of his disciples, and, to a limited extent, one of his helpers. I am glad and proud that I did. A little circle of us, who included, besides myself, a staff sergeant of the R.A., the assistant secretary of the local Co-operative Society (now, I believe, one of the leaders of the hierarchy at the Wholesale Society), a moulder, and a working engineer (fitter and turner) also prominent in the Co-operative Society, used to go to Grinling's house on Sunday mornings to read, at one period Browning, at another Walt Whitman. When winter ended we five or six banded together to read economics, at the house of the Co-operative Secretary facing Plumstead Common. Better trained as I was, I took the lead in these studies of Alfred Marshall and the rest, not forgetting the *History of Trade Unionism*, which the Webbs had just projected into the world of academic political economy. Anyhow, we went on, and we were eager for learning, especially on the topics which underlay our political interests. Incidentally I took the University Extension examination and gained a 'scholarship' which took me, for a fortnight, to the Summer meeting at Oxford. There I saw young John Simon (a very tall handsome man) take the chair at an imitation meeting of the Oxford Union, and heard a fair, curly-headed Michael Sadler, full of enthusiasm, say that no more Giotto's should be left upon the hillside! How many, if not on the hillside, are still in the slums!

With these interests and preoccupations my 'swotting' for the B.A. suffered. Moreover, I became convinced that doing Greek and Latin in solitude and for examination purposes was a poor business. I had met scholars. Withers, my last Principal, was a real scholar; and F. H. B. Dale, whose acquaintance I had made during a week-end at Borough Road, had swept all the University classical scholarship into his net at Oxford. To the astonishment of Jowett, he had become a tutor in a Training College and had actually chosen a career in popular education. I realised well enough that my solitary ploughing through a Greek play or two, and parts of a few Latin authors, while difficult enough for the solitary student, was probably as fruitless for me as it was laborious. I abandoned it, though I am glad I spent some time on it, and began to look round for some other avenue of degree work which would give me what was still a coveted distinction among teachers in elementary schools. I wanted something which would be a really significant line for a solitary and now adult student of twenty-three or more. I hit on law; I started working for the law degree of London. My motives were doubtless mixed. Economics and economic history had become the subjects of my choice. I had taken political economy as an optional subject in my second year at College. I had been lectured to on the subject by an Oxford don, in what were now the old days at Swindon; and now I had embarked on serious study at Woolwich, inspired and, at first, directed by J. A. Hobson, liberal, clear-headed, somewhat unorthodox in opinion, but, above all things, lucid, disinterested and illuminating. He viewed the demand for a freer economic life, a more widespread social justice in the driest of dry

lights. But there was no degree in economics. Not to have a degree was from the professional point of view to acknowledge an inferiority to the rest of my professional fellows, an inferiority which, in a quiet way, I did not feel. I started work then on Maine's *Ancient Law*, and old John Austin's voluminous *Jurisprudence*, on constitutional law and history and on the Institutes of Gaius and Justinian, for which my imperfect Latin was sufficient. On nights other than those of the University Extension lectures I worked at these things with a good deal of industry because with considerable interest. I used to get home to Mrs. Champion's from school about five. I had a not very high tea. I read Shakespeare or occasional novels from five-thirty to six, and from six to nine most nights I floundered along, alone, through the law books, English and Roman. At nine I had supper. And after supper I took a longish walk, generally a circular stroll which included Woolwich Common. Then, after another period of reading, chiefly of miscellaneous books from the Co-operative Society's Library, which was excellent and comprehensive, I went to bed soon after eleven, slept the sound sleep of youth and was back to the Board School, its routine and its very occasional adventures at 8.45 next morning. So the days of this quiet life rolled on. And in a little over a year I had jumped my first hurdle by passing the 'Inter' LL.B. Examination with modest honours in Roman Law. By the end of my second year in Woolwich I rejoiced in a salary of £105 a year.

At this time I had no great ambitions, was conscious of no unusual abilities, was friendly with and mixed with the Grinling University Extension group,

but saw little of them except on one evening a week in winter, and on the Sunday mornings. I saw little of my colleagues at school. I was still on easy terms with the Webbs and went to supper there occasionally; but, by and large, it was a lonely, rather studious, self-contained existence, too quiet perhaps, and too little social to be quite healthy.

Then came a blow which stirred me. I had been home in the summer holidays of 1896. My brother had married, returned south, and was living in his little working-class house in Swindon, after a year or more of work in Manchester and Horwich. My father and mother and my two sisters lived together in one of the Company's houses, rather a more civilised house than our original home, which I have described.

In the summer my father had seemed none too well. But apparently there was nothing seriously wrong. One November day, however, I got a letter from my sister to say that Father was ill in bed. Within a very few days another came to say that he was very ill; they were all afraid. To this day I do not know what the rules of the School Board were: but I told the head I was going home, and I went at once. The old fitter and turner—I say old, but he was only just sixty-one—was in a bad way. He could hardly move; sometimes he recognised none of us. My mother and my sisters did what they could. The old doctor, head of the firm who did all the doctoring for the Company's 'sick society', did all *he* could, and sent his sons and his partners; but little could be done. Acute tuberculosis had seized him,

and a lung had disappeared in no time. I sat up all night, and sent my mother to bed as often as I could, snatching a few hours' sleep in the early morning. But within three or four days my father was dead. Never very strong, a life of constant physical work in factory conditions which were always a strain upon him, if they were not bad for the times, had been too much for him. Family affection and pride probably hastened his death. That we might be respectably clothed he went ill-clad in winter, that we might always have enough to eat (four hungry children) he denied himself the extra nourishment which might have preserved his physique. But he died—died quietly and calmly—just went out. The evening before he died he recognised me, and in his mild delirium it was evident that his last thoughts were for us. Especially for his two girls. In slow and faltering words he dictated a little will to me in which he left each of us three hundred pounds a year! I wrote down something and he signed it, or tried to. Poor man, he had not three hundred pence when his simple little debts were paid. But I like to think that he died in the illusion that we, and especially the girls, were comfortable and safe for life. Safety, in a sense, he had had. He had never been unemployed. It was safety on the poverty line. It is forty years since he died, but even to-day, with life very largely behind me, and with the increasing tolerance of advancing years and the experience of a fortunate and varied life, I cannot think of his life without indignation, even bitterness. Here was a man, delicate, sensitive, with a fine mind, public-spirited, proud, respected by his fellows of all classes. He worked from early morning until the day was done. He never had a week-end

rest in his life except when the factory was on short time and he lost half a day's wages. He worked from the age of fourteen until just over sixty-one, was skilful, steady, reliable. His maximum holiday in any year was ten days without pay. With a wife and four children to raise (and school fees which must have totalled a shilling a week for ten years) his total income for $53\frac{1}{2}$ hours of intelligent work every week averaged under £2, and shillings were deducted if he failed to be at work by 6 a.m. on even one morning out of six a week. Yet his evenings were given to public service of the least ostentatious kind; the Mechanics' Institute and its real welfare was, next after his workman's interest in his skilled job, his absorbing care. His one luxury was a pint of poor beer; it cost twopence halfpenny a pint in those days, and many a time I had fetched it from the 'Artilleryman's Arms', just below, and this pint was divided between his mid-day dinner and his supper. He was a good and affectionate father, almost excessively anxious to see his children concerned with things of the mind. He was conscious that he was a workman, a wage-earner and no more, and that his family were lower socially, had fewer domestic amenities than his people had had for four generations. He was not hard enough to rise in a big factory out of the ranks of the skilled artisan class. And he died. My mother sobbed silently at his bedside, and whispered gently, "Oh, Tom, my dear, dear husband". That was all.

There was £20 insurance money from the Prudential, and, if I rightly remember, some £8 or so from the Yard Club. There were funeral expenses; there were a few odd debts, including the balance of the ancient butcher's bill. My mother had been

paying something on account of this for twenty years, but had never caught up the cost of a too-profuse entertainment of my father's relatives in the 1870's. There were instalments on a watch he had bought for one of us; and there were small sums owing to the Scottish draper, I believe mostly on the college clothes bought for me. The debts were paid at once out of the insurance money; he ended the struggle solvent. The twenty pounds from the Prudential covered them all, and the Inland Revenue does not concern itself with the estates of artisans.

There were consolations. Important officials from the works attended his funeral, and the Council of the Institute, and some two hundred of his fellow-workmen, all losing half-a-day's pay for the purpose. Men came to me and praised him, one implored me to come into the works and see his tool box, left in perfect order. Old Tom Brass, a rough diamond and one of his principal friends, struggle as he might, could not keep the tears from his eyes. It was the first time I had seen a man cry, hard-hearted lad as I was, and he a rough old fitter and turner. It was soon all over. The gathered relatives from Lancashire returned. My mother was stricken and silent. She returned to her housework and her Bible, but she felt the blow secretly and broodingly for the fifteen years and more that she survived him. Nevertheless, I am sure she was a little proud of the evident respect in which her husband was held. There was virtue in a well-attended funeral.

Fortunately my course was clear. There was but one thing to do. I could not come to Swindon; they must come to Woolwich. The shock of death over, I was in high spirits. I would take over the family.

Here was a challenging job. I made the arrangements. Mrs. Champion went to live with a relative. We took her little house in an artisan street in Plumstead, and my mother and two sisters (one just 'out of her time' as a pupil teacher) came to live with me. My sister got a post temporarily in a Woolwich school, though after a few months she went off to a training college at Cambridge. I was then able to repay the cost of my training, by paying such of the cost of hers as was not covered by the Government grant. My two solitary years in lodgings were over. I resumed the Board School teaching, assumed family responsibility, and took up the daily routine of study again.

At twenty-four I had no sense at all that this was other than the ordinary lot of my kind. Things of this sort just happened. My brother was married. I was not. So one took over the job, went ahead and managed. My second sister had a voice and a fine musical sense. She did a little teaching of the piano; she got a very occasional paid job as a vocalist at local concerts, but chiefly she went to London to study singing. By 1897, therefore, when still under twenty-five, I was keeping my mother, supporting a sister at Training College, and helping another sister to learn to sing, on a salary which had then reached £110 a year. We did it somehow, with only an occasional sense of privation, and none of grievance. To-day it seems to me incredible, but, in fact, I could generally find sixpence to see the Arsenal play football on Saturdays; and two or three times in the year I could spend one and twopence on the return fare to Charing Cross and see Irving and Ellen Terry in the Lyceum gallery for a shilling, or Tree as Svengali at the same reckless price. Otherwise, books were accessible in

the public library and in the Co-operative Society's library; there was the open air and pleasant grinding walks out into Kent, and the Church Parade on Woolwich Common with Artillery, horse and foot, Dragoon Guards, and the Lincolnshire Regiment all complete, on Sunday mornings. Then there was always football with the boys, or gutta-percha-ball cricket on the asphalt playground in the summer. I was indeed no sybarite; but I enjoyed life, and was beginning to hope for a larger life than that of the assistant master in the Board School.

I remember only two occasions of complete pennilessness, both occurring at the end of the month, before my £9 of monthly salary was due. On one occasion there was not a penny in the house, and it seemed essential, for some reason which I forget, to have a few shillings. I had a gold tie pin with a tiny pearl set in its circular face. It had been given me by the sister of a school chum at Swindon, the son of the wagon-works manager, for there was no snobbery in Swindon to prevent the friendship. He had died at about fourteen, just as I became a P.T., and his sister gave me a pin for remembrance. I pawned it in Plumstead for five shillings, and was never able to redeem the pledge. I am sure the dead lad would have approved the action, as I am sure my father would have condemned it; and I dare not tell my mother or sister. It was my first and last visit to a pawnshop—to a person of my upbringing a dreadful place.

On the other occasion, owing to the Grinling influence, I was terribly anxious to hear Edward Carpenter lecture. He was the author of *Civilisation, its Cause and Cure*, and, though I expect now forgotten, he was famous in advanced 'ethical' circles in the

'nineties. The lecture was on a Sunday night at the Passmore Edwards settlement in Tavistock Square. I had only twopence in my pocket. I determined to go; so after tea I set out and walked the nine miles or so on the hard pavements from Plumstead to Tavistock Square. When the lecture ended just before ten at night I set out to walk back. Some time before midnight I had reached Charlton on the lower Greenwich road. It was late for me. I had walked some seventeen miles over pavement, so I spent the twopence on the tram back from Charlton to Plumstead, which landed me a quarter of an hour's walk up the hill to home. At the time it was just a mild adventure, and Monday was pay day. I had paid for my 'culture'. It gave me no self-satisfaction then: but it does now.

Chiefly, however, I was interested in the study of economics and political science. And as a result of papers written I was given a scholarship (which merely meant remission of fees) for evening attendance at the School of Economics. And I was now reading law for the final LL.B. exam. Contract and Tort were all right, reasonable, interesting, and understandable from the books. Without any practical experience I found the law of Real Property difficult to master from books, even from the fat ones; but I went on; Evidence was plainly applied inductive logic, and Criminal Law could be comprehended by unassisted reading. Eventually I got the degree.

At one thing or another I still did my three hours' reading on most evenings. I am sure my teaching did not suffer. Not much preparation was really necessary in those days, and I managed to mark the written work in school in the dinner hour, or before

coming home to tea. And I was wise enough not to do too much of this soul-depressing duty.

Of the school itself there is little noteworthy to recount. Ours was an everyday elementary school of seven classes in a poor, but not the poorest part of a working-class town. I was not by any means the best practical teacher in the school. I had not the indomitable zeal, the humourless, grinding industry of A, nor the easy but determined mastery of large classes which was the gift of B, nor the rather lazy, nonchalant command of boys which was the mark of C, a man of six-feet-two, with a Wellington nose and a wife who was a head mistress with social ambitions. C, indeed, was a churchwarden, posed as an aristocrat, letting fall vague hints of a relationship, legal or ultra-legal, to a ducal house. He liked to air his dress clothes, and it was said that he and his wife dressed for dinner in their little five-roomed villa near the Common, and left the blinds undrawn so that plebeians might enjoy the unusual sight of a shirt front. I never saw this sight, and I expect the story was merely *ben trovato*. But he was a very competent teaching practitioner by our standards. All three were undoubtedly more efficient than I was. For I could never impose the rigid discipline which, after the death of old George Webb, became the rule. Nor did it matter much, as I generally had the small top class, where fairly friendly methods were practicable and profitable. But I am sure that when for a year I had Standard III (age about nine years), the teacher of IV could rightly complain that I had been too easy-going both in discipline and the general standard of attainment to make his succession an easy one.

Of course there was one 'character' on the staff.

He was an old man, a thin and meagre, grey-bearded Scot of less than middle height. He was fidgety and irascible and often in ill health. Like Charlie Lionel of my earlier days, and for the same reason—ignorance—he taught the lowest class, poor little chaps of seven just up from the infants' school, and often irritating little imps. It was a large class, and old MacBean was no disciplinarian. He was quite unsuited to teach small children, was incapable of teaching older pupils, was sick of his miserable toil, and thus his only disciplinary weapon was a long and very flexible cane. Sometimes he found the burden of controlling sixty small boys, many of them full of vitality and natural mischief, more than he could bear. His large, cavernous grey eyes lit up with unreasoning fury his anæmic and ascetic face; he shrieked rather than shouted, and he ran amongst them slashing promiscuously, right and left, with his sinuous cane. He did no real physical mischief, but he earned the fiery hostility of some mothers. Most of the little chaps who got a slash across the shoulders took it as all in the day's work; it *was* all in the day's work—part of their social system. But, if one of them got marked, as happened only infrequently, for his blows were seldom concentrated on one small boy, but distributed broadcast irrespective of merits, there might be a row. I remember one.

I was leaving school just after twelve mid-day, when up the narrow stone staircase ran the irate Mrs. Body. She was thin, pale, and probably underfed. One or another of her progeny (poor woman!) was in each class of the school. Some of her twelve surviving children had left school, and some had not arrived. Her husband was an Arsenal labourer on about a pound a

week (and agitating for twenty-four shillings), and how they lived was incomprehensible even to me, who had been brought up on the just under two pounds a week level. Dressed in her tattered black, thin of body, pale of face, with the remnants of a bonnet balanced precariously on her scanty and greying hair, she ran rapidly up the stairs, shouting "Where's old MacBean? I want old MacBean. Just let me get me hands on 'im." I met her on the stairs and arrested her upward flight. "Now, Mrs. Body, what is it?" said I. "I want old MacBean," she continued breathlessly. "Jest let me get me 'ands on 'im." "Come, come," said I, and the oil-pouring business went on in its not unpractised form. In two or three minutes she was calmed. Oh no! she had no business on these premises, she hadn't. Mothers had no rights, they hadn't. Was her boy ever naughty? Don't ask silly questions. A' course he was. How would she like sixty young urchins to deal with at once, especially if she was unwell? "Don't be balmy! Ask me another!" Aw right, she'd go. Oh, yes, she'd go right enough. "That's right, we'll walk down together!" "No, we won't! I'm off, I am. And don't you forget it, next time he whacks my Benjy, it's his fahver wot'll be here, and Gawd help ol' MacBean if he gets a punch in. And as for you, young man," she said, turning on me. "No, you don't whack 'em very much—least, our Billy ain't said nothink about *that*. But wot you want to look after, young man, is your nasty tongue. Thet's 'ow you gets 'em, yer nasty tongue. You look after yer nasty tongue!" She ran off. MacBean's grey hair and straggling beard were momentarily safe. I reflected on a reputation in George Street for a nasty tongue. And I really think

that from that time on I forbore the great temptation to irony and sarcasm which is the more cowardly failing of the schoolmaster. Mrs. Body carried war into my territory. I was a little ashamed, for her indictment was true.

Such was the incident which diverted the dull if benevolent routine of elementary school life in a neighbourhood inhabited by the low-paid but regularly employed. Once I got a fright. These school incidents seem to be turning too often on what is euphemistically called corporal punishment. I must write a little on this topic later. In the meantime I must warn the reader not to infer that we were, as a body, indiscriminate or cruel in the use of the cane. Some of us, indeed, hardly used it at all, even at that date. In classes of fifty, sixty or more, children of elementary school age are not always angelic, and if they see a sign of weakness, they can be cruel. The cane was the sheet-anchor of discipline. But it was no longer in daily use, all the time and by everybody.

I had a big boy in my class, when, owing to some rearrangement, I had temporary charge of boys in the middle of the school. He was nearly two years above the average age; he was stupid and mischievous, and he was trying it on the new teacher. He was a nuisance and a 'bad example'. The boys, though they could not have formulated it, knew the situation. Would the new teacher quell Simpkins or not? If he did, he would be established. If he did not, they would be able to torture him; and why not? He did not look very formidable, though he seemed a pleasant sort of fellow.

Simpkins did his best to upset an oral lesson; what his particular tricks were I do not remember. But I

called him out. He smiled a smile of silent insolence, and I knew the moment had come. I told him again quietly to come out. I could see he was losing confidence, and was shaken by the deliberately quiet manner I adopted. But he could not go back on his defiance, or *he* had lost face for good. He was in the second row from the front. I walked in, collared him by the shirt-neck and the seat of his trousers, kicking and red as he was, and deposited him on the classroom floor. Then I whacked him, instantly and well. What would you have done? A few years later I am sure I should not have resorted to force. I could have managed otherwise; nor do I believe the incident would have occurred at all. But I was young, not completely self-confident, and, *with these lads*, of unestablished prestige. It was all right. I should have no more trouble with *this* class, and that was a relief; for in those rough days the fate of a teacher who, in a boys' school with a roughish clientèle, failed to establish personal authority independent of the head of a school, was, after a struggle of indescribable misery, to have to *go* as a failure. A family was at the moment almost entirely dependent upon me; and I could risk no failure.

Next evening a knock came to my door, and I learned that Mr. Simpkins wished to see me. He came in, and I confess to queer sinkings at the pit of my stomach. Mr. Simpkins, however, turned out to be entirely reasonable. He had come to tell me that his son had been sent up to Guy's Hospital with what were feared to be internal injuries. He called me 'sir', which made me feel uncomfortable. "I know my lad's a little devil," said he. "It take me all m' time to hold him in, sir. I've whacked him m'self many a

time: but you must have given 'im a fair larruping. Can't say I blame yur. I expect he wanted it. But do be careful *where* you 'it 'im next time. 'It 'im on the rump, sir, on the rump. That's the safe place. I thought you ought to know he's been took to the hospital, and if he don't mend it may mean trouble for yur; so I thought yur ought to know. Something internal, y' know. Might be awkward. But I shan't make no trouble. Not if I can help it. But 'it 'im on the rump, sir, next time."

I thanked him heartily and sincerely. I told him that I could hardly believe that an ordinary cane, directed chiefly at the objective he mentioned, could have caused these injuries, that I would go to the hospital to see the boy as soon as possible. If I had done him serious injury, I was very sorry. A soberly conducted conversation ended, and the decent, stalwart workman took his leave, repeating his anatomical adjuration.

I was left in a state of fear. The sinking feelings penetrated to lower depths. Visions of a coroner's inquest rose over the threshold of consciousness. The figure I might cut disturbed me sorely, for I was much more concerned about myself than about my victim. Next day I rushed up to Guy's immediately after school. It was outside visiting hours, but someone gave me access to the lad. I found him in charge of a very firm-looking nurse, who laughed at me. "Caned him, did you?" said she. "I wish to goodness you'd caned him more. His 'internal injuries' mean that he bolts his food in lumps, and must have done it for years. He's a savage, an imp of Satan. Besides, he's not marked *much*. You couldn't have tanned him so very hard. Do it again. And ask him now; ask him

if he can play tricks *here* with *me*." She turned a cold and icily truculent eye on Simpkins, who turned over in bed, uncomfortably. I went again after he was up, and heard the tales of the mischief he tried on when milder-mannered nurses were in charge. But it was clear that the savage bolting of his food was the cause of his illness, and no brutality of mine. In due course he rejoined the class, and gave little trouble any more. It was a bit of luck.

Within a couple of years of my joining the staff of the Plumstead School, the annual examination, even by sample, was no more. We were inspected. To a certain extent the work was done by the H.M.I. But we took little account of his visits. In our district he was an amiable Cambridge mathematician who took a great interest in evening and in infants' schools, but whose inspection of our work, at least as we regarded it, was casual, unobtrusive, and thus, we thought, ineffective. It took the form of a silent entry into the classroom, accompanied usually by a courteous, but not effusive recognition of the teacher's existence by a nod. Then the already portly, middle-aged gentleman would sit on the fireguard, contemplating the ceiling or the middle distance, and, having spent ten thoughtful minutes in that way, he would leave as silently as he had entered, but with no nod. I thought it quite likely that he saw a good deal. His two assistants, however, who came in turn about once a year, each made their presence felt. One of them was a bustling person who got about among the boys, examined their exercise-books, and, with a thoroughness we both respected and disliked, looked into things in a way which could not be ignored. He was himself a good practical teacher of the old-fashioned sort, and

though he was somewhat feared, he was liked. He told you the worst directly and at once; and his verbal comments were always more damnatory than the written reports which, in those days, we always received at the end of the school year. His fellow-assistant was less popular because less direct, or, as we used to put it, less straightforward. He would be complimentary if he could; and if he wished to criticise adversely, he thought it more polite to put an implied criticism in the form of a question than bluntly to say that he thought work was bad or methods inadequate. We thought he was lacking in candour, but probably he was merely timid.

The older teachers disliked these 'visits without notice', though as a rule, unless we happened to be the first school visited in our area, we could date the visits approximately by hearing of visits to neighbouring schools. The time had not yet come when we could regard the visits of inspectors as other than inimical to the teacher; indeed, at that date inspection was a detailed form of examination, and not usually, as later it became, the visit of a friendly and well-informed critic anxious to help by positive suggestion, and able to spread ideas, whether original or acquired.

