

HYPOMNEMATA

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BY

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## 1. Beginnings

My grandfather, William Walbank (1840-1928), left a short memoir, written, I suspect, around 1910, some time after his retirement, in which he described his childhood and adolescence in fairly poor circumstances in the Yorkshire manufacturing town of Bingley. My father, in his old age, made a copy of this document (which had perhaps become dog-eared) and this I now possess; the original he unfortunately destroyed. Several people have found this personal record of life in Bingley around 1850 of interest and that is one of the reasons why I have decided to follow my grandfather's example with an account of my own early years, covering the period from about 1914 onwards to around 1946, when I was appointed to the Chair of Latin in the University of Liverpool.

I was born on December 10th, 1909, in the house in Cleveland Terrace, Crownest (a hamlet on the outskirts of Bingley), where my parents then lived. It stood in a terrace built on a slope just below the Cottage Hospital and Gilstead Moor and my only knowledge of it is the story that the WC was in the cellar: hence a common request was: 'If you're going to the W, would you mind bringing up a loaf'. My first Christmas Day was reputedly spent in a clothes basket on the hearth rug, with (naturally) no share in the dinner (a story which, when it was later recounted to me as a child, aroused my resentment). But very shortly afterwards my parents removed to a new and more conveniently placed house at 7 Bromley Road, off Park Road, which was the main road up the hill from the town towards the village of Eldwick and the moors beyond; and this was my childhood home, where I lived until 1931/2.

The far end of Bromley Road was rather grand; but our end of it, nearest to Park Road, was part of a private development carried out by a local builder, Fred Bradley. No. 7 was halfway

along a row of smallish houses, with gardens in front and, at the back, which was on a gradient, a yard and then about three steps down into a back street, with an earth surface, which it shared with the backs of Wilson Road. The front door opened from outside into a passage with, on the right hand, a small drawing room, known simply as 'the front room' and used only when we had 'company', as at Christmas. Next, a flight of stairs at right angles to the passage led up to the first floor. The passage then opened into the main living room, which was inconveniently planned; it had three doors – the one from the passage, a second one giving access to the cellar steps and a third opening into the small scullery, which contained the back door and where cooking, washing up, washing clothes, and ironing them took place. Trapped between our own scullery and that of no. 9, this living room was dark as well as rather draughty. Upstairs there were two bedrooms, the larger front one with a fireplace – so that whenever I was ill, which was fairly often, I was transferred there. There was also a small narrow bathroom with a wash-basin, bath and WC.

A further flight of stairs led to an attic covering the whole area of the house, with small roof windows and containing a very useful amount of storage space. Later, when my great-grandmother came to live with us, this attic served as a third bedroom for me. The cellar contained a cool larder, essential in days before refrigerators, and this my father used as a dark room for developing photographic plates, for he was a keen photographer. There was also a coal-cellar, filled from a shaft opening from the back yard. The house faced NE, which meant that from the back-bedroom window (facing SW) I had a view of the moors around the Druids' Altar, a group of large rocks of millstone grit, deposited on the edge of the hill during the ice age and the subject of many rather vague legends. The site figures in Disraeli's *Sybil* as the meeting-place for a Chartist demonstration. A child takes the world in which it is brought up for granted: but the view of the Druids' Altar and the valley of

the Aire extending beyond it up towards Keighley, together with the more extensive moors on the north of the valley towards Rivock Edge, impressed themselves on me and are, as it were, the shorthand sign that springs to my mind still if the word Bingley is mentioned.

My father was an assistant school teacher at Eastwood Elementary School in Keighley. He travelled there by train each morning, taking his dinner (i.e. his midday meal) in a jam-pot, which he carried carefully placed in a Gladstone bag, along with his various books and papers. There were facilities at school for warming up the food in a pan of hot water into which (I understood) the jam-pot was plunged. I found this procedure rather impressive and only later discovered that it was a common practice in schools. Incidentally, it was a practice which led to one of the most terrifying incidents of my early school years. This occurred when I was already attending school and was sent to the staff-room by a teacher to put a light to the gas jet in an adjacent pantry under a similar saucepan containing a jam-pot. There was a fire burning in the staff-room and someone had carelessly left the gas jet in the pantry turned on, but not ignited. When I opened the pantry door, there was a sheet of flame and an explosion and I fled in terror with my hair singed. I felt a keen sense of injustice when my story was treated as fantasy.

My earliest recollections, like, I suppose, all children's recollections, are those of sorting out the people around me. Which were relations and which friends? And what about pseudo-relatives such as Aunt Janet, who was in fact Janet White, a close friend of my mother from her 'teens, who had been given this honorary status. From an early age I was interested in my family and their relationships, an interest which seemed to embarrass my mother, for reasons which only later became clear to me. There were many problems. For example, there were my grandma and my grandpa: why did they not live together, as one might expect? Why indeed did they seem to have no connection with each other? And then my grandma –

what was her relationship to my mother? To me they both seemed to be of a similar age. Were they sisters? I put this to my mother and was surprised to find her apparently angry at such a suggestion. Eventually these things were sorted out and perhaps this is the place to give a more systematic account of my family on both sides.

## 2. Some Aged Walbanks

The Walbank family (spelt with one 'l' – a Lancashire branch uses 'll') can be traced to the Bingley area as early as the 17th century. Parish registers show Walbanks at Morton, a little way up the valley from Bingley. The name has been associated with the Roman Wall in Northumberland, but as far as I can see with no solid evidence. A short and fanciful account of the early history of the family by my father's cousin Willie Walbank alleges that our ancestors had lived at some unspecified date around the Tweed and had then come south to the neighbourhood of the Wall and later, 'as cattle drovers or marauders', south into Yorkshire – all this in the 16th century. But this account also records 'another idea' (!) that 'they came south with the Covenanters to help Cromwell about 1642'; or, alternatively, that they accompanied the Young Pretender in 1745, a hypothesis excluded by the presence of Walbanks in the Bingley parish registers of the seventeenth century. These stories seem to be based on oral tradition (e.g. 'my father David said, etc.') and I should say deserve no credence whatsoever. It is, however, true that there was a family tradition (neglected in recent years) of using the names David and William for boys in alternate generations.

My grandfather, William Walbank, the writer of the memoir, was the sixth child of a family of twelve. His father, also a William, was born in Bingley in 1804. His mother, Mary Briggs, was six years younger than her husband, having been born in 1810; she outlived him by over thirty years and died in 1888, the year before my own father was born. I mention these dates as they underline the long period which oral recollections can cover – in this case going back at one remove to the time of the Napoleonic wars. This earlier William was an overlooker at Anderton's Mill in Bingley and, according to the short account written by my father's cousin (Willie Walbank), which I have

mentioned above, lived in a house in York Street. His early death at the age of 51 may perhaps be ascribed, indirectly, to religious conversion. Till he was 30 or so he was reputedly a man who 'used to take his glass'. But then, inspired by a Wesleyan revivalist meeting, he signed the pledge, became teetotal and was henceforth a strong advocate of 'temperance', i.e. total abstention from alcoholic liquor. William now had more money and time on his hands, and he therefore bought some land near the Granby Steps (between Chapel Lane and Wellington Street) and on it, with the help of two boys, he built two houses and a shed. While engaged in building houses three and four he unhappily caught a chill, from which he died. The last child of this William was Mary, born the year he died (1855). I can remember her death in 1919 because while digging her grave in Bingley Cemetery on Bailey Hills, the gravediggers unearthed a quern, which was subsequently placed on permanent display in a glass case in Bingley Public Library in Main Street. I felt considerable pride over this discovery, which I thought reflected very well on our family.

My grandfather (the memoir writer) was a small, neat man with a white beard, a pronounced Yorkshire accent, and an ebony walking stick. He had retired from his job as a shoe-repairer many years before I was born, and now lived under and over the shop at 107, Main Street, where two of his sons still carried on the business. I say 'under and over' since his living quarters were in the basement-kitchen looking out through a back yard to Station Place, opposite Bingley Station, but his sleeping quarters were upstairs on the first floor. He dropped in on us fairly often and I have vague memories of his taking me and my cousin Kathleen Walbank, who was about my age, on walks. But he was on the whole a rather remote figure. My uncle Arthur, who trained as an artist, made a rather good painting of him when he was still working and probably aged about fifty, which now hangs in my study. It is painted on board and portrays him in his cobbler's apron. More than one visitor has been

misled by this garb and has asked me if he was a bishop, a confusion which would have given him no pleasure at all, since he was a firm agnostic.

Of my grandfather's siblings I can remember only three – together with Fred Mountain, the widower of my great-aunt Annie (died 1889), who had some sort of warehouse just off Park Road. My father occasionally took me there as a small boy, to visit 'Uncle Fred Mountain' and to weigh me free on the warehouse scales. Fred Mountain had a son Frank, who was my father's cousin and a master at Sowerby Bridge Grammar School; but by a second wife he had a further family, all musicians. His great-grandson Paul Mountain later turned up as a violinist and acquaintance of my granddaughter Fiona Alexander in Leeds.

However, to turn to my grandfather's own brothers, the eldest of those I remember was John. (Later I thought of him, and indeed of the whole collection, as a kind of lower middle class provincial version of Galsworthy's Forsytes.) John, and next door to him his younger brother, Joseph, both lived in large Victorian detached houses just off Sheriff Lane, Eldwick. Eldwick is a village on the edge of the moors, separated by the valley of Eldwick Beck, which runs down through Shipley Glen, from the slope up to Dick Hudson's – a famous moorland pub – and the footpath over Rombald's Moor to Ilkley. John, born in 1831, seemed incredibly old. He had been a shoemaker, living in Wellington Street, but had later moved to the shop in Main Street where, on his retirement, my grandfather and another brother, Stephen, who had been apprenticed to John, took over the business. John, who was, I think, a bachelor (though he may have had a wife, now long deceased), was in his mid-eighties and was looked after by a formidable housekeeper, Mrs Dobson, whom all the family regarded with dislike, distrust and a certain amount of terror. Aged, secluded at Eldwick, and fenced in by Mrs Dobson, John had little with which to occupy himself. He did, however, possess a medium-sized telescope, which he

would set up at the bottom of his garden and with it carry out imaginary trips all over Shipley Glen. My uncle Francis had a story of making a surprise visit to Uncle John and, having been invited by Mrs Dobson to go seek him down the garden, finding him with his eye glued to the telescope. On spying Francis, Uncle John quickly adjusted the direction in which the telescope was pointing and exclaimed: 'Look here, Francis, you can see a party down the Glen quite clearly making a pot of tea!' But Francis was not deceived. In his younger days John had regularly taken his holidays at Blackpool, where he was a keen frequenter of salesrooms. However, he managed to avoid the worst cheap-jacks and consequently his house was full of purchases of uneven quality but not rubbish. I am sorry to say that after his death (in 1919) many members of the family paid repeated visits to his house with large bags and came away enriched. Whether as a result of one of these forays I am not clear, but the famous telescope was afterwards in our possession and I did not get rid of it until I left Oxton, Birkenhead, in 1977. John's death produced a sense of outrage in the family on account of his will. He proved to have left his considerable estate to his surviving brothers and their offspring, which meant my uncle Joseph and my grandfather. Consequently all those nephews and nieces whose parents had been careless enough to die before John got nothing. And even my father and his brothers were aggrieved, since Joseph's daughter-in-law Edie (her husband Felix had already died) would eventually get four times as much as each of them! It was a will that could almost have been designed to sow the maximum amount of strife within the family.

Joseph, born in 1846, and so six years younger than my grandfather, had been a schoolmaster, and eventually headmaster of a small elementary school at Lees, a village on the hillside south of Keighley. I remember him as a small, pale man with a squeaky voice and a large curved nose. His wife, Aunt Jane Ann (née Aude), was of French origin, though I think from a generation earlier. She looked (as I later realised) entirely

French; and judging from photographs, their son Felix (who died of TB in 1913) also looked very much a Frenchman. This was not however the case with his son, my (second-) cousin Alan, with whom I grew up fairly closely, so that he seemed much nearer to me than my (Walbank) full cousins. Uncle Joseph and Aunt Jane Ann lived next door to John at Eldwick in another large Victorian detached house, with a coloured glass staircase window of a type very common in the West Riding. Like John they had a large garden overlooking the Glen (but, I believe, no telescope). Part of the house was occupied by Cousin Edie, their daughter-in-law, widow of Felix and mother of Alan.

Edie (née Waterhouse) was truly awful. She employed a pretentious and affected manner of speech, with the kind of over-compensation which gives 'butcher' the vowel sound of 'butter'. Edie constantly talked for effect (which, however, eluded her). My parents exchanged visits with her regularly, as did my uncle Francis (my father's brother). All regarded her with mixed feelings, despising her pretensions but giving her good marks for her devotion to Alan's welfare. She had a job as a teacher, for a time at Myrtle Park School and later at Morningson Road School, where I was to encounter her in a new capacity. She paid great attention to Alan's diet, which was thought to be very important at that time, since TB was believed to 'run in families' and was the great bogey before anti-biotics were discovered. This meant that Alan was regarded as under threat and every care had to be taken with his diet and health regime. One relaxation which Edie indulged in was to attend the Hallé Subscription Concerts in Bradford and my parents were very unreasonable and philistine over this. There is no reason to think that Edie did not derive genuine pleasure from classical music (they did not); but her snobbish talk about her concerts made a charitable interpretation difficult. Some years later Joseph and Jane Ann, together with Edie and Alan, removed to a house in Sleningford Terrace, Crossflatts (a village just up the valley from Bingley) and after the death of the old couple Edie and Alan came to live

in Park Road, just round the corner from Bromley Road. Since Alan afterwards followed me at Bradford Grammar School and Peterhouse, we continued to be very close, although he was three years my junior.

