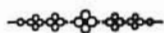


SUNDAY'S CHILD



From Victoria to Elizabeth II
with a Unitarian background



Catharine T. Herford

To my sister Ruth for endless help and
encouragement and all the typing.



www.unitarian.org.uk/docs



Frontispiece. Wateryeat, Conlston Water, c. 1902.

Group I

Back Row: 'Boy Dick', Richard Hutton Osler. 'Mimi', Emily Christian Osler, Mrs. Harry Creaton. 'Robbie', Robert Osler Herford. 'Uncle Travers', Robert Travers Herford. 'Lizzie', Elizabeth Rylands, friend and helper.

Middle Row: 'Ruth', Ruth Herford. 'Hetty', Henrietta Maria Osler (Mrs. Clive Riviere). 'Grandpapa', Timothy Smith Osler. 'Aunt Meg' Margaret Herford (née Osler) with Margaret Roscoe Herford on her lap, 'Madeleine', Amy Madeleine Renold (Mrs. Eric Hunter).

In front: 'Catharine', Catharine Taylor Herford, 'Rip', Irish terrier, 'Dickie', Richard Hugh Herford.

Taken from a snapshot by 'Charley' (Sir) Charles Renold.

SUNDAY'S CHILD

written and published

by

Catharine T. Herford

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FOREWORD

By Sir Adrian Boulton

One of my earliest recollections, as a member of a Unitarian family, was to see my father and uncles reading "The Inquirer". When I grew up I too became a regular reader and, as I open the paper, my eye often catches a well-known Unitarian surname and I am happy to read some report about the doings of a member of the family concerned. Herford is one of those names and its connection with Chester (my birthplace) specially brings it to my attention when it occurs.

It is thus a particular pleasure to accept Miss Catharine Herford's invitation to write a foreword to her book with its reminiscences of life in many parts of England and Wales, always with a Unitarian flavour, as well befits a 'Daughter of the Manse'.

CHAPTER ONE.

A BACKGROUND OF TREES

PREFACE

This is in no way an historical 'documentary',—rather, it is a running commentary, or series of footnotes to such monumental works as C. Woodham Smith's 'Florence Nightingale' and Jo Manton's 'Mary Carpenter', glimpses into the interior life of Victorian and Edwardian England and the later Georges. My grandfather Osler maintained that it took three generations for an idea to bear fruit;—we of the 1970s are the outcome of the toil, sweat and tears of the 1870s, growing indeed out of the tribulations of the 1770s and the persecutions of the 1670s. Whether the world still needs the work and witness of those referred to by Charles Lamb, (himself of their number) as 'One Godders' is as yet to be revealed. At least the children of Great Britain no longer run barefoot in the streets, unless by choice, and perhaps another century will achieve it for the world.

I WAS BORN early on Sunday morning, February 9th 1896, the fourth child of a busy country parson and his wife—quite the most tactful time to arrive. Their other children had all chosen Sewing Meeting Wednesdays for their arrival, useful for spreading the news but Sunday was of course the best for that. I had long, black, straight hair which covered my face entirely and which our dear Scottish family doctor opined needed 'straking' (or parting). This my father did and ever after affirmed (I will not say 'swore') that I winked at him. It seems to have been an auspicious occasion.

To grow up over the turn of the century was in itself an achievement. For those who are unaware of the term 'Five Mile Act Chapel' it is best to look up the years 1662 onwards in a reputable English History Book, to gain some idea of the significance of an address such as ours was, namely, 'Stand Parsonage, Whitefield, near Manchester. In those days postage for a letter was 1d, and for a post-card ½d. A letter from Holland, written somewhere about 1900, directed simply to Miss Herford, at her father's parsonage near Manchester,' reached my elder sister quite easily without missing a post. And a 2½d. stamp without any post-code had been all sufficient. Those were the days!

It was a region north of Manchester, some eight miles out and about five from Bury, five also from Bolton, and known nowadays as a 'grey area', but it never seemed grey to us. Of the old Parsonage there will be more later but it had a good front garden 'mostly set to lawn', as the estate agents would say, surrounded by flower-beds and flowering shrubs; the sort of flowers that looked after themselves, larkspurs, nasturtiums, eschscholtzias, with a good laburnum for climbing, a Gloire de Dijon rose behind the garden seat, some lovely old lime-trees at the back of the rhododendrons along the road, prolific holly and pink hawthorn down the side, along the lane to the Grammar School playing field. A tree had been felled at some earlier date at the top of the lawn and the stump, built round with white rockery stones, had been planted with lilies of the valley and a precious Osmunda Fern, brought from the Scilly Isles, before 'family' holidays had to be considered, and this was our mother's pride and joy.

A "side yard", chiefly remarkable for an outside 'convenience' of a type never seen before or since, of the bucket and tip variety, led to the Back Garden. This began with a stable yard complete with coach-house and loose

box on one side and a magnificent coal shed on the other. Coal, (11/- per ton at the pit head,) was never delivered at less than two or three tons at a time, but the occupier had to arrange for cartage, so the nett result was not as cheap as it might sound. Down the middle beyond the yard ran a path with a good piece for kitchen garden on either side, with apple trees; rhubarb and gooseberry bushes. There was also a patch of uncontrollable polygonum, which we called "pligum" for many years, where we had a hiding place with a box to sit on. Beyond the kitchen garden was the playground and summerhouse, with more shrubs and elderberry bushes.

Beyond our demesne the meadows, (later to become a golf course) fell away to Chapelfield and Radcliffe, but these were lost in the valley; not even a mill chimney showed because of some trees and the steep hill, Stand Lane. The real limit was Rivington Pike with Grant's Tower to wave to. Sir Robert Grant, (1785-1835,) was the author of the hymn "O worship the King, all glorious above." He was always reputed to be one of the Cheeryble Brothers, celebrated by Charles Dickens. Dickens lodged for years among the Unitarian connection of Central London and many of his characters were more than recognisable to my mother's generation. One likes to think that the Cheeryble Brothers were not only typical but were drawn from life, with love.

A wonderful county, Lancashire! Who said "Grey"? Indeed!

To have seven or eight generations of educated forebears on both sides of the family was remarkable in the days when neither Public Schools nor Universities in the British Isles, except Glasgow, were available to other than professing or supposedly practising members of the Established Church. Even now it is hardly understood that Higher Education became generally available, even at a price, only to those who so desired it, during the nineteenth century. For girls, barely a century ago.

To gain academic qualifications Glasgow was the nearest, then Holland, Paris or Germany, or if possible, Harvard, because there language raised no barriers. No wonder Nonconformists were regarded (only too often rightly) as uneducated 'rangers' having no social status whatever.

An interesting legend to which my father, himself an Hebrew scholar of considerable standing, was greatly attached records that one Nicholas Herford assisted Wycliffe in the translation of the Vulgate into English, particularly in checking the original Hebrew Scriptures. But Nicholas was a priest, and finally recanted, so he remained a legend. The family seems to appear first in Devon or

Somerset and the spelling was probably Hereford. Doctors, lawyers and wine-merchants produced the stock, working up through the Midlands to Manchester, to emerge labouring mightily for the Reform Bill of 1832 and producing Unitarian ministers, or marrying them, for seven generations or so. Of these my father was the last, with four uncles and four cousins simultaneously in the field.

My mother, Margaret Osler, seems to have come from Somerset roots also, based largely on Bridgwater and intimately connected with the Blakes, but again converging on the developing region of Birmingham, where her grandfather met and married one of the four daughters of Timothy Smith, "King Tim" as he was known for his labours in the development of the new incorporation of contiguous villages that was to emerge as "Birmingham" in 1836, two years after his death. Here was a hot-bed indeed, since the penal laws excluding association for religious purposes within five miles of a corporate town did not run. Labour was cheap and work scarce, and throughout the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries far-seeing folk from Roman Catholic, Quaker, Jewish and Unitarian stocks had settled in and developed factories of all kinds, banks, and business houses. Unfettered Higher Education, predominantly Technical and Scientific, brought together men like Michael Faraday, James Watt, Joseph Priestley, and Matthew Boulton, to pick out only a few from a burgeoning outcrop, and a spontaneous upsurge for comprehensive, civic development produced the first purpose-planned water supply and sewage disposal systems in the country.

My mother's people made magnificent cut-glass ware, notably chandeliers for Indian Princes, but her father, Timothy Smith Osler, (1823-1905) migrated to London, where he read for the Bar, married Henrietta Roscoe (1821-1899) from Liverpool, and became absorbed in a literary and legal entourage into which my mother was born in 1861.

Uncle Richard Hutton, Editor of The Spectator married successively to two Roscoe cousins and living at Englefield Green, was a continuing source of strength and comfort throughout the London years. Henrietta died in 1869 and the family had moved over to Hampstead, but the Roscoe support remained a sheet-anchor in the troublous times before and after the second marriage of Smith Osler in 1872. For three years the home life was abandoned, Smith spent more and more time in chambers, his eldest son went to Manchester to study medicine, the two middle sons still at school looked after themselves and Margaret went to Birmingham to live with one or other uncle and to share lessons and make lifelong friends with Ethel Chance, daughter of another family of glass fame. Her holidays

were spent among the other uncles and aunts, chiefly in Liverpool, Nottingham and Somerset, where she seems to have been beloved of all. In after years it was remarked of myself that I was the only person the speaker knew who could pick up a free meal in any village in England! The stories belonging to those three years are innumerable and illuminating. In Birmingham two cousins in their early twenties, Arthur Smith and Alfred Osler, found this child of eight years old a delightful and safe companion and took her everywhere. She remembered them in 'peg-top' trousers with long 'side-whiskaws' that blew out behind them in the wind as they walked. The Rev. George Dawson was the prophet of the day and one or other of her swains would take her down most Sunday mornings to listen to the great man. She was so touched because, when her short legs dangled in the pew, Arthur Smith would put down his top hat for her feet to rest upon, but Cousin Alfred was the one who, when she was staying in that house, would come in to say 'Good night' and take her in his arms when he found her fretting for her mother.

At Nottingham she stayed with two maiden aunts of her mother's, Margaret and Clara Tayler. On Sunday mornings they would take her to the High Pavement Chapel. Before them would be walking Mrs. Henry Turner and Meg would be sent forward to take the old lady's arm. After a few steps the command would be:—"Now run back, dear, and take Miss Clara's arm, she needs it so much more than I", and so they proceeded. Little did she guess that in due course 'old Mrs. Turner' would be added to her list of Aunts, for Mrs. Turner had a nephew called 'Herford'.

It was probably at South Petherton in Somerset that she spent her gayest times among a tribe of Blake cousins, several of them younger than herself. Here she was the ringleader in many mad escapades and to the end of her life Bridge House was the abiding memory of carefree fun and games.

Another glimpse into the interregnum years is reflected in the record of a holiday begun in Hampstead, when the regular Minister of Rossllyn Hill Chapel was exchanging with another. This meant little to a nine-year-old except that on the following Sunday Margaret was with the Aunts in Nottingham. Back at High Pavement on the Sunday morning she suddenly realised that the hymn she was singing was one she knew from the previous week. She then saw that the Minister, now on his home ground was the 'visitor' of the week before, and now, all ears, she became aware that hymns, lessons and sermon were an exact repeated performance. The following week her term had started and she was back in Birmingham when 'come Sunday' lo and behold a 'visitor' again, by now her old friend

from Nottingham with every portion of the Service exactly as before. It was thirty years before she had an opportunity to tell the good man of the circumstances and that it was due to him that she had listened with close attention to sermons ever since. He replied that it was the only time he had ever taken such a risk but it had evidently paid off.

THE NEW HOME

In 1872 it seemed only wise that Smith should try to make a home again. He chose for his new wife a cousin, Hannah Tayler, with whom Margaret had always been on the happiest terms. But the altered situation was awkward and difficult from the start and the intimate adolescent years are best left in oblivion. But Hampstead was a world in itself and the old Five Mile Act Chapel on Rossllyn Hill had as much to do with reshaping of things to come as almost beggars the imagination.

When my grandfather first settled in Hampstead a horse-drawn omnibus, a new invention with a new name, plied between the city and Chalk Farm and/or Swiss Cottage, (both noted spots for 'dawn duelling' it was said) but from there on it was open country largely covered by heath and infested with footpads, highway robbers and the like. It was quite unsafe for single pedestrians and it was usual to wait until a party of twenty-five or more had assembled before embarking on the mile or so walk up into the 'town'. A 'town' Hampstead sought to be, and to that end had built itself a 'Vestry Hall' but there were no further Municipal Buildings and certainly no corporate government. So it too had become a refuge for the free thinker, literary, political and religious. The London County Council was still a thing of the future and schools, of which there were several notable specimens, were a matter of private enterprise entirely. But University College, Gower Street, had been established to feed the newly founded London University, (1827) as an examining body only and my grandfather was soon elected to the Senate and worked indefatigably for the promotion of Higher Education, particularly for girls.

His sons went to University College School and greatly daring, and from a stern sense of duty because he was a Governor, he took Margaret from her beloved Holly Hill, Miss Norton's, and sent her to the newly founded North London Collegiate School for Girls under the headship of the redoubtable Miss Buss. When one considers how entirely lacking was the supply of any sort of adequately equipped women for such a post it was not surprising that the

STAND and 'THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL'

Governor's wretched daughter was more than once subjected to the most humiliating pressures. One instance will suffice to indicate the birth-pangs of a new order of things: An occasion occurred when the singing of the National Anthem was appropriate. My mother was singled out by name before the whole assembly:—

"Miss Osler, you have no religion. Will you kindly leave the Hall".

Very soon she was allowed to leave the school and took refuge in a small establishment, Miss Lowe's, Mayfield, Southgate, where life once more became a thing of joy. But her father, one of only two like-minded members of the Senate, was working tirelessly for the opening of the medical schools to women. My mother was present at the ceremony of 'Capping' the first woman D.Sc. (Moral Science 1881) at a British University, Dr. Sophie Bryant, but was bitterly disappointed not to be allowed to enter the medical profession herself. Her father knew better than she that her basic education was nothing like sufficient for the task, though actually he could not just fancy it for his own daughter. Similarly she was never allowed to take part in private theatricals if a mixed cast was involved. However a Theological College, now Manchester College, Oxford, had moved in 1852 from Manchester to London and her uncle, Dr. J. J. Tayler, father of her step-mother, was Principal, so there was no lack of eligible young men in the offing, and in due course Robert Travers Herford, B.A. emerged. In 1886 they were married and Margaret said 'Good-bye' to the lights of London and went to take up residence in 'darkest Lancashire' mercifully unaware of all that lay before her. Nevertheless, at the age of ninety-one her last words were: "I have had a very happy life, and have very much to be thankful for".

IN SPEED'S MAP of Lancashire it is marked as 'Ye Stand', a ridge of high ground dividing two Domesday Parishes, Radcliffe and Prestwich. There had been perhaps a 'shooting-box' at some period, a vantage spot for watching point-to-point racing in the valley on the Prestwich side. It may simply have meant originally where one paused to consider things after climbing up from one side or the other.

A magnificent half-timbered barn of some four or five hundred years of age still stands largely unnoticed in a farm-yard close to the Top of Stand, and in all probability it was here that the persecuted 'Conventiclers' first took refuge under the blind eye of a largely absentee landlord, the then Earl of Derby. The region was given over to sheep-rearing and is noticed in the Subscription List of the Scottish Wars in the Fourteenth Century when one 'Kay of Sheephay' must have been a person of considerable standing. His descendants strong in numbers and integrity still flourish in the surrounding neighbourhood, and there are those who like to count 'Kay the Seneschal' (of King Arthur) among their forebears. Sheephay is still a charming little house about a mile from the barn along the ridge, and possibly as old. The exterior has altered with the years but a lovely twisting staircase graces the interior, or still did thirty years ago.

A rich seam of coal and abundant soft water flowing along the valleys on either side converted the rural picture into one of mines and cotton mills, with bleaching and dye-works running alongside. The handlooms changing over from wool to cotton threw out the beautiful, old wooden spindles by the 'skipful' and these were gathered up and in their turn translated into 'spindle-backs', now sadly known as 'Yorkshire' chairs, though probably for the same reason. We acquired an odd dozen or so when I was a child for some throw-away price, their arrival at the Parsonage being greeted with scorn by the reigning domestic deity of the day:—"Huh! I wouldn't have kitchen chairs like them in my dining room". They had good rush-seating, replaced in one or two cases with seagrass, and the last five survivors, sold by auction in 1976, fetched £127!

The house as we knew it was a simple, Georgian, mellow double-fronted, brick affair with a low-pitched slate roof. When, in the early years of the century, the dining-room was extended with a bow-window and a porch was added to the central, triangular, pedimented front door, some of its original character was undoubtedly lost, but the

real interest lay in the fact that, in opening up the wall to receive the new features, a second wall of a much older structure was revealed behind a cavity filled with a growth of ivy, quite equal in thickness to that which covered the whole face of the later building. 'Sheephey' had been treated in the same way and the two were possibly of similar mediaeval ancestry, but a third, somewhat lower storey with a deep-eaved cornice had been added to the Parsonage. The house had no foundations, however, and plumbing was an afterthought, with sad overtones and consequences.

After their engagement my father-to-be departed on a Hibbert Scholarship to study Old Testament Hebrew at Leyden University. It seems to have been a period rich in friendships and enlarged experience, but it is possible that Dutch was not too easy to acquire at academic level, and before the year was out the Hibbert Trustees decided that Herford was not fulfilling any useful purpose. He threw in his hand and returned home with a straggly beard and a seemingly permanent cold on his chest. If it had not been for his fiancée's desire to cure the latter the hirsute condition of the former very nearly put paid to the romance on sight.

But Margaret was a brave woman and came of valiant stock, so at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, clad in dark green and carrying lilies of the valley, on Friday, April 13th, 1886, she set forth upon a new and strange journey with a high-hearted happiness that nothing but the constitution of a horse could have sustained against the trials and tribulations that were to follow. That it was not a 'white wedding' was due to the fact that the bridegroom's mother, our Grandmother Herford was suffering what proved to be her last illness, and was indeed within a month of her death. But she would not allow the wedding to be postponed. So in spite of the pile-up of 'bad luck' superstitions, Friday, the 13th of the month, green wedding-dress, lilies of the valley, the happy couple lived for four years longer than their Diamond Wedding, and their children, five in all, survived them both. But that is by the way and we revert to the year of their engagement.

Margaret had spent that year preparing for the new life as best she could and had taken a course in technical dressmaking and had prevailed upon a local laundry to initiate her into the mysteries of 'cold' and 'boiled' starching and ironing. To the end of his professional career my father's beautifully-folded, lawn cravats, to say nothing of his collars, cuffs and stiff shirt fronts were her especial pride and joy, apart from being a weekly and demanding chore, from which none of the long-serving and devoted 'maids' who joined the household were ever able to relieve her. Caps, aprons, pinafores, handkerchieves, tablecloths,

napkins, pillowcases, (all with tapes to be carefully flattened out) were quite enough for them to cope with. And the irons (no electricity in those days) had to be heated in front of the bars of the kitchen range!

Cooking was a 'sealed book' until her second day in the cold, damp Parsonage, when a workman, arriving at 7 a.m. to do some required job, handed her his breakfast to be cooked, a rasher of bacon and a screw of tea. Between them all a fire was burning in the open kitchen range and Margaret did know by repute the look of a frying-pan. The rasher survived and was edible, but the procedure was typical of her life for the next six or seven years.

Later on she used to say that it was every bit of seven years before she really knew what her role would be and how she was to tackle it. For reasons which, mercifully, we were to know little about, things at the old Chapel had reached a very low ebb. Again it is almost beyond belief now, that when in 1885 my father accepted the 'call' to become Minister at Stand he only realised after acceptance that the post included the Headmastership of the Stand Grammar School! "Because he was a graduate and it was only a matter of twenty-six boys and an Usher." Still, there it was; a source of daily dismay and frustration. The school had indeed been founded somewhere in the late Seventeenth Century, partly to meet an appalling need, but also as a cloak to the perseverance of the Dissenting congregation which drew its members from a wide area, embracing both the Domesday Parishes and the backwoods between. By 1693 the political climate allowed the building of a Chapel alongside, but the old school, (one up, one down, with the most primitive amenities, if any,) still lingered on until 1911. By this time a County Council had evolved and the Grammar School, rebuilt on a site nearer to where folk lived, was purpose-built to take four hundred boys and girls. But in 1885 the 'old school' was still a going concern. After 1708 it had also accommodated a Sunday School, whose own Superintendent, financed by the Chapel, was to teach the 'Three R's, and thus to feed both Grammar School and Congregation. My father's predecessor had been completely exhausted by his efforts to control or guide the unwieldy, (and insanitary) set-up. For two miserable years my father struggled, having no instincts for school-mastering anyway, and then it was found possible to separate these 'Siamese Twins' with Independent Governing Bodies, but the Chapel still had nowhere except the old school for week-end work and social activities. Working parties and the like met in the Parsonage, but even that had its moments of light relief at times. There came a day when my mother missed her working scissors. Thinking back she remembered the Sewing Meeting of the previous

week, and went by instinct to feel in the crack of the sofa. Sure enough—scissors, but they were not hers. She felt again and fished up two more pairs, her own among them, but by then her spirit was roused and she continued the search until she had amassed fourteen pairs! The following week marked the end of the season for the time and she produced her 'haul' with joy, and by then the 'London Miss' was beginning to be regarded with respect, even perhaps with awe.

For those two initial years there had been no family nor any sign of one. In those halcyon days it was possible, nay, even expected of the bride at least, to enter the married state with positively no knowledge of the processes involved. So it was left to my father's elder sister to discover, after some serious probing, that our poor innocents had no idea of times and seasons in these matters. When at last the family began to arrive the eldest son was only eighteen months old when the first daughter appeared, and the next eighteen months saw the imminent arrival of number Three (who weighed 10lbs. on delivery and measured 36 inches.) The Doctor lived two miles away and had to be fetched in the dead of night by my father—no transport in those days, though I believe the Doctor did bring him back in his little pony trap. They nearly lost my mother in that confinement and she was then given a respite of four years before the present writer came on the scene.

During those first five years the 'flock' had become perfectly accustomed to letting the little 'London Miss' do all the work and it was the same family doctor who, happening to meet a departing working party, stopped one of the good ladies and asked sharply how many more Minister's wives they were prepared to lose. I believe he said 'to kill' but that may be my fancy developed over the years. After that four year break the present writer pink-eyed and always a bit short of vitality, appeared to grace the scene, where these memoirs began.

By 1893 a beautiful new Sunday School had been devised and largely built by the growing group of stalwarts. It had a large hall with a properly-laid dancing floor and a good stage with dressing-rooms and washrooms on either side, and a wonderful sliding screen that became cupboard doors to the basement kitchen underneath when not in use as a partition up above, The 'New School' known as such for the next seventy years, became the social centre for the neighbourhood. The local 'Co-op', itself a newly-developing idea born in the same region, had a good hall but there was no other to compare with ours. Here the well-run and properly organised dances, held roughly once a fortnight from October to March were a much sought after delight



'A chield's among ye, taking notes'.