There is little more to be said about actual teaching as a qualified certificated master. Except perhaps this: there was no kind of specialisation, not even the collective teaching of singing which I had been accustomed to under old 'Shonnie' when I was a pupil teacher. Besides teaching a little French, and some elementary mathematics to the top VIIth and Ex. VIIth class, which, as I was supposed to be the 'young intellectual' of the staff, was mine more often than not, I taught everything to them and to lower classes during

my short service in the middle of the school. This meant arithmetic and English (grammar, composition, reading, dictation, spelling—all still regarded as separate subjects), geography and history, drill (still the only form of physical education, though it developed into barrack-yard physical jerks of a long-discarded type), science, with experiments which by no means always succeeded, and drawing (done in my later years at this school with coloured chalks on sheets of brown paper), Scripture, singing (though I never really attained the facility with tonic sol-fa, which was the accomplishment of most of my colleagues)—everything, in fact. It was gruelling work in the middle school, with fifty to sixty boys of all ranges of ability. For as yet we had not dared to vary from annual promotions, and the clever boys were kept droning through work they had already mastered. There were always two or three, or even half a dozen really able and intelligent fellows in each class who could profitably have been promoted in six months or less. The change from this kind of thing to the organisation of a good elementary school of to-day is amazing. Of that the public can rest assured. A good elementary school to-day is incomparably better than it was a generation and a half ago, better disciplined by better methods, better taught and better managed, and at least twice as effective in all that matters.

Perhaps here it will be convenient if I preclude the possibility of misunderstanding about the caning of boys in these schools at this time. That there was plenty of it, and some not too vicious but sometimes quite hearty ear-boxing, no truthful man who lived through it could deny. Every teacher (against the rules, of course) had a cane in his desk, and some used

that illegitimate cane daily. Of course only a minority of the canings were entered into the punishment book, as by regulation they all should have been. Of the seven masters in this school, two, owing to their personality, used the cane very little, though even they would cane for bad, and especially for persistently 'careless' work, as they called it. Two used it a lot. That is to say, it was their normal means of dealing with offences of all kinds. The other three, who included myself, used the cane with fair regularity: that is, we probably caned very mildly—one stroke—one or two boys every working day of our lives. It was a ritual rather than a punishment.

To infer from this that the teachers in elementary schools of that day were brutal or cruel would be quite wrong. I spent five years as an assistant in this very typical elementary school, and over four years as a pupil teacher in a much larger and a better school in Swindon. I remember no case of brutality. Most of the canings were one 'cut' on the hand, and were more symbolical than anything else. Even when two 'cuts' were given, and given with the intention that pain should be felt, the pain was not considerable. The 'Charlie' of my boyhood and 'old MacBean' of more mature years would be indiscriminate, and MacBean, when he lost his temper, which the dashing 'Charlie' seldom did, might be vicious; but he was ineffective. The large mass of canings were really more ritual observances than anything else. Talking in class was a definite offence. For this offence the recognised punishment was 'one cut'. And few boys took it other than as just an incident in the daily round.

Even in my time in the elementary school, which ended in 1899, the amount of punishment of this kind

was diminishing; and as the old annual examination became merely a memory, caning for mere inability to get sums right or to spell gradually disappeared. This process has been continuous. And in many elementary schools now a cane is hardly ever seen. For eleven years between 1923 and 1934 I visited elementary schools in London almost always without notice. I am sure I have walked unannounced into at least a thousand school departments in that time. On only two occasions have I encountered an actual punishment. In one case it was an unauthorised and plainly wrong punishment by an assistant master who had evidently lost his temper; and it was appropriately dealt with. In the other the head master was in the actual process of punishing a boy in his (the head-master's) room when I appeared unannounced. The punishment was regular and, from the physical point of view, trifling. What was far worse than the cane was the disgrace of the function, for the boy was ashamed of what he had done, and was overawed by the solemnity of the ceremony in the head's private room. My appearance and the explanation which ensued made things worse for the poor urchin.

The normal class in the elementary school is still well over forty. The published averages of pupils per teacher are misleading; for what signifies is not an average which includes a largish number of very small classes necessitated by small rooms in old buildings, and includes also the small schools, in which, for purposes of policy, there are two teachers of one kind or another. What matters is the normal size of a class; the numbers which most commonly occur. This is still forty or over. So long as this obtains, corporal punishment will be retained; and it is a power which

most teachers will agree it is necessary, in existing social conditions, to have in reserve. It is, however, a form of punishment which has practically disappeared from girls' schools and is diminishing rapidly in boys' schools. Personally, after the age of thirty I could not, and therefore did not use it.

It was an upbringing of being punished and witnessing punishment which made it possible for me, up to the age of about twenty-eight, to be what I will crudely call an average caner. Most teachers in elementary schools, were they released and secluded temporarily from the atmosphere and habit of the profession, would suffer a similar paralysis of the power to cane. I can truly testify that the normal atmosphere of the boys' elementary schools to-day is, usually, a happy and a pleasant one, whilst girls' and infants' schools are in the normal case a joy to see. It is the greatest pity in the world that more of the general public of all classes never see the schools in action. Visit a good infants' school at once, and you will feel a better man, or a happier woman.

CHAPTER VIII

RESEARCH AND THE SIDNEY WEBBS

THE tolerant reader will have inferred that I ceased to be a teacher in an elementary school. I did. I gave notice so as to leave the Plumstead Board School, as it then was, at Easter 1899. And, as a teacher, to the Board School I never returned. Except in my first school at Nottingham I think I can say that I had been in the classroom an average effective member of a school staff; and certainly except 'in parts' not much more than that. As an average teacher I was on good terms with my head and my fellow-teachers. Any claim I had to more than this rested on the fact that I was studious—an inclination which most of my teaching colleagues, who were not studious, respected. I was a loyal trade unionist, and spoke well, I believe, at teachers' meetings, with an air of sagacity beyond my years. In fact, writing as an elderly person who has grown painfully and slowly out of shyness, and is prepared to set himself down on paper as truly as he can, without much regard for appearances, I may say that I have always seemed much wiser than I really am; and I have appeared to be more moderate and reasonable than in my inner soul I was. This is one reason for considerable professional progress and moderate worldly success.

My translation out of the Board School world to other activities was, I think, accidental, in the sense

that, though I was prepared for other things, and had begun to feel that teaching in those conditions was not my especial *métier* (if I had one), the translation might easily never have occurred. People, I believe, greatly underestimate the part which Fortune or, if you like it better, Providence plays in our lives. We walk to the right, and something happens which affects all our future earthly life, and perhaps the next one also. We walk to the left, Fortune behaves differently, and we go on monotonously, and perhaps quite happily, upon our original route.

It so happened that for two sessions in 1897-8 and thereabouts Graham Wallas was the University Extension lecturer in Woolwich. He lectured on political science. I attended his lectures, just as I had been to J. A. Hobson's, and to Philip Wicksteed's before. I wrote him papers, as I had written them papers. For the study of politics and of economic thought and literature, outside the preparation for a Law degree, was my chief interest, an interest born of the family tradition. So I came to know him; or rather—for the initiative was on his side—he came to know me. He would ask me to walk down to the Arsenal station on what must have been his weary journey home. We talked of history, of the condition of the working-classes in a typical industrial town like Woolwich, and of the work in and problems of the elementary school. For Wallas had again become a member of the London School Board, and had helped to organise a Progressive victory, under the leadership of that enthusiastic old fire-eater, Lyulph Stanley, afterwards Lord Stanley of Alderley. Graham Wallas was chairman of the School Management Committee of the School Board, its most

important executive committee. The tradition of the School Board was that the members, especially the Chairman of Committees, did administrative work of the kind done, and rightly done, by Civil Servants in the central government. This tall, benign, Oxford rebel, for in revolt against his cultured past he then was, worked eight hours a day in the old School Board office. One night he asked me if I would organise the supply of flowers and plants to the schools: material for art lessons, for Nature study and the like. A movement to use 'Nature' in this way was commencing. He said he had tried some of the office people, but they were clerks, not administrators, and had shown no gumption in trying to start this new bit of work.

Of course I said I would; though I explained that I knew little about flowers except the common wild flowers of the old Wiltshire countryside. He replied that common sense, not botany, was the issue. The problem was purely an administrative one: how to get the right material from the parks, or other sources if I could find them, regularly and reliably into the schools.

So one Monday morning I found myself seconded for this task. I noticed with a certain naïve surprise that my stock went up at once. The head master became affectionate, and almost respectful. And H.M.I., who came in a few days before I started, and had evidently been told about the job, talked to me in an interested and interesting fashion, instead of entering my room with only the nod of recognition, sitting on the fireguard, and leaving silently, as was his wont. I see now that this was perfectly natural, but it surprised me a little at the time.

The work itself was brief and, in detail, not worth more than a paragraph. I started on the public parks to see what they could provide and how they could provide it weekly for some two thousand four hundred elementary school departments, or a selection of them. The working of the official mind and of the natural man in which it existed interested me vastly. One listened to irrelevancies about the need for plants and flowers in schools: why were they wanted? what about arithmetic? I soon found out how far it was necessary to discuss these sceptical but ill-founded doubts. Finally I got the right idea from the least promising source, a retired old Major-General in charge of one of the Royal Parks, who showed at once a lively interest in the idea of sending his specimens, *his* flowers to brighten up Bethnal Green, Stepney, Bermondsey and Deptford. "A damned good idea," he said and sent instantly for his lieutenant and a gardener. And on the spot we worked out in outline a system whereby a School Board van should visit his park every morning and take away in tinned boxes a load of beautiful things which would otherwise be burnt as refuse. The 'botany box' scheme, as it was soon called, was initiated; most of the L.C.C. and the Royal Parks came in; and the scheme, modified, enlarged and doubtless improved in all sorts of ways, is still in operation; to-day hundreds of schools periodically get their 'botany boxes', which are much more than the name implies.

I found that this was really a trial job. For, a week or two afterwards, the Librarian of the School of Economics, where I still held a 'scholarship', asked me if I would consider working for the Webbs on a

new historical project. They had done Trade Unionism, its history, and its implications. They had taken what they called a holiday, which I subsequently discovered meant that they had circumnavigated the globe and collected on the way all its most forbidding printed documents. Now they were to tackle English Local Government. Graham Wallas, too, casually mentioned this to me; and I have no doubt whatever that he was at the bottom of the suggested change of work; another insight for an innocent and inexperienced teacher into how things are done. And another eternal debt due by me to him! He said, with truth, that it would be worth while, even at a sacrifice, to work in close touch with a first-rate mind, meaning Sidney, for the two of them were not yet regarded as an amalgam. I told McKillop, the Librarian of 'The School', that I would certainly consider it. And he made various kindly but false prophecies about the future, *e.g.*, that Sidney would be Home Secretary in the next Liberal Government. I think this affected me not at all. For one thing, in 1899 it seemed little likely that there would be any Liberal Government; and, so far as I knew (which was not very far), the Fabians and the Liberals were far from cherishing a mutual affection. I was still a Liberal, and there was as yet hardly a Labour member in Parliament: only, I believe, the saint and hero, Keir Hardie, in his famous deer-stalker, and one or two old-fashioned Liberals like Thomas Burt. I had heard Keir Hardie speak in Woolwich, and had been moved by him as I had been moved by great Nonconformist preachers: moved, but far from intellectually convinced by either.

However, one evening early in 1899 I went by

arrangement to see the Webbs at their house in Grosvenor Road, for them a little house, for me a big one. I had seen him before in the distance: I had never seen her. They made a queer impression. The little man tapered to the toes of his beautiful little feet from his massive head, with its great shock of thrown-back hair, the myopic eyes, and the pointed little 'foreign' beard. Thoroughly English as he is, why can't he look like an Englishman? Then there was the vital, handsome wife. If I write familiarly of Mrs. Webb, who must not be called Lady Passfield, as Beatrice, that is not a commonplace familiarity, but the outcome of the respectful affection of nearly forty years. Tall, dark, with great brown Eastern eyes, and beautiful dark hair already greying, her carven, aquiline features and her candid smile, I remember how she struck me, not so much as a beautiful woman (that no one could doubt), but as a remarkable human being. They were certainly uncommon people, not in the least like the very ordinary folks with whom, naturally, I had chiefly mixed; and though by this time I had met a fair number of able people, especially of the University type, the 'don' class and the Liberal dons at that, these two, I realised, were of a more uncommon mould, full of personality. One felt they would say or do something entirely their own, especially Beatrice.

Evidently their intelligence service had been at work. The only question was whether I would come on terms which had no financial attraction, and, indeed, if the term can be applied to so unimportant a person, would involve me in risk. I had no doubts. I would leave safety for this adventure. My mother was at home, one sister was at training college in Cambridge

but would be down in a year; the other sister still did some casual music-teaching and occasional paid singing, not very well paid. They would still be my family, my dear responsibility. Financially, I should be no worse off, nor any better. I took the post at the salary I was then getting in the elementary school, and the salary increment of £5 which was due in a month or so. There was to be an allowance when I travelled for them, a very, very modest allowance; but not too bad from the point of view of one still measuring money by artisan standards.

I felt fully at ease with them at once, and found that I could talk to them easily and naturally. They seemed to me to understand the work-a-day world of my 'class' as well as any not of their class ever do, and far, far better than the best intentioned of the ordinary upper middle class. They seemed to think that I arrived rapidly at an understanding of what they wanted, and their methods of accomplishing it: as indeed I did. So I was to open a research campaign with them at Easter 1899.

On Easter Monday I travelled to Leeds, and, after tramping about a bit, got lodgings, and surprisingly good ones for the money. In the words of the contemporary comic song, I had a rare bank 'oliday. On Tuesday the three of us, by arrangement, attacked, in the Town Hall, the minutes of the Corporation of Leeds. For some four years after that I lived upon minutes and records of vestries, quarter sessions, town councils, manorial courts, upon old newspapers and pamphlets, upon 'Acts Local and Personal', Turnpike Trust Acts, and the doings of Commissioners for Paving, Lighting, Watching and Cleansing. The Webbs' attitude to it all was aptly described by

Sidney, who, at lunch one day in Grosvenor Road (for, like an army, we campaigned in the country in the summer, and went into winter quarters in London), was asked what he would do with a garden. He said he would Pave, Light, Watch and Cleanse it! At the Hampshire haven of peace to-day in his mellow age he has not done that.

It may be said that the Webbs struck a hard bargain with me. My salary was £120 a year, which was what I should have been earning under the School Board during the first year of my service with the Webbs, and no increase was given or expected. The fixed weekly payment for maintenance expenses when travelling just provided for humble lodgings when I was on tour. On the whole it was a business-like bargain for them, and, from the purely financial point of view, a profitless one for me. But I knew well enough that they were not 'rich', they were well started on a life of complete devotion to public causes and to exploration in paths of knowledge, to them absorbing, and to me a good deal more than interesting. Here, at last, was the intellectual life to which this was, for me, the only and the unexpected avenue. I knew I should meet all sorts of interesting people, and I did. And I had an opportunity, such as is open to few, of exploring England and seeing its people. Even a commercial traveller usually has his beat. But my beat was everywhere. The Webbs travelled and investigated during the L.C.C. vacations. The Easter holiday at Leeds was followed by a summer visit to Manchester, whither I preceded them. Indeed, that year I was in Manchester, except for a fortnight's holiday, from Whitsuntide till the end of October, and came back from its moist, mild summer

looking like a fatted steer. After all, it was, or was very nearly, the home of ancestors on both sides, probably for more than three hundred years. And apparently there is something in one's ancestral country, even the most urban and dirt-ridden. I had long stays in Newcastle and Birmingham, in Liverpool, Bristol and Nottingham, and shorter stays in such places as Beverley, Carlisle, Winchester and Marlborough, Exeter and Southampton, Norwich, Ipswich, Aylesbury, Gloucester, Brecon and Taunton, Chelmsford and Preston. In winter we would put in three to five weeks in Brighton or Plymouth or Southampton, starting as soon as the passage of Boxing Day opened town halls, church vestries, or the offices of port-wine-complexioned stewards of ancient manors.

The County Council vacation ended, Sidney would return to London and to his job, spending his mornings at the British Museum digging up pamphlets and disembowelling them on to quarto sheets of excellent paper like a wolf tearing choice but bloody morsels from the bodies of a ravaged flock. He read twice as fast as I did, and took his notes three times as fast. Of course he had the advantage not only of greater natural gifts than mine, and naturally of a more certain sense of what he wanted. Beatrice (fitting first name!) was not quite so mechanically quick; her notes were less extensive as well as much less legible than his or mine. She would always rather write a little digest of what she read than copy *ipsissima verba*. She generally stayed on in the provinces for a week or two after he returned to town. And she was pleasant and friendly, and would get her friends (she possessed friends of all classes

everywhere) to ask me to dinner. And in the smaller places I would smoke in hotel sitting-rooms to cover her then uncommon cigarettes. For the Webbs, imposing, as was right, a reasonable discipline in working hours, were obviously, and without strain, equalitarians in things social. By way of conversation they could give me much: but they let me talk too. Some of my later friends and colleagues would doubtless smile at this, and say they had no choice, which was not then true. I believed, truly, that I could tell them a good deal about 'proletarian' outlook and psychology of which the middle-class Sidney and the governing-class Beatrice could not possibly be seised. If, therefore, I felt, as occasionally I did, that they wanted seven-pennyworth of work for sixpence, I knew perfectly well that they were giving to society about nine-pennyworth themselves.

In the great towns we not only researched in the municipal and parochial, and, if there were any accessible, the manorial records, and in the libraries, but each town was a centre for research in towns and in the country around. From Manchester we 'did' Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne and Rochdale and the like. And sometimes with them (oftener, of course, without) I went to see meetings of all sorts of local governing bodies. They, we, or I interviewed Town Clerks and Clerks of the Peace, Borough Engineers and Medical Officers. Through old college chums, I got to know (from their point of view) the local administration of education. And I began to realise the great part which the 'salarial' played in all forms of local government. There was the Town Clerk who had countered corruption by telling a chairman of Committee that if there was an attempt

to get through a certain contract he would rise in his place in open council and take public exception thereto. There was old Sir Samuel Johnson, Town Clerk of Nottingham, reputed more or less to rule the town, who bought the Company's gas works first and secured authority for the purchase afterwards. He told me of this; and his whole being exuded pride in his Disraelian audacity. The members of Councils were interesting also, from the pale, red-headed enthusiast in Yorkshire, flaming against the local conditions, especially the back-to-back houses in which he was bred, to the well-to-do, cultured Liberal, devoting half the ordinary business hours (he was a solicitor, with a traditional practice, and wealthy) to running education in a cathedral city, and the stout Tory alderman of Bristol who, on business grounds, kept the tramways in municipal hands in his western city and drank whisky ritually from nine to eleven p.m. I believed then, as I believe now, that in spite of manifold imperfections and minor corruptions, the traditional English method of representative government is the most disinterested and the most efficient of any, in the sphere of local as well as of national affairs.

The Webbs had hoped to write a book on the working of contemporary local government. In my time they did not succeed. The nineteenth century did not begin politically until about 1832, when Parliamentary Reform, following by the new Poor Law and the remodelling of local government in the old boroughs, were the signs of the establishment or re-establishment of some approach to political democracy. But in order to understand the nineteenth century they were forced back to the study of eighteenth

century conditions, and in some departments of local life to a much earlier period. The great volumes on the Parish and the County, the Manor and the Borough made a history which, broadly speaking, ended at the *beginning* of the nineteenth century as defined above. As history it was well worth while, for there is now recorded what no one else than they could have recorded. If much of the research was that of their helpers, the books were theirs alone. They, themselves, wrote every word.

I have given some idea of the industry of this remarkable couple, who were, perhaps, more appreciated and understood abroad, and especially in pre-war Germany and the United States, than at home. Their notion of a holiday was a month in Leeds, Manchester or Bristol and five or six hours a day in dusty muniment rooms, whilst their evenings would be spent not uncommonly in dining or interviewing local people concerned with local government in its contemporary or its historical forms. At home in London in the earlier days they would be at work at the British Museum by nine-thirty, and whilst Mrs. Webb would rest, or devote herself to social or family duties in the afternoon, Sidney would be at his committees in the County Hall. In the later period of my service the mornings would be given to the actual writing of the book. This started early. When I arrived at Grosvenor Road (for I was still living with my mother and sister in Plumstead) they were already in full action, and I passed upstairs to my little study on the mezzanine floor, to go on with the filing and arranging of documents and the odd secretarial work which I did at the house. In the *New Machiavelli*, Mr. Wells, in his rather ill-tempered picture of the Webbs,

refers to the pale, over-worked secretary he saw as *he* passed up the stairs. It was I. In fact, I was at the time of sanguine complexion, and no one ever yet succeeded in overworking me, though at election times, no doubt, I overworked myself. But, then, so did Mr. Balfour, one of whose qualities, a natural, useful, self-protective laziness, I possess and cherish. Constitutional laziness with a *capacity* for work is a great gift. Mr. Wells, to judge from the number of the old Kensington 'sciences' he took, and by his admirable, if voluminous writings, is industrious and restless by nature; that is his misfortune as well as his merit.

In fact I enjoyed these years with the Webbs. I loved the travel, the new places, the new faces, the new lodgings (hotels were beyond my means), toilsome as it often was to find them, and unpleasant as some of them turned out to be.

What I enjoyed less, though it provided one with a certain excitement, was running a County Council election for Sidney. This I did three times. We used to take a grimy little office in High Street, Deptford, in the election year. I had a clerk to help me, who was more or less permanently employed by the local Liberal Association. Temporarily he became the paid servant of the Webbs. In the intervals of arranging for the few meetings which Sidney held, for he did not much believe in public meetings, we addressed long envelopes. For Webb at each election wrote a really substantial pamphlet, with portraits of himself and Beatrice on the cover, and this was sent as an election address to each ratepayer. He believed in educating his constituency, and in offering them before each election something at least as solid

as a major Fabian pamphlet, clearly written and with an impeccable array of statistical fact. I am quite sure the middle-class voter regarded this as a compliment, and very often read the document. Even the half-illiterate inhabitants of the poorest parts of Deptford—and these are very poor—were impressed: they were being taken seriously! If they could not understand the pamphlet, Sidney could,* and it was a compliment to get it. And Webb and Robert Phillimore were always returned by large majorities. It is a pity that a majority of M.P.s are incapable of educating their constituents in this way.

We organised the canvassing. This took place chiefly in the evening and on Saturdays for the last two or three weeks before the election day. More important still, we organised the 'fetching up' of voters on the day itself. We had few vehicles and little of the display or panoply of a general election. But we could command large canvassing forces, recruited locally and from town. So we got more people to poll than the other side, which was all that mattered. The Fabians turned up well on these occasions. My election work meant staying at the office, such as it was, from early morning until at least ten every night, but in spite of the fatigue and the distaste which accompany the mechanical side of electioneering, it was fun. For, if in those days the Fabian men of the second and third ranks were a bit solemn and pretentious, the middle-class educated Fabian young women were interesting and sympathetic. On Saturdays Bernard Shaw and Wallas would come

* Two workmen in the 1890's heard the great theologian, Dr. Fairbairn, preach. As they came out one said to the other, "I dunno what he was talking about, but *he* do."

down to canvass, and so would swell friends of the Phillimore family, and some Liberal politicians of the Haldane type, and the then young Charles Trevelyan. With the usual snobbery of the Englishman, I can remember feeling that, if not of the great (though I feel sure my family was older than most of theirs), I was among the great.