### 3. Walbank Uncles

My closest Walbank relatives were my three uncles. My grandfather and his wife Ann (née Lee) had four sons; there was also, I believe, a daughter who died in infancy or was stillborn. Arthur was born in 1871, the twins Francis and Frederick in 1873 and my father, the baby of the family, in 1879; their mother died in 1887, aged 39, when my father was only eight years old. The twins had been apprenticed to my grandfather and his brother Stephen and at some time in the past had taken over the business in Main Street. Arthur was a more distant and slightly mysterious figure. He had spent some time in the shop but had attended the School of Art at Saltaire in the evenings, thus obtaining art qualifications of some kind and had, indeed, spent a year studying art in Paris, with the aid of a scholarship. As far as I could see later, this had had little effect on his technique or his aims as a painter. He ended up as a peripatetic art teacher in London and painted very pleasant water-colour landscapes of a nineteenth century kind. I have several on my walls at present and am quite fond of them. Arthur was married to Aunt Ethel (née Wilton), who had herself trained at Saffron Walden and had subsequently been a teacher. They had a beautifully situated flat overlooking the river at Barnes and later, when I was older, I would visit them there for their boat-race parties. From their window – it was a first-floor flat – you could see the boats clearly all the way from Chiswick Eyot to Barnes Bridge, by which time the result was evident.

Ethel was tall and attractive, but she was a southerner and had a rather astringent manner; she did not really hit it with the Bingley clan. Moreover, as I later realised, she was ‘difficult’. I began to note that people I met on one visit to Barnes, who appeared to be close friends, were subsequently nowhere to be seen and were not mentioned. Ethel did not like the north and made that clear. It was therefore sad that in 1939 she and Arthur



had to (or chose to) evacuate themselves to Bingley and that, after his death following a prostate operation in 1940, she had to stay on in a house in Bingley until her death from dropsy in 1943.

To return to the twenties, Arthur and Ethel used to come occasionally to stay with us and I spent time with them in London. I learnt something about painting from Arthur (nothing, I must say, from anyone else) and I found him agreeably different from people in Bingley. He moved a little outside the regular parameters of normal Bingley life. For example, shortly after his arrival in 1939 as an evacuee from London, he went along the canal bank to paint Dubb Bridge over the Leeds and Liverpool canal and was promptly arrested as a potential spy – though it was hard to see what use a water colour of Dubb Bridge could have been to the enemy. It was also in his favour that at some date in the past he had taken my grandfather on a cycling holiday to Paris. My grandfather, on the flimsiest qualifications, had taught French in the evenings at the Bingley Mechanics' Institute, but I have no idea how much he knew or how like French it can have sounded. Presumably after his year in Paris my uncle knew rather more.

Contacts with uncles Fred and Francis were more frequent but, on the whole, less productive. At a fairly early date I came to realise, as children do, that relations between the twins were strained. For this there were, I think, two causes. They had married two friends, Ada Shackleton (Francis) and Annie Taylor (Fred), the latter a farmer's daughter, who put on airs. (I remember Francis later telling us how, in order to deflate her, they would in their youth try to embarrass her with such remarks as: 'Will it be tuppence now, Annie?') The wives had later quarrelled and this led to coolness between the brothers. Francis and Ada had twins, one of whom died at birth and the survivor, Florence, grew up mentally subnormal. As she reached her teens Francis, understandably, tried to give her some occupation delivering parcels for the shop, but she was easily diverted and

this proved unsatisfactory; and Frederick resented it. He and his wife had two children, Kathleen and Gilbert, and there was probably some jealousy (again understandable) on Ada's part. So the partnership was uneasy. My father tried to avoid getting involved in the friction, but he was not very good at this and we achieved neutrality mainly by having little contact with Fred and his family (we never visited each other, for example). With Francis and Ada we maintained friendly relations. Ada was a rather unintelligent woman, but my uncle was completely devoted to her. Whereas Fred was a pale and colourless man, Francis had a ruddy complexion rather like my father. He was a radical and also, like my father, an agnostic. But the whole family kept up the taboos of a Wesleyan upbringing without the beliefs which must originally have underpinned these. They were all teetotal – though my uncle Francis spoke of having drunk beer in the train in Switzerland! Perhaps when you cross the Channel the rules are relaxed. As an illustration of this odd puritanism I recall an occasion when my grandfather arrived at our house in a state of almost nervous collapse. Asked with concern what was wrong he replied: 'Ah've just seen our Francis smokin'. Ah s'll ev ter alter mi will!' Along with his taboos – and his concessions, as in the matter of smoking – Francis had a great admiration for Robert Burns and I believe that this was inspired as much by the more salacious aspects of his verse and life-style as by his loftier sentiments. Francis had a motor-bike with a side-car at an early date and I remember the excitement of seeing him come down Park Road on it – an excitement so great that I nearly got myself run over by the following vehicle, as I charged across the road afterwards. To complete this picture, Francis in the 1930s became a *Daily Worker* reader and voted Labour. But basically his reactions remained those of the radical small-town shopkeeper.

About 1921 the twins decided to dissolve the partnership and the business was sold to a chain, Freeman, Hardy and Willis. This meant an end of 'the shop' and the amenities provided by

my grandfather's front bedroom window as a grand stand from which to watch processions. From here we had seen King George V and Queen Mary when they drove through Bingley and every year we went there to watch the Gala procession. Now that was over and my grandfather removed to a house at the top of Stanley Street, where he lived until his death in 1928, looked after by an excellent housekeeper, Mrs Turner (who had been with him in Main Street). It was of course an unquestioned assumption at this time that a widower could not be expected to look after himself. The labour involved in managing a house, with the still primitive methods of cleaning, washing, washing up, etc. made a housewife's life extremely laborious (and in addition there were superfluous tasks imposed by social pressures, such as yellowing or whitening the doorsteps). Such a programme could not be contemplated for a man.

My uncle Francis now moved to Burley-in-Wharfedale, where he bought a shoe-shop in the centre of the town. This proved a happy period in his life, since the Girls' Friendly Society from the local church took an interest in Florence. This put a little strain on my uncle's anti-clericalism but he was ungrudging in his gratitude. Unhappily, after a few years Florence developed a cancer of the thigh and died. Francis and Ada moved back to Bingley where they built a house near Cottingley, and remained there for the rest of their lives.

#### 4. My Father as a Young Man

My father, Albert (Joseph David), born in July 1879, was the youngest of the bunch and, as a child (I suspect), somewhat spoilt. It seems to have been decided fairly soon that the shoe-business was already fully loaded and that he had better do something else, in fact that he should become a teacher. From the Hill Street Wesleyan School he won a scholarship to Bingley Grammar School and then, in 1892, when he was thirteen, he became a pupil teacher at Mornington Road Elementary School. Under the pupil-teacher system quite young children were trained to teach as they learnt. How this fitted in with his work at the Grammar School I am not clear. At the same time, as a kind of insurance, he also seems to have served some sort of apprenticeship in the shoe business. In 1897, however, he won a Queen's Scholarship to the Yorkshire College (later Leeds University) and in two years passed the Preliminary Examination and what was then called the Inter.B.Sc. as well as obtaining a first class teaching certificate. At this time he was living at home and travelling daily by train to Leeds. On 11 December 1899 the train on which he was returning to Bingley was involved in a serious accident near Holbeck. He was in a front coach and sustained serious injuries, a broken leg and a fractured skull. Among the many casualties he had been put on one side as probably beyond aid, but fortunately his cousin Wilfrid (the son of Stephen Walbank, my grandfather's partner in the shoe business), who was also a student at Leeds and was travelling on the same train but in a rear coach, spotted him and put pressure on someone around to take him into care and get him to hospital. This event put an end to my father's university career. It was several years before he recovered. For a time the family envisaged a job for him as a postman, but a friend, A.D. Slater, headmaster of Harden Elementary School, gave him the chance to come in voluntarily and try his hand at teaching. Gradually his

memory and confidence returned sufficiently for him to revert to teaching, first in a job at Otley and later at the Eastwood Elementary School in Keighley, where he remained until his retirement in 1939. But this accident scarred him for life. His quickness of mind had been lost. He found it hard to follow the logical thread in, for example, a problem in arithmetic and throughout his life preparation for the next day's teaching took up much of the previous evening. This disaster cast a shadow over the whole of his working life and often made him irritable. He received some rather trivial compensation from the Railway Company, but not on the scale usual today.

Already before the accident he had met my mother, Clarice Fletcher, and they were married in 1905, when he was teaching at Otley. I shall now turn to that side of my family.

## 5. Fletchers

The Fletcher family was a social grade below the Walbanks. Social distinctions at this time were somewhat fluid in the West Riding; there was still some truth in the old adage: 'Clogs to clogs in three generations.' But whereas the Walbanks were in the small shop-keeper class, the Fletcher women-folk at any rate worked in the mill, though the men might, with luck, do rather better. It was a subtle distinction and not one to be pressed. My mother's family was much more of a female affair and there were several 'irregularities', as I shall explain. As a child I gradually became conscious of my mother (Clarice), her mother (Phoebe Bracewell) and *her* mother (Louisa Fletcher, née Bower), a very old lady known to me as 'Nana' and to my mother as 'Ma' or, in reference to her, 'mi Ma'. My grandma and Nana shared a small late eighteenth-century cottage on a bend in the main road up to Gilstead at a point known as Crownest, and only a stone's-throw from the house where I was born. It was damp and rather dark (owing to the small windows) and had no inside lavatory. There was a WC. 'along the back', which was shared with Lizzie Holmes and her mother, who lived next door. On the ground floor the living-room contained an old-fashioned high coal-burning kitchen grate, with a trivet for the kettle, an oven (no longer used) on one side and a receptacle for firewood etc. on the other. There may have been a back boiler for heating water – I am not sure about this. There was of course no bathroom or water upstairs, but only in the low back kitchen-scullery. There were two bedrooms and a cellar. The great virtue of this cottage was its back garden with a splendid pear tree, a lilac, many flowers and a view up the hill to Gilstead Moor. Cooking had originally been done in the fire-oven, but there was now a rather primitive gas-cooker, and the house was lit by gas.

The two were, so to speak, the remnants of the original Fletcher household. Louisa Bower had come originally from

Dodworth near Barnsley and, though I don't know this as a fact, I would hazard a guess that she came to Airedale into domestic service, since this was common from the mining areas of Yorkshire. Her husband, Fletcher (I don't even know his first name), had been an engine-driver and at some stage in his life, perhaps before his marriage, he had been abroad in some railway connection, in Riga and also in Egypt. This visit to Riga was taken by my grandmother as entitling her to express pronounced views on the Russians, whom she greatly disliked. 'No freedom there,' she used to say, 'one word and off with you, down them there steppes.' My grandmother used to speak of taking her father's lunch when she was a small girl and he was working in the engine sheds at Carnforth. At that time they lived at Yealand Conyers. But the chronology of all this is obscure, including what happened to my great-grandfather Fletcher (and when).

At the time my mother was born (1880) the family lived somewhere in the Church St. area of Bingley (perhaps actually in Church St.) and consisted of Louisa and her offspring, two sons and three daughters. They were a varied and evidently colourful group. Harriet was only a name to me. She and her husband, George Smith, had emigrated, like so many Bingley people, to Methuen, Massachusetts, where there was a textile industry. They kept up a regular correspondence with the family at home, and during the first World War we had a brief visit from Harriet's son Percy Smith, then a GI in the American forces (so this was presumably around 1918). I recollect a bathing party consisting of my father, my uncle Frank Bracewell and Percy Smith in the river Aire near Beckfoot Bridge. Percy was rather a plain or, as the Americans would say, homely young man, but recognisably Fletcher, with a distinct resemblance to his aunt Louisa, a second daughter and my grandmother's sister.

Louisa had married a man called Taylor from Morton and they had gone to live in London. But here, at some point, she eloped with a green-grocer from Haringay, called Fulbrook. Like so many men featuring in the Fletcher saga Fulbrook seems

fairly soon to have disappeared from the records. The younger Louisa had two Taylor daughters and a third daughter, Louie Fulbrook, by the green-grocer. The Taylor daughters were part of my childhood and I was fond of them both. Hilda, who was married to Tom Taylor (no relation), had two small boys, younger than me, called Frank and Denis. The Taylors used to visit us at Bromley Road and I always looked forward with excitement to these visits; and also, when I was a little older, I went to stay with them in their flat at Highgate. It was in a large block called Whitehall Mansions in Archway Road, a little below the Archway from which it gets its name. As a small boy I found the rather happy-go-lucky life-style of the Taylors an attractive contrast to the rather buttoned-up life-style at home. At that time Tom Taylor worked as a porter in Covent Garden and he was a real cockney. Until they were married (and indeed perhaps afterwards) Hilda had worked behind the counter in Stanley Gibbons' stamp shop in the Strand and the small packages of stamps which she brought me as a gift whenever she came to Bingley added to the joy and glamour of these occasions, for I was at the time a keen stamp-collector. When I stayed at Highgate, in addition to walks over to the ponds and Hampstead Heath, we would go, far more often than at home, to the cinema; and once they took me to hear a real jazz band, the Southern Syncopated Orchestra from the U.S.A., down in London. It was all a tremendous contrast not only to home but also to life with my Uncle Arthur and Aunt Ethel in their more elegant, middle-class, slightly cheese-paring milieu at Barnes. The end of the Taylor story is however rather sad. Tom lost his job and they moved to a somewhat sordid address in York Way behind King's Cross Station. I visited them there once many years afterwards, when it was clear that Hilda was beginning to deteriorate mentally. At one stage my father lent Tom some money to buy a cart with which he was going to set up some sort of peddling business, but it never came to anything. Eventually we lost touch with them entirely, though my parents once put up

the younger boy Denis and his wife when they were on their way to Scotland; and Tom in due course wrote to tell me of Hilda's death.

Hilda's good-looking younger sister Ethel followed a course which at that time seemed erratic and was highly disapproved of by my parents and everyone in Bingley, especially my Aunt Becca, who had formed the impression that Ethel had cast her eyes on her husband Frank. Ethel had one illegitimate child, a red-head called Charlie. She then went to live with an Anglo-Indian known to the rest of the Taylors as 'the Captain' and had a second son by him. To complete this story, Louie Fulbrook, the half-sister, subsequently went to live with the Captain's son. They too have all disappeared long ago from my horizon. I recollect however one occasion when I was staying with Hilda and the Captain invited me to have lunch with him at his club, the Eccentrics (he was slightly pretentious); he clearly derived satisfaction from entertaining a Cambridge undergraduate and the Cambridge undergraduate was impressed by the idea of lunching at a West End club – so everyone was satisfied. But I was not in any doubt that he was a phoney.