The Author (aged 3 to 4 years)

and attraction. By the turn of the century all sorts of other denominations had appeared, but for most of them dancing was quite taboo, and 'socials' given over to kissing games were very much disliked by thoughtful parents. Tickets for a Stand dance were eagerly sought and could only be obtained from recognised members of the club or committee concerned—e.g. Football, Cricket, Sick Club, Drama Society, Choir, Band of Hope, etc. My father always attended at the start and expected newcomers to be formally introduced. Then he would hand over the supervision to one of his trusted Men's Class and retire to his study in the Parsonage across the road. Anyone who was unable to name the source of her, or his, ticket was politely but firmly shown the door. At 10.45 my father returned to the Dance Hall which was finally closed punctually at 11 p.m. and left ready for Sunday School at 9.30 a.m. next day. Those were the days!

THE MANCHESTER SCHOOL

That South Lancashire should have developed into a 'grey area' was a tragedy not easily escapable. Coal is a grubby customer and experience is costly. There was so much to be learned, and learned only by the hard way. The old Domesday parishes were in no way equipped to deal with a situation growing through the preceding four or five centuries when, according to our best historians, the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire were virtually sanctuaries from the arm of the law for almost every type of dissident opinion. Roman Catholics and Freethinkers alike made what they could of what they found, but they were by no means thoughtless money-grubbers. Distress, disease and squalor were the natural concomitants of rows of houses, regarded as palaces in their day, hastily provided in the early Nineteenth Century for the unprecedented rush of destitute labourers from the surrounding countryside. No one had heard of piped water or indoor sanitation so none was expected. Indeed as late as 1868 a young couple marrying and building their house in the best part of Birmingham nearly came to 'words' when the bride insisted upon having that, (a lavatory) within her house which her husband-to-be, an estate agent and manager for a large and noble family, considered quite unsuitable and undesirable inside any sort of dwelling. That house is still inhabited, though occupied today by several households, but many a time it was wondered why 'Uncle George' should have had the bathroom planned down such a long and chilly passage — the unhappy compromise arrived at barely a century ago.

By the same token the Diocese of Manchester was only carved out of the region between Chester and Lichfield during my father's lifetime and the establishment of County Councils almost within my own.

But Professor G. M. Trevelyan was one of five notable nephews who spent much of their summer vacations staying with their 'Aunt Annie', (Miss A. M. Philips, The Park, Prestwich,) and she was a student, an educator, a lover of children if ever there was one! In due course it was two more of these nephews — Charles Trevelyan and Morgan Philips Price, who were active architects and members of the first Labour Government. Their forebears had been among the backbone of the old 'Manchester School' Members of Parliament, working for the Reform Bill and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. John Fielden of Todmorden, Father of the Factory Act, which limited the work of children to ten hours a day, (and was soundly trounced for his pains,) was of the same clan and it seemed as if little Stand was the place where ideas were promoted and cherished, and where in due course they flourished. The founder of The Manchester Guardian, (John Edward Taylor,) was of the same fraternity, though he sought and found great support and backing among the Quakers of Rochdale. A great-niece of his was a member of my father's congregation and when he married, in 1886, she made him a present of the fine oak cradle in which John Edward Taylor had been rocked as a baby. In due course we all took our places in it. It remained with us until the 150th anniversary of the paper, when we gave it back to more interested descendants. It had seemed perfectly natural that we should have grown up with it as long as we could remember and it seemed to constitute a symbol of all the thought and life and work that had emanated from that apparently insignificant little hub of the universe. When in 1941 the Germans set about bombing Manchester it was the Top of Stand that took the first incendiaries that were to start a beacon light to guide the rest. The little, old Chapel burned like tinder, but in the rubble, which contained among the rest the ruins of recently installed memorial windows, just one word remained intact. And that word was 'FAITH'. We were glad that it had been found and could be kept.

CHAPTER THREE

DELAMERE and SUMMERTREES

IN 1905 Smith Osler died on April 1st and the big old house on Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead was abandoned. The Parsonage at Stand was in quarantine with scarlet fever. The Spring Term had begun with whooping-cough followed by chickenpox, and except for one brother on a scholarship at Manchester Grammar School and in some way isolated from the rest of us and the other brother safely on a farm in Cheshire, not one week's lessons had been done by any of us, though the school bills came in just the same. Our mother managed two mid-week trips (Farmers' Special, Manchester to London, 15/- starting at cock-crow) to cope with the London situation, finally helping her bachelor brother to find new quarters in what was still called John Street, soon afterwards to be re-named Keats Grove. She felt that blow to Old Hampstead as keenly as any part of the general upheaval. The nett result was that after the brother had taken his share of books and such furniture as would be useful and suitable for the little old house in John Street, all the larger pieces, including the Broadwood Grand Piano, fell to our mother's lot and a new chapter indeed began to germinate in her far-from-barren mind.

After the immediate wind-up in Hampstead and the taking down of the carbolic sheet covering the sickroom door in the Parsonage, it was felt by both parents that a day or two 'off the beaten track' might be justifiably considered. With the address of possible farmhouse accommodation scribbled on an envelope by a sympathetic colleague for use as and when it might be helpful, they set out for Delamere, 3/6 return from Manchester on the old Cheshire Lines Railway. Even in these days no one expects to find fifteen miles of unspoilt royal forest almost in the heart of the industrial North West, but there it was. Yes, there it was, astride a stretch of Watling Street, with the Summer Palace of Ethelburga, Queen of Mercia, giving the name of 'Eddisbury' to the Parliamentary Constituency to which, on the other side of the cleft, Mount Pleasant belonged.

Mount Pleasant Farm proved to be 4½ miles by road from Delamere Station, but it was all the address they had and they found it! It must have been on a Friday because when the farmer had been tracked down, working among his 'roots', he disclosed that 'the missus' had gone to the market at Northwich, but he would put the parents into the house to wait until she got back. This they elected to do, as it seemed quite in order that they should put up

there for the night. By the next morning they were so charmed by the region that it occurred to them to ask whether there was any possibility of finding somewhere to rent where they could put the furniture, recently acquired from Hampstead, and make some kind of holiday retreat for themselves and family, and very particularly for the careworn mothers and babies of the growing flock from the granite-settled streets of mills and coalfields around Stand. So far away, and yet so near.

Saturday morning was devoted to discussion, and within an hour 'mine host' announced:—"We could set you this." It appeared that though they rented the whole of the five-bedroomed house they only used the back premises and one bedroom. The rest was practically empty and potatoes were stored in the front rooms. An amicable agreement was reached before it was time to be getting back to the station. As an afterthought as they were about to leave, the farmer said:—"I expect we ought to have your name." Again, those were the days! The upshot was that the occupiers would have the place clean by the time the furniture could come from London and about £20 was expended upon simple white crockery and enamelled iron pails and kitchenware generally. This included a three-tiered 'steamer', in which complete meals could be cooked simultaneously, and of which the last remaining section the top tier and its lid, survived to be disposed of seventy-one years later from a demure three-bedroomed 'semi' in a part of Cheltenham, still waiting another thirty years or so to be developed.

The sixteen-acre holding, carved out of an edge of Delamere Forest, had been acquired in the 1860s by a business man, threatened with tuberculosis and he had put up a comfortable, well-built house, with five bedrooms and a bathroom for which there was no apparent water supply, except a surface well too near to the farmyard to be accredited as safe, and which tended to run dry with remarkable ease. Expecting to live for six months only, he managed to put in fifteen years, such was the fresh air on that dear hilltop. He had had a flat roof made with 'easy' access, (up two ladders and with a heavy skylight.) but from which a view of seventy miles in all directions was available, as well as providing water catchment which for two years supplied our intermittent needs tolerably well. At the end of that time the wily ground-landlord saw that more had been spent than anyone could afford to lose and announced his intention to sell, but he would give my parents the first option. Bearing in mind that it was still some thirty years before there were any water mains or sewage disposal schemes to be paid for and having eventual retirement to be considered, the proverbial barrel

was scraped and with possibly a little help from a brotherly loan the estate was acquired and Ted Reade and his 'missus' became our tenants, a re-investment of funds that amply repaid its cost, though we never indulged in stair carpets to the end. But with ownership it was agreed that the name, 'Mount Pleasant', (with its far from pleasant overtones of Liverpool and London) could be changed, and with the neighbouring farm of Summerbank close by and the romantic idea of 'Lairdship' inspired by the novels of Sir Walter Scott—notably 'Redgauntlet'—in mind, my father likened himself to 'Maxwell of Summer-trees' and so the new name was found.

For the succeeding nine years it was continuously let or lent, occupied by ourselves for the longer holidays in alternate years and for innumerable, odd occasions such as Spring-cleanings or convalescence after one or other of our numerous illnesses, when absence from the Parsonage was desirable. One or two of ourselves, two girls who shared our lessons as weekly boarders, twin cousins, plus one or two from the Sunday School, together with our dear Miss Breeze and a mother or two would make up a Spring party and for five or six weeks we lived certainly an 'ordered' existence but I have no recollection of lessons of any kind. There was the farm whose buildings and farmyard we shared, the forest only two fields away, and a bit of it on our own territory anyway. The only shops, butcher, post office and small general store and cycle shop were twenty-five minutes walk away at least, there was not for many years to come even a pillarbox nearer—there was never any time to wonder what to do!

CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOLDAYS

AN 'ORDERED LIFE' began at 6.30 a.m. when the Staff and the Parents got up. Three fires were lit, the Dining-room was dusted and the boots were cleaned. At 6.50 the rest of us were called. Essential washings took place in the bedrooms, (complete toilet sets in every room) but the family shared a cold bath, run overnight because the hill-top reservoir was not far enough above us to provide more than a trickle of cold water for most of the year. Hot water came quickly but was equally precious and very hard to cool, so again the nightly bath that sent us all clean to bed was usually shared and was an occasion of tumultuous fun and games. Our poor father, wrestling with his sermons in the Study next door to the Bathroom, had a gruesome time but very rarely complained.

7.30 a.m. was Breakfast-time and the household were all assembled to start the day with the five-minute 'Prayers'. (one psalm and one collect), that held the threads of life together throughout the vicissitudes of existence for the whole of the Parents' lives and beyond; and for all who came and went. It all seemed very right and proper and only laziness ever argued.

But the education of the young was a matter of continual concern and not least because the theories of Pestalozzi and Fröbel were being actively explored and promulgated by our own people. My father's uncle, Rev. W. H. Herford, and his daughter Caroline who was later to become the second Mrs. Robert Blake, together with various sisters and cousins were busy establishing Ladybarn House Kindergarten School along Fröbel lines in South Manchester and pioneering a Department of Education in the budding University, Owens College, which was to have widespread repercussions round the world in later years. We lived too near and yet too far away to be closely involved; and there was too much an element of 'The prophet in his own country' among the nearer relatives to make active participation a likely proposition, but the seed had been sown and was germinating. The little school, Stand Lodge, started by the daughters of my Father's predecessor, Rev. W. B. Squier, took full advantage of the new approach, their youngest sister, Dora Squier, being among the first to qualify for the Norland Diploma in Kindergarten teaching.

My mother undertook to teach us to read and was very sceptical of any new approach in that direction. Illustrated 'Readers' were her particular bugbear—if we could see a picture we should only guess; and how right she often was!

But with me who saw everything as a picture if it was to have any meaning at all she found herself completely stumped. She found a Reader, without pictures, 'Step by Step', of which I treasure a copy to this day, which carefully reduced every likely sort of word to its basic syllables, and how simple but how baffling this could be. I can feel myself sitting on her knees wrestling with a sequence of words beginning with A, developing through Ass to the point where we reached GRASS. Here I stuck. It must have been nearly dinner-time and the table would be needed.

"Come, dear, you know the word well. Look out of the window."

I could see the lawn, complete with croquet hoops, etc. but the letters did not say LAWN, and I was dumb, and she, poor soul, dumbfounded. The books were put away and we had dinner, and I rather think that by the end of the week I was reading fairly happily, but simplifications remained stumbling-blocks for long enough. I suppose I was six or seven by this time and in regular attendance at Stand Lodge School but later on my younger sister, Margaret, who was 'bright' was reading easily and well by five years old, and I felt that acutely. We subscribed to a wonderful children's magazine called 'Little Folks', which we studied earnestly from cover to cover month by month. A page at the end, devoted to the youngest readers, had a story recounting the exploits of one HAR-OLD. I sat under the diningroom table for what seemed like hours pondering this extraordinary phenomenon. I had an Uncle Harold and was quite prepared to welcome this newcomer, but what sort of a name was HAR-OLD? It is one of those things that resolves itself in sleep, and that was how I learned to knit too. One day I wrestled from morning to night in hopeless bewilderment. I awoke the next morning in complete possession of the whole art and mystery of knitting and ready to embark on Crochet at the first opportunity. Needlework and the threading of large-eyed crewel needles enthralled me for as long as I can remember, and my fingers have never been straight!

And so we plodded down the hill a mile or so but it seemed everlasting. A little group formed at the Top of Stand to make the journey but at twelve o'clock the home-pram and baby would be along to bring us home. Of what we did in those first terms I have very little recollection except of standing in a large circle reading aloud. There must also have been something we did with beads, (counting, presumably,) but they were coloured and they fascinated me. So much so that when later on, after a communal hair washing, we all sat round the nursery fire drying out, Mother would be reading aloud. The book of the day, chosen primarily to interest the older ones, was du Chailu's

'Travels in Central Africa', (or some such title) and trading with the natives was transacted with the exchange of coloured beads. At this I took notice, sat up and enquired eagerly 'Did you say *Beads*?' A bell had been rung for me and books had begun to speak. But for the most part school was still a nightmare of rush and bustle, the buttoning and unbuttoning of boots, and the awful business of being told to run out and play in the garden. I knew that one must find one's way to the lavatory or shameless things might, and did, happen, but a strange garden—No. It must have taken me at least three weeks to bring my mind to venturing out to play—at what?—with all these strange boys and girls, Gladys, May, Harry, Geoffrey, and Tom, Doris and two Elsie's, and of course lots of others. Once a week I stayed on for dinner because of Dancing, and that meant changing into one's white cashmere smock, long black stockings and heelless dancing sandals, while two or three of those wretched girls stood around to watch—to see what sort of undies I wore. I suppose. I don't seem to remember wondering for a moment about theirs. But I do remember the buying of the silk stockings and the sandals. They seemed quite out of this world, and that they should be bought especially for me was beyond belief. Clothes were things that came out of the big white cupboard and before that had arrived in bundles from various aunts with long families. There were long pink vests which Mother knitted endlessly. It was her proud boast that she had knitted either vests or socks while tramping over every pass in the Lake District or in the hinterland of Criccieth, Llanbedr or Towyn. Criccieth had to be abandoned at a very early date (for me) because there were too many wealthy Birmingham cousins about, and Mother could not bear the competition nor the different standards of economy. She had chosen a different life-style and was only too well aware of the two schools of thought that made themselves felt on occasion—thus:—'I can't bear to think of dear Meg with only those rough country girls to help her', and 'It's alright for Mrs. 'Erford, she keeps a girl.'

But until the boys went into Norfolk jackets or 'Etons', (stiff collars, cuffs and long trousers) we all wore sailor suits and she made every stitch that we wore, apart from the cousinly cast-offs and apart from boots and shoes (again often hand-downs), she reckoned to be able to clothe all five of us for round about £15 a year! The little Wilcox and Gibbs sewing-machine, given to her for a twenty-first birthday present, and mounted on a treadle at the time of her wedding, would be unshipped from its treadle to go with us on every holiday, and a 'bolt' of pink 'union' flannel was converted into combinations, nighties and pyjamas for

the winter while other folk were reading magazines or playing games. Most of one's friends at the turn of the century wore white, frilly knickers but our household jibbed at the washing and ironing of these and the concomitant petticoats required. What we wore before the evolution of 'bloomers', rendered necessary by the development of cycling, I have now no recollection. Whatever they were involved a complicated business of side vents to be buttoned on to the home-made variety of the Liberty bodice. Elastic was as yet too unpredictable for regular washing demands and was reserved for the finishing off of bag-blouses, (which my mother instinctively called 'Garibaldis') and for securing hats, black if to go behind the head under the hair, or white if under the chin. Then somewhere about 1907 or 1908 the regulation 'gymslip' or costume evolved by Mme. Osterberg for girls' and women's gymnastics arrived, requiring matching knickers, the whole outfit rendered in navy-blue serge with loose white calico linings. Frills had departed for ever. Side vents and strategic buttons were now added to the regulation white top. Flannel or 'Jap' silk were the preferred materials with cheaper variants in Wincey or Viyella, but washing colours were still very chancy. Pink and blue faded out at once, green was based on arsenic and regarded (often with justification) as highly dangerous. The immense range and colour fastness of the aniline dyes for which Manchester was paving the way was still regarded as too poisonous in production processes to be encouraged. The theory found its necessary sponsorship on the Continent, and only as part of the settlement of things after World War I did the patent rights return to Britain under the aegis of the newly founded I.C.I. (Imperial Chemical Industries), developed from the firm of Messrs Brunner, Mond, and Co., of Northwich and Manchester. Earlier, and incidentally, Mr. Roscoe Brunner took his own life in desperation at the turn things were taking, and the rumblings of war were beginning to be heard in 1910 by even such small fry as ourselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

'FRENCH WITHOUT TEARS'

STAND LODGE must really have been quite outstanding in its day. Music, Dancing, Art and French were the regular fare for all in the hands of very inspiring teachers. There was never a dull moment though it is hard at this distance of time to know what, if anything, we made of it, but it says much for them that without exception they all remained our devoted friends until their several deaths, long after we had all scattered into the great world.

'They all' included the Squier sisters, Beatrice and Christabel, who took the elementary stages of the 'Three R's', (Reading, Writing and 'rithmetic.) Poetry and History, and organised the whole scheme, Miss Collier for Music, Miss Howorth for Dancing, Mademoiselle for French and, tandem, the two Miss Bauerkellers for Art.)

French for the 7 to 11-year-olds must have been an enterprise in itself in those early days. Wealthy families would have had French governesses, but as a regular 'school' subject it was rare and we were blessed beyond comprehension. Looking back one can see it was all part of the Liberal atmosphere finding expression in many of the 'lost' spots of England up till 1914.

Mademoiselle Madeleine de la Br ue had been born during the Siege of Paris in 1870 into a noble French family, ruined by their Republican views. The family was broken up and Madeleine came as a refugee to England under the aegis of some Liverpool Liberal families to find her feet as and how she could, as an 'au pair' girl (as we should say today). She was gay and charming and far too heady for the sober youth of Liverpool (or their mamas), and after a couple of years or so she was safely despatched to Manchester. Curiously it was my mother's folk in Liverpool who transferred her to my father's kin in Manchester, but there she settled down and gathered a private connection about her and not least a regular attachment to the Stand Lodge School, with the continuing interest and background support of Miss Anna Philips (above mentioned).

At this point it is appropriate to notice that Lady Bell, authoress of 'French without Tears' and coinor of that now-household expression, was an integral part of the Philips/Trevelyan connection, and thus Stand Lodge received and used that immortal work from its earliest appearance. 'M dor est malade—Pourquoi?' together with his companion tales found a ready and abiding welcome.

We danced and sang 'Sur le pont (paw) d'Avignon (daveenyaw)' 'Savez-vous planter les Choux' and a charm-

ing one about 'Polichinelle'—a French variety of 'Punch', and above all we played Picture Lotto. 'Mam'selle' had three or four different sets with perhaps twelve small pictures and their respective matching cards, flowers, common objects and the like, and it was over these that my heart first warmed to this good soul. We sat round the dining-room table, the cards were dealt out and as my turn came—'Pour Catharine' sounded like 'Poor Catharine! I knew that at last there was someone who understood and shared my apprehensive misery. (Forty years later in a superior Birmingham Grammar School someone in the Staff Room preparing for an imminent lesson, enquired anxiously if anyone could explain why 'Reseda' meant 'Green'. My hand shot up at once—'C'est Mignonette, n'est ce pas?'. All the same I realised later and somewhat to my cost that it is 'not done' for one faculty to steal marches on another.) It was sad at the time to realise also that Mam'selle's wonderfully 'free' approach was by no means understood or encouraged by those who felt that examinations, and the ability to conjugate irregular verbs were important, and we were sadly allowed to disparage this early training and to know that poor Mam'selle had been made to suffer accordingly. But we never lost touch and in later years I was able to visit her on two occasions in Paris. As ever I was 'a dark horse'. Assisting with a party of Yorkshire school lasses I was able to produce as 'out of a hat' a beautiful real Parisienne, who was of inestimable value in helping with our arrangements. The only element of tragedy was that her English, though far more fluent than my French, was 'pure Manchester'.

Those halcyon days however could not last forever. Though Stand Lodge had proudly announced itself as 'Stand Lodge High School' it could never have aspired to a recognised secondary level, and with some heart-searching moments, aggravated perhaps by the apparent possibility that our home might be about to move to Oxford, a new element was introduced. As notice of departure had been delivered and even though the Oxford prospect was found to have faded, it seemed best to carry on at the higher level under new auspices. The Parsonage household by this time (1908-1910) comprised myself, my younger sister Margaret, the two Crabtree girls, Nelly (Helen) and Norah, from nearby Heywood as weekly boarders, and two New Zealand cousins—the twins—Helen and Daisy Osler, all of us due for High School within the next year or two. Stand Grammar School was just on the verge of being taken over by the new County Council Education Authority, and was to be opened up in a lovely new building for a mixed clientele of boys and girls. Though pioneers in many other ways my parents did not fancy this arrangement in its raw

beginnings, and so Miss Mary Letitia Breeze, (Breezy) was introduced with Latin, Algebra and Geometry at her fingertips and French in exercise-books with homework to be done alongside.

A room in the new Sunday School block across the road was made available and at the same time the gymnasium of the old Grammar School, still in situ beside the old Chapel, was applied for and its use permitted. A qualified 'Mme Osterberg Swedish' expert joined the 'visiting' staff and the pleated navy serge gym tunic (with matching knickers) already mentioned, became 'de rigueur'. It was a considerable shock when three years later the two Crabtree girls and I, went off to school in Cheltenham to find that at that august establishment 'Calisthenics', (in ordinary and most unsuitable dress) was all that was in general practice and that 'Gymnastics' were an 'extra' for which no special equipment nor premises, (except for some parallel bars and a rope in a semi-basement for remedial purposes only) appeared until sometime in 1912 or so, and the required costume for that was quite remarkably uncomfortable and archaic. Indeed 'College' (Cheltenham Ladies' College) missed out on the 'tunic' vogue completely and it was only in 1927 and after a year or two of Dalcroze Eurythmics in black crape Dorian chiton over meridian pants that a beautiful complete gymnasium was provided and every vestige of skirt disappeared from athletic costume. For games we wore heavy calf-length gored serge skirts with firm, stitched, shaped belts and the white shirt blouses that were to become regulation uniform before I left in July 1913. It was a visiting lecturer, Sir Sydney Holland, staying as Miss Faithfull's guest, who remarked that in his opinion the image of College would be greatly improved if some simple form of uniform could be adopted. The idea was promoted forthwith and I was myself a 'guinea-pig' sometime in 1912 when called in during Break one day to put on and demonstrate (we should say 'model' now) one of the proposed 'navy serge suits' for a visiting governor's inspection. It was precisely what had been thought suitable when I was first fitted out for school in 1910 and so made little change in my scheme of things, but for the young lady who habitually swept about College in a lavender cashmere dress with a full skirt, deliciously smocked all round, and over, her shapely hips, the cynosure of all eyes and the source of wild envy in her classmates, it was indeed a sad occasion. But what a relief it was and how expenses dropped when all competition vanished. Incidentally it was a delight in later years to discover that Sir Sydney Holland—of blessed memory—shared quite a substantial portion of my father's family tree. Again, for those prepared to argue in favour of abandoning the (now)



Group II. Summit of Coniston Old Man, 1902.