Shaw was an effective and, of course, an amusing canvasser. He spent occasional evenings at this work, and, when not a candidate himself (he once stood for the L.C.C., as I shall recount), he always turned up on election day to do some 'fetching up' of voters. I remember one little incident which is probably worth recounting. He had been out on the Saturday morning, interviewing women voters in the more respectable quarters of the constituency, such as Brockley: for it was important to see the women voters in the morning and get them to vote early, before the men came home. He came into the office at mid-day, and there was present the stalwart Secretary of the Club and Institute Union, B. T. Hall, who unfortunately died a few years ago. Hall was a man who spent his life organising men's clubs, and his faith was the simultaneous diffusion of enlightenment and beer. In his view the two things went together: unless beer accompanied enlightenment it would never penetrate the mass. Indeed, he may be right; for the consumption of beer in England is deep-rooted tradition, nowhere stronger than at the old Universities and the Inns of Court, where we must at least assume enlightenment, if we cannot always prove it. Shaw came in and, addressing my dark, bilious, primeval Kentish co-secretary, asked where in Deptford he could get some lunch. "Walk up to

the High Street and just turn right into the New Cross Road," said Dann, my colleague, "and you'll see Pozzi's Restaurant. That's the only place here, unless you prefer a good pull-up for carmen."

"What the devil are you talking about, Dann!" the bearded and beer-minded B. T. interjected, knowing Shaw's vegetarian faith. "Sendin' Shaw to a *I-talian Restarong*! He don't want no restarong. What he wants is a *corn-chandler's*—three doors away in this street." We dissolved in laughter, and Shaw's then beautiful ascetic face with its saintly eyes (as they then were and still may be!) wreathed into smiles. Where he got lunch I cannot say, being much engaged in directing two enthusiastic girls from Newnham to the mean streets from which they proposed to entice voters to the poll.

So the election went on; and by the count (for which I had to organise a discreet and respectable band of scrutineers) I was generally healthily tired. However, we always won, partly because the respectable Nonconformist vote, much of the High-Church vote, and most of the slum vote, was then Progressive.

What should have been my third election campaign (for the agent or organiser always thinks of an election as *his*, candidates being a necessary cog in machinery) petered out, for no opposition candidates stood, and Webb and Phillimore were returned unopposed. As soon as we had the good news that there were to be no opposition candidates, we packed up our organisation and descended upon south-west St. Pancras, where Shaw himself, on his only attempt to become a county councillor, was standing as a Progressive in a constituency which, consisting as it did of boarding-

houses and middle-class flats, was pretty hopeless. As a candidate, Shaw, for all his great business ability and common, or rather, uncommon sense and sagacity, was no good, except of course for the purpose of educating the public and shocking into life the minds of such bourgeois as he encountered. Mostly he did not encounter them. He was obsessed with the notion of penetrating the police station and collaring all the constables' votes. At a public meeting where the speakers included his intellectual friends, amongst them Mrs. Webb, he evidently grew restive at the paeans of praise they sang about the brilliance of his mind. So he got up and said all this nonsense about his cleverness had little foundation. He was not clever: he was good. This is probably true, for Shaw, clever or not, has always been chiefly interested in discovering in what goodness consists, and in preaching it, as the student of his plays and prefaces will discover. His speech therefore consisted of a disquisition upon his views on his own moral character which, naturally, he said was very high. It was well worth hearing, but probably did not increase his poll. Again, he became weary of the tiresome and myopic concentration of the teetotallers in their demand for pledges of action against alcohol and against nothing else. He replied to their questionnaires in nice essays, but refused to give pledges or unqualified answers to their interrogatories. Finally he cooked his teetotal goose, if this metaphor is appropriate to one whose meals are best obtained at the corn-chandler's. He replied, I think it was to the United Kingdom Alliance, that, convinced as he now was, by the course of his correspondence with them, that for the moment teetotalism and stupidity went together, and that the consonance was probably

inevitable, if returned to the Council his first action would be to move that a by-law be passed making one daily double tot of rum compulsory within the county on all inhabitants, men and women, over the age of eighteen years. This lost Shaw, a famous, convinced, and strict 'abstainer', the temperance vote. He was a bad candidate. He lost the election, which, however, no one of his colour could have won. But lots of actors and authors and all the nicest and the prettiest young Fabians came to canvass, and I had the privilege of sending out Granville Barker and Lillah Macarthy (and she *was* a beautiful woman) to canvas boarding-house keepers. On the polling day itself Granville Barker minded a little grocer's shop whilst the little old woman proprietor went out to vote. I have no doubt he sold half-pounds of sugar and ounces of tea with grace and conviction; and I can only hope that the prices were accurate and remunerative.

So there was some fun, if much monotonous, dreary labour, in running an L.C.C. election campaign. When later I became one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools, I did not officially inform the Board about this side of my experience, though I amused colleagues marooned in gloomy hotels at Burnley or Keighley with some reminiscences.

And Shaw, who, to my surprise reidentified me a few weeks since, gave me a complete set of his then published works, autographed in his beautiful handwriting. These volumes may be an asset I shall regretfully be compelled to realise before, in my extreme old age, I become an applicant for public assistance. By that time American prosperity may be fully restored.

* * * * *

So some four years fled. In the second half of this period the Webbs themselves naturally gave less time to research and more to writing. My wanderings in the provinces were often solitary; the parish and the quarter sessions material was now extensive, and the end of this research was heralded by the monotony of the results. We had attained the stage when it was certain we should discover little that was new about the parish or the county from their records, so in the winter I worked more at the British Museum among pamphlets, old newspapers, and the Local Acts of Parliament which embodied the efforts of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers at the end of the eighteenth and the earlier years of the nineteenth centuries to obtain local power to deal with the urbanisation of England, then actively and extensively in process. The fat books were being written by the firm of Webb, and one saw something of the process. The material we had so laboriously collected on the quarto sheets of good paper, which were to preserve our notes for eternity, was now all clipped together in convenient packets, each packet dealing with a single point. Through the relevant packets Beatrice would read, and would prepare the plan for a section or a chapter. This, doubtless after discussion with Sidney, which I never shared, was written up by Sidney in his own rapid bold, legible Civil Service hand. In his case the brain of the 'First Division' Civil Servant was accompanied by the handwriting of the Inspector of Taxes to whom marks for handwriting had once been important. A manuscript of any length from Beatrice would have driven mad the most skilful and equable compositor. It was not that her handwriting was bad and unformed, but that

she often did not write at all, merely scrawled down something which purported to be the first and last letters of a word with a scratch of the pen to connect them. So they started work daily at nine-thirty or before, by which time Sidney had read the *Times* and answered his letters (with his own hand), and Beatrice had done her housekeeping—and done it well. He wrote steadily from nine-thirty until lunch at one or soon after. And from him I learned the very important lesson that the way to get a document written is to sit down and write it. When it is down it is there; and very probably it is not so bad as you think it is. It is an appalling thought that all these great thick books have been written, every word of them, by that indefatigable calligrapher.

It was now 1903. The Boer War was over. The Parish and the County volumes were approaching completion. And whilst working for the Webbs I had still been reading, in the intervals of business, for the final of the London LL.B. I failed once, and really do not feel very small about it, considering that the final is a most comprehensive and, on some subjects, practical examination. It is not easy to assimilate Justinian's digest, or the chapter '*de Usufructu*', in provincial lodgings after a dusty day in a town hall or in the office of an old solicitor who is steward of the Manor of Ashton-under-Lyne, and after you have made the journey back to noisy, not over-clean rooms where a music-hall artist (or artiste) practises his or her bag of tricks above your ceiling. And the details of conveyancing, or of the bequests which are void for remoteness, have a habit of not sticking when acquired 'against gravity', as it were. Some of the brilliant people with whom I subsequently worked should

have had the discipline I underwent at this time, when the process of learning was all overtime, and the forces of inertia were strong. For though, by nature, of a certain ultimate obstinacy, I was undoubtedly lazy. But on two pounds ten a week, with a home to keep going and an only just sufficient lodging allowance, one cannot go to the music-hall or even the provincial theatre very often. Nor indeed was I much inclined that way; owing to ancestry, early training, the Woolwich tradition of 'culture', and possibly some native fastidiousness, these provincial entertainments were not much in my line.

On Saturday afternoons in the winter there was League football to see in most centres, and I was natural man enough (Philistine enough, if you like) to watch it. Remember, too, that within reach of nearly all the great provincial towns there is fine country to explore at the expense of twenty minutes' journey, except in the case of Manchester, where the minimum time to beauty of that order is at least half an hour. I wandered off on Sundays from Newcastle to Hexham and Blanchland, and to the beautiful Tyne Valley. From Glossop or anywhere in the corner where Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire meet you can get glorious walks. And I have been chased by a furious bull in the hunting pasture-lands of Leicester. In those days I was content to wander alone either with a vacant mind (for in youth one's mind can be vacant), or pondering many things, until I saw the promising cottage or pub, which provided two boiled eggs for tea in addition to the jam for a shilling or less in those days. If anyone pities this solitary life, he is mistaken. I was as near happi-

ness then as one can be. No doubt the frustrations, the unfairness, the cross-purposes, the general unreasonableness and confusion of this imperfect world were there. But I was still young, and they were ignored: in any case, I had excellent health, and there was the future to be adventured, a future which looked then as long as eternity. Young people at least are immortal, and the sense of mortality comes only with the years.

Like most men, however, I succumbed at last to the lure of marriage. Mr. Wells says, I see (his second volume is out as I write), that sex must be the second, if not the first theme of every candid autobiography. I doubt it very much. It is always there, of course, and the world cannot continue without it. But in most ways I had kept free from its tangles. For one thing, I had always been very shy. I had been raised amidst the rather stern decency of the Nonconformist artisan class, whose standard of personal conduct in most things, and particularly as regards women, is high. I certainly had too high an opinion of women in general at that time. I was entirely ignorant, and thought (when I did think) of sexual intimacy as a demand made by men, who as a sex were coarse and brutal, upon women who were refined, delicate, and gave to a pitiable urgency what their finer instincts, but for compassion, would deny. Such was the unformulated theory which was the natural outcome of a respectably Puritanical upbringing; and it was a theory subconsciously held, I think, by most of my social equals and contemporaries. We thought of girls and women as interesting and stimulating companions. Sex, no doubt, was at the base of our

attitude, but with most of us it remained there. This view, false as in its foundations it may be, at least saved us lots of trouble if it made some.

At various times I had had an interest in particular girls or women, though rather a kind of worship than anything else. It was, in fact, an æsthetic feeling—calf's love is its inadequate name. There were two sisters, pupil teachers in Swindon, who used to pass our house on the way to school. One of them, in her clean trimness, and what seemed to me her steady, ingenuous gaze upon our commonplace world, I admired intensely. I used to watch from the front room of our house for her passing, and see her go tripping up the hill. This passed, and when we met, as we did at occasional parties or at Chapel functions, we were just playmates with a special liking one for the other. At college I neither saw nor wished to see any women. There were none to see. And to pace the Terrace at Richmond in the hopes of chance encounter was not done by my set. At Woolwich I had no acquaintance outside the teachers (or a few of them) in the Girls' and Infants' departments of the school. These were older than I by four or five years, and though we were on good terms, to think of them as possible mates never entered my Victorian head. The headmaster's daughters were all engaged save one, who did not attract me. Then, to be candid, when I lectured (or rather taught) a class for the Co-operative Society there was a girl (I believe she was in their library) who, as I slowly realised, used to wait for me at the end of the lecture on one pretext or another and, naturally, as our ways lay in the same general direction, we walked home together. She was pleasant, but not really interested

in the things which interested me. She was just human company and no more. I had too much on my hands to think of marriage. To think of anything else, according to the standards I had subconsciously acquired, was to put both of us among the lowest of the low. There were the lowest of the low. I had seen them, had been on football or cricket journeys with them sometimes in earlier years. But my sort was not their sort, and I could not think as they certainly thought, nor could I possibly act as they probably did. It was a class rather than a personal feeling. This may sound pharisaical. It happens, however, to be true.

But the Webbs had need of further help than mine. Indeed, through parts of the first three years of research there had been occasional or part-time help from others, and always from young women of the University order. One was a pleasant, intelligent, slightly embittered Newnhamite with a hundred pounds a year of her own, as she told me, and rather a grudge against a world which, because she would not become a school-marm, would give her no employment. I saw her only when I worked in London; we were nothing more than good if casual chums, and after a winter or so, she went off to a job with one of her well-to-do Quaker relatives in the provinces. She was a nice girl, and I remember her pleasant, companionable attitude with gratitude. She thought I was a prodigy of industry: but this was only because Oxford and Cambridge do not work in the afternoon, and I had always had to do that, and thought nothing of it. The next was a young Oxford woman, versed in philosophy, intellectually very able, who drifted off to her donnish destiny, in which

world ultimately she became a dignified figure. They must both be over sixty now. And as I write I see them at twenty-two or three and wonder what these silver-haired old ladies are like.

But in the third of my research years the Webbs engaged a woman who was two years younger than myself, had had a good University career, had taught for three or four years in a secondary school, was a Fabian (I wasn't yet—in spite of three years with the Webbs), had got a real scholarship—not merely, like me, a free place—at the School of Economics, and with that and her savings had investigated women's work in the Printing Trades, and had written, in collaboration with one who has remained my very dear friend as well as my wife's, the standard *History of Factory Legislation*. That spring we were thrown together a great deal. Socially she was my superior; we had common interests and some community of outlook. We often worked close together in the Reading Room. We went out to tea together. When we stayed up, say, for a debate at the Students' Union, at which I am afraid I often spoke, we had supper together. Mrs. Webb says that woman is always the pursuer and that I was a captive. There may be some truth in this: but I succumbed, if at all, a willing captive. And in June I told the Webbs that we intended to marry in August, and that I supposed I had better find another job.

I think Beatrice was not displeased at this marriage *dénouement*. As she said, she took the blame or the credit for it. And she is a womanly woman as well as a manly one. Sidney inclined to be a bit grim, at least outwardly. I had one hundred and twenty pounds a year, and as I could not leave my mother entirely to

be supported by my sister, now a full-fledged teacher in Plumstead, I had to help there. I had no prospect of a better job. Nor could my wife, as she became at the end of August 1903, look forward to permanent employment. But the risk was taken by both of us. And fortune has favoured the rash, for rash we were. At least, anyone will admit that *she* was. I had thrown up a safe and permanent job under the School Board for a temporary and uncertain private employment, and whilst still in that employment I had married. This temerity has been justified, but neither of us was a genius. So we had to look round. The Webbs certainly gave us time to do that, and were quite willing for any reasonable time to keep us both employed together. But obviously the situation could not indefinitely be prolonged; we had to consider things. I must recount this as a principal incident in my life. If I say that community of interest and some approach to intellectual equality are not bad bases for a permanent union, I need say no more.

Some time before marriage I had entered as a student at the Middle Temple. Obviously I intended to get called to the Bar, and had occasional fits of confidence, with longer intervals of doubt, that I might succeed in that profession. Before marriage I had passed the earlier Bar examinations, and I went on eating my three dinners a term. But odd jobs came along. Almost as soon as I had married, one of them turned up. At University College School, then in Gower Street, there were some Higher Commercial forms, composed chiefly of scholars sent after 'matric' to that school. The thing was an experiment. Commercial education, or rather education for commerce,

was in the air. Miss Lilian Knowles, a brilliant graduate of Girton, who had been early in the field of economic history as one of Dr. Cunningham's Cambridge group, had taught history from the economic point of view in this course at U.C.S. She resigned, and she told me she would recommend me as her successor. I jumped at it, was appointed and taught there two mornings a week for over four years, whilst still working (in the early part of the period) for the Webbs. In the next year the City of London College, which was in effect the City Polytechnic, though naturally specialised on the side of part-time technical education for city employees, advertised! for an evening lecturer in economics and allied subjects. Here was the subject I had pondered over in one way or another for a period reaching back to the 'Extension' class in Swindon fourteen or fifteen years before. A testimonial from Sidney no doubt helped me into the job, and this was the only way in which 'influence'—surely legitimate influence—has ever been of the slightest use to me. So I lectured on economic theory, and on history and geography from the economic standpoint for two evenings a week at the City of London College. It flattered me to know that John Stuart Mill and Sidney Webb himself had both lectured to the classes out of which the College grew or to the College itself.

Here were two posts, neither of them inconsistent with continuing research in London mainly, but also in the provinces, during the long academic holidays. Providence, apparently, was on the side of the rash, and the years of study, which had certainly been disinterested, had found some slight material justifica-

tion. There was a side to the situation, however, which I confess seemed a debit, not a credit side. I was back to teaching again—part-time, it was true, and as a specialist, and on a different plane. This I had never intended—so far as my intentions had ever cleared themselves. I went on with my dinners at the Middle Temple, attended a few of the Bar Council lectures, which, at that date, I found pretty useless. But there was a drawback to the Bar. I could get called if I qualified, as I did; but there was a fee to pay—eighty pounds, if I remember aright—and with a home of my own (very humble) and contributions to what was now the old home in Plumstead which with any decency I could not cease, and did not wish to cease, I very often had not eighty pence. I tried a little journalism, and had my very first articles accepted by the *Pall Mall* and the *Westminster* of glorious memory. But with the two lots of teaching and the necessary preparation therefor, and the certain work from the Webbs, there was precious little time to write. Then, quite unexpectedly, Fortune behaved well or ill (to this day I cannot determine which), but with decision. The City of London College had started a day department. It was held to be unsatisfactory and on the wrong plane. I was asked by the Governors to organise in its place a Higher Department. This was a whole-time job. And I was offered the relatively gorgeous initial salary of four hundred pounds a year to do it. After misgivings, and realising that a year in some obliging barristers' chambers was for me impossible, I took the post, continuing for one year the part-time teaching at U.C.S. Farewell to hopes of the Bar! I was a teacher again. I have come to love education as a cause, and for more than

thirty years since this time have lived for it almost exclusively. But that has been a growth. It occurred through no youthful and passionate sense of vocation. I confess that when I left the Board School in Plumstead, I hoped I had done with teaching, though in fact I had rather liked the actual work. I was a teacher again, against my then real wishes. And the four years odd with the Webbs is the only time in which I have not been actively engaged in or about popular education. The time with the Webbs was for me a time of revelation and of growth, a time of enlargement socially and intellectually. I look back to it with gratitude for the opportunity, and with much respect and a warm affection for two of the ablest and most public-spirited and, essentially, unselfish people I have known.

CHAPTER IX

BACK TO THE ARMY AGAIN

IT was, I think, 1905 when I ceased what had become part-time paid work for the Webbs, though I helped voluntarily with their crusade for the abolition of the Poor Law. My wife went on working pretty regularly for them for some years; and they have always remained my friends. In 1906 I became head of the Day Department at the City of London College, and continued to lecture there in the evenings. I dropped geography fairly soon and confined my evening lectures to economics and the economic aspect of history.

This teaching life was mine until 1912. It was interesting and it was (I hope) useful, but it was relatively uneventful, though, possibly from the documentary point of view, worth recounting for the public. I had to build up this Day Department from nothing, and with perhaps more than the usual share of obstacles. I started with six miscellaneous pupils. I left with about one hundred and fifty and a reasonable organisation behind me when I departed in 1912. It was not a super-success, but it was far from a failure; and many individuals among the pupils from time to time show me great friendliness, and say that they found me a stimulating teacher and a decent sort. I tried to do my best. It was hard work. But it suited me far better than the elementary school had done. A good deal of money that ought to have been

spent on my department was being expended on the wrong kind of work in another department. I was not captain of the ship; and I had the kind of life that a second man leads when his superior is out of sympathy with him, and takes the view that reforms and new ideas constitute criticisms of his static past. It is a commonplace situation, as I have since learned. And I have occupied it more than once. I expect that not all the right was with the first lieutenant, nor all the wrong with the captain. I had often to balance loyalty against what I thought was efficiency, and I do not regret that loyalty often won. But it caused me a good deal of perplexity at the time. However, I organised as well as I saw how. I taught as well as I could. I liked the pupils (chiefly between the ages of fourteen and eighteen): I think they liked me. Discipline was little trouble. For me it was easy compared with the conditions of the elementary school; and, fortunately, all the staff save one poor language master (one out of three) were good natural teachers and disciplinary troubles did not arise. That is, they were people of such personality that students took their position and authority as a matter of course. The evening lecturing to adult students I enjoyed thoroughly, though, on the two evenings on which I lectured, the last evening lecture terminated a twelve-hour day, and I felt, as a rule, fairly well worked out. But general economics and economic history are, in fact, and contrary to the conjectures of the ignorant, interesting subjects. I often had very good discussions. The students, men chiefly between eighteen and forty, and most of them at work in the City (bank clerks, Stock-Exchange clerks, workers in insurance offices and in all sorts of

merchant businesses), had backgrounds of practical affairs which were very helpful and occasionally illuminating. What they sometimes lacked in natural intelligence or in the kind of acumen which academic discipline sharpens and makes conscious, they made up in knowledge of actual business affairs and of social and domestic life. A theory of wages is one thing to a student of Balliol or King's College,* and quite another thing to one who is a wage-earner. At least there was a different angle of vision; and practical illustration, and a real foundation for scepticism, criticism, or confirmation of book knowledge was not lacking in these classes. The students were nine-tenths of them voluntary students, and they had to be held and interested. Nothing but the feeling that the lectures were worth while kept them in attendance.

I stayed at the City of London College, organising the day department there and teaching day and evening for some seven years. And I had other odd jobs. It was a time of increasing economic stability in my personal life. Poverty and the struggles which arise from poverty were behind me. After a year or so in a tiny flat in the Gray's Inn Road we could afford a modest house in Pinner, then still more than semi-rural. To epitomise the change, I now lived in a house with a bathroom. That, in those days, was a real index of respectability. Even the little flat had its tiny bathroom. But no working-class house had a bathroom in 1905, and in spite of the danger of universal negatives, I hazard the guess that hardly any had a bathroom in 1920. Please make no inferences

* As they were then. Balliol or King's now have many undergraduates who know working-class social life at first hand. But of course they are not actual wage-earners.

about personal cleanliness. Even in Swindon in the 1880's and 1890's, people of my class and stamp revelled in the washing-baths and the swimming-baths. Give the working people the chance of being clean easily, or even laboriously, and they will take it eagerly. At College in the 1890's we had showers in the dormitories, and in my Woolwich lodgings there was the bedroom tub. We were at least as advanced as Oxford was then. I mention a house with a bathroom merely as an index, a symptom, if you prefer it, of a new social stage.

In retrospect I find that my chief interest lies in the life before thirty—the life which even as teacher and researcher was still in its substance the life of the artisan class. The certificated teacher of those days was, in essence, the artisan. He (or his leaders) asserted a professional status which, in fact, was non-existent. In habits, outlook, whether intellectual or social, in all the respects connoted by that convenient old word 'manners' he was still the artisan. He was the first-rate artisan with a tincture of culture. I wish statesmen had been thrown up from among that class of teacher, the class of the sober, skilful, essentially respectable artisan class. But it is hardly to be expected, for 'we' are not 'raised' to be leaders. Our fathers are subordinates. Our lot is circumscribed, in culture and education, in movement, in responsibility, in everything. The right kind of man (or woman) born into the professional or the upper business class, or into the aristocracy, has the path to culture or to statesmanship smoothed for him. He can work with gravity. We have to work against it. The outlook even of the leader of a big Trade Union is conditioned by his past; and his slow and painful

development, his circumscribed interests are far other than those which the statesman really requires. I write this with, I think, no jealousy—certainly with no consciousness of that ugly quality. I record the *fact*, with a regret perhaps not untinged with a certain resentment, that things were as they were, and are as they are, in a very imperfect world. However, as they are, they are; and to fail to recognise this is blindness, or stupidity, or cowardice. And I know no remedy, in a country with the peculiar English history and tradition. The nearest I can think of is to hope that some sprinkling of those who, with public help most properly bestowed, at least get the academic opportunities of the well-to-do, will remember their origins and their early youth, and work manfully and affectionately for the splendid, patient, tolerant, humorous mass from whom they have sprung.