My grandmother had two brothers. The elder, Alfred, was deaf as a result of measles when he was very young and consequently also dumb, for at that time deafness carried dumbness with it. He communicated by a mixture of gestures and the alphabetical sign language (which I learnt). My mother had grown up with this and could always chat away with him using gestures as quickly as she could talk to us in the normal way – an impressive performance. Alfred had suffered a further disaster. He worked in a saw mill at the 'top of the town', that is on Bradford Road just above Myrtle Place, and there he had lost all the fingers of one hand on a circular saw. His fingerless hand I found rather frightening, especially in combination with the strange noises he emitted in his attempt to communicate. But he was very kindly and he made us a wheelbarrow, when (as I shall describe) we acquired an allotment. Uncle Alfred's gentle and

delightful wife Elizabeth he had met at a deaf and dumb school and she was also without speech; unfortunately it seems that her deafness, unlike his, was congenital, since it recurred in one of their grandchildren.

Alfred's younger brother Harry was only seven years older than my mother and she always thought of him as an elder brother. Harry had somehow obtained a better education and become an accountant – a good example of social mobility, which certainly existed in the West Riding in the later nineteenth century. He was regarded as 'well off' and lived in Clondyke, a slightly superior area of Bingley near Myrtle Park, so named from the gold rush which was taking place at the time these houses were being built. Harry was a good pianist and a lively character in company – in contrast to his wife, who looked and was a rather doleful woman, with a somewhat morbid mind. It is, for instance, reported that she came home one day with a long face and announced mournfully: 'Harry, I've just bought a grave.' To which Harry's typical reply was: 'Never mind, Annie; we ar' not to a grave or two!' Their son Jack was a little my senior and also attended Bradford Grammar School as a paying pupil. He was not intellectually distinguished and my chief memory is of his currying favour during a School Certificate Examination by acting as a surreptitious centre for the circulating of illicit information derived from a concealed French dictionary. Jack Fletcher's chief interest was playing the drums in a jazz band. I am not sure what occupation he had when he grew up and my last news of him came at Christmas 1991, when my cousin Clarice Illingworth told me that he was wholly incapacitated by a stroke; he would then be about 84.

How then did my mother fit into this Fletcher household? The answer, which I only learnt from her when I was about sixteen, is that she was the illegitimate daughter of Phoebe, hence her surname Fletcher. I do not know the name of her father. Her younger brother, my uncle, was called Frank Bracewell and for many years their different surnames puzzled

me. Phoebe, I eventually learnt, had married a Bracewell (first name again unknown to me), who had subsequently gone off to America, intending (or not) to send for his family. But like so many other Fletcher males he seems from then on to have disappeared from the records. It was only a year ago that I learnt, also from Clarice Illingworth, that on Frank's birth certificate he was also Fletcher, changed later to Bracewell. So evidently the Bracewell marriage was a subsequent move to regularise Frank's status and I suspect that it never led to a separate establishment. Certainly both Clarice Fletcher and Frank Bracewell grew up in the matriarchal atmosphere of the Fletcher house; and for many years my mother believed that my grandmother was in fact her sister and 'Ma' her mother. Frank married Rebecca (Becca) Wood, a remarkably beautiful and kind person, who remained handsome into her nineties. Their daughters, Ethel and Clarice, still live in Bingley (or Eldwick), both widowed and with grown-up families and grandchildren. I visit them when I am in Yorkshire.

## 6. My Mother and Father

I have no idea when my parents first got to know each other. Bingley was not large at that time and since they lived in the same area they probably knew each other as children. They certainly did not meet at church or Sunday School, a common recruiting ground, since my mother's family were C. of E. and attended Holy Trinity Church, the rather fine Norman Shaw building off Church Street (and now demolished owing to subsidence); whereas my father's family had lapsed from nonconformism. The cleft extended to politics. The Fletchers were conservatives, the Walbanks liberal-radicals. Clarice and Albert started 'walking out' when they were quite young. The first time they went out together in the day-time – which was evidently something in the way of a public declaration, in contrast to less formal meetings in the evening after work – was one Easter and they took their walk along the riverside above Ireland Bridge and the weir, an area highly popular for boating. Many parties came from Shipley, Bradford or Leeds to go on the river at Bingley, for it was renowned as a beauty spot. On this occasion some horseplay led to an upset and a young woman went overboard and was soon in difficulties. My father (who was a competent swimmer, having learnt to swim in the Leeds and Liverpool canal) promptly dived in and got her out, unconscious. He then went off with my mother to dry out in the boiler room of the adjacent gasworks. My mother must have had very mixed feelings about the whole affair – pride at Albert's gallantry, some irritation at having this important occasion rudely interrupted by the misfortunes of some other young woman (probably silly), but above all her innate dislike of being involved in anything that might draw attention to her – an attitude which I believe sprang basically from her embarrassment at being illegitimate. The rescued girl was led by her companions to believe that it was they who had pulled her out; and having

been unconscious at the time, she was not in a position to question this. But later she learnt that her real rescuer was my father and she presented him with a gold medal, which he always wore on a gold chain across his waistcoat in the style common at that time. The medal (which I have before me as I write) has on the reverse an inscription which reads: 'Presented to A.J.D. Wallbank (sic) for saving life' and on the obverse a pattern made up of the letters A.J.D.W. and a date, April 8th, 1898. The complicated formula in my mother's Prayer Book – it involves calculating the Golden Number, the Paschal Full Moon and the Sunday letter! – confirms that in 1898 Easter Day was on April 10th. So all this took place on Good Friday, which is in fact what I recollect having been told. My father was 18 and my mother 17 (they were born on 8 July 1879 and 20 July 1880 respectively). The day, 8 April, by a coincidence was later to be the birthday of Mary Fox, whom I was to marry.

At this time my mother was working as a mender at (I think) England's Mill. She told me many years later that she would dearly have liked to train to be a teacher, but circumstances in the Fletcher household did not make that possible. Instead she had had to leave school at, I suppose, eleven or twelve and go into the mill. One attractive feature of my father may have been the fact that he was set for a teaching career. In 1898 he was in his first year at the Yorkshire College. After the railway accident occurred in December 1899 my mother remained loyal to him throughout what must have been a long and depressing convalescence; it cannot have been easy. She was a strong-minded woman and a driving force in the marriage, often uncomfortably so. She gave him full support in often difficult times and she put up with the tedium of his long evenings preparing for the next day's teaching. Small wonder that she often gave the impression of hating books!

## 7. Early Days down to 1916

Despite my father's problems my childhood was a happy time. Indeed it was only after I reached the Grammar School that I really began to understand the extent of his handicap. My earliest recollections seem to be connected with holidays. In particular, I have a strong memory of being shown a floral clock at Bridlington by my father and of howling my head off on the beach at Scarborough, somewhere outside the Parade, because I was lost (only temporarily, it would appear). I must on these occasions have been only two or three, since in 1914 we spent our holiday at St Anne's-on-Sea. I was then four and a half and I have a clear memory of that occasion (and one quite separate from all my later memories of a place where I was to live from 1941 to 1946). I remember this earlier St Anne's as a place of wonder and magic, because of the little artificial waterway with its stepping-stones in the gardens along the beach and the coloured electric lights in the sloping gardens on either side of the railway bridge, which provided an alternative route to the prosaic causeway. All these of course seemed much larger than they did later.

The 1914 visit to St Anne's sticks in my mind also because it was on that occasion that my father told me, just as we were preparing to go home, that war had been declared and that the Germans were now our enemies. My reaction to this was a strong conviction that the Germans must indeed be a very wicked people to be at war with the English. Another incident connected with this holiday has often been recounted (to my embarrassment), but I have no recollection of it myself (having probably suppressed it by some Freudian mechanism). We were spending the holiday (as we commonly did) with my parents' friends Willie and Nelly Holgate. Their daughter Annie, a child of about my own age, was detected stealing an apple from outside a greengrocer's shop and was given a long moral

discourse. It was only when I was observed to be weeping copiously that my share in her guilt was exposed.

It was in the following September (1914) that I first went to school. Belgrave Road Infants' School was a small sandstone building about ten minutes' walk from our house; it has now become a set of luxury flats. I was four and a half and the intention was that I should attend mornings only; but I enjoyed it so much the first day that I insisted on going full-time from the start. It was a small school with three classes, first, second, and babies'. I was placed in the second class, where the teacher was Miss White, a kindly woman and a good teacher. Indeed the other assistant mistress, Miss Lister, and the headmistress, Miss Denby, were both excellent with small children. I was here for about a year and a half (for one 'went up' at that time in March) and I quickly learnt to read. We used the phonetic method but also cards with letters in sandpaper on them, which we traced with our fingers and identified with our eyes shut – in that way giving us a useful *physical* apprehension of the various letters. I remember clearly the first time I read a word in a 'real life' out-of-school context. I was walking along the canal bank with my parents, when we passed a service boat with its name SAM emblazoned on the side. I read it: S-A-M.....SAM! In a moment I was on top of the world. I could *read*. And indeed I was very soon reading the small paper-backed children's books available at school at a great speed.

I have several other memories of Belgrave Road School. The first is of a bright idea which I conceived one day when the weather was rather uncertain. At about 10.00 I noticed that outside there was a spell of sunshine, so I went to the teacher and suggested that it would be a good idea if we had playtime then instead of at a quarter to eleven when it might well be raining. I was rather surprised and disappointed when this extremely rational proposal was not taken up. The other event was a disaster. I caught ringworm. In those days such infections, along with squints, deformities, lice, sores, suppurating glands etc.

were run-of-the-mill affairs and there were always one or two children wearing the special white regulation caps assigned to sufferers from ringworm. My mother was naturally appalled at this prospect and she arranged with Miss Denby that I should wear a cream cap of my own instead. I was allowed to keep it in a box in her room and to change into it on reaching school. Even so, the infection caused my mother constant anguish until someone told her that ringworm could be cured swiftly by the application of acetic acid (but forgot to add, or did not know, that this should be diluted). Twice a day from then on my mother ruthlessly applied undiluted acetic acid to my scalp and her anguish was nothing compared to mine. However, it did work. The whole area, inflamed, settled down at last into one vast scab and as the hair grew this was lifted off my scalp and could eventually be removed with scissors. I had suffered *katharsis* the hard way.

Away from school, in the evenings and on Saturdays and during holidays, I spent much of my time out of doors in a really excellent environment for small children. When I was very little the back street offered protection with houses all round and watchful neighbours (who included my great-aunt Martha Alice – pronounced Marth'Alice –, the widow of Stephen and the mother of the Wilfrid who had saved my father's life immediately after the railway accident). Though I remained an only child, there were other children to play with: in particular Denis Wild, who lived next door at no. 5, about my own age and, when we were small, my closest friend, the result, I think, of proximity rather than shared interests or temperament. For small children, however, these are matters of little importance.

The Wilds were rather better off than the Walbanks. Fred Wild worked as a clerk at Steel's Mills, Harden, which made springs and was owned by his father, Walker Wild, a rather impressive self-made man, who had overcome the disability of having lost an arm. Walker Wild was the source of many gifts to his grandson Denis, which – I am rather ashamed to say –



aroused my envy; there was a splendid rocking-horse and a steam-engine which pulled a train, both kept in the Wilds' attic, where we played together on wet days. The Wilds' house was brighter than ours, too, since electricity had been installed soon after the war. And they had a pianola! Whereas we had only an upright piano and gaslight. Moreover, even after we too got electricity sometime in the twenties, the bulbs always seemed to be of low illumination. Denis' slight social superiority also came out in the matter of schooling. The 'nice' school for lower middle class people to send their children to was a rather primitive kind of dame school, housed in the Sunday School under the Baptist chapel in Park Road and run by the Misses Bygate. Anyone with any pretensions to gentility naturally sent their children there and this included Denis. These petty snobberies were quite prevalent. I still remember my resentment when a Mr Munday, a neighbour in Wilson Road, who was a clerk in the office at the local railway station, but who sent his daughter Kitty to Miss Bygate's, having lost his temper with me for some reason which I do not recall when I was playing in the street outside his house, addressed me as a 'Board-School brat'. The expression 'Board School' was by then obsolete, but had been retained as a term of insult. Denis Wild was later sent away to Lancaster Grammar School, which had a boarders' wing.

There were other children besides Denis in our back street – Kenneth Murgatroyd, an amusing, rather light-weight boy, a year or two younger than me, whom I saw a good deal of after Denis went away to school, and Eric Milnes, whose parents were Christian Scientists and consequently allowed his younger brother Dennis to go around for several years with a suppurating gland in the neck, evidently refusing to acknowledge its existence. As we grew older we went further afield. A street away and we were on the banks of the Leeds and Liverpool canal, with fields and woodland in which to play. This was a stretch between the three-rise and the more famous five-rise locks. There was also a field on the other side of Wilson Road,

adjoining and belonging to Platts' Mill, where we played in the evenings when the staff of the mill had gone home, sometimes at cricket and sometimes in imaginative games which involved making long and destructive routes through the middle of the hay. Later, as we grew more venturesome, we discovered ways to climb onto the roof of the mill. We had no concept of danger and fortunately our parents had no idea of what we were up to.

A central activity of this out-of-doors life, which – once the war was over – dominated several weeks during the autumn, was preparation for the Guy Fawkes night bonfire. Preparation for this began soon after the summer holidays were over and continued until November 5th. At the end of Wilson Road was a large walled kitchen garden belonging to the Misses Foulds, who lived adjacently in a large house. (Later this plot was sold for building and the new houses built there became an extension of Plevna Terrace.) At the lower end of this garden there was a large stone pit and this we annexed for storing 'prog', or wood for the bonfire. Prog was obtained by 'propping', going out prospecting for tree branches and dragging them back to the lair. (In the Bradford area, I later discovered, this activity was known as 'chumping'.) For propping purposes children of different neighbourhoods organised themselves into predatory gangs, part of whose recognised activity was to locate and mount raids on neighbouring hoards of prog. Consequently, as November 5th approached, it was essential to arrange for constant guards over one's hoard outside school hours and as late at night as one could reasonably hope to stay out. The fire itself was a grand affair, usually held at the bottom of Wilson Road near the canal. Young and old all attended and everyone brought fireworks, potatoes to roast, and toffee. As a device for lighting one's fireworks preferably one carried a piece of 'mill-band' consisting of oily rope, which smouldered at one end and contributed a characteristic pungent smell. On one sad night a spark from the mill-band got into my box of fireworks and all went off at once in a grand conflagration. Once November 5th had passed, the

great thing was to see how many days the remnants of the fire could be kept burning.