'R.T.H.' Boy Dick, Hetty, Mimi, Madeleine, Ruth, Robbie, with his new Kodak.

From snapshot by Charley (see frontispiece).

archaic and degrading idea of regimentation in any form, it is as well to realise that any return to 'free' choice in the matter of costume may result in frayed and bepatched jeans for all occasions, but is more likely to involve wildly expensive competition in following trends of the passing moment, and the heart-breaking endeavour not to appear 'odd' or 'deprived' in any way.

The choice of 'Cheltenham' for me, in these days and with our particular background may seem strange in view of a tradition that had built up from Mrs. Turner's School, (Lenton Fields) in Nottingham to be followed by Roedean and Channing (House) School and others with definitely Unitarian foundations, but the arguments were not hard to follow. Before the institution of 'Burnham Scale' salaries Cheltenham was by no means (and still is not) the most expensive school of its type. Indeed compared with Roedean it was almost cheap and its respect for academic and vocational standards far in advance. Channing would have made special terms for 'daughters of the Manse' but London was far too full of family and other diversions. Moreover it seemed to be time to discover that there were really 'very good people' in other connections and as weekly, or even daily, travel to 'good schools' was found too exhausting in my older sister's case, when my turn came and with the help of an unexpected legacy of £200(!) it was found possible to send me off to the more salubrious (and perhaps enervating) climate of the South-West. With rheumatism and anaemia playing havoc with my existence it was a wonderful choice and I flourished mightily but my younger sister, following two years later, was a victim to liver and jaundice from the start and made no sort of progress in the then conditions and had to be removed.

It was in Cheltenham in the 'House' that I first experienced electric light. At Stand it had been gas, fishtail jets in bathroom, passages and bedrooms with incandescent mantles elsewhere. Except in the study, where a beloved oil lamp prevailed, cherished and maintained by its master. At Summertrees it was lamps and candles until 1946, and why in all those years neither house nor property was ever seriously damaged passes comprehension. The fishtail jets particularly had so many possibilities. They extended from the walls on folding brass tubes, the exposed flame jutting out into the room with the most engaging insouciance. In those days I wore my hair controlled by a round celluloid, tortoise-shell band, finished at the ends with two inches or so of fine comb. They cost twopence each at the local general shop and burned up with a glorious, spontaneous blaze if they came anywhere near the unprotected flame.

No account of Cheltenham in Edwardian (and earlier) days can be quite complete without some mention of one

entirely vanished feature of the then landscape—the Page Boys. My mind tells me there were fifteen of them with Eustace at their head. The number may be wrong but Eustace was superb. They wore navy uniforms with long, narrow trousers and tight jackets, finished (true to type) with round, brass buttons from neck to waist. They 'lived' in a cubby hole somewhere at the lower end of the Marble Corridor and stood by to carry messages between members of the staff. Nothing was ever conveyed by word of mouth but from time to time someone would appear from the Staff Room, then at the opposite end of the same corridor and with a stentorian voice yell 'Boy', when a minion would appear with a small silver salver and do the deed. It all added zest to that silent hive of industry but, sometime in 1912 or so, it all came to a sudden end. Clandestine corespondence with Eustace, the Beautiful, brought matters to a head. One girl, I regret to say from our own house, and all the boys disappeared together, the latter to be replaced, but for one term only I think, by a row of demure damsels in caps and aprons, and after that the telephone had become a working possibility and no doubt took their place. But the original pageboy had a very real function which can easily be lost sight of. When not on an errand he trimmed the quill pens, making those used and discarded by Senior girls fit for use by the juniors. The boys were also so situated that they could hear and were encouraged to listen in to Miss Beale's Divinity Lectures. It is recorded that one in his day was so impressed that he eventually entered Holy Orders and became a Colonial Bishop. What a sad falling off by 1912. Incidentally, the combs also have an interest all their own in that they were quite obviously what Alice in Wonderland wore and the 'Alice Band', so often referred to in descriptions of little girls' costumes of much later date, was not the ribbon or velvet 'snood' as so often suggested which took its place probably for sheer safety's sake. At Stand it was at the bathroom gas-jet also that with rolls of damp paper shaped like cigars and cigarettes we embarked upon the enterprise of learning to smoke. A contemporary comment, precise source unknown, ran something like this, 'Eh, them little 'Erfords' is wick'. That was in the local vernacular of South Lancashire and meant 'lively'.

An open flame hazard of much more recent date, (perhaps only thirty years or so ago) survives from Summertrees after my father's retirement. He was an inveterate pipe-smoker, particularly heavy on matches. Living so far from shops my mother made an injunction that he must provide his own and not raid the kitchen cupboard. Being, as Kipling put it, a 'creature of infinite resource and sagacity' he forthwith installed a tiny pilot lamp beside his reading chair, with a handy supply of paper spills and all seemed set for

fair sailing into a cloudless future. There came a day however when the current (Manchester) Guardian was nowhere to be found. 'Elevenses' in the kitchen were in full swing when an irate apparition at the door demanded the whereabouts of the precious paper. Had someone taken it to make the fire? Of course it had come—it was being read—it had disappeared—where? by whom? I slipped away from the hubbub to conduct an independent inquiry. A faint suggestion of burning hung about but the study seemed intact until the swivel reading-desk attached to the armchair was examined at close quarters. And there, set out at full spread were the blackened sheets of the whole paper! And it could be observed that one corner had impinged on the tip of the little pilot lamp, and had then quietly smouldered until the whole newspaper was consumed! I raced back to find the victim and dragged him to the scene of the (near) disaster. He looked—he smelled—and then he laughed! And then we laughed too—but only just.

And so—on a blazing day in July 1914—the old world came to an end. The call had come to our parents to uproot, to pack and to move to London and in the middle of a blinding thunderstorm somehow this was accomplished. After twenty-nine years, with four tons of books in forty cases the parents, who had arrived with nothing and had planned to live on nothing, staggered away in thunder and lightning to take up in Bloomsbury the next chapter of their pilgrimage through life. A water-main burst as the cavalcade approached Manchester and everything had to be unpacked, and re-assembled twice before their goal was reached. And what a goal!

When one says they had set out with 'nothing' it was perhaps hyperbole—there had been some wedding present money, which had been spent on three or four odd pieces of rosewood for the drawing room, though it hardly sounds entirely appropriate now. An octagonal 'occasional' table, a semi-upholstered, fireside armchair, a book table, a nursing chair and two bedroom chairs, but all in rosewood and inlaid with something light and pretty—and that was that. The rest was acquired as and how during the next many years. Our mother used to say that one did not 'buy' furniture, it 'came' to one and she reckoned that over the years she had inherited the less usable remains from at least four households. She used to tell of lying in bed, (in the great four-poster which had come originally from the house of 'King Tim' of Birmingham) listening to the pieces comparing notes—the Osler bits—the Roscoe bits—the Tayler bits—the Smith bits—all making friends with Mrs. Turner's 'Napoleon Chair' from Nottingham, which our father contributed together with the great silver 'John Holland' teapot which had to be reserved for the really big tea parties (when

they occurred).

The 'John James Tayler' furniture only came after the Stand days were numbered but it is worth recording here, if nowhere else, what it amounted to, quite apart from numberless rare and fascinating books. When Manchester College, now in Oxford, was moved to London in 1852 Dr. J. J. Tayler, my mother's great-uncle moved with it as Principal and his Manchester (Upper Brook Street Chapel) flock gave him, in token of their respect for his services—Item—one complete set of study furniture comprising one double writing table with chair, one leather-bound easy chair, one standing desk with high stool to fit, one black marble striking clock, and for his family(!) one Broadwood grand piano, and two Spode tea services, one for his wife and one for his daughter, the sort that had two sets of cups, tea and coffee, to one set of saucers and no plates, but vast and lovely teapots, milk ewers, sugar basins with lids and slop bowls. The tea service for his wife, hand-painted with blue convolvulus, was much the worse for heavy wear by the time it reached us; the other, with enchanting pink roses, was quite too perfect ever to have been used. It was reported of the worthy recipient that he had rather wryly observed on one occasion that perhaps a trifle more stipend during the years of his devoted ministrations would have been more appreciated. However — those were the days! The rest of the furniture was the result of perspicacious picking up or rescuing of this and that from builders' yards and/or wayside sales.

'Old oak' was their fancy and one of the first arrivals was the gift of a wedding present from a member of the Stand congregation, 'Old Miss Taylor'. She was the great-niece of John Edward Taylor, the founder of The Manchester Guardian. She owned the cradle the founder had been born into (so to speak). She was arranging for the disposal of her possessions and the nephew to whom the cradle should have gone had no use nor place for such an article, and proposed to cut it up and make a box of it. She thought that would be a pity, so would the parents accept it as a wedding present? Well—who wouldn't? In due course we all took our places in it though it was kept downstairs and only used for display purposes (ourselves of course included). The cradle had a wooden hood and our mother was terrified of our precious necks being broken by careless lifting so we were always placed in feet forwards, and it has been suggested by our ruder friends of later years that a highly developed sense of contrariness might thus be amply accounted for! She also thoughtfully had a slatted base fitted in, to lessen the chance of other dangerous contingencies. None the less it was symptomatic of circumstances that it never seemed in the least unusual to have it

among the things of our ordinary life.

The grandfather clock which accompanied all our waking hours until this last year, (1976) was literally a 'find'. That is to say, on visiting newcomers to the Sheep Hey house already mentioned, the incoming tenant was showing my father round. When he came to the out-buildings he pointed to the clock, which he had found there and which had not gone for years. When my father offered him 10/- for it he accepted it as largesse of the first order. The clock had a lovely engraved brass face, signed Samuel Butterworth, Rochdale (temp. about 1790). It was brought home in triumph, spread out on the kitchen table—we hope on a newspaper—taken to pieces (he had never tackled one before), cleaned with a paraffin rag and found to be wanting a new pulley for the rope. This was acquired for twopence in the Shudehill Market. Manchester and with a new rope every five or ten years the clock has gone perfectly ever since—the best timekeeper in the house, with a heavenly strike and a leaden weight apparently originally cast in a jam pot—or so my father deduced. The counterweight was a simple length of strip lead which sadly disappeared after a visit for cleaning etc. to a clockmaker in Rhyl, who substituted a horrible neat composition 'fir cone' which he said he thought looked better! I suppose lead has a price far beyond rubies!

And so we came to London—and again it all seemed so natural. The administration of the old Dr. Daniel Williams Trust and Library had, since its foundation in 1693, come down in the hands of the Unitarian successors of the English Presbyterians and when the Secretary/Librarianship became vacant (in 1914) the choice of a successor rested upon my father, not least because of his and my mother's intimate knowledge of the traditional position. The emoluments were no better—worse if anything—when comparing life in Central London with conditions in (almost) rural Lancashire, but the house in Gordon Square (University Hall as it was still called for reasons that do not concern this record) had possibilities far outweighing its more obvious disadvantages, e.g. impossible stairs and 'transitional' plumbing, and we took possession in spite of the continuing thunderstorm and the forty cases of books. Moreover London was at the moment held to ransom by the Suffragettes and within a month the Sarajevo assassination had rent the world asunder. For us at least it seemed as if the removal of a little pin in Lancashire had truly caused a cataclysm. One little incident relieves the tension of those first uneasy days. Still savouring our new experiences, we heard one evening in that hot July a newspaper boy calling out the urgent news of a special 'Late Extra' issue and my father dashed out to buy a copy.

Within five minutes he was back fuming with frustrated rage. 'They charged me 2d just to read the headlines' he said, 'and it was only the result of the Bombardier Wells and Georges Carpentier prize-fight!' These things help to pin the dates and facts together; even so, we were able momentarily to breathe again.

We slipped away to Summertrees still almost hypnotised by the unearthly sense of foreboding. August had come and we were back 'at home', and on Tuesday the 4th after a brilliant sunrise I was up and out by 5 a.m. to survey the world on my bicycle, intent on painting an impression before breakfast. In Tarporley I met the postman setting out on his first round, and he gave me the news we were holding our breath to hear:—'WAR has been DECLARED on GERMANY'. I took the message through the hamlets as I rode home. Both my brothers had enlisted before the end of that day, and by the end of the week forty relatives and all the lads that we had grown up with were gone. No wonder the world seemed to have come to pieces in the hand! The old dispensation was at an end and adjustments of uneasy kinds have gone on ever since—not to mention the second and far more devastating war to follow.

But in September 1914 life was to begin again for me. I had done a year in Manchester on what was expected to be a recognised diploma course in Fine Art, associated with the university. I believe that is still a hope of the future, but when my world moved to premises sharing a backyard with the Slade School all seemed set fair with no more bother at all. Only—a World War had not been in the plan, and half the Slade had gone off to serve and no new students were permitted. So St. John's Wood and the Academy Schools seemed to be indicated and a cycle ride through the back streets behind Euston and Marylebone Stations and halfway round Regents Park became the order of the day, and it appeared as if the world was really at one's feet at last. Antique, still life, costume, moving model, a Friday sketch club, with imaginative composition involving monthly visits from eminent painters living in the vicinity—it was a wonderful experience and should have nursed me into the Royal Academy Schools without much more ado. Only—there was a war on, and it also ceased to be clear (even if it ever was) at what stage and how one could ever earn one's keep. Moreover the dear old building in Elm Tree Road, (St. John's Wood) had been condemned for years and its condition was only condoned because (so they said) of the wonderful mural decorations contributed by former, and by then famous, men. The furniture, apart from stools and easels, was disintegrating at touch and the costume cupboard smelt! But no one lived there and we supposed a 'Bohemian' atmosphere seemed to be expected. It was only

when paint brushes and half-chewed costumes appeared in unexpected places overnight that investigations showed that the place was overrun with rats, and that half a disintegrating (rat) corpse was discovered under the floorboards. In my innocence I enquired earnestly for the other half, but in the ensuing twelve months it seemed that I myself had absorbed most of it. I believe one or two others were affected, but one aspect after another of blood-poisoning bedevilled me for the better part of the succeeding two years, coming to a final showdown on May 30th, 1916—a day for ever branded into my consciousness. As I tried to cycle home much too early for dinner, I found myself wandering almost aimlessly through North-West London, and the newspaper posters at every corner were proclaiming to the world—"LOSS of the HAMPSHIRE. KITCHENER GONE." I got home eventually about 2.30—no one expecting me by then and all gone out about their business, but the doctor from the corner of the square came in that evening and it appeared that though I was approaching twenty-one instead of fourteen years of age, I had contracted St. Vitus Dance! and then the fun really began! What our poor mother went through I cannot bear to think!

Because all this time there was a war on and almost from the start our enlarged premises had enabled us to take in Belgian refugees (and that in itself could furnish material for several books). Our first two, an elderly couple, he a schoolmaster, she a musician, from Brussels were dears and gave us no trouble. Mother kept the conversation going, and was always indignant with us because we seemed so dumb at the table. We knew plenty of French but it never seemed to be handy when wanted, but for the rest of our lives, though possibly our vocabularies were only slightly enlarged, we found that we had lost all shame and it appeared to others that we had a fluent command and—thanks to 'Mamselle' of the old days at Stand Lodge — a perfectly wonderful accent. Again — a staff room enquiry in later years — 'Could anyone translate 'Mitrailleuse?' Again my hand went up and I suggested 'Machine gun fire' to everyone's astonishment. We were by then just embarking on World War II and a generation had grown up who knew none of these things. How old one had begun to feel!

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDENT DAYS (AND OTHERS)

Life at the Library began a new phase indeed. All things were possible but, according to an earlier authority, not always expedient. The war 'chugged on', the boys came and went. One of my brothers was detailed behind the scenes to organise and harness civilian engineering into the production and distribution of armaments. To his lot fell the task of checking prototype material as received from Woolwich, and tactfully returning the bulk of the specimens as being at least half a century out of date. His views on the nationalising of industry received considerable attention in the days to come.

The other brother went through the whole thing, for the most part in the front line (Yorks. and Lancs. Light Infantry, known familiarly as the 'Cat and Cabbage' regiment). He was wounded at Ypres, losing a kneecap. This it would appear, should have left him incapacitated for life, but such was his magnificent condition, that after six months or so he was passed out as fit again, though not for front line service. So he was transferred to the Artillery, which meant the loss of all his seniority. He found himself 2nd Lieutenant once more, when such surviving relatives as there were had attained Captain or Majority rank;—trundling down through Italy on a troop train to take up life again at Salonika, arriving just in time to see the city going up in flames. His cousin, Siegfried Herford, by the way, acclaimed by those who knew as 'perhaps the greatest rock-climber of all time' had been killed out of hand as a Private at Festubert in January 1916, in his twenty-fifth year. Fifty years later the present writer was to find her dentist in Rhyll helping, as a keen rock-climber himself, to celebrate a jubilee of which none but Siegfried's closest relatives had the least idea, while there are those who would so willingly have given their lives for their country still lingering on into weary old age left wondering. All the more so in the case of my younger brother because at six years old or so he had been pronounced 'pigeon-breasted' and the family doctor has assured our mother that at any rate he 'would never be a soldier'.

By 1917 I was well enough again, but perhaps because of my condition, to take up life as a Land Girl. This was still a pioneering, amateur affair with no uniform or other terms of reference. People with great estates and short of help made their own arrangements and no one needed to wear breeches unwillingly. Needless to say I fitted myself out at once with the most ill-fitting and ungainly garments

ever hopefully devised, and when, after my first ten days down in Dorset, I was transferred (as having been discovered for some reason to have 'brains and intelligence') to the newly-instituted Bee Gardens, I was told at once that 'Bees could not abide Breeches' and I must revert to skirts. This I dutifully did but within two days a poor lost wandering bee got up inside somewhere and settled down until I was getting ready for bed and then set about me, after which I was allowed to present myself once more in my most unwomanly garb. We Land Girls, (eight of us I think) were lodged in cubicles in the lofts above a range of outbuildings, of which the quarters below me were certainly a stable and loose-box. I never knew a horse could, or would, lurch about and turn over in its sleep so continuously, but one got used to anything and before so very long too. One was there for six months and came provided accordingly. Suitcases were still to be invented and I had a small highly cherished 'Saratoga' trunk—who now knows what that could possibly have been? It was almost cubic in shape and the top was rounded for the accommodation, I suppose, of hats which occupied the tray inside. This I was able to use for a huge feather pillow that had come to our mother with the last bequest of household furniture and fittings (already noticed). This had been a blessed part of the ten pillows that had protected me from the bed-irons while the St. Vitus Dance held sway. It accompanied me for years and was to continue a useful existence as two splendid sofa cushions until the general sell-up some sixty years later—another story altogether.

But the first days 'on the land' until one's luggage arrived were devoted to hoeing nettles attired in neat, navy tailor-mades and a rather natty Panama hat with a pink rose in it. After my real 'togs' arrived life became more varied, letting out and taking the horse (before mentioned) to water and bringing in the three cows reserved for the house use, and after breakfast and for the rest of the day skinning rabbits. These were subsequently boiled in the washing copper, (or similar, perhaps devoted to cider) and then put through the turnip cutter to be served back to the fowls. (N.B. 'Ilkley Moor b'aht hat' was still a community song of the future.) During that six months we experienced the first-ever stretch of Summer Time—also the Lusitania was torpedoed and sunk. How much can the human species devise and bear? There was so much more still to come—so much also that was however very bearable indeed.

But with my return to London in the Autumn of 1917 all idea of taking up life as an Art student once more vanished. Our first Belgian refugees had gone home but others, younger and far less amenable arrived. A sprightly

damsel (Yvonne), whose rapacious younger brother, Auguste, was lodged nearby but came to us for meals, devoured between them every scrap of food for which no lock and key had been thought necessary. An unused oven in the back kitchen proved a fool-proof hideout for such rock buns as the by then scanty rations would rise to. This pair were removed to make room for an 'expectant mother' wife of a serving Belgian Army doctor. Our young minds were widened in every direction by this turn of events, but by this time I had been absorbed into the clerical running of the library and the Doctor Williams Trust, as all able-bodied females were being drafted off into one or other of the Government offices, or like my elder sister had gone away to teach, in her case deaf and partially deaf children, all among the bombs of the East Anglian coast near Yarmouth. That again would make another book.

1917 however cannot be allowed to slip away without more detailed reference to the season 'on the land'. Due to the exigencies of St. Vitus my hair had been cropped but this was by no means fashionable as yet. The 'Eton Crop' developed with the Women's Services, and even then only towards the end of the war, was considered 'advanced' and not easy to maintain when 'Ladies Hairdressers' were few and far between, so my abundant chestnut locks were made up into a switch and worn as a plaited crown around my head as soon the shorn remainder was long enough to pin out of the way. This might seem an unnecessary detail except for the fun of its disclosure early in my bee-keeping days when, inadvertently crossing the 'bee-path' one day I intercepted a speeding honey-flight without a veil and the bees got into my hair and I arrived at the honey-house dishevelled and with my precious switch in my hand, to the amazement and joy of those assembled there. From that day on it became usual to wear a hat and bee-veil as part of one's regular costume. The veils were black as being so much easier to see through; (try it—you will be surprised) but if when off duty one cycled about the neighbourhood so clad one was often taken for a bereft young widow and was not expected to be given to merriment. Occasions for this could be many and various, the day for instance when a bewildered bee caught in a fold of my overall sleeve and began to buzz violently. 'Don't let it sting you', called out my bee-keeper but I, thinking she had my welfare at heart, called back 'It's quite all right, it's only on my sleeve'. 'Don't knock it off whatever you do. It will kill the bee.' 'What should I do then?' called I, for the rest of the bees, recognising familiar sound and scent, had begun milling alarmingly around. 'Unscrew it gently,' came the astounding reply, 'to disengage the barbs so that the bee can get away undamaged. If torn away the bee is maimed dreadfully and

will likely die'. A week or so later I was able to study just such an isolated sting with its bag of formic acid still intact and functioning, pumping a rhythmic flow to the spirally placed barbs from which tiny beads of moisture could be observed issuing at regular intervals. It was an awe-inspiring sight if ever there was one and it dissipated for ever the idea (if ever there had been one) that Nature 'just happened'. The whole art and mystery of bee-keeping became enthralling but I never acquired the real touch; probably an odd six months is not long enough, one must grow up with them. But it is well worth while having learnt to 'take off one's hat to them', so to speak, or rather perhaps 'to take the veil'. Years later at the end of World War II one of my sisters embarked on a similar enterprise, putting all her retirement 'Tribute Money' into hives and equipment, but there was too much else on our minds by then and the bees just took off and went one fine summer afternoon. The only memorable thing about the enterprise was when the next door farmer's small son enquired earnestly one day, 'Do them wassies (bees — wasps?) live in they cotes?' One wonders now, thirty years later, if any peasants survive either.