All this, which seems a little irrelevant to my story, springs from the fact that at the end of my seven years in this City Polytechnic I joined the higher ranks of the Civil Service, and therefore, in a humble fashion, the governing class. For the sake of my wife and children of course I am glad of this. Perhaps, even, for myself. For it is not unpleasant to undertake work of wide responsibility, to mix with educated people, to be able to wear good clothes, eat varied food, smoke good tobacco, buy good books, listen to good music, learn to distinguish good pictures from bad, become conscious of what real scholarship means, and to be able to view problems as a whole in a large and impersonal fashion. All these things, and especially the more material of them, are possible only to those with decent incomes and interesting jobs. Culture and statesmanship are impossible, or very difficult indeed—if you wish me to

be definite about ponderables—on less than, say, £700 a year post-war. If you cannot earn or inherit that, at least your forbears must have done so. Before the end of my stay at the City of London College this level of economic status had come to me.

I say *come*: for I had not definitely sought it. The well-to-do and, I suppose, those gifted with some invincible taste or talent, can choose a career, work for it, and sometimes achieve it. I had not the unconquerable urge of well-defined talent or taste. I had pursued certain lines of intellectual interest without definite object, without mordant ambition, without consciousness of more than ordinary ability, and things had come my way. Fortune or Providence, you may choose your own term, plays, as I have said, a great part in most lives. Certainly in mine. It may be, as Cromwell said, 'He goes furthest who sees not whither he goes'. I was to go to the Board of Education! But first to a Polytechnic.

I do not find the life at the City Polytechnic (for that is what it was) stimulating to write about. In the evening I lectured or taught (according to the size of the class), at first for three hours on end, afterwards, as the day-work became more exigent and more responsible, for two. My audiences, which I have already described, were, most of them, anxious to pass examinations in economics, such examinations as those of the Institute of Bankers or the Institute of Secretaries. A few of them, like the Woolwich workmen I had known, were eager for knowledge for its own sake, or in order to equip themselves for humble grades of political activity. I had to preach the gospel according to Marshall, and, above all, to be clear, and as far as possible clear-cut and definite, an almost impossible

condition in a subject which is less a science than a study. Few of these evening students were brilliant. Many were not even intelligent. But out of my classes two University Professors have been produced, one for London, one for India and South Africa in turn. And several of whom I know have attained quite important administrative posts. Perhaps some half-dozen in the thousand is the right proportion of real intellectual development and success among my pupils. I claim no credit at all for such eminence as emerged from my teaching. I cleared the path a bit, that is all; and evidently I did not discourage. But every teacher, whatever his rank, must put the gift of God as the major reason for his pupil's future success, and his own effort as a very minor force.

If the mass of those taught in such institutions fail to emerge, as indeed is inevitable, it does not in the least follow that the trouble and expense of teaching them are not worth while. They are. The students learn something of the principles underlying their trades and professions at a time when 'shop' is of great interest to them. Their minds are, as it were, nourished; sometimes, indeed, fertilised. They go as far as they can, and both their work and their lives are better and more interesting for the process. Technical education is even more of a social than a personal advantage. It is not by any means the whole story of ascending national amelioration, but it is an important—indeed, essential—chapter. So I regret nothing of the seven years in which I lectured, like Nicodemus, by night, catching the 9.30 or 10.30 p.m. to Pinner, after more than twelve hours' work on two days of the week, and after a full day's work on the others. It was a strenuous, but on the whole an interesting, rather than a lively period.

The Day Department I had to create out of nothing. And I created something—a poor thing, but mine own. The staff, such as it was, had gradually to be collected. I had the legacy from former conditions of old Mr. Pierpoint, a huge, solid, parchment-faced man with lank black hair which fell like a cascade over his low, lined, perpendicular forehead. He lived for book-keeping by double entry, which he regarded as a purely practical art, whilst I regarded it—for I fathomed its essentials—as a good training in deductive logic. Undisputed premises are provided: argue truly, and a correct balance is inevitable. He was over fifty-five, and indurated to his mission in life. His methods of teaching, his text-books, his outlook on life had long been settled. To him life was a process reducible to figures which must always be doubly entered. I suppose this had been decided for at least twenty-five years, or more probably for thirty, and the trombone-like quality and intensity of his voice had been settled, so I guessed, from birth or earlier. He was industrious, and so serious and devoted to his science (to him it was art) that his ponderous and strident career as a teacher was straightforward.

Then there was old Boreton: not old in years, for he was fortyish, but aged from birth. He was not, indeed, corpulent. The word *embonpoint*, if applicable to a male, suited him perfectly. His face was purple, not with drink, but with under-exploded energy; and I suspected him, Heaven knows why, of diabetic tendencies. Singularly enough, I was right; and he is dead. He was a devotee of Isaac Pitman, and lived in the faith, not necessarily ill-founded, that the salvation of the world would be assured if and when everyone could write that script at a speed of not less than

eighty words a minute. As the attainment of that modest rate argues a perseverance and a moral stability of a high order, he was probably right. But it would be a prosaic salvation, and I came to the private and unofficial conclusion that I should prefer a slightly more romantic damnation. Here again was a man so much in earnest, of so indisputable a faith and singleness of purpose, that young people worked for him mechanically. Moreover, it was a bread-and-butter subject, and to adolescents, therefore, attractive.

Very different was M. Alphonse Christophe Lannion, who taught French. Unlike many foreign teachers of a foreign language, he was a good teacher. He had the prime qualification of the French teacher of French: he could use the English language almost like an educated Englishman. He had a real love of literature in more languages than two. Moreover, he had a pointed beard, exquisite manners and, after lunch, smelt of beer, wine being unprocurable at reasonable prices. He was irascible, and his discipline was by no means perfect. But it was good enough. As a boy he had fought in the Franco-German War of 1870—at least, in its later *franc-tireur* stages; he remembered fights in the snow in 1871, and he really hated the Prussians. This made difficulties sometimes with the other foreign teacher, the dark, bespectacled, black-bearded martinet, Herr Bockelmann.

No blond beast was discernible in Bockelmann. Punctilious and industrious, energetic attention to duty was his note. His brown eyes (oh, those Nordic Germans!) gleamed through his thick glasses; his short, well-trimmed black beard wagged; and no ordinary English boy or girl dared to take the least liberty with this martinet from the University of

Marburg. Poor man! An innocent scholar and pedant, fond of the English in a slightly patronising and deprecatory way, he was interned, so I heard, during the War, and I know not what became of him. He was a patriot, but I would bet my life that he would have done us no harm, his chief charge against us being that we were too comfortable for real effort and efficiency. He had everything in clear categories, including the far-from-simple grammar of his native tongue. And if these lads and girls failed to forge ahead with German, failure could not be attributable to a lack of clear, though perhaps too emphatic teaching.

The other modern language man was a failure. He taught French and German. He was a learned, dusty, scholarly Jew, born in Frankfurt-on-Main, who had studied at several universities, French and German. As a teacher he was foredoomed. The teacher's gift of personality was not his. When Bockelmann walked into a room there was instant and careful silence. But the entry of poor Wurzelmann into any classroom was a cause of derision. Class-teaching is impossible for the Wurzelmanns of this world. They must find some means of winning bread other than the task of controlling thirty grinning lads or mischievous girls. Only the select few could profit from the conscientious and patient Wurzelmann. I regret to say that his career with us was brief and far from happy.

There were others, of course, chiefly decent, commonplace, not inefficient English teachers, men and women. They included one woman of the able, managing type who got round everybody, probably including myself, though at the time I should have

denied it stoutly. Finally she carried off one of the men staff as her lawful prey, gained in accordance with the rules of the hunt, and married him. I believe, however, that in the long run he proved a tough morsel, or an unprofitable investment, whichever metaphor you think the more suitable. But men are not infrequently tough morsels.

As for me, I taught the outlines of simple economics and economic history to the older pupils, whilst, to keep in touch with all pupils, I took English literature with the lower half of the school. By this time (I was about thirty-three when I became head of this day department) I had acquired adequate self-confidence for the job. I was interested keenly in what I taught, and I came to enjoy the process of teaching. For teaching is, or can be, a fine art. I think one enjoys it more and more as one grows older; for one is interested then not merely in the process of making a path plain, evoking the interest without which the necessary industry of the pupil is an unsatisfactory grind, but even more in the pupils themselves. Their development is always interesting, and sometimes beautiful. One comes, as it were, to love these young folk, so unconscious as yet of the frustrations of this inadequate world and of the unkind struggle into which they will soon be thrown; and so one works on an emotional plane not reached by the younger, harder, less tolerant pedagogues. For, after all, teaching, at its best, is little tinged with selfishness or worldly greed. The teacher, at long last, can say that, for inconsiderable reward, at least he has attempted to work with, and not against the angelic hosts.

It will be observed that the work, day and evening, was largely vocational in character. At this date a

defence of technical, even of a strictly vocational training, is perhaps unnecessary. Certainly if it is given at the right time and to properly selected people it needs no defence. In one meaning all teaching is technical. The great advances in knowledge have, as a rule, resulted from the discovery or the reinforcement of technique. What is more purely technical than the alphabet, or the arithmetical notation, or our ordinary script? No one denies that we must learn to read, to write, and to reckon. Indeed, the usual complaint is that these things are ineffectively taught to an increasing degree, an indictment which, in later life, I have more than once investigated in the popular schools and found to be false. People do not compare like with like. They compare the selected literates of a previous generation with the unselected mass of to-day. Nevertheless it is by the acquirement of technical knowledge that parents of all classes, even of the cultured upper middle class, tend to judge the results of schooling. They resemble the old ploughman—lovely man! He went to the local inspector to lodge a complaint against a modern schoolmaster who, he asserted, thrashed too freely and too hard. “It ain’t on’y that ’e whacks ’em. He don’t teach ’em nuthin’. My lad’s been at school five year, an’ can’t say his alphabet backkards!”

It is of course admitted that all children must be taught to read, write and reckon. Nor must they be robbed of any part of the human heritage of knowledge which they can absorb. They must not be left in ignorance of the religion commonly held by their fellows. They must know something of the past, and something of the earth they live upon. They must learn to read music and to sing good songs. They

must not merely be taught to draw, they must be permitted and encouraged to express their young souls in form and colour; and art has been taught on this principle with wonderful results. To make their surroundings intelligible they must know some of the simpler aspects of science. The books of literature must not be closed to them, and much of the greatest literature is simple enough for children. The truth is that the curriculum of the elementary school, the formation of which, remember, is principally within the control of the teachers, has been determined by a large number of intelligent craftsmen and craftswomen in teaching, on the principle of denying no one reasonable opportunity to develop his whole self. And those who have had the responsibility of advising teachers and authorities will know that the pressure for new and additional subjects comes from the public, not from the schoolmasters and other professionals. Everybody wants his panacea or his fad introduced into the schools, whether it is naval history, Esperanto, shorthand, solid geometry, or yo-yo. The inclusion of all these subjects for young people under fourteen has, in actual fact, been urged upon me as an official and, I am proud to say, effectively resisted.

When young people, however, are in the sight of their working life, or have begun upon it, their first interest is a technical interest. This interest is partly a genuine desire to understand *useful* things and partly a mere desire for change, and its permanence depends to some degree on the extent to which it is the one or the other; though of course it is generally both. Things are not all white or all black. They are sometimes grey, and they may be piebald or skewbald. Thus, for the adolescent, vocational matter appeals to new, vital,

and growing interests. It heralds the approach of a new world. Pre-apprenticeship education, if one may use a convenient, but inaccurate phrase, finds a justification in the truths just set out, for my experience induces me to think them to be truths.

So that, quite apart from the fact that much of the so-called general or cultural education is technical in its character, the advocate of a well-designed technical education of the general order, or even of a vocational education of a particular kind, has no cause to feel or to be apologetic. For it is true that at least in their earlier stages the study of the classical or of modern languages, for instance, are highly technical, and this whether they are taught by a direct method as living languages or by the older-fashioned grammatical or analytic methods as dead ones. When we come to the professions, we find the education at the University of the lawyer, the doctor or the engineer completely technical: so much so that the best technicians in these professions are demanding ever more vigorously the introduction or reinforcement of humane elements.

Much nonsense is talked about a good general education, even at the public schools. For in one of the best of these I have known a lad, once he had got through the general schools examination, to be giving twenty-five out of thirty school periods a week, to a specialist study of, say, mathematics. The clever boy so treated gets his scholarship at one of the two old universities all right. And his two or three years of almost complete devotion to his specialism at school are followed by three or four years of complete devotion to it at the university. We are then presented with the product of a 'good general education', and we sometimes find the result to be a narrow specialist, uncul-

tured and world-ignorant, or a too-retiring eccentric who shies like a horse if spoken to by an ordinary citizen not of his own interests or upbringing. I am well aware that some such specialists acquire broad culture and varied interests; but these are acquired outside the academic routine, and many never acquire them. This method of taking chances about general culture may, indeed, be right; or, at least, it might be right if it were not left to chance so completely. Some of the brightest minds are subjected to the treatment I have described. For the middle-class lad from a refined home the process may not be fatal. But many first-rate minds recruited by our scholarship system from homes of another order, homes all too frequently less kindly than that I remember with affection through the mists of sixty years—many of these are deprived of their full development through the narrower and narrower specialism into which we have drifted. The broader vocational education is seldom without its humane element. The specialist university course often contains no tincture of it. So we have learned but uneducated classics, scientists, mathematicians and what not; and, sometimes, not uncultured workmen.

In actual fact the course of technical education in a polytechnic or technical institution may be, probably usually is, much more interesting and human than the process of cramming a bright lad in a public school for a university scholarship, and then committing him to the strict specialism of a university course.

I regret in no way, then, the fact that for seven years I gave all my time and energies to building up a vocational school of a fairly liberal order, and to active daily teaching in that school. Since my day the

particular institution I have described has developed in numbers and in quality. But the association of which I have affectionate memories was to close. I was to be translated to the effulgence of a Government Department.

CHAPTER X

OLYMPUS AND LANCASHIRE

WITH the well-conned and necessary reflections of the last chapter I leave this period of my life. I was interested in my teaching work. I was married. I was doubly a father. I inhabited a small but comely house in a semi-rural suburb. I played occasional tennis. I walked vigorously on Saturdays or scoured North Middlesex, Herts, and Bucks on a bicycle. I had avoided golf, so far. I had become a Fabian, though never too vigorous a one. For in truth the day's work was too absorbing, and the semi-rural home too interesting to permit my spending much time on academic politics; of applied politics there was no opportunity. And though I admired and respected the prominent Fabians, especially the Webbs and Shaw, who were intellectually tall of stature, I could not stand the minor Fabians of my own calibre. For they seemed always to assume that Providence informed them, confidentially, and in advance, of all its major British intentions. This I did not believe. Then there were concerts at Queen's Hall, especially the earlier promenades, at which I partially assuaged the thirst for music, especially for Beethoven and Wagner.

Into the midst of this pedestrian happiness there walked, appropriately, a Government Inspector: one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools (Technical Branch). Or, rather, he walked, not into the happiness, but

into my classroom. He listened to me gravely and politely until the lesson was ended. Then he informed me that a group of new appointments to his own dignified rank were being made, and if I would like to join the higher ranks of the civil service in the capacity already named, would I submit my name to a certain Frank Pullinger, C.B., then Chief Inspector (T.) for the Board of Education? I reflected. The pay was, initially, no more than in one way or another I was already earning. Indeed, I could not have afforded to have joined the Board at the then minimum salary; the time for financial sacrifices was over. Perhaps, I reflected, I need not start on the ground-floor. Life being what it was, I must either be inspected or inspect; and, after all, the invitation was a compliment.

So I wrote the suggested letter. In due course I was asked to go along to Whitehall to see Pullinger. I went, and there I saw that grim figure of a man well over six feet in height, with a lined and colourless face, a forceful jaw, and a charming initial manner, not always long maintained. We had some talk. He asked me about my immediate past and my present work, made some rude remark about my having been Sidney Webb's hack, to which I made the direct reply he loved; and we parted. I did not then know that he loved the direct, even the truculent answer, provided it was well founded. And I remember emerging into King Charles Street damning the Board of Education, its presumptuous loftiness of demeanour, and its insolent Chief Inspector, and saying to myself that that was that, and I would set the Thames on fire with some other combustible and in a different place. Nor did I hear anything for weeks. No doubt the ground

was being searched elsewhere. But at this juncture Fortune intervened. From an appropriate source I learned that I stood a good chance of an A. K. scholarship * to visit another part of the world. The offer was, in fact, made. I wrote at once to Pullinger saying that this situation necessitated an early decision on his part, and, further, that I would not enter the Board's service at the minimum salary. He was a Lancashire man, but so, in blood, was I, and a full-blooded one, too. In a few days I got a letter from the grim (and rather lonely) old soul, and went again to see him. He told me at once that he had decided to recommend me for the post in the Board, and that he hoped to have me as a colleague, as he liked men who could give a direct answer and take consequences cheerfully. This was very nice of him. I consulted my wife. Six hundred pounds worth of scholarship would have taken me round the world; but would have provided an inadequate famine fund for the wife and two children whom I should leave behind. It was a temporary thing; and the father of children seeks permanence; so I chose the inspectorate.

Thus at a rather later age than usual for the job I became an H.M.I. in the Technical Branch of Education. I was to live in Liverpool, and my job as a specialist was to inspect and to guide 'commercial education' in the six northern counties and Cheshire. For general purposes I should be in charge of a district in South-West Lancashire. This kind of work, for nearly eleven years, I did as well as I could. Pullinger, undoubtedly a great as well as silent civil

* Scholarships founded by Albert Kahn, a Parisian banker, to enable people engaged in education to see the world. They were worth £600 and tenable for one year.

servant, became my friend, and helped me much. We had little in common except a certain kind of moral courage, though mine was less than his, and a love of knowing the worst about any problem, so that we could feel for a water-tight solution. He disliked what the Americans, I believe, call a 'Yes man'; but one soon learned that criticisms of his schemes and ideas must have solid foundation. Woe betide the man who opposed him lightly, or with a mere litigiousness, or merely from preconceived or *a priori* reasons. But he hated even more fiercely those who agreed out of mere pleasantness or weakness or lack of thought.

So I moved north, to a city which is geographically in Lancashire but is not of it. Liverpool people speak of going 'out into' Lancashire. Liverpool gentlemen, Manchester men, and 'Owdham' roughs. Such is the traditional classification, and if not too literally understood it has a basis in fact. Later on I used to say, a little unfairly, for again it was not wholly true, that Manchester was vigour without enlightenment, and Liverpool was enlightenment without vigour. But of that, perhaps, more later. For the present the little house in the semi-rural suburb of London—it is, alas, urban now—was to be sold and the family translated to the rude north.

In September 1912 I started work as an inspector in the Technical Branch of the Board. I was at once in charge of a district and of certain specialist work; but for some six weeks I was taken about and coached by a colleague whose area was Liverpool and Cheshire, whilst mine was South-West Lancashire, including such beauty spots as St. Helens and Widnes, the satellite mining villages round Wigan, as well as Warrington and Southport and a sector of their hinterland,

My Nestor was a remarkable man. He was then under forty, of middle height, and straight, lithe figure. His hair and his prominent and lovely moustache were the kind of black glinting with blue which is characteristic of the Irish, though he was an Englishman. Probably he had some remote French or Irish ancestors. His eyes were a real violet blue—none of your greys or greens; and this again seemed to make an Irishman of him. So did his volubility and his invincible, I should rather say his incurable optimism. He had one of the quickest and clearest brains I have ever encountered, a photographic memory, and the capacity for ordering facts into categories characteristic of able scientists and lawyers. He had an immense interest in the phenomena of the material world and a complete obliviousness to all beyond it, had a considerable knowledge of most branches of natural and physical science, and a good working knowledge of mathematics. He had been too, a good chemist, for chemistry had been his principal subject. But his knowledge, as one perceived, was too extensive to be scholarly. He did know a great deal about everything in physical science; and he knew and remembered much of the second-rate in literature. He was a great admirer of T. H. Huxley and Tyndall. But he was a real scholar in no subject. His mind was too lively, his interests too diffused. Music was a closed book to him, for he was tone deaf. But, like Trilby, he had a magnificent voice: in his case a rich baritone, which if he spoke at a public meeting at once arrested attention. He was the liveliest and most interesting of companions, and, even at that time, he could not easily bear to be alone. He had no touch of shyness;

emphatically he was a mixer. And his interest in physical phenomena, great enough in all conscience, was nothing to his interest in himself. He would talk on anything to anybody. He would offer his opinion on any problem, incident, or situation to the experts concerned; and the wonder was that he was more often right than wrong. He had tried everything and finished nothing. His course at the Royal College of Science (as it then was) was never completed. But by sheer brains and energy he had won his way from the poverty to which his drinking father had reduced his boyhood, out of a potman's job, through apprenticeship with National Scholarships to the College, had taught science in technical colleges, had been discovered as a teaching genius (which he was) and made into a School Inspector. A little more ballast, a more regular educational discipline, and he would have been equal to any task. As it was he was brilliant, loquacious, genial, hot-tempered, egotistical, taking up one pursuit after another, though always faithful to his ruling passion for producing flowers under glass and outside it. He played no games (though in his early manhood he had been a first-rate fast bowler). He spent lavishly on flowers and plants bought in profusion from all England and probably elsewhere. Out of interest in a new toy he would buy an expensive gramophone and hundreds of records, tone deaf though he was. However, he lived, and all would come right. What a man! what a mind! and what a pity! Personal, family, and other troubles which would have killed the ordinary prudent citizen caused him, at least in company, no pang. He would blithely face the future; everything would settle itself next week, next month, next year. Of course it

never did. But he taught me much. For he knew all about official procedure from A to Z. He was a friend and a companion for five and twenty years, and in his retirement he cuts his way indomitably through the forest of difficulties he has planted. And he will read this sketch of him with laughter and defiance.

With his help as tutor I was projected into a little company of five inspectors who, on the technical side, represented the Board of Education in the North-West of England. I was indeed back to the county of Lancaster, whence my people sprung: back among the dour, outwardly unemotional folk who still, in 1912, regarded themselves as the vanguard of England. They were and are less material-minded, perhaps, and more generous than the Yorkshiremen, for whom they affected a jocular patronage such as Cambridge bestows on Oxford. A Lancashire man, they explain, is keen on money. He makes it and he spends it. But the Tyke makes it and keeps it. It is not for nothing that Blackpool is in Lancashire, and there is no corresponding coast town in Yorkshire. Indeed, the real Lancashire man will express a contempt for his neighbour across the Pennines, a contempt which conceals a wholesome respect. My father was never tired of quoting the Yorkshireman's coat of arms: a flea, a fly, and a flitch of bacon. "A flea because it'll bite either t'wick (live) or dead; a fly because it'll sook ony man's blud; and a flitch o' bacon because it's no good till it's hoong." All the same, they both cherish, or perhaps, more strictly, cherished, a common scorn for the Southern English, whom they regard as affected and la-di-da in the upper reaches, and servile and spiritless in the lower. There is something in it,

but not much. Indeed, I have known Wiltshire labourers as self-respecting, courageous and independent as any northerner could be, if less uncouth. As a Lancashire man by extraction, I greatly fear that much of the northern 'independence' is merely bad manners, or rather a lack of manners masking the real kindness which I believe to be an almost universal and, perhaps, essential quality of the great mass of ordinary English people. Certainly I found the Lancashire people reliable, given to under-statement, slow to promise; but a promise once given was always respected. I will return to these Lancashire people again. Let me get on with the story.