Towards the end of the war it became necessary to bring Nana to live with us. She was getting too old and difficult to stay at Crownest. My grandma had to go out to work and Nana could no longer be left at home alone. So she moved in with us and I migrated to the attic, where I had a single iron bedstead and she occupied my back bedroom. I rather liked this change. But there were now difficult times ahead for my mother. Nana suffered from a breast cancer which had, I was told, first appeared after the birth of Harry, her last child, about forty years earlier! This was generally known about and accepted as 'one of those things'; it was referred to as 'mi ma's cancer' and as far as I know was not treated in any way – though it is hard to say what treatment it could have received at that time. It was an ugly sight and the doctor warned my mother to do all the old lady's washing separately from ours and to be sure she had no cuts on her fingers while doing it. This cancer clearly caused Nana some discomfort, but over forty years she had grown accustomed to it and preferred to attribute any pain which it might cause to imaginary constipation, for which she dosed herself, often disastrously, with a patent medicine called cascara sagrada (which appears to mean 'sacred bark' in Spanish) and a copious intake of hot water. The sacred bark (in a bottle) was kept in a cupboard and my mother tried to modify its effects by diluting it, a device which Nana happily never detected.

When we were on holiday Nana used to go and stay with Frank and Becca Bracewell, my uncle and aunt, until we got back. There was always a feeling of slight resentment that Nana's son Harry never offered to help by having her to stay on these occasions and that the whole burden fell on her grandchildren. While staying with the Bracewells in 1920, however, Nana, who was now 88, became ill, grew worse and died before she could return to our house. On the day of the funeral I was solemnly taken to see her in her coffin: it was the

first corpse I had seen and I did not find it particularly upsetting. In fact, a couple of days earlier, as she already lay in her coffin in the Bracewells' front room, slightly visible through the intermediate door, my cousin Ethel had pointed out to me with a frisson of horror and some glee that one could just see her nose projecting above the level of the coffin, and this made a greater impression on me than the formal viewing.

During these years and afterwards my grandmother used to call in pretty regularly, once or twice a week during her dinner hour. We had a much closer relationship with her than with my grandfather. She was warm and imaginative and from an early date, about 1913, she used to buy me an 'annual' called *Chatterbox* for Christmas. She would buy the previous year's volume at a reduced price, which was clever, since as far as I was concerned, the 1913 volume was just as acceptable as the 1914 one. Phoebe was of a very different temperament from Clarice. She appeared to have weathered what might have seemed in those days the disaster of two illegitimacies unscathed and was now a much respected member of society, a pillar of the Mothers' Union at Holy Trinity Church and, one sensed, pretty self-satisfied about her role and her achievements. She had a job as taker-in at Wright's Mill, which stood just above the present-day Damart establishment at Bowling Green Mills. Wright's was later taken over by a French firm, which may have been a forerunner of Damart; but at this time it was a family mill and the two active bosses were Matthew and Tommy Wright, generally so known, though with 'Mr' added on the proper occasions. There was a third, younger brother, but his only connection with the mill seemed to be a room which he occupied with one of the first wireless installations in Bingley; it had a vast aerial from a mast, but I don't know whether there was a transmitter as well as a receiver. As taker-in, it was my grandma's duty to hand out and approve the work done by the menders, which meant that she exercised considerable power. I suspect she made many of the girls tremble on occasion. She

would visit our house with lots of gossip and my mother's reaction was rather mixed. She could see through the rather obvious self-glorification which shone through much of my grandmother's monologues, but at the same time I think she may have felt a little envy of Phoebe, going out and sharing in the life of the mill, while she worked indoors alone at her housework. For me, however, these visits gave a glimpse into a strange and exciting world and I listened to my grandmother's chatter with some fascination. It was probably a little later that she brought a continuous serial of information about the strange antics of the small Fred Hoyle who was, she claimed, badly spoilt by his mother and constantly in some sort of trouble. Very many decades later, when reading and reviewing Fred Hoyle's *Autobiography*, I recalled these stories with some amusement, for they shed quite a different light on his behaviour from the one that appeared in his narrative. My grandmother's cottage was also a place to visit at the weekend and for several years I used to walk up there on Sunday mornings, share an early Sunday dinner with her and then return for a second dinner with my parents. Because eating at my grandmother's was something special, I used to find meals there much more exciting than those at home, though in fact they were probably very similar. They did, however, include occasional very acceptable novelties such as nettle broth.

I have suggested that our house seemed ill-lit compared with the Wilds'. And that fits in with my recollection that I found it a little cheerless. Or is this a judgement passed in retrospect? Certainly, as I grew older, I was more conscious of the burden and feeling of inadequacy that my father always carried. But apart from that, it was a teetotal, non-smoking atmosphere with many of the repressive elements of a religion which he had long ago thrown off – even including a strictly conformist attitude towards Sundays, when I was dressed differently and never allowed to play outside (since this would have been thought outrageous by the neighbours). Gradually too I became aware of

the rift that my father's agnosticism had caused in the house, for my intensely conformist mother still hankered after the church services and activity which had been part of her youth (and may have given her some emotional support). She had insisted on my being christened, with Uncle Harry as godfather; and there had been some sort of a row at or after the ceremony, in which my father (who could be very tactless) had been offensive to Harry, who consequently became a rare visitor at our house until Nana came to live there and he had to come in order to visit his mother. This was a cause of grief to my mother, who was fond of Harry. I sometimes used to wonder if it was this unfortunate incident that had led my parents to decide against having any more children; but this is probably quite wrong. Indeed it is altogether more likely that, as was the case with several families in our area, they decided to have one child and put all they had into giving him full support. If that was so, it would be churlish of me to criticise their decision, for they certainly gave me every support.

It must however have been pressure from my mother that led to my being sent to Sunday School. Not indeed the C. of E., for Holy Trinity Church and Sunday School were too far away and the Fletchers had no truck with the rather 'high' Parish Church. Instead I was sent to the nearest religious establishment, which was the Baptist Chapel in Park Road, to which my mother's friend, 'Auntie' Janet White, belonged; indeed Janet was probably a main mover in the decision to send me there. I enjoyed getting my attendance card stamped and also the social evenings organised by the Sunday School. At some of these I performed recitations – loyally coached by my father. There were also choir performances for special services and this meant rehearsals – which led on one occasion to my utter discomfiture. At the end of one meeting we were told that the final rehearsal would take place in the chapel the following Thursday at 5 o'clock. This announcement filled me with horror, for it implied a reversal of one of the main laws of the universe and in a great

agony of mind I cried out 'I can't come then. We have our tea at 5 o'clock.' Agony was quickly replaced by shame when the whole assembly roared with laughter (I couldn't see why) and the choir-master suggested that my parents might perhaps manage to postpone my tea for half an hour on this one occasion.

It was also as a member of the Sunday School that I attended the Whitsuntide 'walks', which ended with tea and sports in some hired field. That was very enjoyable; but Sunday school itself never gave me any satisfaction. The superintendents on alternate Sundays were Mr Dawes and Mr Duxbury. The former was a small, colourless man, who has left no impression. Tom Duxbury, however, was a much more forceful character, whom I cordially disliked. He was the manager and owner of a firm called Magnet Firelighters, which he had built up out of an original business consisting of simply a donkey and cart, from which he had sold firewood etc. Later he diversified into window-frames and a couple of years ago (c.1990) I read an article in a journal which described Magnet as a vast multi-million pound public company with Duxbury's sons as directors. This was social mobility on an unusual scale, even for the West Riding (famous for its silk hats on Bradford millionaires); but it took place long after my brief association with Tom Duxbury. Before I leave him I have three things to add. First, although he was narrowly religious (he used to give lantern lectures on 'My visit to the 'ooly land'), Duxbury was very mean. The Fox family, my later in-laws, used to employ his sister-in-law, who lived at Cottingley, to come and do the wash-up after the Sunday dinner. She had a son whose emigration to Australia she was trying to finance. It was only after great pressure from Mr Fox that Duxbury, who was by now pretty rich, could be persuaded to contribute. The second concerns Ellen Hargreaves, a naive and foolish Sunday School teacher, who told us that she had a great admiration for Joseph (the biblical Joseph). 'I often lie awake at night,' she confessed, 'thinking about Joseph'. When Tom Duxbury, now a widower, married her as his second wife, this

memory assumed ribald overtones and led to curious speculation as to whether she still lay awake thinking about Joseph. Thirdly, it was through Tom Duxbury that I eventually severed my connection with the Baptists, since he literally propelled me down the middle of the schoolroom and out through the front door, in the false belief that, despite warnings, I had continued to make a humming noise. The culprit was in fact Ernest Lancaster, who was sitting next to me (he was also ejected), but evidently Duxbury's hearing was impaired.

My father's attitude towards religion, derived from my grandfather and encouraged by my uncle Francis, was crudely intolerant. He strongly admired Charles Bradlaugh, read (or at any rate possessed) rationalist pamphlets and, when he joined a class for book-binding, chose a selection of these to bind. It was a rather shallow agnosticism – perhaps a fairer word would be atheism – which found no place for the central and more positive role that religion has occupied throughout recorded history, inspiring the creation of art, music and literature, to balance the long catalogue of horror that must be laid at its door. All the same, I am grateful to him for the fact that I cannot remember a time when I believed the Christian myth or the Bible version of creation to be true. My first visit to Israel and the sites associated with the biblical stories of both Testaments was a very moving experience, but only in the same way that my first visit to Olympia, Athens, Delphi and Delos was a moving experience. I have therefore never suffered the emotional anguish felt by those who have a faith and lose it. On the other hand, I cannot, as he did, regard religious people as fools or their beliefs as a subject for cynicism.

I also owe a great deal to my father in other positive ways. When I was still quite small he encouraged me to borrow books from the Bingley Public Library, naturally the ones he had himself enjoyed as a boy – Ballantyne, Harrison Ainsworth, Henty, Jules Verne (I still think of him as Jools). Many years later I was amused to be told by Frank Adcock that he had

passed an important examination in English history, while at school, on the strength of his acquaintance with the novels of Henty. Ainsworth was for a long time my favourite. His books were very exciting and catered for what I later recognised as a sadistic feeling with their normal component of a mass execution of a bloody kind in the penultimate chapter. My father also took me on walks in the Bingley neighbourhood and showed me flowers and trees (he was interested in botany) and ancient tracks and footpaths; and he would point out features in the landscape such as Rivock Edge and Ingleborough (which, I seem to remember, one could just discern on a favourable day from a point near the Druids' Altar). He never showed the slightest hesitation in taking me trespassing, if that was necessary for us to reach something he had set his mind on showing me. For example, on one occasion he took me along the railway track so that Mr Sexton, the signalman, could show me the inside of the signal-box. (Mr Sexton was the father of Walter Sexton, later to become one of my closest and most lasting friends.)

My father was closely involved as treasurer in the local branch of the Workers' Educational Association (the W.E.A.) and some of my earliest memories are of his making very elegant notices – he had a skilful hand – to be put up in shop-windows, announcing forthcoming W.E.A. lectures in the Technical School in Clyde Street, and of my attempting copies of these, which my mother allowed me to put up in the 'back room' window (no-one ever came to look at them there!). Briefly, he gave me a great deal that my mother could not have given me. She also read novels, but of the popular, Ruby M. Ayres type and she did not know or care very much about plants and flowers or wild things in general. On one sad occasion the three of us were taking a walk up the hill to the Prince of Wales Park and had reached a point about halfway there, when my mother let slip the information that before leaving she had put my jar of tadpoles onto the kitchen window-sill so that they could have the full benefit of the sun. I knew that this would be fatal and pleaded to

return at once. But plans once made could not be disrupted for the sake of possible discomfort to tadpoles and when we eventually got back all the tadpoles were indeed dead. This story illustrates my mother's rather inflexible and perhaps slightly insensitive character. She was a much stricter parent than my father, though always basically kind and affectionate. They both gave me a childhood marked by a sense of security; but my not infrequent smackings always came from her and never from my more soft-hearted father.

## 8. Mornington Road School (1916-1920)

In some of what I have just been writing I have jumped ahead chronologically; so perhaps I should now go back to 1916 when, if I recollect rightly, I ‘moved up’ from Belgrave Road Infants’ School to Mornington Road Elementary School. This stood two streets further down the hill, alongside the large Wesleyan Chapel. It was a mixed school, but mixed in a very theoretical way, since boys and girls entered the building at opposite ends, were placed in separate classes after Standard I, and went out to play in separate playgrounds with a high wall separating them. The outdoor lavatories were adjacent to the wall on either side and when occasionally a stone became dislodged – not always by chance – that provided an opportunity for mildly salacious transmural badinage. This was to be my school between 1916 and 1920. There were seven ‘standards’ (i.e. classes), the highest being Standard VII, which included a group, still below the school-leaving age, known as ex-VII. The headmaster, Wright Woodcock, had identified me fairly soon as a boy likely to do fairly well in examinations and I was pushed up the school with two double removes. VI, VII and ex-VII were taught in a single class and, thanks to these removes, I found myself one of that group by 1920, when I was 10 and of the age to sit the scholarship examination to Bingley Grammar School.

This group, which I remember very clearly, embodied the unfairness of our class-system at that time. There were in it boys like myself of 10 or 11, who had been pushed up the school and who, it was expected, would get scholarships to the Grammar School and go on to middle-class careers, perhaps in some cases after going to a university. There were also other boys, who in my opinion were just as bright, who were destined to leave school at the statutory age – either 12 or 13 at that time – and become office boys or mill hands. And finally there was still a smallish group of ‘half-timers’, who spent half the day

(sometimes morning and sometimes afternoon) working in the mill and the other half-day at school. They were the poorest boys and were often dressed in shabby and filthy clothes and they usually wore clogs, not shoes. They had to bring a dog-eared book to school, in which their attendance was registered (presumably for their employer) and, as they had missed constantly half the lessons, they were behindhand, apathetic and often seemed half-asleep. Looking back, I am conscious that I was more alert to the injustice suffered by the second category, the more interesting boys who were destined not to go on to the Grammar School; the half-timers were in a sense too remote for me to identify with them at all. This was clearly a shortcoming but in retrospect an understandable one. I have indicated above my uncertainty about the exact leaving-age at this time. But I recall that there was some provision for taking children away from school early if a special case, based on family circumstances, could be put up; and there were certain clergymen who could be relied on to support such a case in all circumstances. Their behaviour was often criticised, but one can understand their dilemma: they knew the poverty of the families and the need for the extra income and so took the short-term view, perhaps having no conviction that education was of use to children of that class.