Another aspect of the 'Landwork' period was revealed after a long day in the pouring rain, wondering what one did with sodden boots which would be required next morning as usual. It was only then that it was borne in upon me that 'the country' was not simply a place where one spent delightful Summer holidays for a limited period and to be deplored if not always possible to be taken 'in the best part of the year'.

Part of the fantastic charm of the Dorsetshire region in question was the local nomenclature of 'the Puddle Country' viz.—Brians Puddle, Affpuddle, Tolpuddle and Puddletown itself. I was still too ignorant to realise the significance of 'The Tolpuddle Martyrs', whose memory was celebrated one Sunday evening—it was all part of the general 'funniness' of things.

The idea of hobnobbing with Socialists was still unthinkable. The (Manchester) Guardian was the bulwark of our respectability, the Liberals still perched precariously on top of an already breaking wave. M. Phillips Price, above mentioned, having offered his services as an expert on Russian language and affairs generally to The Guardian as Foreign Correspondent was by the Summer of 1917 very suspect, and actually lost behind the seething scenes of international diplomacy, to emerge in the September of that year as one of the architects of the 'Brave New World'. Nearly ten years later, at what we took to be the first 'World Youth Peace Conference', (I was its Honorary Treasurer) in Holland 1926, I found myself in the company

of a German Press Correspondent who told me he had been one of the party who had found and rescued Philips Price, doing coolie work in the docks at Archangel with his shirt in tatters.

It was in that same year, 1926, during the General Strike that lasted for a week and brought Great Britain shuddering to its knees that the Radio as a common means of communication was born. 'Cat's whisker' sets were constructed (for the most part by amateurs and using bed-irons for aerials) and took the place of the daily newspapers for the dissemination of news and progress reports and calls to action by the Government. By the end of one hectic week everyone had learned to do everyone else's job; (e.g. Cambridge undergraduates were manning the trains) the arguments pro and con were going on at every picket point throughout the country — mines, factories, railway junctions, etc. and the whole thing fizzled out in a gigantic rain storm that flooded the London Underground system. Everyone scuttled home the best way they could and it was for all the world as if the Almighty's hosepipe had been turned on to break up a dog fight.

But the old world was over. 'Rank' and 'Privilege' were dirty words, for the most part unknown to or unheard of by the folk that had them, only to be recognised for their intrinsic value as museum pieces if and when they survived the general break-up of the Blitz in World War II. Like silverware, glass, china, hand-made furniture, they had become 'Period Pieces', identifiable by experts and sometimes commanding fantastic prices unless found to be beyond that of rubies and consigned to folk museums, and the stately homes of England came open to the public, if they were found worthy to qualify for support from public funds.

However, in 1917 we still knew little of these things except that work went on regardless of wind or weather and if the bees chose to swarm at 3 o'clock of an afternoon it was imperative that as many of us as were concerned should be on the spot again by 9 p.m. to see them safely back into their hives. In this connection too it may be recalled that our Bee Expert, Miss E. M. Penrose, was an adept at picking out the Queen Bee from a swarm cluster and getting her safely into a small cage, which was hung up in a cool spot, with her bees milling about until they could be collected 'en masse' in a straw skep and put down under a wet cloth for coolness until the late evening made re-hiving possible. This might be regarded as inconsequential routine business, inappropriate to a book of this nature, but for other circumstances taken by the present writer as for granted, like so much else before and after.

It so happened, and that may not have been chance

either, that the Architect and Surveyor for the 'Puddle Country' estate was Mr. McDonald Gill, whose brother Eric had only recently completed a magnificent series of bas-relief plaques of the Stations of the Cross for the then uncompleted Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral. The Sculptor had in fact been feted for this only a week or two before my arrival, or so it seems in retrospect. But Mr. McDonald Gill had built our honey-house and was deeply concerned with all that went on there and with those who used it. Among his other accomplishments were great decorative maps carried out in his own inimitable script and illustrated with topical incidents. He had just completed one of the London Underground System, guaranteed at the time to cause prospective passengers to lose innumerable trains, looking for interesting tit-bits among the street network. Such for instance was a recognisable portrait, complete with veil and smoke-lamp, of our Miss Penrose with her long, dainty fingers probing a swarm and enquiring 'Is this a hornet I see?' This one was for Hornsey Underground Station. For those with inner knowledge there was another poster Theatreland with a glimpse of two hares scampering off the Eastern margin under the slogan 'Two hares nearly caught in the Temple'—the significance being that the two brothers shared a studio at No. 2 Hare Court, Temple, E.C. This was practically the signature of their work. One hopes that somewhere those maps are still available for the intensive study and delight that they deserve.

By the winter of 1917 one was back in London trying to take up the threads of life again with half-grown hair and a general sense of bewilderment. Working from a home base seemed the only possible thing and work for the Dr. Williams Trust and Library very much on the spot. An ancient foundation dating from the heyday of the English Presbyterians the Trust had been established in 1693 to help in the education and support of recognised ministers and their widows. The twenty-fourth clause in the will of Dr. Daniel Williams concerned maintenance and proper use of a nucleus of theological works and a few 'plums' entrusted to it before the establishment of the British Museum, notably perhaps a good specimen First Folio Shakespeare. Specialist librarians were still largely unknown and the recognised diploma achieved only in the present century so, apart from a suggested £10 honorarium to a theological student and an injunction that the said library should be 'adequately maintained' there was no provision except for the running of the Trust as a whole. To take this over on the eve of the 'Great War', (World War I) was a challenge that my father accepted with eager anticipation though almost entirely blind as to what it was going to involve.

But after twenty-nine years in the backwoods of South Lancashire and on the crest of a successful wave in his Ministry rheumatism had set in in a big way. The new sphere of interest, in the heart of London, with a fascinating set of new problems to tackle, and a climb of ninety-two steps up to his office at the top of the old University Hall building, put new life into him, (and into his knees) and he was ready to face whatever was to come. But the finding of supporting staff was not the least of his problems and it was one of my own bright thoughts that the School of Librarianship then lately established in University College, just round the corner so to speak, should be approached for the supply of Student Assistance, in that part of the work at least. For the rest his own 'Short Account', published at the end of the war, gives the full story, but for myself to be working behind the scenes at first in the library and later in the office as private secretary it was a wonderful experience. And to have the run of all the relevant year books, including Crockford and Whitaker's Almanac and a host of others was simply glorious but far too demoralising for serious study! One was perhaps still trying to find one's balance after the years of illness and life generally was proving more and more expensive even in the 'provided accommodation' of University Hall. The billeting of the Belgians had shown the possibilities of the house and we became registered lodgings for University College, with full board at thirty-five shillings per week! We could take two students and the immediate prospect of survival seemed assured, but the sort of staff that could be paid for even when found made the going far more precarious and the feeding of the flock up and down those terrible stairs—the kitchen was in the semi-basement—beggars description. A homeless mother and daughter, 'Becca and Jessie', had come to us from Stand sometime in the war years, and were with us all through my illness but Becca's heart gave out and the child had to be trained for more specialised work on leaving school, so presently they departed to the Spirella factory at Welwyn Garden City and we had to think again. I divided my time between the library and housework. Making the beds and 'doing the washstands' in the days before fixture basins with H. and C. in every room made a busy start to every day. There may be some who remember the toil from room to room with a slop-pail getting heavier in one hand and a large can of clean water to fill up the ewers in the other, and three scarcely distinguishable cloths over the arm for wiping different grades of utensils, for it was never left to the occupier of the room to look after their own arrangements. Our mother and Becca presided in the lower regions and by 9 a.m. my father and I departed up into the library and in due course our mother betook herself with

Jack, the bull terrier, also from Lancashire, into Tottenham Court Road and 'the region round about' to do the necessary shopping. 'The grey lady with the brown dog' became an integral feature in the local landscape and deserve a little footnote to themselves.

It must have been the Summer holidays of 1912 because I was still at Cheltenham and Nelly and Norah were still part of the intimate picture of our lives. A great corporate holiday, (the last of its kind) had been planned to take us all and the twin nieces to Coniston Water, where we stayed in a large farmhouse just below Brantwood, whose little wooden jetty we shared. This is important because, for the first and only time, our mother's luggage (the little Saratoga trunk already mentioned) had somehow got lost in transit and never turned up until we returned home at the end of the month. Therefore when on the very first morning the dear dog jumped off the jetty and pulled her in with him, she was left bereft of every stitch of clothing that she had with her. Of course the female members of the party rallied round but to our mother it proved to be the moment of her life (or one of them). It appeared that she had always longed for a real tailor-made suit, and while waiting for the trunk to appear she located an old-established tailor in Coniston and set about it. Now he, good man, had served his apprenticeship with John Ruskin's, Tailor, and told us of his own personal experience of the difficulties involved in that august employ. It had transpired that Ruskin, perfectionist that he was, would on no account allow his suits to be pressed. The cut must be such that pressing was unnecessary. 'Stove-pipe' trousers sported no crease so the task was not so desperate, but the net result was that the little old craftsman who served my mother knew how to do a magnificent job. Good grey local woollen suiting was forthcoming and my mother had a jacket and two skirts that lasted almost the rest of her life, but were still pristine when the move to London took place in 1914, as recounted above. She and the brown dog, Jack, became a feature of the Bloomsbury landscape for the next eleven years.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AFTERMATH AND TURNING-POINT

NOW FOR ME the following eleven years could be regarded as the 'waste lands' but the conversion from pasture to arable land is a painful process when a stretch of unproductive fallow has to be accommodated. To the extent that one lived at home and the Library provided one's pocket-money and dress allowance, one was no longer a direct charge on one's parents and it remains a proud boast that after the age of twenty-one I never received any more direct support, but there never seemed to be time or opportunity to settle down to consider what one should really be doing or how it should be done. A compromise with one's original plans for an Art career was attempted—part-time in the Library and three days per week at Heatherley's. The Slade School would not consider anything but full-time attendance and was, in any case, still catching up and consolidating the upheavals of the War years. But Heatherley's, though entirely stimulating and justifiably unique in its claim to offer the Paris atelier method and system, really catered for the mature and established Artist-Craftsman and had no Diploma Course to offer to the beginners. And time was going on. After the summer 'on the land' there followed a year of increasing war-time austerity, voluntary rationing followed by an attempt at compulsory use of ration cards and meat virtually disappeared (from display at any rate).

Our Belgian Refugees gave place to Students and among the first of these was a Canadian Rhodes Scholar in his final stage of 'devilling' and being called to the English 'Bar'. He was also on the lookout for a satisfactory British wife to take back with him and for a time it seemed as if bothering one's head about survival, with or without a career had ceased to be important. But I was never very good at playing cards and my mother admitted that she had never been able to practise the matrimonial variety either, so a lifelong friendship ensued and another of his fellow students in the house ultimately agreed to join him in the New World. For the next ten years I endeavoured to apply myself to Secretary-Librarianship. I gave up Art but not before the winter of 1919-20, when Miss Ethel Chance, my Mother's childhood friend and our 'Aunty Etty' by adoption, took me with her for four enchanted months to Taormina, Sicily, to put me on my feet again, I suppose, bless her! And what a four months! First, a week's shopping, having found a friend willing to take my place in the Library, bless her too! Two things remain outstand-

ing. We celebrated the first ever two-minute Silence for the Anniversary of Armistice Day (November 11th, 1918), before the erection of the Cenotaph in Whitehall and entirely without ceremony. I shared a pavement in Piccadilly with a boy sweeping up dead leaves, we looked at each other and grinned rather sheepishly and then life went on again. The other thing was holding my breath while I spent all of 59/6 on a pair of good leather walking shoes; by today's prices (1977) £12 would not have covered them, even with microcellular soles. I suppose in men and money that war, to be followed twenty years later by Hitler's effort, will never really be paid for, but for very many people a new life has resulted and a former C3 population, in Great Britain at least, has been brought into the sunlight and changed out of all recognition.

And so Aunt Etty and I set off in a Railway omnibus to take all our luggage, bits and pieces, and we were waved away from the Library steps, only to discover in Torrington Square that our dear dog Jack was out and following devotedly. The little bus had to be halted while I collected him and crept ignominiously back to Gordon Square to have him let in and held while a second, less spectacular departure took place.

There were three of us in the party, with Mildenhall (Aunt Etty's personal maid) to keep us up to the mark, and after a rather grizzly crossing and two congested days in Paris we set off by wagon-lit in lordly state for Rome. A long pause at Modane in thick snow before plunging into the Mt. Cenis Tunnel and we emerged on the Italian side to run down from Turin to Rome in blazing sunshine. We could have done with sun-glasses instead of heavy winter tweeds and the first thing in Rome was to buy me some thin gloves. A gentleman with swirling black moustachios placed my arm upon an elegant stand and set to work to ease my thick and pudgy fingers into exquisite doeskin ones, too beautiful ever to get into again by myself, but I suppose I did. For three days we did our best to see the sights of Rome, plunging wildly back and forth across the centuries, trying to remember Emperors and Popes and Artists with Garibaldi and his 'thousand' pressing through, and for the most part rain pouring down—far worse than anything I ever felt or saw in England. The Pantheon in particular with its great twenty-foot circular 'eye', its only source of light, left open to the elements because in AD I, no one knew what else to do. We dodged round the downpour under umbrellas, looking for Raphael's tomb, but admiring alongside the neat little holes in the marble pavement, provided to carry off the water into the great subterranean channels below. We saw St. Peter's and the Colosseum and the Trajan

Forum and I am reminded now of how my parents, going there some five years later had been greeted by friends who had had a private audience with the Pope. The holy Father had enquired whether they had come for a long stay and was told 'a week'. 'Ah', said His Holiness, 'you may see a great deal! If it had been a month you could have seen more. If you had stayed for six months you would know you had seen nothing!'

I found the Trajan Column for myself, one evening when wandering about between tea and supper. I was too ignorant to look for the inscription which has been acclaimed as the prototype for all Roman lettering throughout the world, but the more than life-size band of bas-relief sculptured figures winding its way round from base to summit held me spellbound until I reached the top and found a figure of St. Peter with his Keys crowning all, and imagined it was not the Trajan Column after all. But the guide-book put my mind at rest and it only added a little more zest—if that were necessary—to the existing Alice in Wonderland nature of my life.

It was almost with relief that we passed by Naples in the train and, I think, in the night. The days were getting shorter and shorter but we arrived at Reggio in the pride of the morning and were intrigued to find that our precious wagon-lit railway coach was shunted into the ferry-boat with all our goods safely locked inside while we found our way up on deck to study the passage between Scylla and Charybdis at close quarters.

And here one is reminded again of the new world that was emerging from the vestigial remnants of the past. To my Mother and her generation the myths and legends of Ancient Greece were 'Myths and Legends' and in the classic translations of Dean Church and Charles Kingsley 'The Heroes' had been a standard favourite text-book for bedtime reading aloud. So it had been in her own faraway childhood and a story she delighted to recall was of her own reactions when, at six years old, a beloved older brother had been reading stories from the Odyssey aloud to her. She had enquired earnestly how one was to distinguish between the Gods as encountered with Perseus, Jason and the rest and the familiar figure of the Lord's Prayer, without whom no day nor night was complete. And Uncle Dick, then aged ten, had called out in glee, 'Mamma, Mamma, Baby's a sceptic'.

But in the last quarter of the 19th century Schliemann was still grubbing about looking for Troy at his own expense and it was not until 1900 that his great successor, Sir Arthur Evans, began on the excavations at Knossos in Crete that were to put the story of the Minotaur into historical perspective. The publication of his finds was

held up by the Great War (World War I), and it was still a matter of excitement and keen anticipation that Sir Arthur should be invited to deliver a 'Friday Evening Discourse' before the Royal Institution (Albemarle Street), in the early 20's, and of bitter disappointment at his eleventh hour inability to fulfil his engagement. But in 1919 I knew little of these things—Taormina was our objective and except for one or two journeys to Catania to see a dentist and a little trip around Mount Etna about the snow level, i.e. 3,000 feet from the summit, we saw no more of the island and confined ourselves to pottering (and for me painting), in Taormina itself. Looking back now it seems somewhat poor-spirited but it left one with a much greater sense of knowing life in other parts than most tourists get.

The great Roman Villa Armerina was still to be discovered, thanks to World War II, by which time aerial photography had come into being and had put scientific Archaeology on to the recognised map of ordinary people.

This is no time nor place to dwell in detail on all that those four months conveyed and left me with—Christmas—wandering through the old town all night, following the Bambino, borne in state from one strategic point to another, a piazza lit up by the dancing flames of a great bonfire, with small boys scampering around or jumping through the flames while some great hymn was sung, a pause of fifteen or twenty minutes at each and then on to the next, until the whole town had been served, ending sometime in the small hours at the Church of the White Sisters, where after a short businesslike ceremony the little figure was carefully lifted up and put back on its shelf to wait for next year. The crowds broke up and melted into cafés or nearby homes to rest awhile before reassembling at the Duomo at 5 a.m. for the first Mass of Christmas, but we drifted back to our hotel and went to bed.

Carnival came with dancing and high jinks in one or other of the hotels or cafes every night. I was having a wretched time with toothache most of that week but it was a gay time none the less. I only got locked out once but fortunately the friend I was with that night lived next door to our Hotel and took me in so that I was able to come in 'with the milk' next morning and appeared at breakfast as if nothing had happened. After that I was allowed to take the big front door key (hanging round my neck) and a good time was had by all. A kind man in the Town Band undertook to teach me to play a guitar. I knew we had one at home so I was delighted to have instruction. He turned out to be the chief Professor of Music in the place and it seems to have been a friendly

arrangement from the first. Whether Aunt Etty paid him I have no idea. I know I gave him a painting of Monte Venere and he seemed quite pleased with it. My brother made over his guitar to me when I got home but it was more than fifty years before I felt anything like at home on it. By then my Sicilian method, though simplicity itself, was quite unorthodox and I get little encouragement to perform for other than my own enjoyment.

Meanwhile a succession of visitors came and went and presently we understood that Dame Ethel Smyth was staying in the town with Miss Oenone Somerville—famous as joint authoress with Martin Ross for Irish country stories. ('Ross' had lately died and poor 'Somerville' was sadly bearing up). However, learning that we were in touch with a dentist in Catania, word came that they would be glad to know if he could be recommended. Thus it was that when a week or two later I had to go over again for extensive treatment, the interval in anaesthetizing and completion was enlivened by a vivid dumb-show enquiry from the dentist as to the possible meaning of the signature in his case book—'Ethel Smyth, Mus. Doc!'. I felt very set up and my companion, an Englishwoman wintering in Taormina was equally impressed. All this might seem unimportant now but twenty years later the wheel of fortune landed me in Cheltenham, evacuated with a Birmingham school at the beginning of Hitler's War. Helping one evening with the billeting of a late-comer among the evacuees I was excited to find that the address we were to contact was (possibly) that of the said companion in my earlier life. The door was opened by a complete stranger but I was determined to make sure, and after a few leading questions the prospective hostess said—'Oh yes, she's upstairs in bed with a broken leg. Do go up and see her'. And there she was indeed and I had the joy of reminding her of all the other remarkable occurrences of that odd two nights spent in Catania so long ago, while she ranged round in her mind to think who I could possibly be. She herself had been afflicted with indigestion but though her command of the Italian idiom was far greater than mine it was I who led her to a promising-looking 'Farmaceria' and indicating the need for Bismuth or Soda-bic. produced the necessary specific as if by magic. There was at the same time a municipal tram strike in process and our movements were consequently somewhat restricted, or perhaps it only seemed part of a Gilbert and Sullivan nightmare, but by the Cheltenham bedside in the gloaming of a late summer evening simmering on the brink of war the effect was dramatic. The child for whom the lodging was required seemed somewhat of an afterthought.

Twenty years later still the Kaleidoscope was shaken again when I was living quietly in retirement in North Wales. A colleague of Rotherham days wrote to enquire among other things as to my reaction to a Radio programme of the previous week in which an interview had taken place with a Yorkshire woman who had inherited a property in Taormina, making her home there for the last twenty years or so. I had not noticed it, but looking up the details in the not-yet-disposed-of Radio Times recognised the name of one who could only be related to the cousin of our Aunt Etty, whose house had been familiar 'stamping-ground' for us during our four-month stay. So once again a daring spirit and a long shot in the dark, and come the following February I was flying out to see what if anything remained after German occupation. Taormina had been Kesselring's H.Q. and the British bombers in due course had indeed noted the fact. And there it was—Mt. Etna in the sunset light exactly as I had painted it so long ago and it seemed possible that nothing else would have changed either. The white marble house, built on six levels of a steep hillside was just as ever and the little town stretching along a narrow shelf of the steep hillside seemed at first glance unchanged. But the Lantern Tower of the Duomo was gone and the Church of the White Sisters, where the Bambino lived, had been bombed out of existence, and the succession of ancient Baroque palazzi that had been let out as tenements with cocks and hens in the patios and strings of washing hanging between the windows—all that was gone. A town sewage system had been introduced within the previous six months and every house was under orders to join up at once. For those who may remember what conditions had been like there is no need to dwell further; for those who are too young—let them rest happy in their oblivion. Suffice it to say that the old Saracenic bridge of Palermo is no longer the accepted public convenience for the neighbourhood.

But where and how to take up life again! One knew oneself at last to be privileged, pampered and poverty-stricken, with life calling and pricking from every side at once. To inherit a tradition of pioneering and reform is by no means easy and at times seems simply fraught with failure and decline. The generation of our grandparents had lived through, and in many ways had helped to make, the transition from the stage-coach to the railway-train. Indeed one of our Mother's grandfathers had been responsible for all the legal work involved in establishing the Great Western Railway. From the North had come those who planned and serviced the North Western and Midland Railways and London had in a sense been taken by

storm. The region between Holborn, Hampstead and Highgate, quite inadequately served by three ancient Parishes was overrun almost overnight with close-packed streets of what had once seemed wonderful, brickbuilt terraces, with taps of running water at the end of almost every street. My Mother, recalling her childhood, remembered gathering wild violets along the banks of the Fleet brook (or ditch), in the meadows at the foot of Haverstock Hill, but, as hinted earlier in this record, the whole region had become one vast slum with innumerable voluntary agencies tinkering at one or another aspect of the amorphous disease. There were University and College Settlements, catering in the first place for Youth, Adult Education Centres, Nursery Schools, and among our own folk (Unitarians) Domestic Missions, of which three served the North and West and at least three more the South and East, as well as Sunday Schools run by independent congregations, such as Essex Church (Kensington), Hackney, Islington, Camden Town, Brixton and Blackfriars, all stemming from the Old Presbyterian roots and far older than anything other than the ancient Parish system, even the Salvation Army.