Every one of my new colleagues was friendly and helpful. Of the four of them, three are dead. Hoffert was our head, the Divisional Inspector, a tall, thin ascetic with a really scholarly knowledge of his branch of science. His father was a Pole, a German subject who had fled to liberty in England after the revolution of 1848. Hoffert, I regret to say, though born and bred in England, suffered considerable annoyance in 1914, principally because his Christian names were Hermann Heinrich. He was a most lovable man, but he was a little tired of his work when I joined his small force. Sedate, dignified and distant in manner, he would, after a week's stay in a hotel, order a claret and lemonade for the good of the house! And I well remember his puzzled consternation, when in the Mayor's parlour of a Lancashire town, not without its Irish element, the Mayor suddenly dug him in the ribs and said, "Well, old chap, and what's yours?" He resented the gesture, and literally did not understand the phrase which, however, was moderately well comprehended by some of his less other-worldly

colleagues. But on this occasion none of us could dispose of enough whisky to please the Mayor, who roared at his own jokes about our educational deficiencies. This may have been why at a later stage, when two of us were pleading for certain extensions of the educational equipment of the town, the old fellow advised his fellow-members of the Education Committee not to be deceived by the soft accents and plausible arguments of "these sybaritic bureaucrats from Whitehall", a phrase, I venture to assert, which was accurate in no particular, substantive or adjective.

Another of those who have died was the witty, generous, kindly Jew who had taken two first classes at Cambridge, who worked for progress as he conceived it, and successfully too, for he reformed the arrangements of the whole of his district. The Lancashire people among whom he worked did not always understand his mordant and ironical phrases: but they knew a man; they recognised the stout heart he bore in his frail frame, and they admired his public-spirited industry. God has rested his soul.

Of the other two, I have described one, perhaps none too charitably, though he will be the first to smile at a picture which dwells 'at least sufficiently on his weaknesses. I give him leave to dwell on mine. The other, who died whilst I was writing this book, was a fat, jolly engineer, a man of his hands indeed. He had played cricket in his early youth for Somerset and later for Gloucestershire, could have gone to Australia with one of the early teams led by W. G., but preferred to sacrifice fame and cricket to earning a decent living. He never spoke of cricket, and nothing would make him speak of his own feats; but great labour would extract stories of W. G. and E. M. Grace, Alfred Shaw,

Shrewsbury and Gunn, Richardson and Bobby Abel. He was six feet high, seemed nearly a yard across the shoulders and, after fifty, was, let us say, sixty inches round the waist. His jolly, candid manner, and his utter absence of 'side' made him the favourite among us with all the local people we met from time to time. I have known him start his brief oral *résumé* of his conclusions about the engineering department of an important technical school by saying with a jovial smile, "Mr. Chairman, in this place the arrangements for teaching my subject are awful". He was our Laughing Cavalier who had no need for tact or even moderation in statement. So he strode with a great stride and a great smile and a direct story right into the heart of things. When he retired he went carefully into the life statistics of all the nice places in Southern England, settled down in that which gave men of sixty the greatest expectation of life; and there he kept his cats, made and showed beautiful photographs, worked at his lathe, and laughed on joyfully to the end. He was a good man indeed, though he did jump out of the wrong side of a train at Hindley and was nearly killed. He fell on his feet in the dark, and was hauled up, laughing heartily, fifty yards from an approaching train. It was a near thing. My heart pounded rapidly as I ran round to the far platform composing the words with which I should present his lifeless body to his widow. I shall always remember him as the man who knew his job and spread good humour all round him. Who desires a better epitaph?

The life of an inspector in the Technical Branch of the Board of Education was in some respects far from an easy one. We were called by our colleagues in other branches the 'High Tea' branch, because we

never dined. Between 5 and 7 o'clock we were always *en route* to schools. From the Board's angle we were in charge of all Continuation Schools, in addition to the Technical Schools and Colleges. But before the War—and since—most of this kind of educational work was done in the evening, principally from seven o'clock onwards. My district lay entirely outside Liverpool, so that when working from home on every evening, usually about five, I had to set out to Warrington, St. Helens, Southport, Wigan or some other centre where 'my' schools—that is, the schools which I had to visit, and, if desirable, report upon—were situated. About nine, or after, in the evening I would set out to catch my return train, reaching home usually between 10.30 and 11 or later at night. For in all cases within my own district, with few exceptions, chiefly in the grimy hinterland of Wigan, I was expected to return home and save a night allowance, a desirable economy. Not that the temptation to stay out was very great!

A word on the habits of Government Departments seems here to be called for. My experience is that the supervision of expenses in a Government Department is strict: and rightly so. No slackness over minor expenditure is permissible. In Whitehall they kept a special clerk whose duty it was to survey inspectors' diaries, check their railway fares, and to cause enquiry to be made whenever there was *prima facie* reason to suppose that one had stayed out when one should have returned home, or had not travelled by the cheaper route if an alternative were possible. One must not take a cab if tram or bus was available; and the use of cars, then just beginning, was strictly supervised. In fact, the use of cars was not, and is not sufficiently encouraged. An incident is perhaps typical. One

day I had to attend a Committee at Whitehall, the first sitting of which was timed at 2.30 in an afternoon. It was easy to get up to town either from Liverpool or Birkenhead by that time, and, as it happened, there was a good train from Birkenhead about 9.30 a.m., which would land me at Euston in time. I did not know whether the business would be finished during the afternoon or whether, as often happened, it would continue next morning. So I took a single ticket; and, moreover, I knew that at that time (it was during the War period) the return from Liverpool was twice the single fare. About return tickets from Birkenhead I knew nothing, for, as a rule, the trains being faster, I went up from Liverpool. The Committee finished its deliberations by 5 p.m. Virtuously I determined to get back, and caught the non-stop 6.5 p.m. from Euston to Liverpool, paying another single fare, reaching that city at 9.30 and home about 10.15, well satisfied with my conscientious behaviour. I had not reckoned with 'the little black man', as we called the Argus of Whitehall who supervised matters migratory. In due course I got an official minute pointing out that I had charged on that day a single fare from Birkenhead to London, and a single from London to Liverpool. My attention was drawn to the fact that had I booked return from Birkenhead to London I should have expended 56s., not 58s., as charged, and I was asked for an explanation. This was easy. I pointed out that, on the return journey, I could not have reached Birkenhead at any reasonable time, that by returning to Liverpool I had saved a war-time night allowance of 25s., had been on the go for more than thirteen hours, and had also saved at least half-a-day's working time on the day following the journey. I was

ignorant that a saving of 2s. could be effected by booking return from Birkenhead. Why then, said I, should my unimpeachable care and industry be questioned? And, as I was then sufficiently senior to be impertinent, I added that if the expenditure of 2s. thus questioned would balance the Budget or otherwise cheer a harassed Government, the 2s. might without further question on my part be retained by H.M. Exchequer. I received a further note to say that the 2s. would, *in the circumstances*, be repaid to me: for, of course, I advanced these payments; and peace ensued. The enquiry was justified, and was in fact an index of strict and good administration. The little black man, seated in Whitehall with his pile of timetables, local as well as national, was a proper institution; and if we scored off him when occasionally *he* mistook p.m. for a.m. or *vice versa*, or broke down on local knowledge, we knew that he symbolised constitutional principles for which Englishmen have fought and died, and the observance of which makes English government the cleanest, and probably the most efficient in the world.

Similarly once when I was sent on a journey which cost a day-and-a-half's work and an expenditure of more than £3 to enquire into an alleged over-claim of 5s. 6d. Government grant, I reflected that I was merely carrying out the great principle of the Parliamentary control of expenditure, and felt not only justified, but elevated.

I must return to the job and its inconveniences, for, of course, they were not hardships. In the morning, when at home or away, there were usually references from the office to be answered or enquired about. At home, with the prospect of considerable journeys and

visits to schools every evening except Saturday and Sunday (oh! blessed intermissions!), I seldom worked in the afternoons. In fact, I usually played golf, and ruined my style by too much playing alone, partners being often difficult to come by. But after the first four or five weeks of the session I was always, for the first seven or eight years of my service, on 'full inspections', as they were called, of the more important Technical Schools or Colleges in the six northern counties and Cheshire. So that in fact I was at home only at week-ends from mid-October until late March.

These 'full inspections' were affairs lasting a week. Half-a-dozen of us invaded a College at Bradford or Blackburn, Crewe or West Hartlepool or Newcastle, and if the institution were a large one, our numbers might be seven or eight or more. We had several functions: to see that public money was being spent economically and an efficient training of the right kind being produced; to discover inefficiency or weakness or laziness. I put these first. But as a matter of fact they were, though right and necessary, the least important of our functions. The most important were to help, to encourage, and to advise. In a big Technical College all sorts of things, chiefly, but by no means exclusively of the vocational order, are taught. Engineering in all its branches meant the presence among us of a skilled and practically expert engineer (or a mechanical *and* an electrical engineer). Building, Chemical Industry, Mining, Textiles, 'Commerce', Art, Domestic Subjects, Physical Training, had to be provided for, the make-up of the curriculum (and therefore the composition of the inspecting force) being determined by the economic character of the neighbourhood. So that our band of inspectors, all

experts and sometimes experts of wide experience and high attainments, and, in most sections of the work, with good practical and academic experience, formed an interesting body of men. To some experience of teaching they added an *extensive* knowledge of schools such as the individual Principal or teacher could seldom possess. Thus we supplemented the intensive experience of the teacher by a width of experience impossible to those who did not live our migratory lives. Not only did we circulate daily, but headquarters changed too. At intervals (usually from five to seven years, but it might be less) we were moved from one part of the country to another; frequently, I may say, to our temporary financial destruction, for the Board's allowances never covered the full cost of removal, still less the losses involved by the surrender of unexpired leases or by enforced sales of our modest houses. These movements, however, besides other advantages from the Board's point of view, broadened our experience.

So we were able to discuss with Principals, Heads of Departments (Scottish and other) and with teachers their difficulties and their problems and their positive suggestions; and in most branches, too, we could deal with buildings and equipment on a broad basis of experience. As a rule, therefore, especially in later years, our presence was welcomed and our purpose understood. Indeed, it may fairly be claimed that the opportunities of discussion were eagerly seized by men on the Technical College staffs, who, in some cases, had few opportunities of talking shop of the right kind with interested and not unintelligent outsiders. It is pleasant to think that one had opportunities of this kind to do educational good.

I should like to bear witness that, in their spheres, less interesting and less varied as I think, the inspectors of the Board in other branches did similar work. Nor were these branches water-tight. We could and did call upon other branches of the Board for help, as in proper cases they called upon us. It might happen, for instance, that a particular Technical School was for some local reason strong in some branch of natural science, *e.g.*, botany, not usually provided for on our side of the inspectorate; and a distinguished botanist or naturalist serving, say, as an Inspector of Elementary Schools would be called in. This not infrequently happened, too, in the matter of modern languages, especially the less common ones. For French and German one or other of us could usually furnish. So that, even had they sung hymns in such an establishment, there was no need for the Principal of a Technical College to choose the hymn selected wickedly by the humorous and able Head Mistress of a Girl's High School, about to be "fully" inspected by the Secondary branch of the Inspectorate:

" Christian, dost thou see them on the holy ground,
How the Hosts of Midian prowl and prowl around?
Christian, up and smite them, counting gain but loss. . . . " *

So we worked hard, travelled much, became experts in the lore of hotels, were mistaken often, especially when travelling alone or in small numbers, for commercial travellers. Indeed, one of my witty comrades presided solemnly as Mr. President at the Commercial Table of an inn in a Yorkshire town, saying that trade was not as good as it might be, but people would

* See *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, No. 91. The whole hymn is magnificent in its ironical application to the inspecting process.

always want textiles ; drapery was a sound line—it was *the* line, for though women might cut down the beef, or the family marmalade, or the coal, they would always insist on underwear and summer frocks for themselves. Thus the drapery line was infinitely to be preferred even to groceries, and certainly, with a solemn glance at our prize electrical engineer, to planting vacuum-cleaners on women who couldn't pay for them. “ But,” he sententiously concluded, “ it takes all kinds of travellers to make a world, and we must be considerate to our less fortunate brethren. They are not without merit. We will now take the collection for the Commercial Travellers' School.”

Solemn though Technical Education sounds, these gatherings out of working hours, as well as, sometimes, within them, were good fun. Our training and experience were diverse and in some cases unorthodox. A collection of eight or nine of us, including a woman or two, provided a great stock of knowledge. I have seldom known more interesting conversation than I remember, in some not too comfortable inn, between 9.30. or 10 and midnight. Those who talk shop talk sense. And there were many shops to cover. The engineers could chaff the miners, and the Building Inspector suffered from the witty, wicked tongue of the Domestic Inspector. General notions could be tested by really expert information ; and many of us learned what points to look out for, or even how to talk or listen intelligently to teachers on subjects of which we had no expert knowledge. Then there was the host of anecdote and personal experience, the stories collected from all sources and every class, and the capper of stories could nearly always be capped. Our district work was lonely enough in all conscience :

but this full inspection work, if arduous and responsible, was supremely social. Occasionally, weary to death in some small provincial hotel, we did ridiculous things, without much aid from alcohol. I have known an eminent engineer demonstrate how he could move his ears backwards and forwards, and a learned scientist stand on his head. If only the students could have seen that the inspectors could be human, all too human!

For nine years I did full inspection work not only in the North-West, but also in the North-Eastern and Northern Divisions: the combination of men and women—for there were always one or two women on call 'job'—varied with the area and with the subjects dealt with in a given school, so that there was always an element of variety; and the intervals between one such inspection and another and the varying composition of the teams were enough to prevent us boring one another. In 1919 I was promoted to be in charge of the whole North-Western Division, and, as other specialists had been appointed, my ambit as a specialist was limited to Lancashire and Cheshire. The North-East was cut off from me, and, as usual, rather greater responsibility brought with it rather less freedom.

Perhaps I should record one interesting piece of work. In 1917 Mr. Fisher, then President of the Board, was preparing a new, and, as it proved, a great Education Act. To the House of Commons, not over accustomed to the scholar in office, he was an attractive figure, and he very wisely made use of a popularity, which was well deserved, to accomplish some first-rate educational reforms, including a new and a decent scale of salaries for teachers, hitherto

scandalously underpaid, and, for the first time, a reasonable pension scheme, on Civil Service principles. Fisher was one of the few Education Ministers who, in recent times, have commanded attention. His Bill, which, withdrawn in its first form on technical details, became an Act in 1918, undoubtedly, stands side by side with the Morant-Balfour Act of 1902 as a cardinal piece of legislation.

In that Act he made provision for the institution of Day Continuation Schools, to be held for eight hours a week, in working hours for all those who, under the arrangements of his Act, left school at fourteen years of age. For before his Act it was possible for children, under certain conditions, to leave before that age.

The provision for school attendance during working hours of young people over fourteen years of age was not introduced into the Act without much forethought and investigation. Over three hundred factories and workshops or farms—working places, in fact—in all principal industries were visited. The lot of undertaking this work, with the help of colleagues enlisted for the purpose, fell upon me. Actually I visited about 150 factories or other places of employment myself. The rest were seen by colleagues, who, like good Civil Servants, worked generously and unostentatiously with me.

The result illustrates, and indeed confirms, a well-known psychological phenomenon: men (and women) will say things individually and during personal and private intercourse which they, or, to be fair, many of them will deny collectively. The difficulties in all sorts of businesses of enabling pupils to continue their education, to be kept in touch with things of the mind and spirit, during work hours are obvious and con-

siderable. But in no single instance did any employer or any representative workman say that it was impossible. In fact, the usual and quite voluntary reply to questions was of this order: "Of course it won't be easy, but it is false to say that it is impossible or that we cannot organise for it. If we'd had nothing more difficult than that to do in these war years, we should have been lucky indeed. Get on with it. If it gives youngsters a chance, or renders them five per cent. better disciplined or better disposed it will be a great help to us."

When officials, or the Minister, or both, met these same people, or their fellows, in groups of a dozen, twenty, or thirty as representatives of their trades, as often as not they would deny what they had individually and privately affirmed to be unqualified truth. The worst instances of this were in the textile trades, and particularly the cotton trade. I heard an employer deny that certain automatic looms could be used exclusively for the manufacture of simple cotton cloth, when only a day or two previously I had actually seen them in process on so large a scale that *miles* of ordinary calico were being made daily by the process described. When taxed, the denigrator would appeal to his fellows, who, ignorantly or maliciously or out of mere comradeship, would support him or fall back upon some flimsy local technical plea which no amateur could colourably controvert, though he knew perfectly well it had no substance. Technical opinion was then asserted to be against us.

In this investigation, naturally, I learned very much, and added to my stock of knowledge concerning the mechanical ingenuity of mankind in all sorts of trades, commonplace and recondite. But I will resist the

temptation to describe even the ingenious automatic machinery employed in the manufacture of buckle tongues. Soldiers need buckles, and the Midland manufacturer who had a stock of some millions of all sizes, from elephants' harness buckles downwards, maintained, not too solemnly, that he really won the War.

The clauses enabling a scheme of continuation education to be universally applied, are still of course on the statute book. There were a few places, including London, in which they were for a time applied. In London, for party political reasons, and on account of some real opposition by the mass of parents, the experiment was abandoned just as it was assured of success. One town, Rugby, to its own benefit and its great honour, has carried out its scheme continuously to this day. And many works, including notably Cadbury's, Rowntrees and the great textile firm of Tootal Broadhurst Lee, have continued their own schemes. Had any Government displayed the courage to persist in a widespread scheme, young people by this day would have been kept in touch with a reasonably designed education up to the age of eighteen, *i.e.* during their most formative years, to their great physical and moral benefit. And the State would have raised the level of its members' well-being very sensibly. Sybilline books, however, have been destroyed, not for the first or last time.

The routine of the inspector's life is not of much general interest, and I will spare any reader who survives thus far details which would bore him. I can only say that we were a band of brothers, that we worked smoothly together and, as we believed, for the public good. Difficult questions affecting the lives,

sometimes the livelihood, of people, occasionally arose, and had to be solved with such courage, justice, sagacity, and friendliness as we could command. As a rule we were listened to at Whitehall, and sufficiently distant from it to make troublesome office interference uncommon. Indeed, when I left the Board of Education I left it with a great respect for its tradition and for the efficiency of its personnel inside and outside the office, as well as for the sound and simple procedure chiefly devised on high by the able Secretary and Assistant Secretaries. In the main, so far as I could judge, the Board's decisions were reasonable, and their methods sane. Sometimes we thought they lacked 'guts' a little: But most Government departments necessarily find sweet reasonableness and some flexibility preferable to anything approaching truculence. Failure to expedite good works is generally attributable to ministers; for they, rightly, command policy, or that part of policy which is dependent upon money.

Amusing incidents were few and far between. Most good school stories are invented by teachers, and occasionally by inspectors. We sometimes amused ourselves in a leisure which was scanty. Once we gave telephone numbers to our colleagues, among the best being X 1715, which, to ease matters, I had better state was the date of the rising of the Old Pretender, whilst Whitehall 0666 was reserved affectionately for the Chief Inspector at Whitehall, 666 being the mark of the beast. The best grown men remain schoolboys at heart! Some of the fictitious telegraphic addresses which we liberally bestowed on various colleagues amused us. But I fear that the reader will not be able fully to see the point of Modesty, Liverpool: the

Absolute, Preston: or Wisdom, Huddersfield, substantives which gave us much quiet, if crude, amusement. Nor can I publish the diary of Mr. Pepys, H.M.I. (T.), which was really very good in parts.

In the whole of my life as an inspector, covering some twenty-five years in all kinds of schools, I have received only one stunning answer from a pupil. One evening I visited the Technical School at Widnes, where, for convenience, some rather elementary work was done. I found a class engaged on that succulent subject 'Commercial Arithmetic'. The example, printed in a fat, red-covered text-book, was this: "Find the simple interest on £30,175 for fifteen years at one per cent. per annum". I seized on this and wished to establish that, the current rate of interest on a gilt-edged security at that date (oh happy day!) being five per cent., no one outside a mental home was likely to lend such a sum of money for fifteen years at one per cent. Incidentally, I should have taught these lads (who had just left day school) that much nonsense is printed, even in text-books. So I started questioning the class in what I believed to be a skilful manner. I made little progress. At last I selected a small boy who looked brighter than the average (one must not infer from the gloom of Widnes the stupidity of its inhabitants) and told him to stand up. He rose, smiling at me unabashed. I said to him, "Now, Tom, you are the best-looking boy here, what would you do if I gave you £30,000?" I hoped he would tell me that he would put it in a bank, or do something similarly banal and sensible; in which case the path to bank rates and the like would be easy. I was disappointed. The little urchin smiled even more broadly, and a wicked glint came into his china-blue

eyes as he replied, "Please, sir, I'd marry and settle down". I collapsed. There were, of course, amusing situations, as, for instance, at Blackburn, when during my novitiate, and naturally desiring to be affable, I leaned down to a small, youngish-looking fellow, who during a 'practical' class was rooting into a cupboard, and said, "Well, my lad, and how do you like this work?" "I like the work all right, and the pay better," was the reply. "I'm the teacher!"

The most surprising, pointed, and 'literary' answer I encountered, however, was not in any school, but in a railway compartment. I was travelling from Liverpool to Burnley, and one changed for Burnley at Preston Junction. Before the change I had exhausted the newspaper and sundry official documents. It was a very cold morning in mid-January. After the change at Preston I entered a compartment in which there was already seated a big, fat Lancashire man who looked to be some three feet across the shoulders and certainly possessed an enormous waist measurement. He was doing nothing, so, feeling conversational, I ventured on a harmless commonplace. "It's cold this morning," said I. He stared at me, doubtless marking a cadaverous face, and said with almost savage emphasis: "Cowl! Yo call it cowl, do yo! What *yo* want, is six raands o' bootered toast, six boiled eggs, an' two rashers o' bacon *as long as yer braaces*, and ye'll none ca' it cowl then." The idea of those two rashers stretching out into a kind of porcine infinity has since been my standard of imaginative and picturesque expression. It was literary Lancashire at its best. He then relapsed into friendliness as I roared at his prescription, and we gossiped gaily on to unlovely Burnley.

It was not he, however, who told me the tackler

stories, peculiar to the weaving areas of Lancashire, of which I will give one sample. For the benefit of the unlearned I had better say that weaving, in the cotton industry, is, predominantly, a woman's job. The typical woman weaver has four looms to look after, and to each larger group of looms, let us say to every twenty or so, a man overlooker or, as he is called 'tackler', is attached. The girls insist on the convention that these male 'tacklers' are stupid; and they invent stories to illustrate the defect. One of them runs as follows: A tackler, Bill, meets one of his tackler friends, Tom. "Hallo, Tom," says Bill; "tha'rt lookin' mighty smart; what's tha bin doin'?" "Nowt much," says Tom. "Aw've just gotten a coat-hanger, that's a'. Thee get a coat-hanger, an' tha'll be smart enough." A week later they meet again. "What, Bill!" says Tom; "tha's smartened thi'self oop aw reet. What's wrong with thee? Tha' looks gradely!" "Oh!" replies Bill, "*aw've* gotten a coat-hanger as well as thee. But ha' the hell do aw keep mi hat on?"

The number of such stories is large; they pour out in numbers; and they account, at least in part, for the production of that great Rochdale genius, Miss Gracie Fields, to whom from a lowly level I offer respectful and very grateful homage.