Teaching at Mornington Road School was good, though of a traditional kind. In the lower classes we chanted our multiplication tables, a method of learning which I believe has a great deal to commend it; it was the method by which I later learnt Greek verbs and in both cases I think we all enjoyed it. Dictation (to test ability in spelling) was usual from Standards I and II onwards and in Standard II, now separated into boys and girls, there was a Union Jack, which was held each week by the class which had been most successful in the dictation test. This exploitation of what would now be called ‘gender rivalry’ aroused great enthusiasm and each week on Friday afternoon we were raised up or cast down by the retention, acquisition or loss

of the flag. I had been moved up into this class prematurely from Standard I in the first of my double removes and I recollect some difficulty in catching up on the arithmetic. Eventually my parents got hold of the text-book in use and helped me to master the new material, an operation hampered at the beginning by my false impression that the author of the book was called, somewhat improbably, McDoodle, whereas in fact the name was McDougall. But on the whole my recollections of the various standards in the school tend to merge, and only a few incidents stand out.

One of these, which occurred when I was seven or eight, was calculated to make me rather swollen-headed. A project organised by our teacher involved children giving short five- to ten-minute talks on any subject they wanted; and, having recently heard a W.E.A. lecture on the subject, I decided to give mine on 'Pack-horse tracks around Bingley', which I did with the help of a diagram on the blackboard. This was so well received by the teacher, that I was told to give it again to one of the other classes, which of course I did with great pride. I mention this trivial incident as an early foreshadowing of what was eventually to be my profession. Standard IV I remember as somewhat trying, since our class teacher was none other than my own Cousin Edie, already mentioned above. It was naturally a great embarrassment to be in any way closely connected with any teacher, and in this case we shared the same not very common surname, so that concealment of the relationship was impossible. Worse still, Cousin Edie was given to illustrating points in her lessons with references to actions or remarks of her little boy, Alan, which illustrated his unusual precocity and intelligence; she would then appeal to me to perjure myself with such remarks as: 'Don't you remember that, Frank?' I was very glad when I moved into Standard V.

The teacher I remember best was the one we had in my last year at the school. His name was Sam Robinson and he had a bullet-head and a rather brutal, saturnine face. Also, what we did

not know, he had suffered from exposure to gas in the recent war. Sam Robinson was an odd mixture. He was an excellent and imaginative teacher and at the age of ten I was doing logarithms under him with ease (and understanding the principle involved). Teaching was still done by the class-teacher in all subjects and I am grateful to him for making me learn a great deal of poetry by heart. We were encouraged to choose these poems ourselves and to bring our own poetry books to school (which I reckon must have counted against many children, including especially the half-timers – but after all everything was weighted against them). Despite these merits Robinson had a vile temper and would not hesitate to hurl a bunch of keys across the room at anyone singled out for his anger. He also caned us unmercifully, using not only rulers, but also a long solid stick which he would bring down on the palm of the hand with sufficient force to raise a large weal and cause extreme pain, which lasted for several hours. I only received this treatment once and a letter from my father (who knew Robinson as a fellow-teacher) ensured that he never did this to me again.

Robinson's eventual fate was really tragic. He became an alcoholic, probably as a reaction to the pain from his gas injuries, and, as he was now headmaster at Cottingley Elementary School, his career was in some jeopardy on this account. He became an object of scandalous gossip when he tried to get into dances when obviously drunk and had to be forcibly expelled. He used to spend some nights at his sister's house in Harden, where he slept in a caravan which she owned; and in winter he used an electric blanket on his bed. Going back there drunk one evening he went to bed with the blanket on and, having apparently been incontinent during the night, was found electrocuted the next morning.

My years at Mornington Road School were happy ones. One had no time to waste getting there in the morning or after dinner, but in the evening, after school 'loosed' (the usual West Riding expression: we pronounced it 'loozed', just as we said 'uz' for

'us'), there was a great deal of enjoyable dawdling, playing at 'conkers' (chestnuts on a string) in season or swapping cigarette cards and 'football cards' (which had club colours and names of clubs on them and were often heart-shaped). The cigarette cards of course came free in cigarette packets and I eventually collected several sets, including 'Oxford and Cambridge Colleges' and 'Universities of Great Britain and the Commonwealth'. But I do not remember where the football cards came from; perhaps they were sold in halfpenny packets, but I certainly never bought any. There was a lot of gossip and telling of jokes, some crude and bawdy, others just puerile. Games we still played seasonally – whip and top, bowling a hoop of wood or, more prestigiously, iron, and (for the girls) skipping. How we knew the right time for these is not clear, but I fancy the shops gave the signal by putting them on show. They helped to give a shape to the year, along with the various festivals and holidays.

The mixing of social classes at our school, the differences in speech, the use or non-use of dialect – it was a point of honour to talk as far as possible like the rest, though the use of 'tha' for 'you' was beginning to die out and was regarded by adults in my circle as 'rather common' – all this was a very useful social exercise. One soon came to realise that one was living simultaneously in several different worlds – the world of one's family, the world of the boys at school, and the world of the class-room. They were normally kept apart and any intrusion of one into the other was a cause of surprise and indeed hilarity – as when for example Mr Pickles, who played the piano to which we marched into the school hall for morning assembly and prayers, one day launched into the tune of a popular song, 'K-K-K-Katie', which we all knew, but felt could have nothing to do with school. Everyone's face lit up with smiles at the incongruity. Usually these separate worlds were kept decently apart – as is of course the case with the different worlds of adult life.

For two summers, those of 1919 and 1920, the two years

immediately after the war ended, our school took part in a programme, the memory of which still conjures up feelings of excitement and nostalgic pleasure. This was the 'Camp School', held, with the collaboration of its Principal, Helen Wodehouse (sister of P.G. and later Mistress of Girton), in the grounds of Bingley Training College, a large institution with central buildings and several residential hostels for women students situated on a fine site up the hill from Bingley and adjoining the Prince of Wales Park. This park, in consequence, had become an attractive place for evening walks for the youths of Bingley, since they might there run into students also out walking (probably with similar objects in view). It was in fact in the Prince of Wales Park that my cousin Alan, the subject of Cousin Edie's imaginative stories, later met his first wife, Margaret Fitton, who was then training as a teacher at the college. It was in the grounds of this college that large marquees were erected and, for periods of, I think, two weeks each, the Bingley elementary schools transferred their top classes for a well-designed course based on local history and geography and including the production of a play and similar appropriate activities. Instead of following the usual streets to school you left a little earlier to climb up Park Road and then, taking the short cut past the Spa, with its iron-impregnated water running with a bright orange stain across the lane (it was known to be very good for you, so you always stopped there for a drink), to continue up the narrow passage through the woods, which brought you out into Lady Lane right opposite the college. We stayed there for midday dinner, cooked outside and eaten either outside or under canvas, a most unusual and enthralling experience, in which the food seemed quite different and enchanting; in fact, if I remember rightly, it usually consisted of soup, rice-pudding, and rhubarb. It was here, in scenes from 'As You Like It', in the part of Adam, that I had my first taste of acting; and by carelessly putting on my father's cycling stockings over my shoes, wore them out (which was not well received at home, though in fact



my father had long since ceased either to wear them or to cycle).

I have already mentioned Wright Woodcock, the Headmaster of Mornington Road School. The astronomer, Fred Hoyle, in his autobiography, holds him up to ridicule as a ‘stuffed shirt’ and buffoon, whose name was given an obscene significance by dirty-minded little boys. The latter statement is true, but the characterisation is quite unjust. Mr Woodcock was an excellent and caring schoolmaster and I owe him a great deal. His own son Arnold (who was eventually headmaster at Ashby-de-la Zouche Grammar School) had gone on, not to the local grammar school, open to Bingley boys (as was the Girls’ Grammar School to girls) with a West Riding County Council (W.R.C.C.) scholarship, but to Bradford Grammar School, a much more high-powered kind of school, but one open only to boys within the Bradford area on a Bradford City Scholarship. The West Riding offered no scholarships to Bradford Grammar School, but there were a few Governors’ Scholarships offered annually, which covered half the fees, and these were open to boys outside Bradford. Mr Woodcock persuaded my parents to let me compete for a Governors’ Scholarship. I sat the examination at Bradford Grammar School in the spring of 1920 and came second – the first place went to a boy called Brear, who later went up to Oxford and read mathematics. I got all the arithmetic questions right and I think I scored in the general knowledge paper by answering the question: ‘What is the League of Nations?’ by quoting Tennyson’s lines from *Locksley Hall* about ‘the parliament of man, the federation of the world’ – though I’m not sure I didn’t attribute them to Wordsworth!

The written examination was followed on a Saturday morning some weeks later by an interview with the Headmaster, W. Edwards. I remember the occasion very clearly since that same morning I was due to take the theory section of a very elementary pianoforte examination, for which I had been entered. That examination was being held in a room in Darley Street, Bradford, and it was therefore arranged that I should go

there late, if necessary, after my interview at the school. However, the names of three of us were called out almost at once and when we went into the Headmaster’s study he told us that we had been elected without further interview. Highly excited I at once asked ‘Then can I go now, Sir?’, whereupon he characteristically put me down with the reply ‘You *may* go now’. To illustrate the rather pedantic and crabbed nature of W. Edwards I will at this point jump ahead twelve years to 1932, when after taking a good degree and completing a year’s research at Cambridge, I called on him for advice about a teaching job, since I was at the time without one. ‘I had hoped’, I explained haltingly, ‘to get a teaching post in a school rather like this’. ‘Perhaps,’ he replied through his tight lips, ‘you will now realise what a good school this is’. ‘Too good for the likes of you’ is what I think he meant. Anyhow, to complete the story of the interview, I rushed along North Parade to Darley Street, did my theory paper (I passed!) and got a tram back to Bingley with the good news. It then became evident that I had carelessly gone to Bradford in my very oldest broken-down shoes: what a disgrace!

## 9. Life in Bingley (1910-1930) I

Before going on to describe the next stage of my career, that at Bradford Grammar School, I propose to say something more about life in Bingley during the two decades, 1910-1930. And first a few remarks about Bingley itself. It was at that time a fairly compact little West Riding manufacturing town, situated in Airedale, between Shipley and Keighley. The original town with the main street through it lay on one of the glacial deposits to be found at intervals along the flat and marshy valley bottom. The direction of the valley at this point is NW-SE, and the town lay on the left bank of the river. On the side of the town opposite to the river ran the Midland Railway – the old main line from St Pancras to Carlisle and Scotland – and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Both came through a rather narrow gap, but the canal then rose up the hillside through a range of first three and then five locks in order to continue at a higher level and avoid the swampy ground between Bingley and Keighley, which was to prove a difficult obstacle in the subsequent laying down of the railway. Immediately north-west of the town was a second glacial deposit, Bailey Hills, which contained the two grammar schools, the cemetery and a few houses (now many more); and this hill hemmed the river in to form a picturesque valley. On the far side of the river a hillside with bush and scrub rose up to the Druids' Altar. It was on this stretch of the river that my father had performed his act of gallantry. In the low-lying area between the two hills stood the parish church, the old centre of the town with one or two inns and the original bridge across the Aire, known as Ireland (and earlier Bingley) Bridge. A mill standing at this point had been responsible for the weir and the consequent boating facilities above it.

Bingley possessed (and still possesses) two parks. One was the Prince of Wales Park at the top of Park Road, which had been opened in 1865 and had near its entrance a fountain (with a

chained iron cup) presented by the Temperance Societies of Bingley. The other, Myrtle Park, was almost in the town proper, lying between Myrtle Place and the river, and was not opened until 1908, the year before I was born. Myrtle Park, with its facilities for brass-band concerts, tennis courts and bowling greens and its easy access from Main Street quickly became the more popular and the more widely used. But for children living in the Park Road area the 'top park' remained an attractive place to visit, especially on account of a large sanded area, formerly the floor of a quarry, which was very suitable for cricket matches. This area was bounded on the one side by sandstone cliffs and on the other by the old butter cross, stocks and market hall, which had been transported from the Main Street when it was widened and re-erected there. Bingley had at that time a population (including the outer villages such as Eldwick, Morton, Harden and Cottingley) of about 20,000 and it had around ten mills, making woollens. Its surroundings were, and still are, extremely beautiful: to the south-west the wooded Harden valley with Harden Beck running down from Cullingworth to join the Aire at Beckfoot opposite Myrtle Park, and on the north-east side a range of hills leading up to and across the Eldwick valley to Baildon and Ilkley (Rombald's) Moors.

Our house in Bromley Road was halfway up the first hill. I have described the immediate vicinity. In winter, if there was plenty of snow (which in retrospect seems more often than, I suspect, actually was the case), we used to sledge down Plevna Terrace alongside the garden where the prog was stored or, if it was really hard, in Park Road itself, where it was possible to get a run of about a third of a mile from the top of Prince of Wales Park to about the level of Bromley Road, where we lived. Motor traffic was still infrequent and tended to keep off the roads when they were covered with snow, and there was no nonsense about clearing a main road for traffic. It was just taken for granted that sledging would take over while the snow lasted. We used to

come down head first, round the steep bend on the corner of Park Side, and then followed the straight run down the hill. My parents seem to have been singularly unawake to the frightening risks involved: a collision or failure to take the bend could easily have ended in a fractured skull or a broken arm. But happily this never happened.