This is no place to discuss the setting-up of the London County Council with all its ramifications, but it was our Mother's own old 'stamping-ground', and after thirty years in South Lancashire and with no immediate 'parish' on her hands, she was back and all prepared to fling herself and those of us still at home into the fray. Charles Dickens, Octavia Hill and Mrs. Humphry Ward (in 'Robert Elsmere'), were all intimately connected with the Unitarian scene and have left ample record of things as they pertained up till the end of the 19th century. With the upheaval of World War I the old world died and we arrived in London in time to live through the birth-pangs of a new age and quite unable for many years to come to 'see the wood for the trees', so to speak.

So for me it was Sunday School, Boys' Club, Girl Guides, and a Women's Meeting of some kind at the Rhyt Street (Kentish Town) Domestic Mission, three nights a week and often Saturday afternoons as well, as I climbed back into full health—Singing, Dramatics, Guiding in all its phases, full of fascination, failure and frustration. It was no wonder that something had to go and Art seemed to be the most nebulous. For ten years it was laid aside, apart from keeping an eye on Exhibitions and 'hearsay'. Sickert (Walter or Richard according to circumstances), was just up the road, Augustus John and Wilson Steer just round the corner, the Poetry Bookshop with Harold Monro down the road the other way, with Sybil Thorndike and her brother, Russell, carrying all before them at the

Old Vic, not to mention Edith Evans, the Vanbrugh Sisters, Gerald du Maurier and Cyril Maude (with his then understudy, Jack Hulbert), within easy walking distance any free evening after tea. How could one ever find one's feet?

But the days of the 'earnest amateur' were over. One should have been able to read the signs of the times—and perhaps one did—when coming back from a Summer Outing with the Mission. Epping Forest was surprisingly easy to get to and we found on our return that the old Mission building had quite literally fallen down. 'Purpose Building' was in the 1840's almost unheard of and the original premises had been evolved from three terraced houses, with their backyards thrown into one and covered with a glass roof to make a hall. After the 'Outing' had got away, somehow a leaking gas pipe had got out of hand, and with no one to 'smell a rat' the whole place had filled up with gas and had exploded within minutes of our expected return. There is, I believe, only one 'Domestic Mission' left in the whole of England, and that is now only a courtesy title. I doubt if there is a soul left who would know the name or be able to define its function. Dr. Tuckerman and the Rev. John Johns came over from New England in the early 1820's, probably in the cause of destroying the slave trade, settled in Liverpool and set a new fire alight, preaching what seemed a far more necessary and gracious gospel for 'the old folks at home' before turning attention to the more distant 'Heathen in his darkness' elsewhere.

And for my generation, such as were still alive, it was the vision of building a new world that was opening up. The German Wandervögel was afoot—all traditional ties overthrown or abandoned with its (among other things) Jugendherbergen (or to the ribald British—Jungle-bungles), the idea of Youth Hostels was emerging. For my own group it was embodied in the 'Fellowship of Youth' or FOY, still existing in 1977 as the 'FOY Society', but very soon we were holding out hands to the Young Friends, The Citizens of Tomorrow (Theosophists) and a host of others, or simply to unattached individuals. All were to be run by Youth for Youth so existing foundations like the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., Boy Scouts, and Girl Guides could only come in by stealth, so to speak. We were to link up across the world and all the rest would follow. And so it did, but not quite as had been envisaged; and that is another story.

By 1926 we were up to the neck in the (to us) first World Youth Peace Congress and I, for my sins, was its Hon. Treasurer, but apart from writing round to a host of possible sympathisers and amassing thereby the vast sum of £50, the Dutch were the great standby and did

by far the most concrete service, including the day to day business of 'keeping the books', for which I had no sort of either training or inclination. But we engaged the great Star Camp (Theosophist) at Ommen and assembled four to five hundred or so from forty-one different countries in one quarter of that vast canvas town. We made a valiant effort to learn Esperanto and when other folk had finished impassioned orations, all after all having to be interpreted in three languages at least, the flippant British delegation had only Country Dancing to offer! It seemed as good as anything else. One typical incident may serve to illustrate the general climate and perhaps suggest the extent, or naivety of the 'Innocents Abroad'. A plenary session in the great central marquee appeared to be going to break up in total disorder if not actual bloodshed, but the final speech, when duly interpreted, was simply a suggestion that the ventilation flaps should be opened more widely! Blessed laughter saved the situation, but at least we came home understanding far better than before the difficulties involved and with far more respect for the efforts of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations Organisation. In that connection it had been interesting to discover that the Swiss delegation appeared to have no knowledge whatever of the League of Nations, or that it had its Headquarters at Geneva, and the Poles were the only non-English-speaking group to attend the League meeting that it had been agreed to hold.

CHAPTER NINE

BIRMINGHAM, YORKSHIRE, BIRMINGHAM AGAIN

IN 1925 my father retired and the 'hub of the universe' shifted, from Bloomsbury back to Summertrees, another shake of the kaleidoscope and new patterns emerged for all of us. Reorganisation in all directions. I began to feel that my position with the Dr. Williams' Trust had become one of sufferance only and without the home-base, entirely untenable. I would see the successor into the saddle and then take what appropriate steps were available.

I moved across into a tiny bed-sittingroom in a region just off Maida Vale by the junction of the Regent Canal and the Grand Trunk Canal. There was an island crowned with an Italianate Villa and a white concrete balustrade which reminded me of a bit of Rome and it was with considerable delight that I later discovered that Ruskin had identified the region as 'Little Venice'. It meant too that at last my mind was clearing. If I was to live on my savings (?) for a bit at any rate, that should go to Art rather than to 'bottle-washing' for its own sake. Then I chanced upon an advertisement of the Press Art School. It ran 'Copy this and win a scholarship'. I did, and did. Then a lovely great parcel arrived, containing a drawing-board, T-square, paper and other seductive materials and I set to work at once. Incidentally that little board and T-square have been my constant companions ever since. Then before I had been working on my own for more than a week two things happened. First, the Women's Club, that had occupied premises next door to Dr. Williams' for some years and had become my base while I was still working there just quietly shut down; I suppose they had been working out the last years of a lease. I don't know, but doors seemed to be closing behind me. Secondly, in the same week came a proposition 'out of the blue' that I should pick up and go to live with one of my mother's elderly cousins in Birmingham, taking my Postal Art Course with me. Another door had opened, and I went. It proved to be a grizzly business, but with everlasting good will on all sides, and it became a saga that would easily fill another book. In due course, after some five years, I sailed away with enough diploma to take up a teaching post in the Girls Municipal High School at Rotherham, Yorks. Within six months the old cousin had died and the house where we had lived in style with four (!) maids and a chauffeur-gardener came to an end and another door closed behind me.

It was just about this time that G. B. Shaw, in his

'Intelligent Woman's Guide', when asked to suggest a good working model (if any) of Communism, had pointed without hesitation to the City of Birmingham. This could always be relied upon to set any gathering of the City Fathers by the ears, but none the less, on looking back, it seemed to explain much of the difficulties I encountered in trying to achieve a recognised Diploma. There was I, a poor relation if ever there was one, but for reasons that need not bother us now, I was working from one of the 'best' addresses in the Midlands and I proposed to pay my fees with my own cheque book. The country was going through a period of 'slump' and industrial depression of unprecedented proportions and by the end of my fourth year (1931), it began to be apparent that Final examinations were beyond my scope. However a point was reached when I was within five marks of success and I was able to begin applying for posts, 'pending final results'. I was ten years older than the rest of the qualified group, a mature student with wide experience etc. but also very cheap in terms of 'years of service'. So it came about that out of a field of nineteen, I was the only one of my year to pull off a job, but it has to be admitted that Providence was working very hard behind the scenes. Circumstances for which I could have had no foreknowledge provided unsolicited references, even to a friend of the old FOY days and with whom I had asked to stay for the interview. She turned out to be an old Girton colleague of the Head Mistress of the school for which I was applying, as well as being on the Education Committee. She was almost as embarrassed as myself and would say nothing at the interview, but it certainly did my cause no harm. The Chairman of the School Governors too, with a most unusual name, a name that I did not learn till afterwards, turned out to be, in his professional capacity, a business colleague, at a very high level, of my older brother, and between them there was great mutual esteem. If he had chosen to say, 'Let us have nothing to do with that shark', my chances would have been small indeed. As it was it was only after I came in to the Council Chamber (or wherever), that he looked at the Short List to see my name, because my appearance had been so exactly like that of the brother 'sailing into a Board Meeting and as it were taking command of the situation'. None of this I knew until after the appointment was made, but there were undoubtedly those who chose to regard me as a bit of a dark horse. When I got home it was to receive the news that I had failed once more and was still five marks away from success; but I was allowed to keep the job—on probation—and I never had to apply seriously for any of my later appointments, so I must have given satisfaction one way

or another. Something of the same sort happened later on when I was offered a post in one of the 'top-notch' City schools in Birmingham. I consulted a Refugee lawyer with whom I had made great friends during and after World War II, and his verdict had been 'Well, you might have got your first job through influence but if you had been no good you would never have got another'. I was greatly cheered.

But Rotherham was the new adventure and what I did not know about holding down a job had full scope. My debt to those five years is enormous. My late entry into the profession too had much to commend it. In the thirties it was still considered far more important to teach children to draw than to help them to find expression. In Birmingham Miss Marion Richardson was still 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness' but if I had come to things ten years earlier I might have been still quite unaware of that voice and like most of my generation highly sceptical. But Miss Richardson was forward looking and lecturers came to improve our approaches to teaching in all its aspects and I still felt it my duty to leave no avenue unexplored. But at 18 (old) pence a head allowed for financing Art and Craft the prospects were dreary in the extreme. A tiny bit of paper and an HB pencil were all that could be envisaged until brave souls like one Clare Barry discovered the possibilities of raw colours mixed in paste and applied to any available paper of sufficient size, and the biggest brushes that could be begged, borrowed or—well, perhaps not—but you see the point.

When finding herself reduced to sheets of brown packing paper, her class without a moment's hesitation had suggested designing rugs. But a day came when a more than sceptical Head Teacher stalked into her classroom bearing an egg-cup. 'Do you suppose they could draw that?' Miss Barry and her class eyed each other and it was agreed that they should try. What size was attempted I have no idea, but when the time came for inspection it was discovered that one wretched child had added an egg. At once 'authority' pounced. 'That child is deceitful. He (she) is trying to evade the ellipse'. Believe it or not it was only on other grounds of efficiency that that poor teacher was not removed from her job.

It is perhaps fifty years ago now but there may be some among the present generation who might wonder why the lovely, soft, blue, buff, and grey, unsized sheets now supplied by the ream for children's painting should be called 'Sugar paper' when we know that sugar always comes in good, smooth, white packets, so much easier for the printing of super-market slogans. It is because fifty years ago sugar was scooped up and served in such

coloured bags, and grocers could be prevailed upon, if spoken to nicely, to hand out a few new bags gratis, or even the used bags could be flattened out for re-use and the texture was found to be ideal. An artist was once criticised for scattering sugar on an ice. 'It improves the texture', was the reply, and indeed it may have been so, but the creases of the opened-out bags were tedious to flatten and the lovely pristine sheets were very soon available by the ream, and so much cheaper than the inevitable white cartridge paper heretofore approved, that it won the day. One wonders now who first thought of undoing cartridges for aesthetic purposes!

Yorkshire in retrospect vanished in a flash—five years supposedly a 'dead man', no diploma, one or two 'guarded' testimonials, a feeling that one must make the most of this appointment because one would never be in a position to apply for another. The colleague with whom I was to share a landlady proved for various reasons to be in exactly the same condition. We took to each other and determined to look no further than the ends of our noses; (but to see to it that they neither shone nor dripped!).

I can't even remember now how I got to Rotherham but I fancy it must have been in the 'home' car and perhaps my bicycle arrived by train, but that first Autumn Term passed in a mist of new encounters. Time-table 'strips' for instance. The Staff Timetable was all set out on a sheet of squared paper with the Class Periods marked perpendicularly down, while across the top the Staff names were set out alphabetically and vertically. This sheet was then neatly cut up into appropriate strips and each one handed to the name in question, to be treasured meticulously in whatever appeared to be a foolproof, indestructible receptacle, for guidance through the ensuing weeks until sufficiently memorised. This procedure is recorded in perhaps unnecessary detail because it so turned out that it was to follow (or lead) me for the rest of my professional career. During my training years I had made great friends with another like myself older, perhaps also for the war years, than the regular group. How we had met I cannot now recall, but probably in some 'sandwich course'. She was working on the Staff of a school outside Birmingham, together with the one who was soon to be elevated to the Rotherham School, while she herself moved back to her own old Birmingham school, where her sister held a part-time appointment. Most of this meant little or nothing to me until, at the end of my five years, trying in vain to make good my diploma deficiency with four nights a week night-school in Sheffield, the said friend made it known that she was all set to get married at the end of the school year. As it was a part-time appointment she had been told

to look around for a suitable successor and she had be-thought herself of me. Under the existing Education Scheme (1926) I was already too old to qualify for a Retirement Pension so a part-time job at nearly twice my then salary was by no means to be despised and I made tracks to depart. My colleague in our 'Rooms' was simultaneously advertised for, almost by name, by a Head Mistress who knew the excellence of her work in another field not covered by her academic record. She went off for her interview leaving me to break the news to our landlady, who had warned us some little time before that if one or other of us left she would make no attempt to find a successor. I went back to my tea, turning over in my mind the best way of breaking the news when, to my surprise, she met me on the doorstep with 'Bad news'. My heart sank; whatever had happened? But lo! her son-in-law had just been round to say that the long-awaited flat in an Old Persons' Block had just been allocated to her and she would have to give us notice for the end of that term. So there we were, all three of us happily called away—and another door had closed.

At the big Birmingham school I found the origin of the Timetable Slips and when, eight years later I was invited off again it was to another school with a Head Mistress trained under the same auspices so I was spared once more from the (perhaps minor), irritation of adjusting to different circumstances. But still Rotherham had much to commend it. My mother also felt that the cross-country journey from the heart of Cheshire where we were by then living, ten miles from a suitable railway station, was not going to help, so when my younger sister, by now a qualified doctor of some years standing, had become sufficiently established in North Wales to justify a larger, better car, my Mother bought the little, third-hand, baby-Austin (Jane) for ten pounds and gave it to me! Fresh fields and pastures new, and no mistake! It had all the makings of a very good little car but it needed loving care and patience. It had a self-starter but I only remember that working once—I think on that first memorable crossing of the Pennines, high up on a lonely stretch of the moors above Sheffield. After that it laid down its burden, so to speak, and we had to rely on an engine always in gear. One stalled to stop and used a carefully adjusted push or drop to start, but when the handbrake failed it seemed time to think again and at the end of its first (January to Easter) term a replacement was sought and Jane (Austin) plus the princely sum of £50 was exchanged for a dashing black saloon with scarlet trim which became the apple of the eye. The question of suitable stabling on the Council estate where one lodged presented some

problems but a firm of undertakers, some half mile distant, found room for her in their large garage. As it was mostly at weekends that she was required there was a tendency to find her jostled into quite inextricable corners or behind roof-supporting stanchions and one of the boys, Arthur or George, had to be tracked down to help to dig her out when required. Moreover the little saloon, tucked in beside enormous hearses or lordly limousines, was a most convenient height and level to deposit top-hats and such other loose impedimenta as the 'crown and anchor' type of decorations used to identify the leading member of a cortege, and whenever I turned up these things required careful re-disposal in other likely spots and I was greeted by the boys with many sorts of kindly jests. Even so it took them quite six months to discover what my job or profession could be. And that seemed remarkable on both sides. The greatest difficulty was when, perhaps shopping in the town on one's free afternoon one encountered the cavalcade in full 'battledress' or as my Father would have said, 'in all their War-paint', and delighted recognition and salutes were exchanged with twinkling dignity and full decorum. It was always a happy meeting! That car lasted two years or so, and then we changed to black and green, a much neater and altogether more 'distingué' turnout. It was remarked by someone that I appeared to buy my cars to match my umbrellas! That car lasted well however and saw me safely removed back to Birmingham, though with some kind of internal crack in her frame timbers, and when it appeared that by this time I was earning £24 per month (!) I scraped the barrel of my savings and with the sky-scraping sum of £90 acquired an elegant dove-grey model that was to carry me for the next twelve years, always excepting the latter half of the war period, when she had to be laid up.

But Rotherham itself could not be left so light-heartedly without some reference to its particular charms. Until Destiny took me there I was hardly aware of its existence, yet there it was on the edge of the Dukeries and the heart of the Ivanhoe country. Conisburgh Castle is in itself a magnificent example of Norman/Transitional fortification with the lovely Thirteenth Century Roche Abbey, where Ivanhoe himself is buried, hard by. In the days when 'School Certificate Art' required Knowledge and Appreciation of Painting or Architecture this was the perfect gift. Knowing these things I had been 'guided' in my Diploma work to make Architecture my special field. Incidentally I was the only one of my group to choose it for my thesis, and never was such selection more rewarded! The terms of my application had specified that Architecture would be

a special advantage so there were valid reasons for my appointment, but I had gone to Rotherham quite unaware of the possibilities of the region.

The town itself might have been written off as the natural outcrop of industrial development, notably coal and iron with the natural concomitants of dirt and overcrowding, but what a revelation it was and how invaluable the training that had led me to be able to read the history of a place almost at a glance. The name alone had suggested a Saxon foundation. You remember the small boy who, when asked how one could tell such things, had responded with heartfelt simplicity, 'Saxon places always end with ham or tongue'. But the layout of the town suggested a Roman origin and, sure enough, up in the Museum and its grounds were Roman columns and other relics; but the centre of the town was dominated by a magnificent Fourteenth Century Church, itself on a Norman plan. Indeed on closer inspection one found the elegant 'Perpendicular' columns were resting on the firm foundation of inverted Norman capitals. This is no place for an intimate 'Pevsner'-like inventory of characteristic features, but one or two deserve special mention, the carved finials of the choir stalls, comprising a complete series of figures, illustrating the Annunciation and Nativity stories, while on a hidden bench end to the Manorial pew could be discerned, almost by touch alone, the charming little rendering of a Talbot dog, the badge of the Earls of Shrewsbury who, as Howards of Effingham, held the Manorial rights after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The Town Guilds each had furnished chapels in the Transepts and corbels representing the staple industries—Weaving, Armourers, and others, supported the dripstones to the window arches all round the exterior. One could spend hours there especially if one was there to draw. Again, outside but close by, the bridge over the River Don was protected by a lovely mediaeval Chapel—one of only four surviving in the country and now, after manifold vicissitudes, restored to its original purpose and beautifully maintained for all to see and use.

But the town itself was essentially forward-looking and my Chairman (my brother's friend), and his charming wife had its interests very much at heart; not least in their entertainment of the notable celebrity speakers invited at monthly intervals by the Rotary (or Round Table?) Club throughout the year. Now it so happened that at the very beginning of my first (Autumn) term there had been an occasion back in Birmingham for which I had more than half expected to be invited to attend. Thus when tickets for the Friday evening lecture in Rotherham were on sale in the Staff Room I had excused myself

as probably being away for the weekend. However no invitation had come so on the Friday morning when a note was brought up to me inviting me to dinner that evening to meet the Guest Speaker and others I accepted gladly. Friday was my free afternoon in any case so I saw no more of my colleagues except the one with whom I lodged, and there were none to observe the lordly Rolls Royce saloon threading its way through the winding road-lets of our housing estate, coming to collect me at 6 o'clock. Only when I was being introduced to Mr. Frank Smythe of Everest fame did I realise to my horror that this was of course what the tickets in the Staff Room had been all about! I suppose it was because I was a sort of 'odd man out' that I made a convenient complement to the dinner table but later, and apparently for their own convenience I was sent on alone with the Guest Speaker in the Rolls and delivered to the private entrance to the Mayor's Parlour. On the way conversation turning naturally to Rock Climbing and Mountaineering generally, I heard then the 'legend', current as I gathered in climbing circles, of my cousin, Siegfried Herford, who had appeared it seemed stumbling up through the mists on Scafell to share the sandwiches of a fellow-climber on the very day when he was known to have been killed in action at Festubert thirty years before. Twenty years later I was to hear it again from my dentist in Rhyl, but in Rotherham in 1933 it had been complete news to me and I imagine to most of his own folk. However that may be, we arrived at the Town Hall and after coffee in the august presence were ushered into the front seats (padded and with arms), and as I took my place, out of the tail of my eye I became aware of a row of colleagues filling the front of the gallery. On the Monday morning, going down for coffee in the Staff Room, silence was broken by a little voice—'A bit of a dark horse, aren't you?' I don't think I ever lived it down completely.

Among other memorable Lecturers I was privileged to meet was Mrs. Rosita Forbes, whose introduction fell to the lot of a worthy soul with a powerful lisp. Imagine the hushed awe of the audience at the announcement that 'Mitheth Rothita Forbth had blathed a trail through the newth of the world'. Her welcome was then greeted with uproarious acclaim and she rose to the occasion magnificently.

Another remembered for personal charm was a noted photographer of wild life, Colonel Dugmore. He it was who had been responsible for the Gaumont British Lion that used to herald the early 'movies', and perhaps still does. Sitting beside me at the table he glanced at our place cards and murmured 'Oliver Herford?'. 'A first cousin

of my father's', I admitted, and at one time Art Editor of New York 'Life'. 'Ah, what a one', went on the colonel; 'He and I used to sit together in the Billiard Room of the New York Press Club and he would keep me convulsed with the most outrageous stories. As he told them they were pure, hilarious joy, but never able to be repeated by such as myself, or others.'

The said Oliver, another 'son of the Manse', came near the end of a long line of sons and daughters of the Rev. Dr. Brooke Herford, who was for several years minister of the King's Chapel in Boston, Mass. Thus the younger end of the family remained American-based, notably Oliver and Beatrice. She made a reputation for herself as a Monologue Actress and she largely helped to launch Ruth Draper in that profession. Nothing however was safe from herself and Oliver but one of their less widely known exploits was an occasion when they shut themselves into the large, parental drawing-room and together proceeded to produce the noises of a public meeting! all this when the rest of the family, eight all told, plus parents and perhaps friends were trying to assemble for tea. Helen Brooke Herford as the eldest of the family took perhaps the most active interest in her father's work and for many years served as his 'curate' and laboured indefatigably for the Unitarian cause. She was responsible for introducing many ideas from the American scene, including the Unitarian Women's League, where the name 'Unitarian' commands far wider respect than has ever been possible on this side of the Atlantic. One of her less known claims to fame but one of far wider acceptance was the (now) ubiquitous shopping-trolley. Settling in Hampstead in the early years of this century she was much concerned for the difficulties that the 'housekeeping sister' Lucy, who was very lame, encountered in hauling the daily grocery supplies up and down the hilly High and Heath Streets. Accordingly she salvaged a pair of wheels from a child's toy truck and lashed them to a walking-stick and then approached the 'Blind Shop' near by to design and make a suitable basket to rest on top. When we arrived in London in 1914 this was still a private enterprise but the cynosure of all eyes, and though she never claimed to have originated the idea, it had arisen out of one of her beloved American experiences. At that time too she was mourning for the lack of what she called 'bias Tape', which was still unknown in Great Britain. After the wind-up of World War I Messrs. Woolworths had appeared—the first I remember was in Edgware Road and behold! 'Bias Binding' on neat cards and in fascinating colours had arrived. I believe Cousin Helen had spoken her mind in some High Place or other and another new dimension had

been opened up. Again, the works of the Almighty are found to be obscure, unpredictable and far-reaching and the debt we owe to the hard-pressed mothers and daughters of enormous families of penniless parsons is probably incalculable.