The amount of comic relief in the life of the Technical Inspector going about like Nicodemus by night, and at least hoping that he is doing good, is, however, small. Apart from the full inspections, which took in the last portion of my service about half my time, it was a long round of evening visits prefixed and followed by dull railway journeys, and possibly a long walk on dull, and often wet or cold winter evenings,

with dreary tram-rides and much solitude. Sometimes the best side of the uncouth and often rude Lancastrians came out, as when, on a dark December night during the War years I went from Liverpool to Bamfurlong, a mining village beyond Wigan. In the school there was a set of evening classes which I had never yet been able to visit. And I desired to see all 'my' schools—that is to say, evening schools run by the Lancashire County Council but within my inspectoral district. I alighted at the dirty little station. No cab was to be had; and at any rate I seldom used cabs. I knew from the ordnance map that the school could not be more than half-an-hour's walk away. But on which road? I had left my map behind me, as cumbersome, and almost useless in the dark. I met a group of miners coming off the six-o'clock shift, or rather the shift which had ended at that hour. I asked one of them to direct me to the school. There he was: black of visage, ill-clothed, with his empty billy-can in his hand, longing no doubt for the tub in his back kitchen, and then the fire and food. He replied, "Eh, mister, ye'll never get there alone i't' dark." I protested that I should if he would just tell me how to start. To 'get there,' I explained, was my job. "Nay," he insisted, "ye'll not get there by yer sen. Coom on!" And, in spite of my protests, he set off along the ashy road back towards his pit, nor would he leave me till the school lights were but a hundred yards away. On this cold and desolate night, after his eight hours, bank to bank, he chose to add an hour's walk to his labour. He refused my proffered money, not with grace, perhaps, but saying: "Perhaps aw'll meet thee i' London some day, and tha'lt do t' same by me". Manners they may lack, but

a helpful hand I have never known them fail to proffer. They are more civilised to-day, of course, than when, not so many years ago, the Saturday night in Wigan, St. Helens or Leigh terminated thus: "Bill, has t' fowten?" "Nay, lad!" "Then geet fowten and come whoam." The weekly 'drunk' and the weekly fight have passed away, or almost. So have the pit-head girls with their rough, but very ready tongues. When their traditional employment was threatened as unfit for women, a deputation came up to town so that the Home Secretary of the day could see them for himself. The meeting over, they passed up Whitehall towards Trafalgar Square, when a would-be swell of a Cockney, with his eye on one of the stalwart, comely girls in her Sunday clothes and her shining, well-washed face with its beautiful Lancashire complexion, shouted, "Hullo, Liza! How did you get here?" "Me?" she answered quick as lightning and fiery as Brynhilde—"Me? Greased my Sunday trousers and *slid down a rainbow*. How the bloody hell did *you* get here, you ugly little black beetle? Clear oot before I punce yo'r guts in." I am sorry for the language, I suppose; but it was intelligible to the addressee, who removed himself rapidly out of range.

And the word 'punce', which is the Lancastrian for kick, if necessary with duckbill clogs, reminds me of the story illustrating the essential manners of the Lancashire miners of a generation now gone. Why have I got on to miners, or why do they hold me? I think it is the memory of their soap-shiny faces as they used to sit in their universal black suits in the mining classes which cheered me so in Leigh five-and-twenty years ago. A curate meets a miner at the right-angled corner of two streets. They collide, suddenly

and with some force. "Very sorry," says the curate. "Sorry," says the miner—"sorry be jiggered! Tha's got to be punced." Justice, though the heavens fall!

And then there is the story of the imaginative miner V.C. who went up to get his decoration but did not receive it. That may be too well known, so I will defer it, and return to the Board of Education and its work. Which reminds me of what disappointment may await people who endeavour to spread a clearer light among those who practise the art of teaching. With one of my colleagues, an older and a more learned man, it was one of my principal duties to endeavour to get the instruction of those who studied 'commercial subjects' on to a rather higher level. Technical education, as I have probably before remarked, must consist largely of the exposition of theory. You must teach in the Technical School what cannot be taught in the works or the office. So to give commercial instruction a 'centre' of theory we invented the subject of 'Commerce', which was intended to be the descriptive economics of the purchase and sale of goods, wholesale and retail, and of the processes ancillary thereto. The invention was very largely another's, but it was my duty and desire to spread it. I got it into school and examination syllabuses, I discussed it and recommended it in various quarters, to enterprising and intelligent teachers, and, generally, advocated it in places where the ground seemed favourable. The stony ground could wait. That is one way in which the School Inspector works, if he is worth his salt. Then I thought the time was ripe for some teachers' classes. This was before the time when teachers' refresher courses, one of the best things the Board organises, were

held in the summer at Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere. Even had such courses been available, only a minority, and a small one, of the teachers in my area would have been able to attend. So local classes were indicated. I tried to think of other teachers than myself. University professors or lecturers would not do: they were too high-brow, would not take advice, and they knew neither the teachers nor the schools. Nor could I find among 'my' teachers the right man. Very well! In default of a better I would do it myself. And so I did on alternate Friday nights at Liverpool and Manchester, where the local authorities, generally ready to back up good works, even when organised by 'bureaucratic sybarites from Whitehall', readily found me a lecture-room, and the county and the county borough authorities encouraged their teachers to attend. I had two good audiences, and I delivered lectures which I fondly imagined were informative and lucid. I managed also to get discussion, not uncritical nor unintelligent, and I finished a laborious job with a certain measure of not undeserved, if qualified self-satisfaction.

A few months afterwards I visited on its first evening a certain class in the subject. An inspector must go somewhere on first nights, at least for diary purposes. The teacher had attended my lectures. Now, one has to begin a lecture somehow, and apparently I had begun my lectures by the impeccable platitude "Commerce is a department of human activity". No one could deny that. But the teacher I visited, an amateur, who was fearfully afraid of failing to demonstrate that he knew some 'principles of teaching', had heard the awful word 'elicit'. He tried to

elicit a definition of his simple subject. "What is commerce?" he asked his class of young clerks aged, most of them, between twenty and thirty. "Commerce," replied one of them, "is the exchange of goods." "Good for you," thought I. But it was not good enough for the teacher. He went on for fifteen precious minutes, eliciting, and eliciting nothing much, until finally, with a proud look at me, as though to say, "Sir, I will accept nothing short of your golden words", he announced that commerce was a department of human activity! I could not bear it. Blinded with tears, and purple with fury, I rushed madly from the room, and consoled myself, or rather cooled off, by pretending to pay attention to a crowd of girls who were beginning Pitman's shorthand with its *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, and the rest of it. However, before the session was out I found I had done some good, and by that time was sufficiently experienced to be satisfied if I had managed here and there to get the level of instruction raised by half-an-inch.

So the work went on. The War was over. I was forty-two when it broke out. I had to take over other work as well as my own during the period. I was a special constable in Birkenhead, but accomplished nothing more than causing a fellow 'special' to break his glasses by directing his gaze upwards to an unlawful light as he approached—calamitously—a lamp-post. Armed with a mashie niblick, I also engaged in a chase after an elusive and probably fictitious burglar. I was promoted to be in charge of the North-Western Division in 1919, when promotion was again possible. I was firmly enough established to have used without reproof the word 'bloody' on an official minute.

The use of that word illustrates the system of which

I was part. I had written an adverse report, in my judgment amply justified and sadly needed, on one of the smaller Technical Schools in my area. Such reports have to pass the criticism (*a*) of the Divisional Inspector and (*b*) of an 'Examiner' in Whitehall. As I was Divisional Inspector, the first hurdle was non-existent. The Examiner,* however, thought my language more direct than was usual or expedient, and remitted the report to me, with an expression of that view. I replied something like this:

Mr. Beauchamp-Cholmondley :

I note your comment. The constitution of the Education Committee of X is such that if I say their institution 'leaves something to be desired', they will think it very good indeed. If one wishes to convey the notion that it is not as good as it should be one has to say that it is bloody awful. Some faint realisation of its inefficiency and inadequacy may then be produced. I regret therefore that I am unable to accept your suggested amendments prompted as I know them to be by the best of motives, and supported by the traditions of the great institution we both serve.

F. H. S.

26.11.19-

The inspector has the last word. No one may alter a word of his report without his consent. Though, of course, the Board, if it disagrees, need not send a report down to the Authority. I have never known this to happen. I knew a courageous inspector, pressed to withdraw from a printed report the unofficial word 'rotten', who agreed provided the Chief

* Now a 'Principal'. The rank-terminology of the Board is now uniform with that of other Departments.

Inspector would interview the Local Education Committee and use the word himself *vivâ voce*, or allow him (the District Inspector) to use it. The Chief Inspector himself came down, and used it with considerable satisfaction and appropriate emphasis.

I must, however, record one heroic act. After a full inspection it was usual for us to be entertained before or after the informal meeting with Governors or Committee, at which we discussed the outline of our conclusions. At H—— in Yorkshire they gave us high tea, and among the rich profusion of food provided there were hot meat pies swimming in gravy. I relate with some pride that I was the only inspector to accept this dish. "For," I argued, "probably never again, at five o'clock tea, shall I have an opportunity of consuming this rich if unsuitable food at the expense of an ancient municipality."

Looking back on it all, there is no doubt that, with all its loneliness and its unromantic detail, it was a desirable life. One had much freedom, both of movement and of expression. In the Board of Education I found that within the limits set by decent manners one could say or write for internal consumption anything one liked. Of course one had to take the consequences, which might be promotion in the one event or, in the other, banishment to some remote and relatively unimportant area, or to London, or even the stoppage of an annual increment.

The principal local officials one had to meet were the Directors of Education, for to be, as it were, the diplomatic representative of the Central Authority was one of one's functions. One colleague given to clear, if sometimes acid, modes of expression classified these officers into three classes: (*a*) those one worked

with; (*b*) those one worked against, and (*c*) those one ignored. In the robust North there were more than a few of the first class; and I found that it was frequently far from impossible (unless one was an arrogant young pup) to convert those classed under (*b*) into class (*a*). Not much could be done with the (*c*)'s, for they were the weak and colourless who are damned for ever.

I was, however, soon to leave the North. So we will defer Directors of Education to the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI

LONDON CALLING

THE great Education Act of 1902, which for the first time made all forms of education a municipal function, had called for the creation of a class of municipal officer of a new kind. The Borough Surveyor and the County Medical Officer were to have their prototypes in a new class of official to act as the adviser and the Executive Officer of the borough or the county on the conduct of education. It was a mistake to call them Directors of Education, still their commonest title, for that implied more power than they ought to possess. It was also an error to call them Secretaries, for in the municipalities and counties the term secretary implies much less than it does in Whitehall or elsewhere. The best title is that adopted by London and Birmingham: Education Officer, which more nearly describes their functions than do the alternative titles.

Men of all sorts were recruited for these posts. Occasionally the aristocratic or at least upper middle-class clerk of a county ran the education business with relatively humble assistance. It was one such Clerk of the Peace who, speaking of a change impending in the Board's representation in 'his' county, said to a high officer of the Board: "For God's sake, this time, send me a gentleman, not a bloody missionary". Zeal, unaccompanied by great skill at 'shootin' and bridge, is not always welcome. But

there was an H.M.I., a scratch golfer, who dominated one Education Committee by giving the chairman fourteen strokes and losing by a putt on the last green. Not that I believe the Board to have been very susceptible to influence in the distribution of its inspecting staff. At least our grim old Chief Inspector was not.

In my division there were two administrative counties and nineteen county boroughs. Each of these had a 'Director': with the numerous directors for minor authorities responsible only for elementary education I had no concern. When originally I went to the North-West only one of these Directors hailed from Oxford or Cambridge. As one who was at neither of the ancient English Universities, I am able to say that the proportion was far too small. At least two of the others were men who had been clerks to the older School Boards, and both of these were most efficient. One of them, in fact, was an extremely able administrator who, starting as a boy clerk in a School Board office, had developed fruitfully his natural gifts for handling men and situations. He took up the sensible and friendly attitude that the Board's Inspector was, properly used, a valuable ally. We reciprocated by telling ourselves that A might be short of knowledge and ideas, but coach him properly and he would see things through. He did; to the great benefit of the city in which he lived and served. One or two had been assistant inspectors in the Board. Some had been schoolmasters, elementary and secondary. One of these, then holding office in what I think is the ugliest town in Lancashire (which is saying much), was the strongest personality in the division. He left it for greater things. He was

undoubtedly a strong man, with great intelligence, little understanding of the finer side of life, but a great and genuine enthusiasm for education as he understood it. He was favourable to 'T', which at least he thought he understood. In small things he was unscrupulous, and he placed a childish reliance on drinks and cigars as lubricants of business. Though sometimes important in private business, these ancillaries are of little service in public administration. But he knew a man when he saw him. And later on, when he was Director for one of the most famous cities of the North, he attained a great respect for the big-headed, small-bodied, Nonconformist engineer representing the Board who neither drank nor smoked, who had no stock of stories good or bad, but who knew his job, was direct, reasonable, and meant business always. It was this Director who caused me to shock the feelings of a young colleague, sent to me, almost without warning, for training before his transfer to another branch. I had occasion to go to dreary, dirty, ugly X to see this famous Director. I took with me the neophyte, who was a very high wrangler, but whom Cambridge and an initial Chair in an Eastern University had taught, apparently, nothing about the imperfections of a wicked world. We duly had the interview. The great man hedged and dodged, and I soon realised that he was merely stating improvised fictions and intended, whatever the merits of the case I was putting to him, to do nothing. After listening for a reasonable time, I refused the proffered cigar, as it was yet but 'the third hour of the day', and took my leave, both of us smiling a reciprocal and understanding smile.

"There," I said to young A (who had religion

badly and ingenuously)—“there, that’s how it’s done; and you need not believe a word old Y said.”

A. looked at me, shocked and sad, and probably if he remembers me at all, still regards me as a deplorably cynical old man. He was not for the Board. In another branch they decided that his probation had not been satisfactorily served. But I rejoice to say that, on his great mathematical abilities, he immediately got a first-class job, at a famous public school; and he now holds an important chair at an ancient and beautiful university. ‘Out of the eater came forth meat; out of the strong sweetness.’ His unsuccessful probation was the best thing that could have happened to him, bitter blow as it was.

Some half-dozen of the Directors were decent, able, and pretty enlightened men; and I fear that we inspectors of the Board who were naturally advisers and ‘influences’ with no direct executive power, and no responsibility to an elected committee, did not always recognise the difficulties of their position. They had to handle committees composed of amateurs of all degrees of intelligence, unintelligence, and of very varying interest in education; though frequently individuals were honestly concerned according to their lights—only in a minority of cases high lights—in the welfare of the rising generation. Our job, to advise the Directors on policy, to smooth their path with the Central Government and, on occasion, to support them formally or informally with (or against) their committees, was easier than theirs. They had to act directly and take full responsibility. This I was not to learn, but to realise, later on, when I became the servant of a great Local Education Authority. It would be a ‘good thing’ if in the administrative

spheres where the Central Government is concerned with local administration some interchange of officers could occasionally be arranged. The difficulties of such a plan, arising out of the differences of function, recruitment, pay, and status, though not impossible to solve, are very great. Anyhow, it is seldom done; and the few permanent transfers which have taken place, either way, usually, though not of course invariably, have been successful.

So life went on. I continued to study 'cities of men and manners' in the six northern counties and Cheshire. I liked the North. But it looked as if there would for years be no open route to the South; and there were reasons, domestic among others, for moving in that direction after over eleven years in that other England of which the Londoner judges only by the football crowds of the Cup Finals, perhaps also in these later years from Gracie Fields, a few plays (everyone should be compelled to see 'Love on the Dole') and silly jokes about Wigan. Dear old Wigan, and Widnes and St. Helens, and, for the matter of that, Bolton and Burnley, Huddersfield, Halifax, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Hindley and Oswaldtwistle. Courage will see them through yet. For even more than most of England they will not recognise that they are beaten. If ever, in a doubtful case, I want a bodyguard, God send that it may be from Lancashire or the West Riding. Stolid and unrattleable, they are typified by one of their number at Niagara. The American told him that 753,263,169 gallons of water hurled themselves over every hour. And all he said was: "Aw see nowt to stop it!"

In the autumn of 1922 the post of Chief Inspector under the London Education Committee was adver-

tised. I was not at all anxious to leave the service of the Board of Education. The salary of the advertised post (to put first things first) was not much greater than that already paid me. The cost of removal and of living in London would swallow any margin. I knew my superiors at the Board, and knew that at least they could understand the language we inspectors used, and that most of them, and nearly all who were my seniors and official superiors, were liberal-minded men. I liked my immediate colleagues, I liked my duties, except that I was tiring a little of the inevitable and eternal evenings of work. Being of a migratory disposition, I did not dislike the travelling. I knew my area, and knew all the Directors with whom principally I had dealings; and I was (I hope modestly) conscious that a certain reputation for sense and for fairness had established me with colleagues, officials, and teachers. Moreover, it would be bad for the prestige of the Board if I applied for the post and failed to get it. But a road to the South had to be opened; and important considerations relating to my children's education were beginning to emerge. A married man, unless without sense or sensibility, must take account of the taste and interests of his wife and family. At any rate, though in many ways it seemed unwise to move from the service of a central to that of a local authority, I decided to apply for the vacant post. I saw the Secretary of the Board, Sir Amhurst Selby-Bigge, who had been just, considerate and entirely unsentimental in his personal dealings with me, which were few. For between the Secretary and an inspector, even of divisional rank, several great gulfs are rightly fixed. He told me that he would not be ill-pleased if one of

the Board's inspectors were appointed to the London post; but of course he could not advise me either way; and he also told me, what was strictly true, that the post I was applying for would not be all beer and skittles. That I knew; and events only confirmed these sagacious prognostications, though his, I believe, were more surely founded on knowledge than mine. Anyhow, I persisted in the intention to apply, though I was a little indifferent about the result. In the interviews which followed this was a considerable help to me. For a person who is not too eagerly seeking a post as a rule does better than the more eager applicant whose need is great. I could keep cool and preserve a sense of humour. I was among a dozen or so called up to see a section of the 'appropriate sub-committee' of the London County Council, a luscious term to which I was soon to become accustomed. I had a pleasant ten minutes or so with them, and confessed to some kinds of knowledge and experience and to much ignorance and inexperience. I did not fall at the first fence. A few weeks later, as one of four 'left in', I saw the full sub-committee. I can remember the pleasant but essentially uneasy conversations in the waiting-room with the other three candidates, of whom one was an H.M.I. of another branch, a very distinguished classical scholar and a writer of well-deserved repute. One of the others was already in the service of the L.C.C. and was afterwards a loyal and helpful colleague; the other became a friend of mine, and still 'directs' education (in an English county) with courtesy, perspicacity and skill. The interview with the full sub-committee was friendly enough, though I thought less skilfully conducted by the other side than the

earlier one. I remember being asked what I knew about mentally defective children, to which I replied, "Nothing". One very able member of the Committee reminded me that most of my recent experience was with Technical Colleges, but, said he, elementary and secondary education were quantitatively greater and more important than the branch I had worked in most recently. What had I to say on that point? I made the obvious reply, that I had in fact a first-hand experience of elementary and secondary schools which few available people could possibly possess; that my recent experience had therefore but completed the gamut, and enabled me to return to the contemplation of the larger services with added experience but greater detachment. Another ancient member of the Committee asked me whether, if appointed, I would reorganise the London inspectorate. I told him that I did not know; but that if, on enquiry and consideration, it seemed the right thing to attempt, I would attempt it.

I remember little more, except that I thought the committee-room dark and much too elaborately decorated, and the Committee too big for its job; and, therefore, quite likely to make the probable mistake of appointing me. They did. But though I put up a competent interview (I am too old now to be too modest), I believe—for it is a matter of faith, not knowledge—enquiries at the Board and elsewhere had a good deal to do with the result. Anyhow, I was appointed; and immediately a gloom settled on my heart: I began to regret it. This was not merely the reaction to the attainment of what had become a sporting desire to win. I was settled, happy, essentially incapable of being overworked in a post

the details of which I now knew from A to Z, and according to my humble measures I was sufficiently prosperous. It was no good. As the golfer knows, one must play the ball from where it lies, and always it lies where one puts it. So hence, vain regrets! Play the regimental march and let us at least embark in good spirits. I was told that I should be recommended to the Education Committee and to the Council for appointment. I took the train back to Liverpool as cheerfully as I might, virtually transformed from a Civil Servant (I was a little proud of that honourable title—and not merely from snobbery either) into a Municipal Servant. This I think is equally honourable; but at the time it did not sound so. Anyhow, I was to be a Londoner, by adoption, once more.

My colleagues played up; and all divisions, E., S. and T., of the Board's inspectors united to give me a dinner and a modest drink in Manchester. The local authorities through that sound but, to the outsider, mysterious body, the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes,* gave me a luncheon, and did my obsequies very handsomely. And so farewell to the North, the grimy, cheerful, indomitable North!

I preceded my family to London for a week or two, as the house my wife had committed me to purchase from a bookmaker (I may tell you the story of the process if space allows) was not yet available. And once more, at the age of fifty, I started on the uphill job of making good in a new post and a new service.

* An examining body which is virtually a combination of Local Education Authorities in the counties named.

The story of my first year in the new post involves people still alive and active. I cannot tell it in more than outline; but to me it was a time of trial, and, at first, often of painful doubt as to whether I had not made a great and irreparable mistake. The conditions of work were very different. My new colleagues in the London inspectorate were considerate and instantaneously and permanently loyal to an imported chief. All I can complain of is that many of them were much too respectful. This, however, was an attitude which it did not take long to dissipate. I must record my gratitude to all of them, for right from the beginning all, and perhaps especially those who were my elders and betters, supported me bravely and without reservation.

But the relationship between the Chief Inspector and the various sub-committees of the Council, and indeed with the executive side of the large office, was very different from that subsisting at the Board of Education. In the Board all the administrative people I had been concerned with were picked men from the old universities, and professionals. An education committee, formed as it is from a popularly, or unpopularity, elected body, is a different matter. The Board's officials were not subject to the pressure of constituents, or to the intrigues of party. Moreover, one never felt that one was *their* servant. One was the servant of the Crown. Again, contact with one's superiors was chiefly through a written medium: minutes, reports, and the like. When there were committees of the Board, one was either a member, equal in rights to any other member, or a witness expected and expecting to tell the truth as one saw it. I was, of course, experienced in dealings with the

committees of Local Education Authorities. I had appeared on all sorts of business before dozens of them, and had a reputation, which it would be a mere pretence to conceal, for conducting that particular kind of business exceptionally well; I knew all the moves of *that* game. It strikes me as an interesting psychological fact that in my early dealings with sub-committees of the L.C.C. the accomplishments I mention were of no advantage to me. In dealings with committees I thought I knew when to make a plain statement, when to be humorous, ironical, confidential, or mildly unpleasant, but I had spoken always as the independent representative of an external authority. In my early days with the L.C.C. I was far too conscious that I was the *servant* of these committees; I felt I had lost an independence I had always valued, and this in some inexplicable way seemed to have undermined proper self-confidence. London had its own atmosphere. An 'aura' to which I was unsympathetic seemed to enwrap every committee I entered; though I felt it was right that I should attend numerous sub-committees at which I had no immediate and specific business. This was my right; and I thought (and think) my duty: how else was I to know the committee personnel and attitude? But attendance produced in me a state of intellectual and spiritual discomfort which was far from reassuring. I wish not to be misunderstood. I believe all the members of the Education Committee, undoubtedly including those who at first at any rate had not favoured my appointment, wished me well. I learned subsequently that I had had a large initial majority, and that the final vote was unanimous. I can confidently say that the L.C.C. members of all

parties invariably treated me both with consideration and with fairness, and that their bearing to officers is always courteous. At least any other attitude is exceptional. Nevertheless I was in a difficult position, partly arising out of defects of my own temperament, partly out of circumstances and personal relationships of which I cannot write freely and accurately, of which, therefore, I will not write at all.