My mother had a busy life looking after the house, with the buying-in, cooking, washing-up, washing clothes, ironing, and baking in a regular round and such additional items as the annual spring-cleaning as extras. Washing clothes, a task traditionally assigned to Mondays, was a much heavier job than it is nowadays. The dirty garments were boiled in a metal boiler with a gas jet beneath, known as a boiler or copper, such of them, that is, as required this heavy treatment. Older houses had a boiler built in with a small coal fire underneath and this outfit was known as a set-pot. Next the clothes were put into a wooden or, later, metal wash-tub, filled with hot soap-suds and attacked with a 'dolly', which was a device consisting of an upright wooden handle going down into a small stool-like contraption, which was turned from side to side pulling the legs through the clothing. Alternatively one employed a 'posser' which had a handle going down to a circular hollow piece, as if it were the top part of a globe, which was moved up and down among the clothes, producing a partial vacuum, and subjecting the clothes to considerable pressure. Any dirt still remaining after this assault was next removed by rubbing on a special rubbing board with a ridged metal surface set in a wooden frame, which was held inside the dolly-tub. The clothes were then lifted out, a heavy job, with the aid of a stick and were put through the mangle, which had two wooden rollers and was worked by hand. Next they were hung out on a line going across the yard and sometimes the back street, or if it was wet, they had to be dried on a clothes-horse (known in Lancashire as a maiden) in front of the fire in the living-room, which in consequence was very damp and unpleasant on wet Mondays. Finally they had to be ironed.

As will be obvious, this whole procedure, which in its last stages could be seriously hampered by bad weather, occupied the best part of each Monday.

Throughout my childhood my mother also baked all our bread, always on Thursdays. Consequently that was the day on which one normally got meat-and-potato pie, jam and apple pasties and the like for dinner. Dinner was the main meal of the day, served around 12.20 (we came out of school at 12.00). The pattern of meals like the pattern of the week was pretty strictly laid down. For breakfast there were eggs and bacon, white bread and butter and tea. For dinner, on Sundays a joint, either lamb with mint sauce, beef with Yorkshire pudding (cooked in a cake-tin – one each – and served before the main course) or very rarely pork (in those days chicken was an expensive luxury). The meat was served with potatoes and a green vegetable (usually over-cooked) and for pudding we mostly had rice pudding, but occasionally and especially on baking day, sponge pudding with jam on top or suet pudding served with custard. Afterwards there was a cup of tea. The next meal, at 5.00. was tea, which in the West Riding meant 'high tea'. This consisted of a first course of cold meat (with salad in summer) or perhaps tinned salmon or sardines, tomatoes etc., followed by a second course of stewed fruit and custard, cake, buns, tarts, pastries and of course a pot of strong Indian tea taken with milk and sugar. At Christmas this was the great meal to which visitors were invited, and then it was more elaborate: potted meat, cold turkey, haslet (in Yorkshire a kind of meat roll) or boiled ham and then trifle (containing sherry, sometimes even among teetotallers, though this was contentious), jellies, Christmas cake, mince pies etc. One might reasonably have expected high tea to be the last real meal of the day; but no! Around 10.00 came supper. As a child and in my early adolescence this was a cup of hot milk and one or two ginger biscuits. But after I had gone to bed and later on, when I was still up and could participate, there was a full supper, with bread and butter, cheese and more tea. Very occasionally, as

a special treat, I was sent with a shilling to Billie Wade's fish and chip shop halfway down Park Road to buy and bring home 'three fish and three penn'orth of chips' which we would eat with the usual bread, butter and tea. As far as I remember, neither my parents nor I ever suffered from indigestion or insomnia on these occasions.

Meals through the week followed a fairly standard pattern, especially dinner. The other meals were much as I have indicated, but what one had for dinner depended on what day of the week it was. Monday was always cold meat from the Sunday joint. Tuesday and Wednesday might be liver and bacon, sausage (rarely) or a stew, Thursday something cooked in the oven such as steak and kidney pie or stewed meat and dumplings, Friday usually fish (fried and served with chips done in a special chip pan) and on Saturday often what my mother called a 'tea-dinner', a curious concept, since it was the normal dinner (or occasionally egg and bacon) but accompanied by a pot of tea and bread and butter (these being the constituents of 'tea' as a meal).

Shopping was no problem, since there were far more carts coming round with foodstuffs than there are today. Meat had to be fetched, but the butcher, Stott Thornton, was only two blocks away down Park Road; he did his own slaughtering at the Bingley abattoir and his meat was very good. It was a slight embarrassment and source of regret to my parents that he had (somewhat unusually) a licence to sell beer, so that one was brought into undesirable propinquity with alcohol while innocently buying meat. But that was just something my mother had to put up with. At least two greengrocers brought their carts along our back street once or twice a week; and every Friday there was Eli (Butterfield) with his fish cart (for Friday, even in this predominantly Protestant and largely nonconformist town was a day to eat fish). Eli looked (and drank) like a fish, and ultimately (long after I had left Bingley) ended in some sort of alcoholic disaster, the details of which I have forgotten. We usually had hake, or occasionally haddock or halibut: herrings

and kippers rarely and no experimenting beyond that. There was also a muffin man and we had occasional muffins for tea (along with, not as a substitute for the other things). Groceries came from Thos. Hemmant, whose shop was in the Main Street towards the bottom of the town. Each Thursday morning we had a visit from Tom Willis, his traveller, who took an order to be delivered by Hemmant's van the next day. Unhappily Tom, whom we always paid for our order the following week, was found to have been fiddling the books and got the sack. He was a popular man and everyone was very sorry for him and hardly at all censorious; he had some difficulty getting another job. But about this time my Uncle Frank, who had worked in the Coop from the time he left school, first in Cottingley and then as a branch manager at Cullingworth, where he went to live (and where we visited him, on foot of course), was now appointed traveller for the central shop of the Bingley Cooperative Society. My mother, with her family disposition towards conservatism, was very much for private traders rather than either the Coop or the now growing number of chain stores. But Frank, after all, was her brother, so reluctantly she left Hemmant's for the Coop and after that received a weekly visit from Frank in his new official capacity.

Other goods, such as pots and pans, drapery, clothing, crockery, pharmaceutical items and shoes were bought in the town, the last of course at Walbank Bros. in the Main Street. But in my earlier years clothes were usually made at home or by a 'bespoke' tailor. My mother made most of her own clothes and many of mine when I was a child: that meant such things as tunic suits, sailor suits (navy blue, but a white suit for Sundays, which I usually managed to make filthy by falling into mud) and short trousers. Boys did not go into long trousers until about the age of 13 or 14. This added to the discomfort of winter, when one suffered from often leaky shoes, frozen knees and draughty, coal-fire-heated houses, which encouraged chilblains. My mother also made such things as 'serviettes', pillow cases and

bolster cases, often embroidering these. I am still today (1992) using a pillow slip which she must have embroidered about fifty years ago.

For more elaborate wear, such as costumes, women went to a dress-maker, probably with their own cloth, which many people could get wholesale through factory connections. This procedure also applied to men. My father would take a suit-length to Willie Lobley, a bespoke tailor, to be made up. It was not until I was about twelve that I had my first shop-made suit, bought at the large central store of Willie Pratt in Main Street, almost opposite the end of Park Road. Pratt's father had a little shop as a bespoke tailor, doing repairs etc., in Park Road and the two generations illustrated the change taking place in buying habits. Today the bespoke tailor must be a great rarity, like the man who makes you a pair of shoes. The same changes were taking place at this time in the buying of furniture. When my parents were married in 1905 they had their furniture made for them by Lund Thompson: a black ebonised suite for the front room, chairs, a table and a sofa for the back room, and a full bedroom suite for their own bedroom. But when, several decades later, they decided to replace the French style cabinet with a simple 'modern' version (actually a much less distinguished object) they bought it from Ben Ingham, who sold furniture, not from a cabinet-maker. Despite the considerable burden of all the housework (for which she had a little domestic help once or twice a week) my mother was indefatigable. When for example around 1920 the W.E.A. ran a fancy-dress dance, she made me a suit as a Chinese boy, with baggy trousers and a wonderful tunic with an overall red dragon design and black edging and a round hat of the same materials with which I won a prize (it was, I think, 7/6d and I spent it on three volumes of Dickens). Needless to say, she also made her own gypsy outfit for the same event and a pierrot suit for my father.

One of the main differences between life then and life now, six or seven decades later, is that you walked everywhere; you

walked because that was the only way to get there (other than bytaking a cab or a taxi, which was inconceivable). The tram running from Bradford and finishing, first at the 'top of the town', then a little later by the Post Office just below the junction with Park Road and, eventually, at Crossflatts about a mile beyond Bingley, was only useful for visiting the Holgates, who lived at Shipley (and later another set of my parents' friends, the Kitsons, whom they had met originally on holiday, and who lived at Manningham). Buses began to run only in the nineteen-twenties, up to Eldwick, then to Keighley, Harden, Halifax, Bradford and at length with a whole network of companies which mostly ended up by being amalgamated into the West Yorkshire Bus Co. But when I was small, one walked to Eldwick to visit Uncle Joseph and Cousin Edie, or Uncle Francis, who had a house on the main road (with a cellar adapted to form a garage for his motor-bike and sidecar). Of course one walked everywhere inside the town and also to Sleningford Road, Crossflatts, where Uncle Joseph (and Edie and Alan) came to live when they left Eldwick. Earlier, people were prepared to walk even further. When my father and mother lived at Burley (at the time of his first job at Otley) they regularly walked over the moors to Bingley at the weekend; and indeed I regarded the four or five miles over to Ilkley (and then back) as quite a reasonable proposition for an evening walk.

Walking was used for recreation much more than it is today. But, as far as I can remember, there was no jogging in Bingley (though I met it – it was called running – at Cambridge later). In Bingley a solitary figure running through the streets in shorts would have been incomprehensible (unless he was a 'harrier' preparing for a paper-chase) and people would have queried his sanity. There was not a lot of entertaining when I was small, apart from Christmas, when a routine exchange of visits took place – with my uncles, my grandmother, even my grandfather, and with cousins, friends and neighbours. Except on Christmas Day, these were invariably invitations to 'tea', but usually were

prolonged to take in supper, before one left for the wintry walk home. As a child I enjoyed the slight (but only slight) variety and the great profusion of food available at these functions, but once the eating was over, the rest of the evening I found appallingly dull.

Occasionally there were party games, card games, such as rummy, rarely whist and never bridge: I never learnt to play bridge and indeed I always found card games rather a waste of time. Mostly the evening was passed in conversation, which was largely repetitive and one might almost say formulaic. There was, especially from the older folk, a great deal of recalling past times and odd local characters from earlier generations; on a first hearing these anecdotes were quite enthralling, but heard over and over again they palled. There was also the holiday theme, the recounting of past holidays and futile comparisons of the merits of, say, Blackpool with those of Morecambe or Scarborough. There were also discussions (often arising out of the meal one had just consumed) of the relative merits of different kinds of food or ways of preparing it (for example roast and boiled meat). It was felt to be important to avoid discord (very reasonably) and with that in mind the conversation was generally steered away from politics and religion – though the latter was sometimes difficult, if my uncle Francis was present and he saw an opportunity to make some biting anti-Christian comment, which would be very offensive to my uncle Frank, if he was there, since (despite working for the Coop) he was a committed conservative, a devoted churchman and a member of Holy Trinity choir. If there were other children present, such as Alan, my cousins Ethel and Clarice or my cousin Elsie (Wilfrid's daughter), we might sometimes go and play together in another room and so avoid the tedium.

Some incidents occasionally cropped up in these ruminations which later one would have liked to pursue further. For instance, my Uncle Francis had some interesting accounts of organised demonstrations against the local squire, William Ferrand, who

lived in a fine seventeenth century house, St Ives, lying in the woods between Bingley and Harden. The question at issue had been one of rights of way and Ferrand had tried to close the footpaths along the Hollins above the river Aire, and there had been clashes and fighting with his game-keepers, and arrests. But once a matter got to the courts (my uncle alleged) the result was in little doubt, since Ferrand was of course a JP. and, though he would not be allowed to hear a case in which he had an interest, his friends would. If necessary, he could, and was prepared to, take the matter to a higher court. Many years later, my wife Mary and I tried to get my uncle to send us a written account of this, but what arrived was very short and scrappy. Clearly he could tell the story in a very lively fashion, but he could not write it down.

This story interested me since I had met the current squire when he welcomed a W.E.A. party of ramblers to St Ives and showed us round the house in a very friendly and genial way. Whether the wicked squire of my uncle's stories was this man or a predecessor was not clear (I suspect the latter), but I regret not having been able to find out more. Also in retrospect there is a great deal I should have liked to find out about his early life from my grandfather; but at the time I lacked the interest.

## 10. Life in Bingley (1910-1930) II: The Great War

I have already mentioned my father's role in the local branch of the W.E.A.. The activities of this body, in retrospect, played an important part in my early years. Before the war its Bingley Branch had, as its secretary, a certain David Thompson, a cabinet maker and the son of the man who had made my parents' original furniture. In the course of the war he was called up into the forces and his place was taken by a most vigorous and single-minded schoolmistress called Jessie Longbottom, the daughter of the blacksmith who operated his forge in Park Road. Jessie transformed the Branch. She had a strong competitive sense and set out, successfully, to make the Bingley Branch the biggest and most effective in the Yorkshire District.

The W.E.A. ran a full programme of lectures in the winter and rambles or visits to places of interest in the summer (in addition to its tutorial classes) and with my parents I soon became involved in both. The organisation also ran two functions on a wider basis. One was the Summer School at Saltburn, with classes of a serious content and that we took no part in (to the regret of Miss Longbottom). We did, however, for two or three years attend the Whitsuntide gathering at Ingleton, which lasted a week (though many left after the weekend). The participants were lodged in various houses throughout the village, but all meals and gatherings were held in a large hut behind the Wheatsheaf Hotel in the centre of the village; and on one occasion all the children who had come with their parents were lodged together in the pub itself – the first time, I think, that I had ever been separated overnight from my parents. During the day we had rambles in the very attractive limestone district around the village. There was what was known as 'the scenery', an area covering the valleys of two small rivers with a large number of waterfalls, and this occupied one day. Another was taken up climbing Ingleborough, though the majority only

reached a point halfway up. Ingleborough seemed to me the greatest mountain imaginable and it was a vast source of pride to make it to the summit (accompanied of course by my father): indeed it still gives me a nostalgic twinge if ever I catch sight of its blunt nose on the horizon. We also visited the caves at Clapham and the vast pot-hole, Gaping Ghyll. There was lots of singing, including several 'nonsense songs', which seemed to me brilliantly witty; and on the last night we all trooped down to the bridge outside the town (so as not to disturb the local inhabitants) and there enjoyed a midnight sing-song. In the evenings there were concerts and also lectures by such W.E.A. tutors as Arthur Greenwood (later a minister in the Labour Government). And for the children there were illicit pleasures like breaking the necks of large numbers of lemonade bottles (stacked in cases behind the pub) to extract the glass marbles with which they were sealed or watching with fascinated horror the slaughter of a pig. When I read of juvenile crime I sometimes recall the 'pop' bottles: in a sense we knew that we were doing wrong, yet it didn't *seem* wrong (or very wrong) at the time. Children's minds work very oddly.