A little story pertaining to Mrs. Brooke Herford is, one feels, worthy of preservation. In the days before anything like 'Women's Lib' had been heard of and Women Parsons were an undreamed of horror (!), it was most unusual for a woman to be other than 'seen but not heard'. So when at some kind of earnest Working Party or Sewing Meeting someone asked if Mrs. Herford would perhaps lead them in prayer she, the most shy and retiring person in the world, had felt that she must not let the side down and would do what she could. With dry-mouthed terror and a tongue cleaving to the roof of her mouth after what threatened to be a shocking, rather a discreet, pause she falteringly stumbled into the Lord's Prayer and closed the meeting. Later on, perhaps over the well-earned cup of tea, one of the good souls remarked, 'Well, Mrs. Herford, we did think you could have done better for us than that!' Truly, Ministers' Wives have to cultivate skins that vary in thickness from butterflies to the larger pachyderms, but they play a wonderful part in the fabric of creation none the less.

CHAPTER TEN

'NORTH WALES'

BUT IN THE winter of 1937/8 North Wales was nowhere on the horizon even on a clear day. My proposed move from Yorkshire was still clouding the atmosphere, the world was humming again with wars and rumours of wars (we were busy with Peace Pledge propaganda and learning First Aid), and my Mother aged seventy-six was threatened with cataract, so, when looking over a shoulder trying to help solve a Crossword Puzzle in a Staff Room coffee break, I read a notice of a proposed Literary Pilgrimage to lay a wreath on the tomb of Dante in Ravenna, at the princely cost of £20 (possibly £25) and in the good fortnight after Christmas before the January term started, my mind was made up. Ravenna had fired my imagination for years.

The trip was to be based on Florence. If Europe was about to go up in smoke and if my mother's eyesight was about to fail utterly there was no time to be lost. The proposed pilgrimage was the brain-child of the English Poetry Society, supported by the Dante and the Browning Societies and I think by the Classical Association too, but as the party was not sufficiently big to qualify for special terms like-minded folk were invited to help fill up the gaps. With my mother's great-grandfather, William Roscoe, author of the definitive biography of Lorenzo de Medici, as a trump card we felt justified in applying and were found entirely acceptable, but admittedly it was just a trifle 'blush-making' to find ourselves on arrival in Florence labelled for registration purposes as 'I poeti Inglesi', but no one seemed to notice. At least that is not quite true because in Florence we were the honoured guests one evening of the British Institute, but there again we need not have worried. It turned out that the Italian Director of Studies had at one time held a Lectureship in Manchester University and when his wife, to whom we had been duly presented, discovered that we had association with 'Dear Manchester' her heart flew open and my mother and I spent the rest of the evening on a comfortable settee at the back of the reception 'Salone' discussing the joys and the friendly folk of South Manchester and the region round about. Our 'Patriarch' was quite unnecessary!

Two other incidents pinpoint the passage of time and the advance of knowledge perhaps. In Florence under the influence of Mussolini great care and attention were being given to cleaning and preserving the national heritage

of works of art. Among these were the murals attributed to Cimabue in the Church of Santa maria Novella and one, till then regarded as a self-portrait of the artist, had but recently emerged from the grime of ages. The figure was found to be wearing a cloak bespangled with rosebuds and to have a prominent left leg wearing a British 'garter'. It could only be the De Spencer (Hugh or Edward) one of the original members of the Order of the Garter, then recently founded, representing England at the court of Florence. 'Old hat' now perhaps but definitely 'hot news' then and we were impressed. The Pilgrimage Tour ended for most of the party with a two-day glimpse of Rome but my mother and I felt we had seen what could be seen in two days and opted to break out for a moment in Assisi instead. Here again a book could be written of the incidental happenings of that venture but it brought unsuspected comfort. In the little church of Sta Chiara, looking at the fragile remnants of St. Francis' tattered habit and the original manuscript of the 'Little Flowers' it became apparent to the good Father conducting the little group of devotees to which I had attached myself that I was interested in more than the relics for their own sake, and when he had blessed and despatched the others he asked if I would care to see some frescoes only very lately discovered. 'These', he said, 'were covered with whitewash during the Middle Ages in the interests of hygiene and have only now come to light and were thereby wonderfully preserved'. My heart gave a leap.

Of course! With the Black Death raging through Europe the Edict must have gone forth for every place where people congregated, to be lime-washed, regardless of what lay beneath. These then were the despicable 'Puritans' who defaced the churches and had no respect for beauty or even sentiment. I felt a whole load of guilt lifted instantly and for ever.

And the fear of hasty judgment brings back another from a might-have-been-forgotten torment of the past. Timothy Smith Osler, my grandfather, during the three years virtual homelessness between his marriages spent more and more time as a barrister reading in his Chambers in Lincoln's Inn. Before the days of 'Safe Custody' at a bank, or perhaps for other reasons, he was entrusted by a friend, about to depart on business to the Far East, with a valuable gold repeater watch and this my grandfather carried with him always. One night found him working late in Chambers and looking at the watch propped up before him he realised that his last bus had long ago departed. He packed up everything with speed and set out to walk the four or five miles back to Hampstead. He got home safely enough only to realise that he had left

the precious watch behind. Next morning everything was exactly as he had left it, but of the watch—no sign. His devoted 'Mrs. Mop' was quite sure it was not there. He thought of all the case-boxes that lined his walls and at once took down the ones he knew he had been working with, but without success. Knowing that things could be overlooked he determined to wait a week before taking whatever steps would be required. On the fifth day he was greeted on arrival by a jubilant Mrs. Mop plus husband and the watch. 'Where did you find it?' was his immediate query. Mrs. Mop, whom he could never have brought himself to doubt, recounted how when she got home the first day and told her husband what had happened, he had said, 'Put on your bonnet, love, we're going back and we search those case-boxes till the watch is found, or else nothing can keep you out of gaol'. And back they had been together to work through the successive nights. On the fourth night it had come to light and she showed my grandfather the box in question. It was one that he had quite forgotten, but he marked it then and there for future reference. In due course it proved to be *fifteen* years before he next had occasion to open it—long enough for poor Mrs. Mop to have 'done time' twice over, and then some!

A modern meditative poem has a haunting verse—

'All we have done on earth has left its trace,
All that we say sounds on for spirit ears,
Help Thou our judging. (A. Bittleston)

Back in Rotherham for a bitterly cold Spring Term and by February I found myself in the throes of bronchial catarrh (pneumonia is easier to spell). During the three or four weeks' enforced absence I received the first hint that the Birmingham School (King Edward VI High School for Girls) was in the least interested in my application but the interview would have to wait until after Easter, if it was still admissible at all.

The Birmingham School proved to be in the throes of moving out of its original premises beside the New Street Railway Station and was occupying temporary hutment buildings which, in their turn, had just recovered from being burnt down. It was still a matter of very recent report how the alarm had only gone off at 5 a.m. and beyond warning the Principal no other widespread contact had been possible. At 9 a.m. the school had arrived by bus and tram to find nothing but the gleaming white remains of rows of washroom equipment standing up starkly in a sea of smouldering cinders. That had been at some date in the previous Autumn Term, coinciding with absence through illness of the four members of the French Staff, so the reorganization and *ad hoc* arrangements for

carrying on 'work as usual' had been more than enough to occupy minds that might otherwise have been concerned with appointing a part-time Art Mistress. The Head had such affairs in her own hands and evidently felt that an interview would be strictly 'pro forma', but when it did occur nothing could have been less formidable. The credentials seemed entirely adequate and a pleasant half-hour was spent discussing the glories and the niceties of the vaulting in Durham Cathedral, which incidentally I had never seen but fortunately knew something about by study and repute. It was that kind of insight and appraisal that had brought together the truly remarkable variety of gifted and inspiring women which had made that school a veritable hot-bed for Headmistresses to be found all over the country.

And so one came back to the old haunts, but on a vastly different level and with the glory of two days a week to do one's own work. At least that was the idea and to a certain extent it was true. I enrolled back in the College of Art, in the hope that I might still be able to fill out the little gap in my Diploma work. But the Inspector in Yorkshire had said 'not to bother, for I was doing quite sufficiently well with what I had got'. So I let it go and enjoyed a little breathing-space, still feeling the aftermath of the illness in the Spring and also well into a course of endemic carbuncles which the Yorkshire doctor, rather at his wits' end, attributed to the polluted atmosphere of adjacent steel works and had been glad to see me go.

Back in Birmingham all sorts of arms re-opened to welcome me and not least in the Church where I had run the Girls' section of the Sunday School for some time. There were certain of the City Fathers there too and their dear wives. When I appeared on two consecutive Sundays back in the old pew they realised that I was no longer just a weekend visitor and they seemed delighted to hear that I had a job and they wished me well. I knew that one of them was Chairman of the Education Committee but that did not seem to concern me—we knew each other on quite different grounds. It was more than a shock to realise, at the Founder's Day ceremonies at my school very early in the term, that he was Chairman of the Governors and that one of the others whom I knew even better was the Treasurer. We all assembled in the Great Hall of the University and there were my 'Sunday pew-pals' sitting in state on the platform and presently one of the wives found me for a friendly chat. Again came Monday morning and a little voice at my elbow in the Staff Room—'A bit of a dark horse, aren't you? I thought you said you knew no one in the school. Your job wasn't advertised, was it?' In the year that followed we were evacuated 'en bloc' to

Cheltenham and she and I were put into the same billets and came to know each other very well. But again Destiny took a hand and landed us for various reasons in the one billet furthest from the School and I found myself, entirely by chance with folk from C.L.C. (Cheltenham Ladies College), with whom I had had considerable contact in the old Gordon Square days when I was a Secretary-Librarian. Their surprise and delight was as great as mine but the friend on the Staff found it all very hard to assimilate and bear and word buzzed round again—'Of course you would get the best billet. We might have known'. It is perhaps small-minded to remember these things now but one interesting development did occur. An Inspector turned up one day with the news that she would like to interview any of the King Edward's Staff who were hoping for Headships in due course. Our Headmistress, who knew the H.M.I. well from old Cambridge days, had replied that she had better see them all, but actually four were short-listed for immediate scrutiny and of these only one got her move then. It was my friend of the little voice and one realised once more that peace and happiness in a school and its Staff-room can depend on far subtler things than good academic qualifications.

'Evacuation' alone would be worth a book to itself but a few salient features are worth recording before oblivion overtakes them. To begin with, the specialist subjects were particularly affected and required continually what Rudyard Kipling immortalised as 'infinite resource and sagacity'. My precious three-day week presented immediate problems and possibilities. Another Birmingham school had already proposed a one-day a week appointment for me which was to take effect in the September of the Evacuation and as this school had been located in Gloucester it seemed good for me to take up my post with them and look after the Art lessons of all their evacuees of all ages up to and including O-levels (not part of my original assignment), and cope with them all on one day from Cheltenham. What could be simpler? But in Cheltenham we were mated with the town Grammar School, itself in the throes of moving into as yet unfinished new premises, lovely, commodious, but without electricity. As the 'accommodated visitors' we were allocated to the use of the school in the afternoons, but as daylight was rapidly diminishing and largely non-existent by 3.30 p.m. it was agreed that Saturday mornings would be necessary to make up the required time. Our Head Mistress, a doughty Scotswomen who quailed at nothing, was also a mathematician and at once saw that a five-day time-table spread over a six-day week in terms of Alphabetical sequence, gave Monday to Friday A to E and Saturday found one

at A gain. Nothing could be simpler except for someone like my everlastingly awkward self, whose time-table fell on days A, B, and D. Because in the ordinary course of affairs I was available on Wednesdays my Gloucester School had made that their day. Again, how simple! Only for them Wednesday was Wednesday and they knew nothing of it being C one week and D the next, and so on. Interested readers may work out the possibilities for themselves, but the problem was not made easier at either end by the fact that my one-day classes could not be confined to afternoons only when the school premises were available. The first day of that new appointment is really worthy of a place in History! I had been able to evacuate my little car (again another highly entertaining story that must keep) and I was able to go over the day before my term started to prospect. I found the host school in full swing and was airily told that the Visitors' morning sessions were all being housed for the time being in a Recreation Centre about two miles out, where I should find the Head Mistress and all I needed. So the next morning off I set. Knowing that I was supposed to be teaching at least three double-period lessons during the day to girls of any age from 12 to 15 or so, I had taken the precaution of coming armed with a suitcase full of clean newspaper. And what a boon a childhood in the hands of inspired (?) or enlightened (?) parents can be! I was by then already a little late so I was ushered by the Head Mistress (another dauntless Scot), straight into the Cricket Pavillion, to meet my first class, between fifty and sixty girls, the evacuated portions of three parallel forms beginning their O-level year. It is possible the number may be exaggerated at this distance of time but it was all part of the fantastic nightmare of the vision of the day before me. It was raining hard as I remember but because the only light available came through the unglazed windows with wooden shutters thrown open, everyone was wearing complete outdoor clothing and the company was seated, jammed together, on the immovable lockers round the edge of the room, while the centre was occupied by an equally immovable table, covered and piled high with cricket equipment, chiefly batting pads. This seemed to be no moment for panic nor even surprise.

We eyed each other warily as I took up my position, at a slight 'embrasure', shall we say, in the battlements, placed the suitcase in position, said a cheerful 'Good morning, girls', followed by a few 'well-chosen and relevant' comments on the weather, and asked for six representatives of the three groups involved to come forward. I blandly announced 'Paper folding'. I had managed to get the newspaper into separated sheets while I talked and these the

monitors handed out as a fold to every two girls with instructions to get each sheet creased and divided into two exact halves. A breathless hush and absorbed occupation heralded the evolution, stage by stage, of the inimitable 'Chinese Junk'. The monitors came to me every time, received their instruction as to the next move, went back and showed their own group the next 'fold'. Where my father had acquired the art I have no idea, but it had been one of the joys of long, holiday railway journeys. One in particular stuck in my mind. Getting from Manchester to the Lake District had always involved a succession of changes which might have seemed tedious and nerve-racking to some parents—but not to ours. At Ulverston there was an hour to wait. Out we all filed, probably seven or eight of us with the addition of a usual cousin or two. In those days there used to be bundles of holiday leaflets in the Booking-Offices; my father took a bunch and handed us each one sheet, then proceeded to pilot us through the intricacies of the Junk—Carpenter's Hat, Catamaran and all—then out to a little beck running beside the Station Road. With a pebble in the hold of each tiny vessel a veritable fleet of balanced craft set out to race. Immediately the hour had passed and the train arrived. What I owe to that magical hour is quite incalculable! Suffice it to say that my Gloucester hoard worked breathlessly till within sight of the mid-morning break when the Head Mistress in the goodness of her heart looked in to see how we were getting on. We were all poised for the final crucial, infinitely delicate process of releasing—as it were—the butterfly from its chrysalis, when in she came and the spell was broken.

The poor soul trying to teach French on the other side of the wooden partition enquired later 'Whatever happened just before the bell went? It sounded like an earthquake'. And so it had—but the six leaders had the secret and all I could say before dismissing them was 'For Heaven's sake, don't let me hear of Chinese Junks appearing in other people's lessons'. We made about three hundred and twenty in the course of that first day! By the following week completely different working conditions had been established, but I got the impression later that that first lesson (?) guided my destiny for the remainder of my professional life.

For the rest of the time Evacuation meant a wonderful year of life seen from many different angles, often quite unexpected. Sharing the beautiful new buildings in Cheltenham and making the best of the short daylight, as before mentioned, caused our Assembly to be held at the close rather than at the start of the day. No Hall was yet ready for occupation so we gathered round one of the cloistered

quadrangles and in the failing light sang all the lovely evening hymns which usually find no place in school affairs. The effect was magical.

I had sold my old bicycle on leaving Rotherham but with petrol rationing a new one had to be acquired and every penny of £12 was spent on a new Sunbeam, the best in the best shop in Cheltenham and one that £50 could not hope to buy today. All the heavenly Cotswold villages in the nearer distance lay before us. With my little group of O-level Architects it was a gift and even without bicycles the town itself was all or more than we could cope with. Imagine the excitement when with an odd bit of blackboard chalk in the pocket I began to work out a plan of the Broach Spire of the old Parish Church on the flagstones at our feet to find a Maltese Cross revealed before our eyes when I was in the very process of discussing the effect of the Crusades on the English style. If the morning proved too wet to venture far afield we took refuge in the old Tithing Barn at Bishop's Cleeve. In those days it was still a working barn, but one of those girls later became Senior Student of the Birmingham School of Architecture and I like to think there might be some connection with the barn's subsequent rescue, preservation and development to its present role of a highly desirable and commodious Community Hall. There was time also to discover that the Church at Bishop's Cleeve contained three entirely different types of staircase.

In Gloucester my parallel group, a very much bigger one and without bicycles, met regularly in the Cathedral. One day I met my 'opposite number' from one of the Boys' Schools also mated to a Gloucester School. He enquired if I had had any difficulty in obtaining permission from the Dean and Chapter. In all innocence I replied 'Heavens! ought I to have asked?' We just walked in and set to work and an obliging verger did the rest. We paid our 6d per head to go down into the Crypt once, but I suppose he saw that we meant business and said no more'. In his own peculiar way Hitler did many of us, and not least Birmingham, a very great service and we may dare to hope that as Kim's Lama would have said, 'No doubt he has acquired merit'.

Anyway we continued to cope, and hope, and just as the bombing really started we returned to base and to another barely habitable but resplendent new building. Now it was air raid precautions, fire-watching, a new Head Mistress and a third school added to my list. 'Art' lessons were still, and necessarily, double periods, but materials became increasingly in short supply. Three dozen fat, black pencils, acquired by lucky chance in Gloucester, and a Woolworth rubber sponge cut up into forty cubes

in a neat cardboard box became my abiding stock-in-trade. The secret with Art equipment is to have something quite different from any other department's needs. If a Black Prince or Black Beauty pencil turns up in someone else's lesson everyone knows where it belongs and it is remarkable how much less easily it vanishes! The same principle was found to work with the lovely new furniture we had asked for—notably our stools. Long ago in the old St. John's Wood days (and how long ago they seemed), we had simple boxes provided, capable of being comfortable at three different heights. When I found these listed in a modern Equipment Catalogue I had requisitioned them at once. Everything on order before the outbreak of War was permitted. So there they were, beautiful, solid, polished oak, with handholds on every face and the rest of my colleagues fairly goggled at the sight. Incidentally, one of the interests of a three-days-a-week job is that though no one can ever remember when you are there, they all know (and always) when you are not. If chairs are borrowed the correct number will quite probably be returned, but they will be the wobbly ones with broken seats that find their way back. Now the solid box-stools were magnificent for 'props' of every kind—Conductor's platforms for Orchestra and/or Percussion Band practice and quite 'super' for battlements etc. but everyone knew where they came from and (if missing from the Art Room), where they had been seen last. They were thus another demonstrable instance of the value of Art in an otherwise highly academic/scientific atmosphere. Heatherley's (of blessed memory) had shown the use and value of drawing-board clips, and chamois leather for dealing with charcoal and so the nightmare of drawing-pins (so necessary for dealing with Notice Boards downstairs), and the inhibiting desire for India rubbers were almost entirely overcome! Paintbrushes presented new problems with developing needs for 'the larger the better' and it is useful at this stage perhaps to show how far and how much the contemporary practice of Abstract Art derives directly from the wartime exigencies which developed the search for aesthetic values in newsprint, barbed wire, scraps of all sorts, coloured bus-tickets and postage stamps; and the ability to work for uncertain lengths of time in Air-raid Shelters. One learns, as a German once said when faced with the task of describing an elephant, 'to evolve things out of one's inner consciousness'. And so the War came to an end and hopes of returning to normal conditions revived.

In planning the new accommodation one had been promised (and as required by the Ministry of Education) both an Art Studio and a Craft Room, both fitted with sinks and store rooms, but with decorative finish (if any)

NORTH WALES CONTINUED

to be left until occupation should suggest requirements. Furniture had mercifully been requisitioned but that intended for the Craft Room had been largely cancelled and 'Beaverboard' wall panelling, inspired by the new Cheltenham school, had been disallowed to my great distress. I besought avidly for it and was summoned from the country in the middle of the Summer Holidays to meet the architect to discuss what was in my mind. Later I was caused to meet the Building Contractor's foreman on the same subject and eventually a compromise was established by which our school maintenance-cum-carpenter, Tom, was allowed to put up a 2in. strip of soft-wood round the one Studio for us to pin up our precious specimen work. It was characteristic of our new Head Mistress that her first criticism of our premises was our old-fashioned lack of display space. 'I should have expected Beaverboard round the walls at the very least', she said. I had long ago learned the foolishness of answering back.

Again it is in an interesting sidelight on the importance, or otherwise, of Government Regulations. A Craft Room was required, was provided, was duly labelled on its door, but first it was found invaluable as a place for eating packed lunches while waiting for the completion of magnificent Dining Room and Kitchens equipment for feeding the daily thousand or so between the two (Boys' and Girls') schools; and when released from that service it was immediately commandeered for a Geography Room which, as far as my records go, it still is. How abiding is the truth about 'leading a horse to water etc.'. The architect whom I got to know well through my other contacts was highly entertained.

THE WAR was over and the 'winds of change' were blowing. It became apparent that under the new dispensation I was no longer what the 'great foundation' had a right to expect and I was encouraged to look out for another sphere of usefulness. The little hole in my qualifications was found to be troubling again, but when I discovered that at least nine of my colleagues were similarly on the look-out it did not seem to be so devastating after all.

In the summer of 1946 there was to be a great celebration; the School was to be 'en fete' and everything that could be mustered was displayed on the Art Room walls and tables together with a large mural which one of the Sixth Form girls had spent ten days of her Easter holiday working on, simply as an experiment, of course. ('What! On my walls? Never', had been the original judgment when the proposal had first been mooted. The Architect however had greatly approved and the mural was still in position ten years later—and it may still be there). I was part of the Exhibition in my working smock and presently a visitor at my elbow inquired if it were true that I was looking out and would I come to her school in North Wales? It did not take long for me to say 'Yes' though actually there were other strings to be tied up or unknotted, but I knew at once that I should accept the proposal. It was a Boarding School—true—but in days still governed by Ration Books, etc. that had everything in its favour and it was much nearer to my home in Cheshire where conditions with aged parents were getting more and more precarious and demanding. Also my new Head Mistress was herself of the old 'King Edward's' tradition and I should have no new 'manners and customs' to absorb.