So, as many other men and women have felt projected from a post the intricacies of which they have mastered, into a position new, strange, laborious, responsible, and difficult, for nearly a year I was unhappy, and for the first time unable to stop myself from brooding too intensively upon troubles which, after all, I was facing. A more self-confident person, with the other kind of courage, the positive courage which knows neither hesitation nor fear, would have had a far pleasanter time. In intercourse with my fellows I fear I possess only the courage which men summon to avoid the disgrace of flight. Many, many times I have wished to run away, but I have never done it. After all, I made no big mistakes. On one occasion I gave, conscientiously, advice on a particular issue, which had the support of colleagues I trusted, but was unacceptable to a party majority; and I found at the last moment that a Chairman, now dead, after promising support, had deserted me. I was humiliated, temporarily, by a defeat which I knew was undeserved. At the time I felt keenly that I had damaged my prestige, and, what was far more important, in so doing, the prestige of the inspectorate. This was my chief concern; for an official lives on prestige. As a matter of fact within twelve months the policy I had advocated was accepted. The

memories of committees are very short, and I neither expected nor received any credit. I set my teeth, however, reminded myself that I had the confidence of my colleagues, that the post itself required a thicker skin than was necessary with the Board, and, summoning philosophy to my aid, I grew, at least for official purposes, a thicker integument. At the end of a year I felt that I was established externally and, what was more important, internally with my own soul. It was true I had exchanged from a post which, if one took it seriously, was full of responsibility and interest, to another which was toilsome, overflowing with detail, full of pitfalls, in which there was no pleasing anonymity, no covering up of mistakes, no advising others to do either reasonable or disagreeable things, but the stern necessity to do them one's self. I was surrounded, too, by an office staff over which I had no control, other than that established by moral forces, and consisting of people who could never really appreciate educational issues, but who, nevertheless, cumulatively exercised enormous power.

Out of the welter of detail through which I had daily to wade I find it difficult to select those matters which, still regarding this book as a document of some sociological interest rather than as primarily a personal narrative, may be of general interest. Perhaps at the outset I had better state that the London Education Committee was and is responsible for every form of publicly-controlled education for a population of about four and a half millions of people—rather more than the whole population of Scotland, nearly half the population of the immense area of Canada, and considerably more than twice the whole white population of the Union of South Africa. Apart from a

relatively small number of 'aided' secondary and technical schools which it controlled, it had to administer directly and in detail every school and institution within its area.* In fact, it is too big a job. The wonder is that it was half as well done as it was and is. Of course I can now look at it all at arm's length. But when in the service (which in my case lasted eleven years), I was, I am sure, a critical spectator, if also, within my sphere, a participant. Fifteen years ago there were about 2,400 separate elementary school 'departments', each with its own head master or head mistress.† There were eighty Secondary Schools, some five and twenty Polytechnics and Technical Colleges, over 200 evening Continuation Schools, including twenty-five large senior commercial institutions, some 150 or more 'Special' schools for the mentally defective, the physically defective, the blind, the partially blind, the deaf, the dumb; and three training-colleges for teachers were directly maintained. There were W.E.A. and University Tutorial classes in which we were interested, there were aided 'Settlements' doing educational work, there were clubs for which we held classes, and other important odds and ends. In all, the Council employed at least 20,000 teachers.

For the inspection of all this work there were about forty-four inspectors, whose number, I am happy to say, increased to about fifty-five before I left, though this was still too small. The Board of Education was also concerned with inspection, but its London staff was relatively small, for most of the actual work of inspec-

* 'Public' Schools like St. Paul's, Westminster or Dulwich are of course entirely outside the system.

† Owing to the fall in *child* population within the county the number has fallen to about 2,000.

tion in the elementary schools was left to us. As there were two sets of inspectors—those representing the central authority and ourselves—a certain amount of co-operation, though, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no collusion, existed. This was desirable and even necessary. I had been one of the Board's inspectors, but I was now in the service of a local authority, though a very large one. This was an advantage in the matter of co-operation, as many of the Board's people were (and are) my friends, and all had been colleagues in another service, even though I had never previously seen some of them. Where central and local authorities are concerned with the same locally administered service, differences are bound to emerge. It was certainly no part either of my disposition or my duty to create or to enlarge them. The contrary, indeed, was obviously right. The position of a mercenary who has changed his paymaster and his immediate allegiance is, however, subject to a double difficulty. In conflicts which are civil in a double sense, his old comrades are apt to expect that he will acknowledge in *action* former loyalties. This is often quite impossible. His new colleagues are apt to suppose that he will be subject to old loyalties to an undue extent. I had to remember, however, that my principal allegiance must be to my new employers. My allegiance must shift with my pay so long as it was allegiance to truth from the new point of view. I hope and believe that where there were differences I tried hard to ascertain the truth; and also that where I believed it was on our side I would maintain it stoutly, even if inconvenient for the service I had left. If it was on the other side, the truth must be acknowledged and acted

upon honestly. I have never to this day lost a great respect, even an affection, for the Board of Education, and especially for its officers. But I sometimes had to disagree with both, and I hope I disagreed effectively. When one fights, one must fight hard. I now knew that things could not look the same from two different, sometimes almost opposite points of view; the views of centrally responsible officers whose principal duties are advisory and supervisory only, whose active executive work must necessarily be through others, are apt to be somewhat 'in the air'. At the best they are the product of external observation, at their worst and most dangerous they may be untested theories formed *a priori*. On the other hand, they are more likely, in the general case, to be enlightened, far-seeing, and progressive than the views of those continuously at work, often against gravity, in day-to-day detail. It is the difference between the staff officer and the regimental officer in the front line, with the added difference that in this case some of the staff, some even of the greatest and the best, had no regimental first-line experience at all. This does not mean that they are always wrong. It often does mean, however, that they are unable to realise the consequences of a seemingly apt, but unverified, hypothesis. Such hypotheses are sometimes elevated too soon into rules of action. This is why I am convinced that if some interchange of functions between officers of the central and the local authorities, anyhow in education, could be made practicable, it would be as the authors of a famous skit so often express it a 'good thing'.

Again, why should a man, once he is appointed, be condemned to be an inspector all his working life?

It would be most difficult to arrange, but it is, I think, not entirely impracticable, in spite of salary scales, pension schemes and the like, with their obverse of great benefit and their reverse of evil, to arrange that men and women shall return to teaching or, at least, to office administration, after a period of real enrichment as inspectors. Teachers often become inspectors; nowadays indeed, inspectors have nearly always been teachers, but few, very few, inspectors pass back to working service in schools or colleges. A couple of alternating periods of seven years would in appropriate cases, I am sure, be a 'good thing'. It would not suit everyone, but it would save some disasters, and add generously to the qualities of rightly-selected people. I liked inspection work. It seemed just to suit me temperamentally. But some very excellent teachers have made bad inspectors, and would willingly return to teaching if they could. Some—the majority, I think—succeed in both capacities, and their medium of public service could, I am sure, be alternated with great benefit.

It is impossible for me to write in detail about a service I have only recently left. There are one or two things, however, that I should like to say. Both the large administrative machines in which I have been a cog have been well constructed. They are typical of English machinery. They are *good*, and made to last. Travelling in the Dominions and elsewhere, the principal criticism I have heard of British machinery is that it is often too good for the job. It is built not to be used up in two or three years, scrapped, and replaced, but to wear well for thirty or forty years. This, so far as my experience goes, is true of British administrative machinery: it is apt to

be expensive (judged by administrative costs in other Western European states), but it is very good. The public pays, but it gets full value for the expenditure. The administration is efficient; it is honest; it tends to be somewhat conservative. I have had considerable opportunities, too, both of investigating business administration of the commercial order from outside and of watching it, indeed sharing in it, from inside. And I have no hesitation at all in saying that public administration in our island is better than private administration. This, I believe, arises out of the method of recruitment more than from any other single cause. The field of choice, under an entrance examination system, is very wide; and both in its upper and its lower reaches the Civil Service attracts some of the best brains and highest characters in the country. Those who prefer public administration to the compilation of private riches can stay in the service and take their C.B.'s and the like. And there is a good demand at high prices for the best of those who prefer adventure or pelf. But I wander from London.

Another thing I learned in the service of the L.C.C. was on the whole a respect for the Committee as the organ ultimately responsible for administrative decisions. This may not be true of all local bodies; but I am confident that the London committees and sub-committees, though the individuals composing them were not uniformly on a high intellectual plane, became very expert not merely in the rapid despatch of business, but also in estimating when they should accept, when question, and when reject the advice of expert officers. Naturally, in the great mass of their business they accepted pretty generally and readily the

recommendations of their officers. How else could an agenda of some 150 or 200 items be finished in an hour-and-a-half or two hours? They were very sensible in distinguishing between detail and matters of principle. They desired candid advice on matters of principle; but they fully recognised that the decision must be theirs. From time to time, even when no party political points were involved, they knew how to take their own line. Sometimes events proved that they were wrong. More often, I think, they were right. Above all sub-committees acting as it were like a jury were usually sound on matters of appointment. As a rule, of course, they confirmed the opinion of their officers. When they rejected it, I think they were more often right than wrong. A sub-committee of practised people seemed to produce an atmosphere in which the right result was likely to occur. And I wish to testify that I hardly ever knew a case, especially in major appointments, when the effort was other than to secure the right man or woman for the post. The administration of local affairs was predominantly, in this as in other matters, honest.

This was due to the public spirit and the devotion of Councillors, of both the whiter and the redder varieties, who sacrificed much time in the public service. A large number of men and women, some well-to-do, a few rich, more of modest means, earned or unearned, gave up the whole of two or three days a week or the equivalent of this, to the public service of their city. It would be false and sentimental to ascribe the highest motives to all of them. Some had party-political or sectarian religious interests to serve; some believed it to be in their ultimate financial

interest that the affairs of the greatest local community in the world should be in the hands of those holding certain general opinions on political or social affairs. Some wanted occupation and had not descended to golf and bridge exclusively. But there were always some on both sides who served for the sake of the public well-being, and for that alone. Nor could many, whatever their motives, hope for personal reward. A few, but only a few, would get knighthoods or decorations, a few would reach the honourable but not resounding position of Chairman of the Council or of an important Committee. On the whole there was a high standard of public service, and certainly a high standard of public morality in all matters of importance. In particular services—education, finance, housing, the fire brigade or public assistance—some had an original or an acquired interest which amounted to a passion.

I can write this, I think, the more assuredly because during the whole of my service a party was in power whose political views, in private, I did not share. I feel confident that this fact was not evident in my conduct. I believe that no one could truthfully say that the difference affected the quality of my work, such as it was. This is not a very great claim to make. I am sure that the great majority of the Council's servants, especially in the lower ranks, and not infrequently in the higher, were out of sympathy with the views of the party in power. I am still more sure that they did their level best—and it was pretty good—to render zealous and intelligent service to their elected masters. This is in the best English tradition; quite a recent tradition, I think, not, for instance, going back to the early nineteenth century, and

certainly not beyond it. So long as it lasts—and I see no reason to suppose that it is weakening—England will continue to be the best-governed country in the world. And no one can travel in Europe, the United States, and the Dominions without being convinced that ours is the best-governed country in the world, and that it is so because of a tradition which is peculiarly English, as distinguished from Scottish, Welsh, or Irish. Enough of this depreciation of our own people! We speak ill of ourselves, and the alien believes us, with dangerous results to him and to us. Absolutely we are pretty bad. We share the common imperfections of mankind. But relatively we are good. In politics none better.

One other aspect of this modern committee-governed bureaucracy requires some comment. A service like education, the administration of which really consists of getting the right teachers to the right children or other students, in the right school premises (or out of them), and with the right, or at least the adequate equipment, requires the service of indoor and outdoor officials. I was always an outdoor official, both for the Board of Education and the Council. In both cases there was of course the inevitable and eternal conflict between the indoor and the outdoor bureaucrats. Or, if you like, between the man sitting in an office chair and the man on the spot. In the English system of administration decisions, so far as they rest with officials, are for those who sit in offices. They are the executive officers; the outside officials are advisers. This is right, at least for those at the top; for in the office the comprehensive, rather than the particularist view of problems may more easily be taken. Moreover, the executive officer has

direct access to the Minister in the Central Government, or to the Committee in Local Government. Of course the Minister may see the outside officer if he likes, just as the Foreign Minister may occasionally see his own Ambassador normally resident in a foreign capital. But the Minister of Education will see the Secretary daily, and he has Assistant Secretaries always at hand in the office: he will seldom see an inspector from the provinces, and will probably see the Chief Inspector less frequently than even an Assistant Secretary. Thus the inspector must expect to work through other people. But in the Board this does not mean that he has little influence. If he builds up a reputation for sagacity, and can and does express himself at the right time with clarity, and occasionally with vigour, his influence may be very great.

Under the L.C.C. system, too, the inspectorate is an advisory body. The Chief Inspector has access to all committees, and may, did, and no doubt does, express his views there. But as a rule, on major matters outside the details arising from his special functions, he will have expressed them through the Education Officer, who is, under the Committee, the executive officer. The Chief Inspector and therefore, through him, other inspectors possess the valuable right independently to state their views by report, written or spoken. This right, though exercised in moderation, is, I think, very valuable and in the interests of good government. If the Education Officer and the Chief Inspector work with reasonable harmony, and if confidence between them is mutual, this right need seldom be exercised, and, when exercised, will usually be by arrangement, apart from reports on schools or

on particular educational issues referred to the inspectorate or initiated by them. Administrative friction, however, between outside officers in touch with the realities of school conditions and 'the office' seldom arises over big matters. It does arise, and frequently, over questions of detail, and sometimes on important questions of the second order. In fact, it is a constant feature of administrative life. This is usually because of the inevitable urge of officers all down the hierarchy to grasp power, and to be unwilling (sometimes unable) to 'waste' time in consulting inspectors. In the Board of Education this occurred much less frequently than in local administration, as nearly all questions worth the attention of an H.M.I. were dealt with in the office by civil servants of the administrative class (the old First Division), recruited, as we all know, from among the best brains of the country. There is no need for them to grasp for power. They have it. Moreover, they are sufficiently intelligent to realise the value of consultation when the area of the actual work done is very distant from Whitehall and the personalities concerned as well as the local conditions may be unknown to them.

Under the L.C.C., however, only a few officers are recruited at the same age and are of the same academic past as the first-class civil servant. There is a 'freemasonry' between the H.M.I. and the 'Principal' in the Civil Service which does not exist between the L.C.C. inspectorate (also consisting nowadays, apart from some specialists, of university-trained men and women) and a class of officer recruited, obviously without training, at an age not greater than eighteen, and in the past much less than this. Ability, of course,

and all fine qualities, emerge not infrequently from a service thus recruited, but cannot possibly be general.

Troubles arising from a real omission to consult or even to inform inspectors who were necessarily the technical advisers of the office arose, therefore, very often. The Chief Inspector would be the frequent recipient of complaints from his colleagues that they had been wrongly short-circuited. Even a happy bureaucracy is the scene of constant fighting. 'Competition' is as much a feature of public administration as it is of private enterprise. Only its form is changed. The Chief Inspector, therefore, had constantly to be deciding which cases he would fight and which he would not. If he fought them all, strife would be ubiquitous in its area and eternal in its duration. Life would be impossible. What one had to do was to fight selected cases hard, and win as many of them as possible, and to confine this pleasing embroilment to issues of unquestionable importance. Such fighting, rather than the promotion of progress in education, though the other side, according to its lights, were not indifferent to this, occupied much time. Every big office, public and private, is, I suppose, as much organised internal battle as it is organised co-operation. This, or nearly so.

Other important classes of work concerned the promotion of teachers and, alas, their discipline. In the matter of promotion I can testify to the anxiety both of officers and of members of the Education Committee to be fair, and to see that the best people were selected. After allowing for the non-provided schools, there were some 1,500 departments the headships of which were the direct responsibility of the Council. This necessitated appointments numbering

at least, I suppose, some 150–200 a year: *i.e.*, about four to six a week during the sittings of Council and its Committees. There was and is an effective sifting procedure. In order to be able to apply for the post of head master or head mistress, assistant teachers were under the necessity of securing a place on the 'Promotion List'. Any assistant teacher of a required number of years' service could apply. Of these the local inspectors who already knew their work or took steps to acquaint themselves with it sent forward the names of a fixed proportion for preliminary interview. These preliminary interviews were held in the late afternoon or early evening by panels of three inspectors, each applicant appearing before the panel of which his or her inspector was a member. Thus the candidates from each district were seen by their 'own' inspector and by two inspectors to whom as a rule they were strangers. The composition of the panels was changed from year to year. This was an insurance against any system of back-scratching among inspectors. In this way the number of candidates say for sixty to eighty places on the list would be reduced to some 400–500, and all the four or five hundred would be interviewed, ten or a dozen an evening, during three or four months in the year by three senior officers of the Council, usually the Chief Inspector, a Divisional Inspector, and the Education Officer or the Assistant Education Officer in charge of elementary schools. I think it was generally acknowledged that we were considerate as well as fair at the interviews. At least, such were our intentions. I think, too, it was generally acknowledged that, in spite of occasional and inevitable mistakes, we got hold of the best people.

The list being formed, vacancies were advertised

and those 'on the list' could apply for any vacant post. Out of these applicants six were selected by the officers for interview by a section of the sub-committee; and this section, at its weekly meetings, reduced the number to three. These three were interviewed by the full sub-committee, in the presence and with the help of the Chairman of Managers for the School the headship of which was vacant. They recommended an appointment to the full Education Committee. That is to say, they made the appointment. It will be seen that great care was taken to secure that headships went to the people best suited to these important positions. I am sure it was a good system, and at least no better has been devised; though ideas for its improvement were welcome: and never came.

For the headships of Secondary Schools and Technical Colleges there was no promotion list. Such a device would have been impracticable. So every such vacancy was advertised, and every post was wide open to competition within and without the service. Thenceforwards the three stages of sifting out applications, preliminary interview of a short list, and final selection for a list of three was followed. Mistakes, though I think not many, were made. The competition was real, and I remember no case in which the appointment was 'rigged' or in which an honest attempt to select the best candidate was not made. The system of selection for promotion was devised by the late Sir Robert Blair, and the permanence of the system he devised is a tribute to the memory of a first-rate administrator.

The discipline of this very large education service, with its literal thousands of teachers, of whom at least

two-thirds were women, lay, subject to real control by a sub-committee, in the hands of the Chief Inspector. To any man of conscience this would have been a matter of anxiety. Not that serious cases of inefficiency or misconduct were relatively numerous. The precise contrary is true. Nineteen-twentieths at least of the teaching staff were, and I expect are, efficient up to any reasonable standard, and unimpeachable in conduct, so far at least as their conduct was the concern of their employers. But the odd twentieth (or less) could provide quite enough problems of difficulty; and, in serious cases, questions of the reputation and the livelihood of teachers were constantly involved. The whole of this unpalatable side of administration was reduced to system, so that minor matters could be dealt with locally, or indeed left alone if the Chief Inspector were satisfied that such was a right course. The teachers' rights were fully protected, and the whole machinery was devised to secure fair play and impartial judgment. Every complaint case came before the Chief Inspector from the hands of a discipline officer, and the Chief Inspector was authorised in all suitable instances to classify complaints as trivial, in which case he dealt with them at once and no more was heard of them. I should like to testify here to the wisdom, the sagacity, and the ability with which the discipline officer advised me in these affairs. The first who helped me had very long experience, a judicial temperament, and was most painstaking. He was a good example of a devotion to public service, without hope of notice or of considerable reward, which, exemplified by him to an unusual degree, is far from uncommon. He was followed by one who had been my personal office assistant, and to

him, in this, as in his original capacity, I left greatly in his debt.

If a case were not classed as trivial it was remitted to the local managers of the school in which the teacher charged was serving. An inspector, specially selected for the task, attended all such hearings, in order to advise on procedure, to see fair play, to neutralise local influence if any. One and the same inspector attended all such meetings, so that advice and action could be uniform. This inspector's remarks on cases of any moment were very valuable. Here again, throughout my time with the L.C.C., the Council was exceptionally well served. The managers, after hearing, made a recommendation. If the case, though not classed as trivial, was relatively unimportant, it went no further, and the managers' recommendation, *e.g.*, for a caution, was carried out. The appearance of the recommendation on the Council Sub-Committee Agenda was usually formal only.

If it was at all serious, the case went from the managers to the Teaching Staff Sub-Committee, with or without re-hearing. If, however, it was a really serious business, it was necessarily reheard by this Sub-Committee. The Chairman of the Local School Managers and the Discipline Inspector were always present; and it was my duty to attend to act as assessor and, often, as an additional 'prisoner's friend'. But the teacher charged could bring a 'friend' to represent him, and in all really important issues this meant able counsel-at-law. The Sub-Committee was not necessarily bound by the strict rules of evidence. The Committee was not holding a trial. It was endeavouring to ascertain the truth, and evidence which would have been excluded in a court of law

might be heard. Substantially, however, the proceedings were in the tradition of the law. Evidence could be given on both sides, the Chairman could question witnesses and, unlike a judge, nearly always did this. Members of the Sub-Committee could do the same; but as a rule most of them did not: one or two sagacious members would be asked by the Chairman if they desired to question the parties or the witnesses. And the Committee formed the habit of leaving questions to the Chairman and one or two others. The British tradition of practical good sense was maintained. Naturally those who rushed in to question, as occasionally happened, were not usually the wisest people. The Chief Inspector was expected to ask questions if he wished so to do. And he was invariably asked, as a person in close touch with schools and with the history of each case, to give some opinion, or to comment on the case before the Committee came to its decision. In doing so the tradition was that the Chief Inspector must not press a case against a teacher, except for cogent reasons. Nor would any decent man wish to do so. I can say quite confidently that the Sub-Committee exercised its independent judgment on the whole case, including in that case my own comments. As a rule the conclusion was an inevitable one. And I believe the teachers knew that substantial justice would be done, and that the inclination of the Committee and of its officers was towards reasonable leniency, except in cases where the interests of the children—for whose benefit, after all, the whole educational organisation existed—demanded drastic treatment.

There were of course cases where I thought the Sub-Committee too lenient or too severe. But, as a rule, I

grew more and more to rely upon the common sense and the public spirit of what, in the matter of these cases, was a professional jury. Only occasionally have I known a case settled by informal gossip by members out of court. But I remember one bad case of this. I am confident that the system was a good one and, almost without exception, well and conscientiously worked. I have known cases last for two or three days. I have known people convicted with great difficulty on perhaps a minor issue, because the evidence on a major issue, though well known to some of us, was not admissible or not provable. One such case was taken by the 'convicted' teacher to the High Court. But after the judge had given the Council an initial bad time, he came to the view that we were justified. If he had known all, his initial inclination against us would never have existed.

The class of case, however, which gave me personally considerable trouble was where a plausible person was ably and not too scrupulously defended. And far more troublesome than these were the cases coming to my knowledge where some temporary obsession had caused conduct, which, if brought to light in a Committee, would inevitably have meant professional ruin, and perhaps final personal disaster, to some one of whom any fair-minded man or woman might say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I". In some of these cases, being first, though far from venial offences, I dealt with the parties secretly myself, making free use of a caustic tongue and issuing a first and final warning. In some cases had this come to light it would have been *my* conduct that the Council would have had to consider. But I do not regret having taken this risk. In almost all such cases the warning

that I must never hear of the parties again in connection with the situation discussed was fruitful. I never did. Nor did the Council. I hope I may have acquired merit in ultimate high quarters by preferring risk and mercy to safety and conventional public justice followed by almost inevitably cruel results. Nor do I believe that I did much harm: much less than would have been involved by the permanent and public ruin of some transgressor, subjected to unusual strain of temptation, but essentially sound.