Over the years I derived a great deal from the W.E.A. From one course of lectures I learnt quite a lot about contemporary novelists; and by shamelessly plagiarising the contents of a lecture by Henry Charlton (a Bingley man who was Professor of English Literature at Manchester) on Hamlet, I managed to win a Holiday Task Prize, when that play was prescribed for vacation reading (this was later, in the early twenties, when I was already at Bradford Grammar School). At this point I shall succumb to the temptation to digress with a true anecdote about Henry Charlton, who was the great success-story of Bingley Grammar School and came down one year to officiate at their Speech Day; I cannot remember how I came to be present. The Chairman was a local councillor, probably Chairman of the Bingley Urban District Council, and the nearest Bingley got to having a mayor. He had been a contemporary of Charlton at the school and in

introducing him he therefore indulged in a certain amount of reminiscence. 'Henry,' he said, 'Ah can assure you, was no swot. He always liked a bit of fun and he would gladly take the lead in baiting the masters. Indeed it would be no exaggeration to call him the champion master-baiter of the whole class.' To my surprise this startling and ambiguous claim caused not the slightest ripple in the Bingley audience, who probably used quite a different vocabulary, and for whom the hidden possibilities of the councillor's remark had gone unrecognised. Whether Henry noticed it, I cannot of course say. Later I got to know him, but I never judged it a suitable question to put to him.

To return to the W.E.A., many years later, in the 1930s, Mary organised a class on current affairs in Bingley under their auspices, and this, although I was then lecturing at Liverpool, I would attend when at home in Bingley under an assumed name and identity, to keep up the number of class attenders (since if the number fell below a certain point the class had to be discontinued). Tutor and class connived at this deception, which was in both their interests. I shall revert to this class later, since it led to our making two of our close friends, John and Dorothy (D) Edwards. Finally, to round off this account of my connection with the W.E.A., I taught a class on current affairs in Lytham in 1945/6. The Bingley Branch continued to flourish under Jessie Longbottom for many years, though I think it is no longer so important, since the arrival of so many competing claims on people's time, not least TV. My last memory of Jessie is from a meeting of the Yorkshire District in Leeds Town Hall round about 1934. Delegates from all over Yorkshire had attended and had been offered overnight hospitality by members living nearer to Leeds. As Mary and I left we were, like others, diverted by the sight of Miss Longbottom standing in the middle of the hall and calling out in a loud voice: 'Where are those two men from Swaledale who are sleeping with me tonight?'

The Whitsuntide holiday at Ingleton was far more interesting to me than our normal holidays, which were generally taken at

Morecambe (or occasionally at Blackpool or Scarborough and once each, I recall, at Llandudno and Bournemouth). But Morecambe was the established seaside holiday place for people living in the Airedale industrial towns. There was a direct railway connection via Settle, Clapham and Lancaster to the Promenade Station and as a child I believed that this line, running from what were obviously terminus stations at Bradford and Morecambe, constituted the whole of the British railway network. Since holidays were taken in the same, Bingley Tide, week, one was constantly running into Bingley people as one walked around in Morecambe and this, I think, was felt to be an additional attraction, giving a kind of familiarity to the Morecambe scene. People scarcely known at home would be greeted with great warmth when encountered on the promenade.

On these holidays we stayed in a lodging house, which meant that my mother and Mrs Holgate (for the Holgates usually came with us on holiday) went out each morning and bought food for the day, which was then brought back to the landlady, who cooked it. Since she had perhaps half a dozen separate families staying in the house, this must have involved a great deal of labour and organisation, but it was a recognised system for those who, like my parents, did not aspire to the greater luxury of a boarding-house, where the food was provided by the landlady. During these holidays the main recreation was walking along the promenade or along the cliffs to Heysham, sitting on the beach, bathing if it was warm enough (which it rarely was) or taking a weekly ticket for the very inferior concert-party on the pier. When we were small we were also taken to play on the sands, 'we' being myself and Annie Holgate. Once or twice during the stay we would make excursions – for instance in a horse-drawn landau to Heysham docks or by train to Hest Bank or Grange-over-Sands. My father was a good swimmer and he was very anxious to teach me. But early morning lessons in a cold rough sea before breakfast I found very distasteful and I was in fact sixteen before I learnt to swim; and that took place not in the sea



at Morecambe, nor yet in the Keighley Baths, which I later used to visit, but in the new Bingley Baths in the Princess Hall, erected around 1926 near the entrance to Myrtle Park.

If one did not go on holiday during Bingley Tide (and my father had a rather longer summer break from which to choose), there was plenty that week to provide entertainment at home in Bingley, in particular the annual carnival day, officially known as the Fete and Gala (pronounced Gayla). This involved a procession through the Main Street, consisting of symbolic tableaux on horse-drawn carts, which were organised by the various churches and other institutions, several bands playing at intervals in the procession, female impersonators (entered for a competition) and other categories of entertainer. The procession ended up in Myrtle Park and a concert took place there in the evening. We usually watched this procession from the window above my uncles' shop, until they sold the business. During this week there was also a fair on the Gasfields near Ireland Bridge, with roundabouts and various sideshows, for which the power was provided by large steam-engines, which were also used to tow the dismantled roundabouts from fairground to fairground (for each town would have its tide or fair in a different week). Myrtle Park was a popular meeting place throughout the summer months and at the weekends young men and women would take part in what was very much the equivalent of the Mediterranean *paseo*, going up and down the Main Street or, if there was a band in the park, round and round the bandstand with the unadmitted but frequently achieved purpose of striking up an acquaintance with those of the opposite sex. The extension of this custom to the park had already been established when I was a child, since this had been acquired in 1908 and concerts took place there from 1913 onwards.

They were probably interrupted by the war, which between 1914 and 1918 overshadowed life everywhere. I was of course too young to get its full impact – I was not quite nine when it ended in November 1918 – but I have some very clear memories

of it, in particular the pages of photographs of the local dead and wounded, which appeared each week on the back page of the *Keighley News* (which incorporated the *Bingley Chronicle*). Our immediate family was not involved, since my father's injuries in the railway accident made him category C3, i.e. not liable for active service. My Walbank uncles were not called up either, probably on grounds of age, but my Uncle Frank was drafted into the Pay Corps and was stationed at York, and so was able to get home fairly often. There was, however, one traumatic incident. Those not called up had to take medical tests at intervals, as the tremendous carnage led to the need for more men, and on one such occasion, through incompetence, my father was given an A category. I remember the dismay and grief at home at this news; my mother was well aware that he was simply not up to facing army life. Anyhow, he appealed against the decision and was restored to the C category, so this crisis was surmounted. But I remember visiting the Inghams, the family of a girlhood friend of my mother, who had died in adolescence, to see her brother Arthur, who turned out to be on his last leave. Even as a child of about eight I sensed his misery and despair at the thought of returning to the trenches. A few weeks later we heard that he had been killed.

The various stages of the war passed over my head, but there was some local excitement in the early days at the arrival of Belgian refugees, including a family whose male head was known as 'the Burgomaster' – he had evidently been mayor of his native town – and the exotic presence of his daughter, a small Belgian girl called Yvonne van Sneyk – a very un-Yorkshire name, which seemed exciting in itself. There was also the diversion of rationing and even more, the occasional arrival of a load of, say, margarine to be sold 'off the ration' on a first-come first-served basis to those who queued for it (a fixed amount for each person). Information was sometimes unreliable and I recall one occasion when Denis Wild and I were sent to queue outside the Maypole shop in the Main Street, where a consignment of

margarine was said to have arrived. But after we had stood there for an hour outside the locked doors and no-one else had joined us, we concluded that we were on a wild-goose chase and came home with empty bags.

Other events that stick in my mind are a disastrous explosion at the munitions factory at Low Moor south of Bradford (with heavy casualties among the workers) and the news of the sinking of the *Lusitania* (which was to lead to the entry of the U.S.A. into the war and the arrival, already mentioned, of Percy Smith to visit his relatives in Bingley). At one stage I possessed a large bronze medal – it must have been an allied forgery – which purported to represent passengers for the *Lusitania* buying tickets from a skeleton, standing for Death. The purpose was evidently to show the enemy openly gloating at their success in sinking this liner. What eventually happened to the medal I don't know, nor indeed how we came to possess it. And did I actually see a zeppelin flying over Bingley by night? I have a clear picture of the sight, but it may be imaginary. Another feature of the war was of course the black-out and what I recall of this is that people wore small disks in their lapels which glowed in the dark, to prevent them from bumping into each other on the unlit pavement. These disks were somehow 'charged' by being exposed to the light during the daytime and we used to make them more interesting by drawing little faces on them.

During the war we were encouraged to grow food and additional allotment gardens were made available. My father acquired one in a large field on the top side of Villa Road, a rather 'superior' part of the town, not far from the Prince of Wales Park, and later the original of the better- class district figuring in John Braine's *Room at the Top*. John Braine was librarian at the Bingley Public Library and this novel was based on the town and neighbourhood of Bingley. This allotment was rather inconveniently situated for us, since it could only be reached after a long trek up the hill (though we were helped by having the wheelbarrow made by my uncle Alfred). The soil, how-

ever, was very good and we had excellent vegetables from this allotment throughout the war. I have a clear memory of the end of the war with the armistice of November 11th, 1918. We all bought flags – Union Jacks – to fly out of the bedroom window. Evidently the shops had been stocked with these, in anticipation of the event, for presumably it was known for some weeks that victory was in sight. So there were plenty for everyone. Ours, bought at a small shop in Clyde Street, cost fourpence. Denis's, typically, was slightly larger, probably a sixpenny one. We were sent home from school for a celebratory day's holiday.

The war seems not to have disrupted the life of the town as much as I had later imagined, for, when I began to look up the details of those years, I was surprised to discover that an event which deeply impressed me at the time (and became a theme of our games in the back street for several weeks) took place, not after the war was over, as I had thought, but in 1916, when it was at its height. This was a celebration held in Myrtle Park and called 'The Masque of the Wool'. It was a kind of pageant, performed in the lower meadows of Myrtle Park and representing, symbolically, the past, present and future of Bingley, personified as Bingeleia, a young and beautiful princess. (Bingeleia was in fact the earliest recorded form of the town's name, dating back to pre-Norman times.) This Bingeleia was in reality a version of the Sleeping Beauty and, after the dose of whatever it was caused her to fall into her deep sleep – I think it was the industrial revolution – she was hemmed in, within her palace, by a circle of imps, clad in black material and linked together with sheets of this stuff, but also punctuated at intervals by occasional superior imps in gold with gold chimneys on their heads. Various attempts were then mounted by a succession of knights on horseback, who came one after another to try to break through; but all were in turn repulsed by the imps, who chanted 'Get thee away, get thee away! For this is the throne of Mammon grey.'\* The blackness of course stood for the

\* [FWW note] 'From Wm Blake: from MS c. 1810 (Penguin ed. p. 72)' [= 'I rose up at the dawn of day']

smoke which regularly engulfed Bingley and the gold figures for the money, the 'brass', which caused it all.

The knights were representative of various movements and organisations in the town, such as the Cooperative Society, the Oddfellows (I think), the I.L.P., the W.E.A. (in the person of David Thompson, so evidently he had not yet been called up) and others; but all in vain! And then at last there came the new, unknown knight (shades of Ivanhoe!) – Electricity (shades of Lenin!) – and before his onslaught the ranks of Mammon fell back and Bingleia was restored to life, health and a new, bright future. (In fact, when one sees Bingley today, this wasn't as daft as it sounds.) There were other minor events that day, of which I remember only one – a dramatisation of the *Lady of Shalott*, played I think by a Miss Glover, who had also featured as Bingleia, and one of the knights (not David Thompson) as Sir Lancelot. Miss Glover lay in a boat at the top end of the meadows and drifted downstream to the musings of Sir Lancelot, who received her corpse at the other end of the meadows near where the footbridge now goes over to Beckfoot. This was all rather naive and in retrospect rather laughable. But I still think it was rather brave and admirable to have put it on in the middle of the terrible first world war.

I will conclude this section with something on health, for one of the greatest contrasts between now and then is the advance that has been made in coping with illness and disease. Sixty or seventy years ago doctors were far less able to treat many illnesses. Frequently all they could do was wait for something called 'the crisis', after which you either died or began to recover. Many illnesses were potentially fatal. When in the autumn of 1920 I caught scarlet fever, this was a very serious matter. My mother was determined to nurse me herself at home and was glad of this decision a month later when, from my bedroom window, she watched the funeral of a boy of my age who had been sent to the 'fever hospital' with the same complaint about the same time. For six weeks she lived in

isolation, apart from the visits of the doctor. No-one was allowed to enter the house and my father had to go and live with his father, since he was in contact with children at school. TB was a fatal disease – my father's cousin Felix had died from it – and one saw people in the streets who were already marked down as infected and pointed out with a shudder as doomed to an early death – which indeed usually occurred very soon afterwards. The general attitude towards TB was not unlike that today towards AIDS, and for the same reasons. It was also common to see the street outside some house strewn with peat or straw to deaden the noise of passing carts: inside there would be some sick person on the point of death or 'crisis'. And, as is well known, the end of the war was followed by an influenza epidemic which killed as many people as the war itself.