It is no bad thing to graduate, as I did, from Municipal High School through Direct Grant to Private Independent Public School and to sense the differences in emphasis in each in turn and the approach to the exigencies of the day as they arose. The Municipal High School was the apple of the eye to a desperately devoted and ambitious community. Nothing was too good for it—if expensive Specialist staff asked for equipment of any kind the best would be provided at once and without question, so that one might find wonderful things in store that succeeding generations hardly knew of, and because they had not asked for them did not really need. It was a lesson in hopeful generosity that was sometimes hard to live up to, let alone justify. The Direct Grant School also was in many

ways the child of opulence. It owed its foundation to the distribution of wealth by King Edward VI after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Here again was an interesting side-light on History. In the Sixteenth Century, Birmingham and King's Norton were two rural, midland parishes with a religious house in each. At the Dissolution each was offered the means to found a school, either in terms of a piece of land on which to build, or a sum of money of equal value for the same purpose. King's Norton chose the money and set about erecting a jewel of Elizabethan charm and elegance, standing beside the great old Parish Church but not big enough now even to hold a weekly whist drive. But Birmingham chose the land and in due course established five great schools to enhance the growing city, itself too young to be subservient to the Test and Corporation Acts of an earlier dispensation. Only with the stringencies of World War II was the curb on requisitioned equipment made to tell. The change to the private Independent Public School could not have been more marked.

With the best will in the world the apparent issue reduced itself to one of hard cash. The largest paintbox must be the best. What to do about Granny's lovely Christmas present—thirty-six ghastly dabs of tinted chalk and glycerine—with a shapeless brush virtually devoid of bristles—and then, when invited to explore the possibilities of pattern-making with jars of coloured paste on sheets of newsprint to hear a voice announcing loudly, 'My Auntie paints but she doesn't do it like this', or, 'My Daddy pays for me to be taught properly'—it is very easy to find oneself in sympathy with the Queen of Sheba, 'whose spirit died within her'—but for different reasons!

Suffice it to say that I arrived in North Wales in the January of a particularly hard winter (1946/7) to find one Staff House rendered uninhabitable by burst water-pipes, the gravel main approach in process of being tarred with the steam roller being marooned only just not in mid-channel, the playing fields quite un-usable, so that not one single match nor practice game was played that term! 'Bean-fed horses' best described the condition of our healthy, well-fed pupils and it took the new 'Auntie' all her time and energy to adjust herself to circumstance and to gain, and hold, control. The War was over—true—but supplies were still to whistle for! Things were on order, but there was literally no paper except a stock of priceless stiff watercolour boards of Imperial size and a supply of something that looked like parchment, which I thought we could use for lettering. It was disastrous! India rubber only brought it up in great woolly lumps and it had to be abandoned, though with great care it

could be used for Bookbinding by someone who knew what they were doing. It transpired in time that it had been acquired years before for repairing the Percussion Band (1) but morale is difficult to maintain while research of this nature is pursued. So, till half-term newsprint ruled the day but then new requisitions began to appear. We had pottery clay and a coke-fired kiln but dabbling in cold water at that time of the year reduced my poor fingers and thumbs to cracked helplessness with plasters on six of the requisite ten so, when German Measles broke out I was thankful to be one of the victims and to end my first term in the warm seclusion of the Sanatorium. If my Seniors had not been trying to design and paint a backcloth for the forthcoming Gilbert and Sullivan Opera—it was 'Patience' I think and how appropriate it seemed—my cup of happiness might have been full. But I did survive and nothing was ever so bad again.

And now one was in a new strange world where all the buses were bound for Holiday Resorts. One was reminded all over again of the feeling that had first assailed me during World War I when I was working on the land. Coming in after a long day of field work in the pouring rain and wondering just how one dried out, boots and all, sufficiently to face life again the next day I had realised only then that up to that moment life in the country had never really meant anything but holidays, taken in the best part of the year when the exigencies of a timetable were insignificant for picnics that could always be postponed; or, if soaked to the skin, one could take refuge in a hot bath and go to bed. One is ashamed now to think how easily one passed judgment on curious country customs one had found. Sicily, the Tyrol, Venice had each revealed something of this same superficial attitude to other people's ways of life. 'How superstitious were these peasants with their innumerable wayside shrines!'

The words of an old Spanish carol ring in one's ears:—

'Up then, laggardly lasses, up awake and away,

Up and out before cockcrow, on the road before day'.

The idea of getting down from some remote village to the all-important early morning market with a basket of precious eggs and a mule laden with other produce, to be urged, perhaps cajoled along tracks that can be dangerous enough in full daylight, then the comfort of the waymark at a strategic fork or junction is appreciated, the more so if not dependent on the ability to read. And if it carries a suggestion of tender care and thoughtfulness it is all the more welcome. The same thing is noticeable in the bewildering canal system of Venice and the placing of the responsibility for maintenance and possible lighting in the hands of the parish and its children seems to the

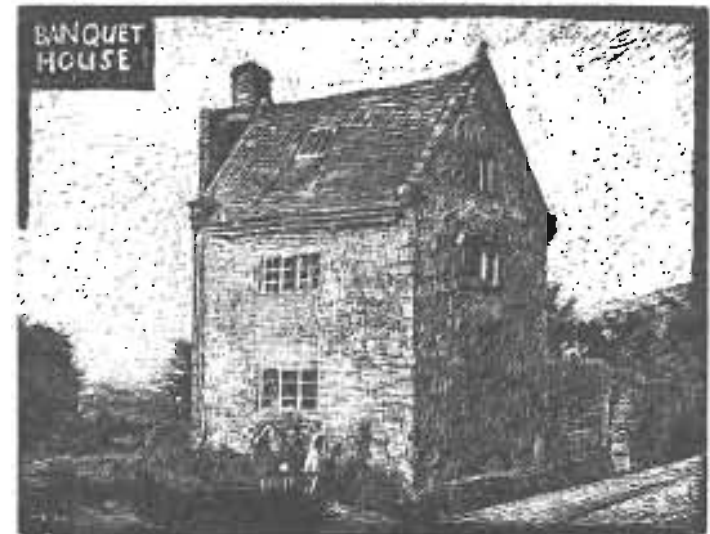
present writer a stroke of genius in no way to be either despised or tolerated with amusement or disgust.

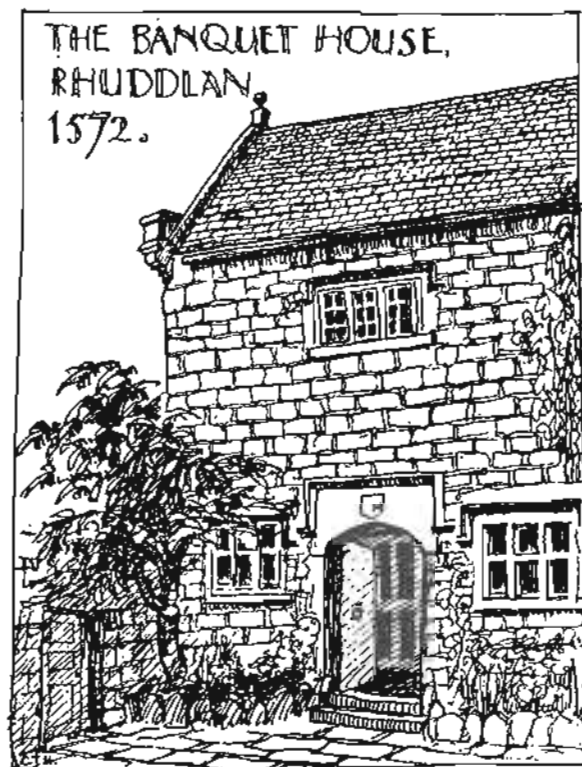
And so it was in Wales—so lovely—the sea almost within sound, the hills and valleys calling, but—come one's 'free' afternoon, how often did one seek them? It was so much easier and so often necessary to get along to the shops somewhere, have tea and go to the Pictures, too tired to think about anything else. The weekends came and for the first time in my life—apart from the summer 'on the land' in 1917—I was out of reach of the comfortable old Chapels of my youth where hymns were more than 'singable tunes' and dogma almost unheard of.

Matthew Henry's Chapel in Chester, founded in 1701 for Phillip Henry, the son of one of the Ejected Ministers, became the only possible link—and what do any of these words convey to anyone today? Yet two hundred years later a monument to his memory had been erected at public expense and his magnificent Queen Anne pulpit and the oak furniture and fittings of the old Chapel were preserved in a 'listed' building in the heart of the old city. Little alley ways paved between strips of cobble stones led to it between Watergate and Trinity Street and the tiny Eighteenth Century houses nestled up to it on every side, enclosing an old burial ground with table tombs and ancient grave slabs, one of which bore the revered name of Boulton (see the Foreword). So picturesque it was until War and its concomitants arrived. But between the Wars the little old city stirred. The houses were condemned and the folk who, young and old, had swarmed about the old Meeting House for generations were moved out into salubrious, new estates three or four miles out of Chester. The derelict houses were used for practical experiments in preparation for War and possible Air Raids, first they were gassed and then blown up. When the debris was peeled away from the Chapel, there it stood 'naked and unashamed', but newcomers, if any, simply stared and asked 'What's that?' The City Mission in a comparatively modern building next door survived for a time by dint of bringing in parties from the Housing Estates but the heart had gone out of it all and in due course it seemed best to sell the site to the City which was avid for a great, new, central car-park and which paid handsomely for the little plot of 'freehold'. So Matthew Henry with the great old pulpit and the lovely choir furniture, rails and table, moved out under the direction of a gifted modern architect, Colonel Saxon, and began a new and chequered career on one of the largest of the new Estates. Fifty thousand homes were planned and there was scope for every sort of activity but the kind of things that had sustained the region for the last two centuries, Music, Dancing and

Drama, by way of Sunday Schools and Temperance Associations were so far smiled upon that they were provided in modern rate-supported schools and Library. Even funerals which had always been wonderful openers of hearts and doors were amply catered for with a beautiful new Crematorium—no need now to have the Chapel open, dusted and warm with Organist and Blower ready to hand a Minister on the spot to do the Honours. But the old family feeling was gone and with it all sense of responsibility and 'the Council' does not by any means live there. The heart-breaking growth of vandalism has been an unforeseen result. All this we had helped to promote—it had seemed good in essence to take the Church to the people instead of whistling for the people across acres of car park devoted to the interests of visitors and often largely abandoned after working hours or at weekends. But at anything from twenty to thirty miles radius it was found impossible for the promoters and supporters of the scheme to do anything more than Sunday observance at great expense with perhaps a fortnightly 'something' in an afternoon. To have ideas but no possibility of helping to promote them was useless and heartbreaking and in due course one simply had to pull out and leave. But that did not happen until retirement began to tell.

Meanwhile, within ten minutes of the School and just across the valley there stood a magnificent Edwardian Castle built in the Thirteenth Century to guard the approaches to the ancient City of St. Asaph. Here in its latter days when life in a crumbling fortress was no longer either convenient or desirable the Steward, whose descendants still exercise Manorial rights over the region, saw fit in 1572 to build a Banquet House for the entertainment





of important guests, Ministers of State and the like, for Rhuddlan had its own purpose-built Parliament House (long before London for that matter). In the course of time this too became redundant, the King and Parliament had come to terms and the Lord of the Manor, always encumbered for lack of funds, had set about developing his stretch of coast along the Clwyd estuary to provide, with its miles of sand, its bracing sea air and the development of the railways, a much needed 'lung' for the industrial North West. Rhyl came into being and Rhuddlan settled back into antiquity and the Banquet House with one-eighth of an acre of old orchard was sold off for ready money. It was in some sort modernised early in the present century and by 1957 it was on the market again. The money in the Bank that was being amassed with a view to paying a deposit on whatever should seem likely when retirement was due, proved to be adequate as it stood to buy the little place right out. Though I was yet not actually out

of harness it seemed like a fairy tale come true, to move the home from Cheshire and settle down to start life all over again.

A high stone wall with a solid little door named 'Banquet Ho(sic)' and an almost blank wall with a high-up tiny window below a Tudor dripstone, and a gable end crowned by a broken Renaissance finial were all that could be seen by passers-by and for eleven months it had stood vacant, with a desolate 'For Sale' board sagging over the wall, above the eye-level, so thus almost inconspicuous.

A colleague who was house-hunting asked me to take her round to look at addresses that she had collected and when I asked where we should start she had replied, 'Well! there is the Banquet House of course'. I, not then actively on the look-out, had hardly noticed it. But with a real reason for penetrating that little 'secret door' I said, 'Right. Let us get an order to view and a key at once. I have always wanted to see inside there'. The key proved to be next door, we pushed in and the little place—as it were—came to meet us. Untouched for eleven months the old garden was a riot—American pillar roses, buddleia, wisteria, lupins, blazed at us, and my heart stood still! The only thought in my mind at the moment was—'Whatever else she wants she can have but—she can't have this'. How does one set about explaining such a situation? The question did not arise however, because what was Heaven for myself and a weary sister was quite impossible for one alone, even if she had not had a grand piano on her hands. At the moment it was simply a question of how habitable such a place might be, but the key worked in the old door—a modern spring lock but the old original key affair, seven or eight inches long and heavy withal, still worked if wanted. We stepped inside, to find ourselves in a high, dark, vault of a room, with uncleied-timber roof and a wide hearth, largely bricked up, only one three-light, mullioned window showing light because its twin was entirely overgrown with wisteria and buddleia, but there was no trace of musty smell, and that settled it. All the rest could be dealt with if the essential fabric was sound. And so it was!

The sister, away in London on a visit, had to be contacted and wheedled over secretly and without delay. Nothing proved simpler. I had a Speech Day at the end of the week and if she would come over for that, we could slip across the valley the moment 'the Captains and the Kings' had departed and just have a 'look-see!' without anyone anywhere being any the wiser.

It had been a question—because Rhuddlan had been the last place the dear old parents, plus the bathchair, had been able to holiday with us and it was just possible

that would prove to have been enough. But it all worked out and at the sight of that garden I felt her heart stand still and I knew all was going to be well. It was nearly a year before we could really move over but there it was for holidays and for doing up, a lovely and rewarding job. No Building Contractor was in a position to take on new work at the moment, but we were put in touch with a retired builder living close by who was delighted to take us on. He proved to be the one who had done the initial modernisation thirty years before and he knew all about the history of the little place, notably the vault. This was permanently sealed by a huge flagstone, reputedly 12 inches thick, in front of the hearth; the vault itself being connected by subterranean passages running back to the Castle well and to the old Abbey (Farm) nearly a mile away. These suggested a much earlier building than the present 'Jacobethan' exterior presented but it seemed likely that there were other passages involving the Manorial vaults in the old Churchyard which skirted the quayside embankment of the river just below the Castle and the inference from several other undocumented signs was that the Banquet House vault had been a most convenient 'fence' for the illicit liquor trade for centuries. When 'Sale by Licence' took the place of the collection of 'Excise Duty' there were found to be no less than fifteen licensed houses in Rhuddlan, which suggested that many, from all walks of life, had had a share in a very profitable business. It could be that the winding up of the contraband trade marked the point where the little old house was put on the market, but all the records had been lost in an Estate Office fire some years previous to our proposed take-over and all questions were discouraged. But it left an interesting suggestion of a ghost behind, and before we took up residence entirely we were to experience this in a curious way.

So it was that when camping there for our first Christmas, the house still largely unfurnished, about 5 p.m. one dark December evening, the present writer took up a casual position at the one window (and that upstairs), that commanded a view of the cross roads between the bus-route and the Castle approach. One should mention that the rain had been drenching down all day and an interesting and increasing puddle had been developing at this spot. It was about the highest point above the river in the whole region and a flood was not expected though all the water-meadows below the Castle were awash, but as the watcher stood at the window a column of water several feet high shot up out of a near-by grid. It was thus apparent that the tide must be up and the storm-water could not get away. The erstwhile puddle accord-

ingly showed every sign of covering the road and as a bus was approaching at the moment it seemed interesting to stop to see what happened. It must be remembered that we had not yet taken up residence so it was no real surprise to see what appeared to be a zebra-crossing on our side of the bus stop, not noticed before. As the bus drew up a stout lady in a red raincoat dismounted and came along the footpath towards us. As she stepped on to the crossing however I felt the hair rise up on my head—the zebra-bars showed clearly *through* her as she passed over to her own doorstep, red mackintosh and all! As she appeared to have no difficulty in letting herself into her house it seemed wise to conclude that there was no immediate cause for panic, but it would be perhaps prudent to close the casement window before going downstairs to report. Lo! the crossing vanished! A crenellated garden wall across the way was reflected in the temporary flood water—never seen again in the ensuing eleven years of our occupation—and the whole refracted in the window-pane. Quite simple! and easily reconstructed for demonstration purposes later, but if that good soul (whom later I came to know well) had had anything against me or had come to a sudden end that night I knew well the stuff that ghosts are made of. I have never forgotten the sensation.

Come the summer and the real move was accomplished. And what a move! It had been planned to do this in style when retirement for both of us was accomplished but the Estate Agents had other ideas. In spite of all efforts at secrecy the Cheshire property was advertised, anonymously and quite cleverly but recognizably none the less, over our heads. Our acquisition of the Banquet House was known in trade circles and in no time at all prospective purchasers were drummed up, our price duly battered down, and Vacant Possession required by the June quarter day. All this in March!—my sister in the throes of a National Presidency (Unitarian Women's League) with another year to run and myself up to the eyes in arranging a School party to Venice and Florence in the immediate Easter Holidays. Sister, between trips ranging from Aberdeen to Aberdare and organising a Conference in Oxford alongside, had a nice little bout of 'flu to help the 'old ship' along while I dashed madly back and forth at weekends sorting books and pictures and chalking OBH (Old Banquet House) on anything we could not bear to part with. The rest, including some lovely old bits for which we just could not have made room was sold on the Summer-trees lawn one wild wet day in May and when all the overheads had been met fetched £126!

Summer Half Term was given over to moving across

and with the devoted help of our other sister, a busy G.P., also in North Wales, but a magnificent packer of books and crockery, all was accomplished. I spent an anxious Friday afternoon in Rhyl, seeking and finding a darling Kitchen cabinet that would fit exactly into the only available space in the minute, triangular cavity that was to serve as scullery/kitchen for the next eleven years. When in the following year a proper window was cut in the two-foot thick stone wall and a windowsill achieved, it seemed as if life had nothing more to offer.

And so RETIREMENT hung deliciously before one's eyes and if one had not been the proverbial donkey one would have recognised its 'carrots' for what they were.

'Whatever will you find to do, living in the country?' folk asked, as if—except for eleven years in Bloomsbury and Bayswater, blistered and scarred by war, one had ever lived anywhere else'. The short answer to that of course and not least that of the teaching profession, was 'Clean the house and cook the dinner', but the long days of painting and pottering in the garden never even appeared as a mirage to lure one forward. 'The fault' as Dear Brutus should have known, lay as ever in oneself and not in one's stars and if one was still an underling it was because that seemed to be the place where the work and the elbow-grease were needed. But for the moment Providence stopped teasing! All our furniture and not least the old oak including the Grandfather Clock, with 'Samuel Butterworth, Rochdale' engraved on its brass face, and the (Manchester) Guardian Cradle fitted in perfectly. The decoration had been done in the interregnum between purchase and occupation, brown paint had yielded to magnolia, the little sitting-room had responded to blush pink and silver grey and (never before or since) Messrs. Woolworth's had a salvage stock of old rose matting, eighteen inches wide, which exactly fitted the narrow passages and the crooked stairs in the upper regions. These stairs to the gorgeous attic, stretching the length of the house under its high-pitched Tudor roof, had never been painted before and their response to the 'strawberries and cream' of the new decor was quite remarkable. It was such fun! And the reaction of the friends whose silence at the news of our purchase had been more than audible was quite delightful! By the time of the second Christmas, though still awaiting the installation of a long-burning grate, the place was more than habitable and a big house-warming, carol party to which came all the friends and colleagues in the region, served to put the little old Banquet House back on the map in a new way.

As a matter of fact the first 'Open day' was a week's Exhibition of the author's paintings, covering a period

of sixty years, to mark her seventieth birthday. A tiny sketch of Lulworth Cove, done at the age of ten, had survived among the mixed sweepings of the years and the collection ended with a recent portrait in oils of my sister Ruth, entitled 'The Lybian Scarf', a complicated piece of striped silk over a scarlet jacket. The face itself had to be rather an afterthought, but it turned out better than might have been expected. The very day after the start of the undertaking the said sister, plus dog, set off for her daily journey to the shops only to return within the next half-hour, creeping over the doorstep with averted face and faltering step. It appeared that at the corner of the road (unfortunately just outside the old King's Head Hotel, which gave unnecessary and unasked-for zest to the subsequent record) she had caught her toe on a broken flagstone and measured her length across the pavement, all tied up in the dog's lead, her spectacles gone and her 'noble Roman' nose flattened to the ground! However for the portrait it was found possible to substitute a cushion, set cornerways, to support the scarf, and the following fortnight, while the purple 'neb' returned to normal shape and colour, could enable undivided attention to be given to the vivid stripes. It was in fact a blessing in disguise because the arrangement of the folds once established on the cushion did not need to be disturbed and the poor sitter could remain peacefully 'in purdah' until able to face life again with equanimity. But the portrait turned out much better than might have been anticipated and became the 'pièce de resistance' of the show. We decided to collect contributions for 'Enterprise Neptune' then in the throes of being launched by the National Trust. The local Commissioner, Mr. J. Humphrey Williams, was invited and must have told the Press because he and his wife and the Press Camera all arrived together. I was caused to hold the portrait and the whole thing was given wide publicity in the course of the following week, an entirely unforeseen development but one which paid unsuspected dividends in the years that remained. The 'Neptune box' was added to the 'Liberal box' on the Tribute Table. The year was 1966. To anyone in the old Unitarian connexion and tradition it was immediately recognisable as the Tercentenary of the 'Great Ejection'—within the decade of 1662—whatever that could possibly signify! It was, of course, the year when nearly two thousand clergy of the Established Church felt that they could neither 'assent nor consent' to the entire contents of the Book of Common Prayer. They were accordingly ejected from their livings. Earlier reference has been made to this in these pages but it seemed good to their present-day representatives to undertake to raise a great Memorial Fund for which collect-

RETIREMENT, TRAVEL AND ANCHORAGE
AT CHELTENHAM

ing boxes were duly issued. We had one and displayed it with the rest. And so it came about that when the Exhibition Week was over and the Neptune takings duly handed in it seemed a pity not to go on inviting the public in. Rhuddlan had no amenities to offer beyond the Castle and its lovely setting and this was a change. One afternoon three young mothers with their families came tumbling in from the nearby holiday camp. They were charmed with everything and there was something for everyone including a tiny tin village pump—probably early Victorian—which still worked. It was kept especially for daddies and young children. They saw everything including the Guardian cradle and upstairs the Wilcox and Gibbs sewing machine while one young mother detached herself to have a word with us. It may not be generally known but many Unitarians have a little pin badge (a single flame on a kind of chalice) and as the party departed upstairs the one mother turned round to say 'You are Unitarians, aren't you? I saw the badge'. So of course we had many little things in common to discuss before she dashed upstairs to rejoin the party. When the moment for departure arrived, and it rarely took less than an hour to see everything properly, our new friend looking at the array of collecting boxes on the table, said 'These folk don't know anything about it all so I told them which box to put their money in'. Enterprise Neptune, Oxfam, the Liberals, Save the Children Fund got nothing at all that day and I don't suppose the other box got all that much—but every little helps.