Such were the leading lines of business of a Chief Inspector (Education)! And I end a dull but necessary chapter.

I had occupied this responsible and arduous post for more than eleven years. I was over sixty-one. I had many interests for the cultivation of which I required leisure. I should leave many friends, much interesting work behind me; but it was best to go before the inevitable decline of powers became too swift. I had been hard at work since I was a boy of fourteen. I had, as I thought, earned my keep. It was time to make way for the better, the stronger, the younger, the more light-hearted. As a famous Admiral said, "Men over sixty think they are as good as ever they were: but they are not". So I destroyed much paper, resigned my post, was bidden by my colleagues and by my employers a too kindly farewell. I left the office to begin the new life of the sexagenarian. "Old age hath still his honour and his toil." And, whether or not of noble note, I still hoped and hope to accomplish something ere the end. Little did I anticipate that this would lead me to the ends of the earth. But that is another story.

CHAPTER XII

FINAL MUSINGS ON SEA AND LAND

I sit here endeavouring to write whilst the slow old ship pitches her way past Cape Finisterre as I return from an educational trip to South Africa. Only a few of the people around me, I suppose, have enjoyed or suffered the kind of education on which I have spent all the best years of my life. There are 140 first-class passengers on board. Nearly all of them—good-natured, friendly people—have spoken with me. I have gossiped as opportunity offered. This is not one of the modern luxury ships, which seem to be run automatically; and here one sees the crew and the stokers, as well as those intelligent psychologists the stewards. I sit wondering, between the lurches, how much intellectual and cultural difference there is between the passengers on this sound old middle-class liner and the crew. On the whole, I think, not much. Of the 140 passengers there are about two—I make the third!—who can talk intelligently and dispassionately on public affairs, literature, music, science or art. Indeed, the chief topics of the passengers are the run of the ship (an event, I admit, sufficiently absorbing, for I won the modest sweep yesterday), and form at deck games. Deck quoits is a good game, and, now I have the swing, I am not a bad hand. Games are not to be despised. We can and certainly do also discuss the movements of mining shares with avid interest, and talk of food

and drink. But not of much more. This leads me to ask, for the *n*th time: Is popular education a success? It costs much more a head than it did a generation ago. Is it worth while? Is it any better? For the crew, stokers, and stewards, the product of the system, seem to me to be as interesting as the passengers, who chiefly are not.

I have been in it, not only as a pupil, but also as a teacher or inspector since 1886. Over fifty years. And I wish the middle-class boomer who circulates his empty head between Surrey, South Devon, the Riviera, and South Africa would stop booming. He disturbs the rhythm of these sentences. I can, however, confidently assure the public that, so far as I can ascertain, education of the popular order in England is as good as it is in any country of which I have knowledge, and it is better than in most of them. It has abolished illiteracy. If it has created the possibility of the yellow press, it has also made possible reasonable antidotes to it; and these increase year by year. If rubbish in print boasts its millions, at least solid, reasonable literature of a high quality is largely purchased by the product of the elementary school and can be published by the hundred thousand copies. And it is the readers of this better stuff, among the manual labouring and lower black-jacketed class, who really count in the formation of public opinion.

Looking back to the 'eighties of last century, who can doubt that the working class, black or white-handed, is more civilised, less brutal, more reasonable, better disciplined, more patient—perhaps, indeed, too patient—better able to consider a variety of points of view, and, above all, more good-humoured?

Indeed, the brutalising forces—the dog-racing, the horse-racing, the prize-fighting—are organised from above, not from below. To take another sphere: politics. The management of Labour politics is at least as disinterested, as self-respecting, freer from financial taint than the organisation of middle-class or aristocratic politics. It is more intelligent, too, if less successful in obtaining office. I am convinced that a large section both of the black-handed and the black-coated working class is as well read and as thoughtful as the run of the middle-class, comfortable people with whom I play golf and refuse to play bridge. It is true that well-to-do people liberally organise second-rate cinema performances for the proletariat, and devise all sorts of media for profitless gambling. It is true, too, that a very large section of the proletariat succumb to the facilities provided for lowering their moral and intellectual temperature. It is true, again, that a sensational Press is provided for them, though this is provided as extensively for the respectable class of average *hommes sensuels* who live comfortably in the suburban villadom. The average mental capacity of mankind being as low as undoubtedly it is, these things, in our civilisation, are inevitable. I am, however, profoundly convinced, and convinced by a lifetime of close contact with the mass in its childhood and youth, that but for our educational provision, imperfect and inadequate as it is in almost every respect, things would be much worse—the animal brutality (if that is fair to animals), the drinking, the bestial features of common life even two generations ago have gone. Children are better cared for, better clothed and fed, and are better mannered. To this I can bear the witness of my eyes and ears. This change is due

to elementary and to popular secondary education more than to any other single cause.

So I do not regret the kind of life led, but not originally chosen by me, into which Providence, or some force external to myself, directed me. I contend that I have worked, sometimes it is true with only moderate intelligence or with lukewarm zeal; but at least always with and for the light.

As I have written, the last eleven years of my working life were spent in organising the inspection of London schools, in inspecting them on occasion myself, in dealing daily with dozens of small problems, giving counsel to my colleagues when I could, and listening to them always, doing my best to encourage good, self-respecting, self-effacing teachers, of whom there were many, especially among the women, dealing mercifully with merely erring offenders and justly, I hope, if sometimes drastically, with the atrocious or the mean. And so, ashore again, in the early summer of the most quietly beautiful country in the world, where all seems solidly based, moderate, relatively serene, good-humoured and safe, I do not regret over-much the working and public aspect of my life.

It will be best to say very little more of the day's work, whether for the Council or for the Board. For me it is over. Better men and still better women continue it. There are things, however, which puzzle one. We do not wish the British stock, particularly the English stock, to diminish in number or to regress in quality. Few people would publicly avow that to reduce the number of our people say to the eight millions of the time of Queen Anne is desirable. We can and do support forty millions; or, to speak more accurately, they support themselves. It is known that

very many of them live on far too low a plane of material comfort. To describe how that plane could be raised, and indeed must be raised, would require another book.

But, if we want a large, virile, and generous-minded people, why do we take so little pains to see that children are born better and better nurtured? For they *are* our future. Here again are problems the solutions to which could be supplied; it is no part of my duty or purpose to supply them now. But there is one reform, quite a practicable one, of which I must write. At present some 90 per cent. of English children are confined for nine or ten years in school quarters which any educated middle-class person would instantly reject. The condition precedent of a great improvement in elementary education—that is, in the daily lives of about 85 to 90 per cent. of all children for ten years at least—is the immediate destruction and sensible replacement of approximately four-fifths of the present school buildings.

Writing in 1922, Winifred Holtby, who was a School Manager in Bethnal Green, says:

“ I have been over the schools, and the children are sharp as needles—or hopelessly stupid. *The buildings are a crime—huge classrooms, no hall in some cases, dark corridors, and primitive sanitary arrangements.* But most of the work is alive, and most of the teachers devoted. A few dug-outs, of course.”

Again:

“ Would you like inspecting? Here everything is so strange in the teaching world. I’m glad I’m not in it. The Government pledges itself to educate

children properly and then pleads economy. . . . The children are herded together 50 and 60 in a class. . . . How can they learn? . . .”

This is almost as true as it was when written. It is true that, here and there, we now have light, airy buildings not without some beauty, and furnished with the equipment which the excellent curriculum evolved for them demands. But I am confident that not one school in ten can be so described; the statement that four-fifths of the schools need destruction is an understatement. Let any good citizen visit *all* the elementary schools in his town or country, and not merely the recently-built schools, many of which are delightful, and see for himself whether or not I am right. Since retiring from active work I have done this for myself in town and in country, have published much of my evidence, and can produce more of it. No one has attempted to dispute the facts. And I am sure I am right. Five years ago it would have been true to say that no elementary school had a gymnasium. No wonder we have an agitation for physical culture. We need it. But whilst Denmark and other really democratic countries ensure that physical education can be efficiently carried on, we do not. There may now be (though I doubt it) twenty elementary schools (out of 30,000) in England and Wales with the facilities for physical education always provided for the middle-class child. There are no more. What humbugs and hypocrites we all are! We shout for bricks, but we provide neither the straw nor the clay. There are still many, many schools in town and in country, built at dates between 1860 and 1900, which in 1937 are completely inefficient for the purposes of the all-round education, intellectual, moral,

physical and æsthetic, which the work of teachers and inspectors and devoted laymen, all working together, has produced. Yet we can spend on roads by the hundred million and on beetroot by the million out of Exchequer funds, whilst we improve the physical environment of our children at a tortoise-like speed. For a capital sum on which the annual charge would not exceed four millions, we could make effective the possibility of joyful and sensible training for all our children, and lighten the almost intolerable conditions in which most of the teachers work. The teachers do not complain enough. The dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in. In spite of their advancing culture, they are school teachers, and accept conditions which many an office-girl would indignantly reject. Let us suit our schools to their present purpose as the railways have suited their locomotives to the work not of 1870, not even of 1900, but of 1937. We ask no more than this. And, by the Splendour of God, we must work until we have taken no less.

Apart from the general public, who must be informed and agitated out of their ignorance, the people who, if they chose, could reform these conditions consist of two sets: (*a*) the Local Education Authorities and (*b*) the Board of Education. Neither of them will do it unless public opinion forces them along. There are some 300 local education authorities of all degrees of magnitude, from the largest, like the London County Council or the City Council of Birmingham or Manchester, down to an Urban District Council controlling the local affairs of a population of 20,000. A Borough of 10,000 may administer its own elementary schools. The authorities are elected, when there is a contest, by the votes of a minority of

the ratepayers. There is seldom a considerable poll. Frequently, and especially where rural County Councils are concerned, there is no contest. The Councillors and Committee-men are chiefly quite ordinary people, among them occasionally a sprinkling of intelligent and enlightened men and women, diluted, as it were, by a mass of mediocrity, and not without elements of stupid self-importance, bumptiousness, or even dishonest self-interest. They are the microcosm of the nation. Unless by accident, they will not undertake the necessary work I have described. They have not the knowledge, the imagination, or the impetus. And where their principal officer is intelligent and well-disposed he will tell you, just as I, as an official, have often had to tell myself, "It's no use running my poor head into a stone wall. The head will be bloody but the wall will still be there; and I shall lose part of the influence I have painfully accumulated, and be compelled to start the doubtful process of reacquiring it."

Then there is the Board of Education. They have the power to achieve the admirable and 'salutary' reform I now advocate. They could by regulation and through their grant machinery achieve it. I much fear that the chances are against it. Why? Let me set it out like one of the Board's minutes, 1, 2, 3 . . .

1. No man of really first-rate political ability has ever been President of the Board of Education—at least, since the ancient days of Robert Lowe or W. E. Forster. I suppose those of the second order who may have come near it in recent times, are Mr. Fisher, the present Lord Halifax and Lord Eustace Percy. Of these the first carried a great Education Act, and was prevented from administering it. The second occupied

the office, metaphorically, for five minutes. Lord Eustace was there longer, and became technically quite an expert; moreover he showed signs of a certain aristocratic-doctrinaire interest and activity. He went or was dropped—at least he is not there; * and Earl Stanhope, unknown for any political achievement, certainly not famous for any interest in popular education, of whom, indeed, the ordinary man can but say “Who is he?”, succeeds Mr. Oliver Stanley. These people are no good for their purpose. A Minister of Education is needed big enough to see that if he will fight the Treasury he can do more to secure a virile, a worthy population than any other Minister.

2. When there is a Minister like Mr. Fisher or Sir Charles Trevelyan who, big or small, wishes to do something, there are always the permanent officers of the Board to be encountered. It would ill become me to write in derogatory terms of any of them *as individuals*. The elders in the administrative class are still men recruited by nomination before the changes which assimilated recruitment in the Board of Education to other offices. Most of them are able products of the old Universities and the Public Schools, and usually ‘well-connected’. Intellectually they are well up to the standard of the Examination-recruited Class I Civil Servant in other offices, probably, on the average, above it. But they are entirely without first-hand acquaintance with the ‘proletarian’ class whose education they control. As a class they are against enthusiasm, they detest any action which could be termed ‘dramatic’. In so far as they desire movement ahead—and probably most of them do—they

* He has just accepted an educational post, and has retired from Parliament.

prefer it to be an inch rather than a mile a year, even in those respects, like material environment, where rapid progress is relatively easy. They lack imagination and they lack positive enthusiasm, though many of them burst with brains. So that, in sum, their attitude is always critical and seldom constructive. If Lloyd George or Winston Churchill—I cannot supply the name of a really dynamic Labour man, for Herbert Morrison is as yet only a medium-sized bomb filled with second-quality explosive—had been at the Board of Education and had realised the possibilities of large-scale beneficent action, things would have happened. Either of them could have told the very able, very suave, and well-mannered administrative officials to set about it; and, under orders, they would have been most efficient. The Board has an excellent administrative service. It could be magnificent if it were magnificently used. But no man of the first-rate order has ever taken office in the relatively humdrum and politically unimportant office of President of the Board of Education. Until recently it was an ill-paid office. And Cabinet posts were ranked as much by their pay as by any other consideration. Hence the Board does nothing, or at least very little, in the way of radical reform of educational conditions for the people, which, on the material side, are hopelessly out of date. So much, for it is all that space allows me here, for the Board.

3. Such amateurs and non-official people (including myself) as interest themselves in educational progress are commonly dull to an unusual degree of repulsiveness. They drone. They lack magnetism and personality. No book on the reform of education has ever commanded the same kind of public attention as, say,

the out-of-date works of Karl Marx or Henry George. What man in the street ever read a book on popular education? And who, if he can decently stay away, will go to an educational meeting? The consequence of all this is that whilst there is in the common people a dissatisfaction with things as they are, that dissatisfaction never becomes effectively vocal. The poor are too often so grateful for what the teachers now do, that it does not occur to them to ask for more. We, who realise what could be done in ten years: what, in fact, has been done in Germany and Italy, though done wrongly and wrong-end up, what, in fact, is in constant progress on the side at least of health and physical culture in the principal Scandinavian countries—we are dull and impotent, and we fail to rouse public opinion. We are not entirely to blame. We have not the position nor the money. Only the emergence of a really great agitator, who must necessarily be a great man, a Lincoln, a Hitler (How did that man push his way from paperhanging to power?), or a Lenin, can save us. I do not know how he can be found, or when he (or she) will emerge. One must do what one can. But I have neither the strength, nor the stature, nor are the summers left me. Night approaches, when I must cease to work, as I now cease to write. For night falls on the conies as well as on the gods.

INDEX

- ABEL, Robert, 85, 250
 Africa, South, 305, 306
 Aire, River, 97
 Alderley, Lord Stanley of, 197
Ancient Mariner, the, 13
 Anderson, William, 104
 Andrews, John, 60
 Arnold, *Latin Prose* of, 172
 Arnold, Matthew, 87, 154
 Arsenal Football Club, 181
 Aston Villa Football Club, 181
Athletic News, 85
 Attewell, 162
 Austin, John, *Jurisprudence* of, 176
 Avon, River, 97

 Baker, William, 84, 85, 92
 Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J., 208
 Barkby, Edwin, 130, 132-133, 147
 Barker, Granville, 213
 Barnes, 86, 162
 Barnett, P. A., 129-130, 131, 152
 Birmingham, 204, 311
 Blair, Sir Robert, 299
 Blatchford, Robert, 173
 Blue School, the, 142, 143 *et seq.*
 Bockelmann, Herr, 233-234
 "Bohemian Girl," the, 116
 Boreton, Mr., 232
 Bowen, Ike, 145
Boy's Own Paper, the, 31, 83, 86
Bradford Observer, the, 128
 Braid, Alexander, 53
 Brass, Tom, 180
 Brentford, 140, 141, 142
 British School, 145 *et seq.*
 Brigg's University Correspondence
 College, 172
 Bright, John, 65, 114
 Bristol, 204
 British and Foreign School Society,
 117
 British Museum, 204
 Brougham, Lord, 222
 Browning, Robert, 174
 Buckle, G. E., 130, 133-135, 142, 143,
 147, 148, 152
 Bury, 27, 29

 Cadbury, Messrs., 261
 Calderhead, David, 161-162
 Cambridge, 130, 153, 154, 181, 247,
 269, 275
 Cardus, Neville, 162
 Carlyle, Thomas, 163
 Carpenter, Edward, 182-183
 Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J., 114
 Champion, Mrs., 170-171, 176, 181
 Charles II, 68
 Chatham, W., 14
 Churchill, Lord R., 115
 Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston, 36, 314
 City of London College, 222 *et seq.*
Clarion, the, 173
 Clifford, Dr., 108
 Clifton, 152
 Cornwall, 104
 Council, Lord President of, 97
 Cromwell, Oliver, 96, 230
 Cunningham, Dr., 222
 Currie, R. F., 87-88, 99

 Daft, H. B., 162
Daily News, the, 114
 Dale, F. H. B., 175
 Denmark, 310
 Devonshire, Duke of, 82
 Dickens, Charles, 86
 Dixon, John, 162
 Dryden, 172
 "Dumpy," 83 *et seq.*

 Eagleton, Granville, 93
 Education, Board of, 79, 82, 111,
 250, 255, 256, 258, 262, 268, 271,
 272, 274, 277, 279, 289, 294, 296,
 308, 311, 312, 313, 314
 "Elijah," 116
 Eliot, George, 86
 Emerson, R. W., 163
 Everitt, William, 101

Fabian Essays, 110
 Fabians, the, 173, 200, 241
 Fairbairn, Dr., 209
 "Falka," 116
 Faringdon, 101

- Fields, Gracie, 265, 278
 Fisher, H. A. L., 36, 258, 259, 313
 Flowers, Wilfred, 85-86, 162
 Football League, the, 85
Football Star, the, 85
 Forster, W. E., 312
Fortnightly Review, the, 114, 127

 Gabe, R. T., 138
 George, Henry, 315
 George, Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd, 314
 Gladstone, W. E., 31, 114, 139, 173
 Glazebrook, 152
 Grace, E. M., 249
 Grace, W. G., 85, 249
 Gray's *Elegy in a Churchyard*, 66, 96
 Great Western Railway Co., 11, 16, 48, 49, 53, 58, 61, 65, 85, 105, 113
 Grinling, C. H., 174
 Grinling University Extension Group, 176, 182
 Gunn, William, 85, 162, 250

 Halifax, Viscount, 312
 Hall, B. T., 210
 Harcourt, Sir W., 114
 Hardie, Keir, 172, 200
 Harford, Sergt., 62, 63, 65
 Hartington, Lord, 114
 Hastings, Warren, 14
 Henry V, 96
 Hitler, Adolph, 64, 315
 Hobson, J. A., 173, 175, 197
 Hoffert, H. H., 248
 Holcombe, 27
 Holtby, Winifred, 309
 Horace, *Odes and Satires*, 172
 Humber, River, 97
 Huxley, T. H., 79, 245

 Independent Labour Party, 173
 "In Memoriam," 150
 Irving, Henry, 181
 Isleworth, 118, 122 *et seq.*, 142
 Spring Grove, 143

Jessica's First Prayer, 15-16
 Johnson, Sir S., 206
 Johnstone, Rev. C. F., 87, 88, 92
 Jones, Inigo, 10
 Jowett, 175

 Kahn, Albert, 243
 Kingston, W. H. G., 86
 Knowles, Lilian, 221

 Labouchere, H. D., 114
Lamplighter, the, 15

 Lannion, A. C., 233
 Leeds, 202, 203
 Lenin, 315
 Lincoln, Abraham, 315
 Lionel, Charles, 70-72, 185
 Liverpool, 204, 244
 Lockwood, 86
 Lohmann, 85
 London County Council, 280 *et seq.*, 311
 Lowe, Robert, 86, 312

 Macarthy, Lillah, 213
 MacBean, 185-186, 193
 Maine, *Ancient Law*, 176
 Manchester, 203, 244, 311
 Grammar School, 152
 "Maritana," 116
 Marshall, Alfred, 174, 230
 Marx, Karl, 110, 315
Merchant of Venice, the, 66, 109
 "Messiah," the, 116
 Mill, John Stuart, 222
 Miller, T. H., 130, 131-132, 134, 136
 Morley, John, 114
 Morrison, Rt. Hon. H., 314
 Mozart, 60
 Murry, Middleton, 49

 Napoleon, 64
 Newcastle, 204
New Review, the, 128
 Newton, Isaac, 59
Nineteenth Century, the, 114
 Nottingham, 153, 155 *et seq.*, 204
 County Cricket Club, 162
 County Football Club, 161, 162
 Daffodil Hill School, 161
 Forest Football Club, 161, 162
 Ithaca Road School, 157
 Stenhouse Street School, 157

 O'Connor, T. P., 114
 Odo, Bishop, 69
 Ody, William, 68-69
 "Old Charlie," 12
 Orpington, Mrs., 38 *et seq.*
 Oxford, 130, 141, 174, 175, 228, 247, 269, 275

Pall Mall Gazette, the, 223
 Percy, Lord Eustace, 312, 313
 Phillimore, Robert, 209
Pickwick Papers, 109
 Pierpont, Mr., 232
 Pitman, Isaac, 232

INDEX

319

- Preston North End Football Club, 83,
139
Primitive Methodists, 105
Principles of Elocution, The, 13
Pullinger, Frank, 242
Purser, Mr., 98
- Ramsbottom, 27
Reed, Talbot Baines, 86
Richardson, 85, 250
Ridgeway, 10
Rogers, Rev. G., 108
Rowntree, Messrs., 261
- Sadler, Michael, 174
Salisbury, Lord, 30, 115
Schmellering, Mr., 41
Scott, Adam, 162
Scott, Gilbert, 48
Scott, Sir W., 86
Selby-Bigge, Sir A., 279
Shakespeare, 13, 77, 163, 176
Shaw, Alfred, 249
Shaw, G. Bernard, 209, 210, 211, 212,
241
Shelley, R. B., 139, 150
Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, the, 15
Sherwin, Mordecai, 162
"Shonnie," 54 *et seq.*, 62, 63, 64, 65,
70, 74, 76, 77, 78, 83, 90, 99, 146
Shrewsbury, Arthur, 85, 162, 250
Siam, 150
Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir John, 174
Smith, A. R., 138
Snowden, Rt. Hon. Philip, 172
South Wales Daily News, the, 128
Speaker, the, 128
Spectator, the, 127
Spencer, Thomas, 24
Stanhope, Earl, 313
Stanley, Oliver, 313
- Swindon, 1 *et seq.*, 20, 29, 40 *et seq.*,
48 *et seq.*, 54 *et seq.*, 70, 77, 102,
110, 116, 127, 155, 172, 173, 175,
177, 180, 182, 193, 218, 228
Mechanics' Institute, 109, 113, 179,
180
- Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 121
Terry, Ellen, 181
Thackeray, W. M., 86
Tottington, Manor of, 25
Toynbee Hall, 174
Tree, H. B., 181
Trevelyan Sir Charles, 210, 313
- Unitarians, 156
University Extension Movement, 173
- Wallas, Graham, 197-198, 200, 209
Ward, Herbert, 136
Warwick, Mr., 98, 99
Watson, William, 139
Webb, George, 166 *et seq.*, 177, 184
Webb, Sidney and Beatrice, 174, 199
et seq.
History of Trade Unionism, 174
Wells, H. G., 217
New Machiavelli, 207
Westminster Gazette, the, 223
Whitaker's Almanack, 86
Whitman, Walt, 174
Wicksteed, Philip, 197
Withers, W. L., 152-153, 175
Wolsey, Cardinal, 96
Woolwich, 165, 166 *et seq.*
Wurzelmann, 234
- Xenophon, 172
- Young Men's Friendly Society, 108,
127