RETIREMENT actually came only by stages. At once there were enquiries for possible teaching help; short or longer term Locum Tenens posts appeared and I found my week tended to become geared to fixed times and seasons at schools along the North Wales coast. There was one assignment that I could have held indefinitely if I had cared to give up Saturdays for it, but that was the last thing I had cleared my decks for, so to speak. So I just did a very pleasant Summer Term there, but it had its uncanny side too, like so many of my contingencies. The school, Hafodunos, like others, had come out from Manchester (or other similar distressed areas) during World War II and after a brief stay somewhere up the Conway valley had come to rest in a big house of no great age but for me one of fascinating association. It had been built in its present size and circumstance on the site of a very much older typical Welsh farm where, as a girl, my grandmother, Henrietta Roscoe, had spent innumerable holidays with her first cousin, Margaret Sandbach, daughter of Edward Roscoe, a Liverpool merchant. Margaret Sandbach had died childless at the early age of 40 and the great new brick house, which subsequently took in the school, was built for a new wife but in some sort as a memorial to Margaret, the first one, of whom a bas-relief in marble as a half length portrait was mounted in the main hall. Margaret Sandbach had been a poetess of considerable note in her day (1812-1852), and also a painter of exquisite watercolour landscapes and flower studies. She and Henrietta had had very much in common and it would seem that my mother had been named Margaret after her. I have reason to believe that many other Margarets owe their names to the same source, though perhaps, in a later generation, even more owe theirs to my mother herself.

The latter half of that term at Hafodunos was broken by a long-standing engagement to go to Oberammergau, so it must have been in 1960, the ten-year intervals of the production of the Passion Play having been resumed in 1920 after World War I. An active Unitarian Minister, the Rev. Geo. W. Parkinson, had been conducting regular holiday parties to Switzerland and other Continental spots for years, so when he proposed to go to Oberammergau I fell in with the suggestion. A new shuffle of the kaleidoscope and with a friend from the Christian Community,

who proved to have Unitarian links of old standing, we made a cheerful though for the most part very elderly party to set out on as reasonable terms as possible to make this pilgrimage by train, ferryboat, train again and coach, to reach our destination in two days.

And at the introduction of Mrs. Ida Knott into the circle it seems an appropriate moment to consider the development of thought that was taking place in the writer's outlook. The old Unitarian position was, as ever, unassailable but apparently only for those, and they a fast diminishing number, who were born and bred within its ranks. This is not the place to trace the history and development of independent thought down the centuries—much has already been touched upon—but the fact remains that in every association bred in such principles there will be found two opposing 'schools of thought'. There are on the one hand those who, like myself, look out through clear shining windows on to an entrancing world of speculation and free enterprise and those, on the other hand, who have bolted in head down to take refuge from outworn or ill-fitting modes of orthodoxy or the chill misery of loneliness and poverty in an ex-feudal scheme of things. There can be no forging ahead in any lateral direction for such—only aspiration can be shared and promoted and perhaps prevention from downfall, but the foundations that have stood the test of time provide today what can best be understood as Spiritual Road Houses, places where folk, coming from all directions, may turn in for rest and refreshment. Good food and welcome warmth are always available with an opportunity to study maps and reference books while one's 'machine' is serviced. Thus it is that while many who call are only too glad to be helped back on to the old, familiar tracks and to find their shortest way home, others are encouraged to explore 'fresh fields and pastures new', while of the hundreds who avail themselves in the course of time of the facilities and comforts provided there will always be the 'two or three gathered together' who will keep the little places clean and tidy, warm and comfortable, with fresh air and good food always available. Who pays the price is again a matter of conscience and concern, not least for those who control the use of Ancient Trust Funds. In all this can be felt the intimate grinding of the wheels of God, even by those who choose to deny His existence.

Thus it was that with the end of World War I (see Chapter Eight) and the disillusionment of Germany and the youth of the world generally a new impulse was beginning to make itself felt. Tradition as a basis for reconstruction was to be abandoned. How to stem the tide of student suicides and upon what foundations to attempt to build

a new Society? What common ground could be discerned among a clientele of now rootless ex-Jews and ex-Catholics, in no sense ill-informed or thoughtless, but rather, steeped in the doctrines of Nietzsche, Freud, and Schopenhauer, to name only a sample of the new approaches. A start was made among the alumni of the Waldorf School at Stuttgart to explore the potentials of the human spirit, as indicated in the poetry of Goethe and expounded by Rudolf Steiner. So it was that the Anthroposophical movement came about and found its way to Great Britain in the early nineteen-twenties. I met it first in practice in a group of Art Students at the Birmingham College of Art, working particularly among epileptic or otherwise handicapped children.

Again it was the new approach that appealed. A mechanism, in this case the human make-up, was more easily studied when out of gear—so to speak—than one that was running perfectly or at any rate without a specific hitch. Thus the handicapped child was no longer an object for pity, nor even its parents though that was harder to accept, but a person with a very real contribution to make and those working in the 'homes' and hospitals for such cases were recognising the new attitude with growing interest. Now while Anthroposophy repudiated any suggestion of being either a new religion or a new church there grew up within and about it—notably from among the parents and friends of the problem children—a movement to promote the healthy development of normal children and individuals generally. Rudolf Steiner had been consulted and, to the horror of a large proportion of the original 'outcomers', had advised them that a new society, though dependent on the development of new individual personalities, could only be achieved by the voluntary association of such in recognised and dedicated groups. And thus the Christian Community came into being and it was in these that my interest was really aroused. In Birmingham, later in Yorkshire and then very particularly in North Wales when cut off from my more regular associations there had been opportunities, four or five times a year, to explore in depth the working of these new groups, folk with no common roots or language, no invested funds, nor even hymn books, but with a growing experience of the value of a lighted candle or a pinch of incense—things which no TV nor Radio Service can ever provide however good the music and the words might be. So, when I could get away to Shrewsbury I was graciously lodged with Mrs. Ida Knott amid her little circle of devotees and in due course we went to Oberammergau together.

And so I return to take up the threads of my original theme. The 'Passion Play' in itself was all that one had

always heard, at first breath-taking but in its later stages almost unbearable—not from any sort of fault in presentation but from one's own shamed weariness that could take no more. The real wonder lay in the perfection of the organisation that fed and housed the multitudes—thousands arriving, thousands in the theatre, and thousands departing three times a week for so many, I now forget how many, weeks in the year. The developing and maintaining of the choirs and orchestras through the nine intervening years, with the strict observance of the ancient rule that only residents of agreed standing in the valley should be performers, and a voluntary offering (?service) at that, could not pass unnoticed, and the side industries—notably wood-carving and embroidery—that have developed alongside gave no feeling of commercial enterprise, cashing in, so to speak, on the occasion—rather it was the quiet devotion of it all that made one think. When the moment of departure arrived there, standing beside rather than among the seething throng of 'comers' and 'goers' stood two police inspectors, one white and one black, possibly United States or United Nations, chatting amicably together, standing by in case of need. But there was no need. One could almost hear the angels sing.

After Oberammergau the 'wanderlust' took over. One had one's passport eating its head off and it became apparent that to wait to find a companion with congenial habits, similar or kindred tastes, the same sort of funds and available at the same time of year was a sheer waste of effort; so, having joined the Hellenic Travellers' Club in 1959, and coming to grief at the first hurdle, I decided to go it alone. Never was time or money better spent. The shiny brochure in itself was a joy—all the places one had ever dreamed of, or indeed lectured about, were laid before one and for the next five years (though I had no idea of this at first), I joined the ship (S.S. Ankara) at Venice, overland at first, then by air from 1963 onwards, and potted up and down the Adriatic and Aegean Seas surveying the wonders of the Ancient World.

The ship was our base and I managed to secure a little, single cabin somewhere amidships on the main deck, and for fourteen days of superb organisation and thoughtful anticipation of all our wants and wishes we traced the journeys of Argonauts, Crusaders, Phoenician and Minoan traders, Roman legionaries, builders and painters, poets and scholars, with a varied and distinguished band of the latter to make our ways plain before us. It is invidious to name names among the brilliant galaxy of lecturers, but none the less the inspired presence and leadership of the late Sir Mortimer Wheeler on practically

every occasion cannot be overlooked. There he was, hot-foot from a gruelling overnight trip to Petra, climbing out on the top of the thirty-foot Colonnade of the 'Little Temple' at Baalbek to hold us spellbound on the magnificent extravaganzas of Roman architecture. On another occasion, when we were visiting a Museum in Libya, a voice in the packed crowd was heard to exclaim 'That man could make a dead cat interesting'. He was always merry withal. 'What culture-vultures you are', was an opening gambit to an 'optional' lecture. The only complaint ever heard at a critical summing-up session was from an eminent Oxford don who 'had found it impossible to miss a single one'.

It was perhaps the glimpses that were vouchsafed into other people's lives, not so much in the places visited as among one's neighbours in the ship's company. So many folk solitary, often from bereavement, or retirement, convalescence or a well-earned Sabbatical, adjusting themselves to a new turn in the wheel of life, or perhaps the miserable girl who had just lost her home and whose well-meaning relatives had spent her legacy for her in booking for the cruise for which she had no sort of interest. She was a bad sailor anyway.

The first of my cruises was dedicated to seeing the Holy Land, even if it meant a stay of only two nights and the day between. It was enough for us to run the gamut from the good soul from Derby, who was bowed down with the glory of having been and seen 'where it all began' and a little Fundamentalist from New Zealand who flung herself into my arms in a ship's corridor, wailing 'They have destroyed my faith. What shall I do?' and refused to be comforted. But in between one was reminded continually of a story my father had collected somewhere—a best seller in any company for stimulating or keeping a cheerful conversation going—an art for which he had been noted from our earliest years. It related to the days when all presentation and serving of meals was done 'in the room' unlike the restaurant-type service of these latter days. The story ran to the effect of the general dismay when, at a banquet of some consequence, a wretched waiter had been appointed to bring in the roast turkey on a vast china dish. This, having been overheated in the process of dishing up behind the scenes, on the moment of impact with the cold table had broken neatly in half depositing its burden accordingly. During the *melée* that followed a clear and vibrant voice from the principal guest was heard to remark:—'My Lord, how wonderful the occasion, and how privileged your guests must feel to witness four of the major events of History, demonstrated before their eyes at one and the same moment of time. I refer of course to (1) the Down-

fall of Turkey; (2) the Breaking up of China; (3) the Dispersion of the Jews (juice) and (4) the Consolidation of Greece (grease).’ By the time the applause had subsided all traces of the débacle had been removed and the occasion had become a thing of joyful memory.

For myself to savour a place had always meant finding a spot for a rapid, water colour sketch and with equipment reduced to a minimum and working on a packet of post-cards (preferably with a linen surface—), a considerable record has been built up over the years. It happened that in 1962 I had been involved in a road accident that had taken away the use of my right arm and hand. All commitments had been cancelled but the cruise was considered the best possible antidote and so was allowed. With my arm in a sling and with much jesting as to my prize-fighting proclivities, I was helped along in every possible way by waiters who cut up my meat at table and stewards who tied up my shoe laces and wound up my watch at night, by fellow travellers who swapped couchettes on the train and offered to massage me morning and night. The tour that year took us to Patmos, almost the last of our ports of call, which was just as well because my beautiful scarlet, Dunlop country shoes were very nearly finished. We disembarked at ‘La Scala’, literally ‘The Staircase’, that led to the Monastery situated on the top of a precipitous hill. My shoes were by then quite beyond tackling an ascent of that kind, and I accepted a lift in one of the two cars provided by the Island, but the hairpin bends of the ascent were such that any other means of descent would be preferable. So I was mounted on the back of an ancient quadruped of the horse species and taken in tow by a ten-year-old ragamuffin (who looked more like six), but he was in company with his father also leading a similar beast of burden. Together we slipped and sidled down the dreadful path of irregular steps and glissades, edged by a one-foot-high parapet, over which some part of us appeared to lurch at every bend in the way, my arm however remained in its sling and we reached our destination whole, there to be met by the inevitable photographer, who was sure he had a picture of me going up—the sling was so kenspeckle. He had not reckoned on my going up in style, so had to admit defeat when trying to sell his developed snapshots. One must admire the zeal and hard work the islanders show in making the most of visitors.

The arm however prevented any attempt at painting so I was an assiduous attender of all museums and the really excellent lectures the cruise provided and by the following year (1963) when in thankfulness I found myself



Group III. One-Man Exhibition to mark the author's seventieth birthday. Looking at a picture are Mr. and Mrs. Humphrey Williams, he being County Commissioner for 'Enterprise Neptune', for which proceeds were being collected.

able to write and paint once more I went on a further cruise. Delos was a very usual port of call and this was my third visit. On the first occasion the view across the dark blue bay, fringed with statts and sea-pinks had been so breath-taking that this time I had settled down at once and had cut out every one of the six escorted visits to the museum or the hinterland. On the second occasion I was disabled and did them all. So on this my third visit I left everyone behind and determined to get to the top of little Mount Cynthos in the centre of the island to look at the view of the Cyclades floating in the blue, blue sea. I found a comfortable spot without a soul in sight and settled down for a good hour to enjoy myself. In due course we found the ship again and later on, at dinner in the big saloon, I told my neighbour a bit about it. 'Oh' he said, 'that explains the talk I heard in the bar just now. Some of the Americans were discussing the events of the day and one said, 'Aren't these British women *wonderful*?'. There were we panting up to the top of that mountain and what did we find?—the little old English lady quietly painting. 'It must have been you'. And of course it was.

Crete and Knossos came into all five cruises and one really began to feel that one knew one's way about. And how grateful one was for the careful restoration of one central part of that vast 'palace', giving some indication of the five-storeyed building of the original conception.

A visit to Troy on another occasion was a bitter disappointment except for those who could 'read' a civilization from fifteen layers of rubble. (Turn back to Chapter Eight for early interest in myth and legend). Here was the Minotaur himself and here his maze. Here was a row of great oil-jars, each capable of holding a man and such as Ali Baba must have encountered in another set of not-unrelated circumstances. How often had I looked at the oil-drum in our back yard at Stand, which supplied our paraffin lamps and wondered how anyone could be concealed in it. Earthenware crocks were used for making bread and earthenware jugs might hold rain water for the house plants but were no use at all for hiding in. Once one had learned to recognize the signs the life and commerce, trade and industry of the Ancient World appeared to be revealed, the breeding and breaking in of bulls for the supply of world markets being just one instance, still to be found surviving in the ox-teams and bull fights of Spain. I was laughed to scorn when hazarding that Taormina in Sicily had once been a Minoan trading centre, but one glance at the archaic fountain with its converted centaur, in the heart of the little city cannot fail to give one ideas!

But after five consecutive cruises one sadly reached the point of knowing too much and too little. With St. John, a very real person after visiting Patmos, one knew only too well that 'the world itself could not contain the books that could be written' and yet there was neither time nor skill to acquire the precise credentials of a lecturer. One must be content with such moments as had seemed to be one's own—climbing to the top of the Sacred Way up Mount Parnassus at Delphi to be rewarded with a view of the Pheidriades (the 'shining ones'), nine hundred foot peaks flaming in the afterglow of a perfect sunset, or savouring the spontaneous hush of the Temple of Hera at Olympia even though nothing but a plinth and a few broken columns remain. So it seemed better to look elsewhere before one was too old and decrepit to face the journeys; but the chance gems of casual conversations will still remain to hold one to one's proper sphere. For instance—an eminent lady recounting how the mother of her god daughter had sent a telegram, evidently in deep distress:—'Marjorie, come and do your stuff. Janet has joined the Mormons'.

Two visits to Venice and two to Rome and Florence of some longer duration serve to fill out the picture and how one admires the spirit of the earlier generations who made the journey before the appearance of the railway! For the wealthy it meant taking the private carriage and hiring horses all along the route and for the lesser folk the 'diligence'—some variety of the stage coach. How they ever arrived or got home again must remain a mystery. Legends that come down from the early eighteen hundreds tell of a great aunt (probably a Roscoe), arriving in Rome and upon asking for hot water for a 'wash and brush up' was greeted by a shocked chambermaid, presumably in Italian, with 'Ah, no, Signora. Not with that lovely complexion. I will bring you some chicken broth!' Again, how easy to forget that 'all mod cons' is a thing of very recent invention, though the great palace of Minos at Knossos and the Roman villas of North Africa a thousand years later knew all about them. But the 'English Tea-room' at the foot of the Spanish Steps is still there to bear witness to the old British colony of the early nineteenth century, before the stirring days of Cavour, Mazzini and Garibaldi. In fact it was quite late on in my experience that I began to realise just how much interest the British had taken in the Italian Risorgimento and the promotion of the unification of Italy. My mother's uncle, Richard Roscoe, had worked for years in partnership with William Shaen, as solicitors and legal advisers to the unifying element. Thus it was that when, sometime at the turn of the century, my own uncle, Richard Smith Osler, became a partner in

his uncle's firm (Shaen Roscoe), that one day during the doing up and modernisation of the old chambers in Bedford Row one dusty old deed box, when unlocked, proved to contain a whole issue of Italian banknotes, printed in anticipation of the establishment of a stable government.

It has been rightly observed in more recent days that no one dares to lift a stone in London without being prepared to uncover some long-lost secret, good or bad, but it was only after the discovery of the Mithraic Temple under Moorgate after World War II that a builder's foreman in charge of post-war demolition and reconstruction work, when briefing his team, added a last injunction:—'Remember that anyone who discovers a temple will be fired'.

The disruption of work by earnest sightseers was too devastating.

But in 1843 (or so) Timothy Smith Osler as a budding law student had spent a term in Rome, possibly with his brother-in-law to be (Richard Roscoe already mentioned). Whoever it was these two young blades (or 'bloods') had set out to celebrate Carnival in the approved style of masked revellers and, dressed up literally as 'red devils', had proceeded to paint as much of the town red as they could. So successful were their efforts that, when things were restored to normal next day, my grandfather was amused to hear of their escapades being discussed in their hotel—'Who could these roisterers have been?' and to discover that the general consensus of opinion had decided that 'because they spoke such perfect English they were in all probability Russians'.

A letter written to 'Smith' by his mother for Christmas 1843 has survived, written on thin 'Bank' paper, crossed and recrossed before being folded somewhat similarly to an air-mail sheet and similarly without need of an envelope (still to be evolved), but tucked up so that it could be, and was, sealed with a wafer. Among the little treasures that went among the final dispersal of our possessions when my sister and I sold our house and moved into a 'Registered Rest Home' was a child's writing-box, undatable except by deduction. It contained two small bottles, one for sand and the other finished with a bit of sponge for damping the wafer and a little lidded compartment still (1977) holding a few wafers and an empty slot which by its length suggested a steel 'forerunner' of a pen nib, i.e. a steel substitute for a trimmed quill pen, while the lid of the box itself held a tiny pair of scissors for opening a folded letter by cutting round the seal or wafer, and a piece of enlarging mirror. This last baffled me for years and it was only when displaying the treasures at one of the 'Open Days' at Rhuddlan that it was suddenly revealed as the necessary means for selecting an appropriate seal

from a bunch and applying it correctly. The steel pen was the 'brainchild' of a Birmingham firm, Gillott, and my mother had spent three years of her childhood from 1869 to 1872 with her father's people in Birmingham, so the little box suggests an up-to-the-minute present during those years and was treasured accordingly.

But North Wales had its problems too. And not least in Flintshire where the names of Gladstone, his doughty supporters, Sir Herbert Lewis and (for the rest of Wales as well) David Lloyd George, were still reverberating among a bewildered electorate. For no doubt excellent administrative reasons, the county had been quietly divided into two constituencies—East and West Flints, with the rise to power of the Trades Union movement resulting in the decimation of the old Liberal stronghold and the County Council still trying to hold the balance between the Industrial East of coalmines and steelworks and the struggling West of the Landed Gentry, with a faceless bureaucracy of municipal and Council Council employees.

After more than twenty years residence in the region, at first as a simple voter if there were a Liberal candidate to vote for but getting more and more deeply involved in the intricacies of the situation, I was asked to accept nomination as a candidate for the County Council. It was a hopeless enterprise from the first. I should have begun years earlier when first approached for the local District Council, but I had had no time while in harness and I had declined out of hand. But now in 1968 I was retired and felt it was time to see what, if anything, could be done. I had already taken over the Secretaryship of the West Flints Liberal Association at a time when a General Election was in the offing, though still undated. We Liberals had no candidate, no agent, a treasurer just preparing to depart for a summer holiday in Spain and a Chairman who was not available on the phone during the Summer Tourist Season on the coast of North Wales. It was a gruelling and eye-opening experience, but heart-warming to find the welcome that awaited me in all sorts of out-of-the-way corners. A woman, devoted to the welfare of children and the schools they attended was a particular attraction but for the long established 'sitting tenant', a Conservative hotel-keeper, my intervention was nothing but a tiresome irritation. But he had to work for his re-election and when the General Election followed in the ensuing November, on a pouring wet day when none but the determined ventured out to vote, the Liberals were at least back on the map with a saved deposit and a close-run third position and that seemed almost a triumph. Also one understood only too clearly the appeal of 'Wales for the Welsh' and the rapid growth of the 'Plaid Cymru'

movement and rather than face it all again and by now past my seventieth birthday, it seemed only another reason for pulling out altogether. The little Banquet House had played its part but the feast was over and it was time for the guests to depart. To find a new anchorage was in itself no bad thing. It had been a strain for relatives and friends, though many, to keep in touch and, sadly, no younger generation either to inherit the treasures or to be left to cope with the final break-up, to say nothing of the business of 'winkling' us and/or our remains out of the enchanting but awkward little building—everything pointed to our seeing to it all ourselves and moving away to something more manageable and accessible.

CHELTENHAM was the answer. A demure little 'semi', a bare stone's throw from the main line Railway station the extended platform of which ran along a deep embankment at the bottom of our garden, appeared at the eleventh hour of a week of house-hunting and so we departed. We bought the new establishment in June but waited to take possession until the following October, in order to harvest the plums (fourteen trees surviving from the original old orchard—a marvellous crop), and to deal with such furniture as could no longer be accommodated. Half a ton of books went either by gift to a burned out School Library in Yorkshire or to a local agent in touch with America. Our indefatigable youngest sister came over from Buckley day by day to pack the china and glass and the remainder of the books. When the final day arrived she carried off the senior sister and the dog to spend the night with her while I slipped away almost unnoticed earlier in the day to drive myself to Cheltenham, to receive the removal van first thing next morning. It was only then discovered that, in their ardour to complete the job in the day, the foreman of the removal team had picked up my overnight bag, tucked as I had thought discreetly out of the way, and had packed it first in the bottom of the furthest depths of his van, quite impossible to get at!

So the new life began for me with the closing of another door and a detour to St. Asaph to buy a face-cloth and a toothbrush, with which to dazzle the world anew.