I was myself rather a sickly child and at various times had congestion of the lungs and a mild form of pneumonia as well as chicken pox, measles, mumps and most of the other children's illnesses. Before I reached school age I had my tonsils extracted (together with adenoids), a rather popular operation at that time. This was carried out at home on a table placed in front of the window in the back room to provide the surgeon, a certain Major Philips from Bradford, with better light. I remember being told to try to blow up a large balloon, which I did – and then breathed quantities of ether into my lungs, which was of course the intention. There was no free health service at that time, but my father paid into a club, the Oddfellows, which entitled the family to free medical service, 'on the panel'. Our doctor, Dr Dixon, resented this and on one occasion told him that the Oddfellows Club was not intended for people in the lofty position of an elementary school teacher. His behaviour towards his 'panel' patients was very distinctly and obviously (and intentionally) different from the way he treated those who would subsequently receive and pay a bill for private treatment.

## 11. Bradford Grammar School I (1920-1924)

Bradford Grammar School, which I began to attend in September 1920, was a seventeenth century foundation, now housed in a gloomy, multistoried building on the east side of Cheapside, where it joined North Parade and Manningham Lane. The playground at the rear was a good way below the road level and overlooked a tangle of railway sidings and the line into Forster Square Station, where I arrived each morning by train from Bingley at about 8.45 a.m. When I visited Bradford recently (in 1991) I was surprised to find a gap where the school had stood. The present-day school is situated in buildings at Frizinghall, opposite Lister (Manningham) Park, and alongside the school playing fields. These buildings were put up just before the Second World War, but they were not taken over by the school until after the war was over, since they had been commandeered for government purposes. They therefore fall outside my experience, except that on one occasion I went to talk to the sixth classical form there when my friend Kenneth Robinson was living at Clock House as Headmaster.

In 1920 the school had about 750 boys. It was a fee-paying school but, as I have explained, many if not most of its boys were there with City or (a few) Governors' Scholarships. It was therefore a fairly good cross-section of the population, though a sifted one, since all entrants had passed an examination to get there. There were a few boys from the Preparatory School, which was on a different site north of Manningham Park. These boys were allowed to slip in more easily, but they were too few in number to alter the general picture. The school had (and still has) a very strong academic record, measured in terms of scholarships (or nowadays acceptances) at Oxford and Cambridge, ranking alongside such schools as Manchester Grammar School. It was for a long time a Direct Grant School, but when this category of centrally funded schools was abolished with the large scale

introduction of comprehensive education, it opted to become independent; so whether it now covers so wide a social band I cannot say.

For sports we were assigned to one of five houses, each with a separate colour (house names were introduced only many years after my time). I was in the Blue House, and at the outset I was quite determined to play games regularly (rugby and cricket) and my parents bought me a Blue House rugby jersey. But during my first term I caught scarlet fever and this left me with a potential heart condition. When in the spring of 1921 I ran in the school steeplechase over Baildon Moor, I set this off and was subsequently forbidden to play games, cycle, take gym lessons or swimming lessons. This was undoubtedly an excessive reaction, for my heart condition was merely functional and likely to settle down with a little rest. But it cut me off throughout the next few years from the sports side of school life – and incidentally gave me two free afternoons, since the pattern of school attendance was to have lessons on Saturday mornings, but Tuesday and Thursday afternoons free for games at Frizinghall. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, when there was afternoon school, I stayed in Bradford for lunch. The school put on a midday meal for about 1/9d, but my parents thought that rather dear and instead I was given a shilling, for which I could get a two-course meal, first at Lyons' restaurant in Market Street and in my later years at Laycock's, a small restaurant in an alley below Kirkgate market, recommended to me by my Uncle Francis and famous for its chess and debating society (though this was not functioning in my dinner hour). That still left a copper or two over, to be spent on foreign stamps or, later, saved up and used to buy second-hand Everyman classics at a bookstall in Kirkgate Market just off Darley Street.

At this time all the forms above the seconds were divided into two sides, classical and modern. The former offered Greek and Latin as main subjects, the latter added German and dropped Latin (which we had begun in the second form, immediately on

entering the school). But both offered a wide range of other subjects. On the classical side, for example, we did some physics, some chemistry and of course French, maths, English, history, art, music (i.e. singing), geography and woodwork. If I may digress on the subject of woodwork, this was taught by a craftsman, not I believe a trained teacher, and he had very rough and ready methods. When one had made something, e.g. a bracket or small box, one had to take it to him for approval. If he approved it, he would stamp it and one could take it home. If he did not approve it, he took a heavy mallet and smashed it to bits. We therefore smuggled our pieces out to avoid this fate.

After one year in the second form one had to decide whether to go on the classical or the modern side and I opted for the classical side owing to a complete misunderstanding of what was involved. My parents had got the impression that if one wanted to leave school at sixteen and get a job in an office, factory, bank or building society, one chose the modern side. That was indeed true, but what was not true was that if one had one's eyes on a university course, leading to teaching, higher civil service or one of the professions, one must necessarily opt for the classical side. As I later discovered, many from the modern side went on to read history or modern languages or science or mathematics and got university scholarships in these subjects. This should have been as plain as a pikestaff, but it just was not; and it was never explained to my parents, largely, I believe, because L.W.P. Lewis, a domineering and rather arrogant man, who was head of classics, exploited such confusion to capture any bright boys for the classical side. One of his most dismissive insults to anyone who had failed to meet his academic demands was to say: 'If *that's* the best you can do, you'd better go off and read *mathematics* (pronounced in the most contemptuous manner).'

I now know, however, that chance and error play a great part at all times in shaping one's life and I do not regret at all that my parents' ignorance turned me into a classical scholar. Indeed, I shall always be intensely grateful that I found myself at a school

where I was able to learn Latin and Greek. Today such opportunities are of course much rarer and harder to come by.

In my first year at Bradford I was placed in Second Upper Form and I there made friends with a boy called Alan Smith, who lived at Saltaire and so travelled on the same train. This friendship lasted most of that year, but then lapsed, as schoolboy friendships are apt to do. I think the reason for this was that I became fed up with his habit of copying my homework on the morning train. Subsequently he went on the modern side and later to Merton College, Oxford, where he read history. In the eighties, when he was in retirement at Bottisham and Mary and I had come to live in Cambridge, he spotted me in the street, rang me up and we resumed the acquaintance. For reasons (I suspect) connected with an inheritance he had changed his name to that of his mother's family and was now Alan Denison. Sadly he died shortly after that, but I have maintained a friendship with his widow, Joan, and his son Simon, a journalist, who took an Oxford first in classics, at Merton like his father.

In 1921 I came third in the annual examination, but whereas numbers one and two and I think four and five were given a double remove, I was not. I think it must have been decided that I was immature. Looking back, I think that was a correct decision, though it was later to lead to some problems. I now went up into Third Classical Lower, and over the next three years I passed through that form, then Third Classical Upper and (I think) Fourth Classical. I thoroughly enjoyed these years from 1920 to 1924. I found the work easy and I generally came out near the top of the form. I could get through the quite heavy schedule of homework quickly and so had lots of time for playing outside and cultivating various hobbies, such as fretwork, into which I was initiated by Denis Wild next door. Indeed we designated ourselves Wild and Walbank Fretworkers and developed a profitable trade in Christmas calendars, which we inflicted on our respective relatives. Eventually I persuaded my father to send off for a parcel of satin walnut and a pattern (I

think it all came to around six shillings), so that I could make a bathroom cabinet. This would have been singularly hideous and wholly impractical, since it would certainly have warped in the damp bathroom atmosphere. But, as I shall explain below, it was left unfinished, as a result of a complete change in my position at school.

As well as practising fretwork, I was also having piano lessons, first with a Mr Coates, who was the organist at the Baptist Chapel and had a curious addition to his piano, consisting of foot-treads (as well as the usual pedals). How these worked I never knew, but presumably they were for practising his organ pieces; yet the piano itself was quite normal, with strings and certainly not organ pipes! I gave up going to Mr Coates when I was ill, following the steeplechase. But later I resumed piano lessons with Miss Annie Atherton, a spinster living with her mother along our back street in Wilson Road. She had a new theory about playing the piano, derived from her own teacher at Leeds. This involved 'feeling the weight' of one's arms and so to speak throwing them from one key to another. This sounds more absurd than it was in practice; and I made quite good headway under Miss Atherton, though she was clearly hostile and embarrassed (as indeed I was myself a little) by my parents' insistence that I should be given some practice in playing 'jazz' (a word used rather generally at that time to cover any popular music, such as musical comedy hits) as well as classical music. These lessons went on until 1924.

It was around this time that I acquired a new friend at school, in fact a 'new boy', whose family had just moved from Pontefract to Bradford. His name was Tristram Betts and his odd first name was due to the fact that his father had been interested in the Arthurian legend at the time of his birth. Later Tris found this name an embarrassment and went over to Jim; but I always knew him as Tris. The Betts family lived in a large corner house in Toller Lane, Bradford, and on one or two occasions I went to stay there (and on others Tris came to stay with me at Bingley).

These visits were a great widening of my experience in several ways. Frank Betts, Tris's father, was an Inspector of Taxes and a strong supporter of the Independent Labour Party (the I.L.P.), which was very active in Bradford. He had been a classic (probably, though I am not certain of this, at Oxford). He was a large man, rather impressive and a little frightening to me. Mrs Betts was small and birdlike, apparently more self-effacing, but probably very capable of managing her slightly eccentric husband. In a religious phase Betts had imposed high church principles on the family and at the time of my first visit they were observing a Lenten fast involving certain foods. There was some sophistry in this, for I noted that they were eating malt and cod-liver-oil instead of jam or treacle on their bread. Betts himself, however, had long ago abandoned this episode in his beliefs and was ignoring the food taboos observed by the others (though he had originally introduced them). The other members of the family were Tris's elder sister Marjorie and his younger sister Barbara. Barbara had red hair and the temper that traditionally accompanies this. In the school election (held to coincide with a general election, probably that of 1923) Barbara was standing as Labour candidate at Bradford Girls' Grammar School, which she attended. This was a foreshadowing of her later career, since she went into politics after the war and as Barbara Castle became a Labour Minister. A great pleasure associated with my friendship with Tris Betts was going with him to watch Yorkshire playing cricket at Park Avenue from the pavilion area (for Betts senior was a member of the Club) and there consuming for lunch a gigantic pork pie. Those were of course the days when Yorkshire usually headed the championship table, and it was a great excitement to see Holmes and Sutcliffe, Macaulay, Roy Kilner, Waddington and Wilfred Rhodes in the flesh.

Another diversion during those years was making a crystal set, one of the most exciting things I ever did. It consisted of a 'variometer' (a kind of coil which controlled the tuning) and the

actual crystal (which served the function of valves – and later transistors). The set was based on a very simple circuit and the receiver was mounted on an ebonite panel, which fitted into a cigar box. The most expensive item was the headphones (which I think cost 30/-) and the aerial, which in those days had to be pretty long and high. With the reluctant agreement of my Aunt Marth’Alice we had an aerial installed across the back street from our chimney to hers with a lead-in down to our back-room window. This aerial was fastened with rope round the chimneys, which was a mistake, since it tightened and slackened in wet or dry weather, thus causing the lead-in to sag most inconveniently. Inside the house the set rested on the treadle sewing-machine, which stood beside the window, and receiving programmes from Manchester (very faint) and, later, when the new relay-station was opened, from Leeds-Bradford was a tense operation, since, unfortunately, if anyone walked across the room, the movement was liable to dislodge the ‘cat’s whisker’ (the small wire with which one sought out the most sensitive spot on the crystal) and one lost the sound altogether. Later too, when our next door neighbours, the Wilds, acquired a valve set, they were decidedly inept at tuning it, with the result that it went into shrill shrieking noises known as oscillation; and these were all picked up in a deafening way on my crystal set. Despite these difficulties, making and listening to this crystal set gave me a quite disproportionate amount of pleasure.

This rather idyllic existence came to a sudden end on 24 February 1924. L.W.P. Lewis, whom I have already mentioned, was taking us for Greek and asked some question (what it was I have now forgotten). My answer, it would seem, suddenly convinced him that I ought to be in a higher form and after a little negotiation with my parents (who, of course, acquiesced, not unreasonably) I was moved up into Fifth Classical, the School Certificate form. Suddenly I found myself saddled with a very severe burden of work. There were only five months before the July examination and I had not only to pick up a year’s work

in all subjects, but to cover the S.C. syllabus, on which the rest of the form had been working since the previous September; and that included set books in English, Latin and Greek. The Greek books were *Iliad* 21 and a shortened version of Thucydides on the Sicilian Expedition and the Latin were two of Cicero’s *Philippics* and a substantial part of *Aeneid* 9. All these authors (including the Homer) were completely new to me. The English prescribed books which I recall were *Paradise Lost* 1 and a World’s Classics collection of short stories; but there were undoubtedly others.

It was a pretty heavy grind, which involved long hours of homework, stopping music lessons and having virtually no leisure during the week. I had great help from Mr Robertson (‘Robo’), our new form-master, who took me for most of the classics. He was an Irishman – probably the first I had ever met – and he would rarely let slip an opportunity to make reference in class to ‘Professor Mahaffy of Dublin University’ with the pride of an old T.C.D. man. Throughout the Easter holidays I did exercises from *Bradley’s Arnold*, the old, tried, Latin instruction book, and posted them to him to his home in Ilkley, whence he returned them with the exercises carefully corrected and my errors lucidly explained. There were other masters to get used to, in particular S.C. Glassey, the strict but very competent English master. It was under him that I learnt the useful art of *précis* (this formed part of the English syllabus). If I may leap ahead, when Glassey retired several decades later, he went to live with his daughter at West Kirby and decided to take up the study of Italian. Having passed S.C. and H.S.C. (or, it may be, by then O levels and A levels) with flying colours, he decided to enrol as a student in the Italian department at Liverpool University. At this point he judged that it would be advantageous to make renewed contact with me (I was at this time Professor of Ancient History at Liverpool) to use my influence in having him accepted. The contact was a strange one since the relationship was simply a continuation of schooldays: he addressed me as Walbank and I

called him Mr Glassey. He was accepted, passed in Italian and took a degree (a second one, of course, for he was already a London graduate from his youth); and, ambition having taken over, he registered for a Ph.D. Though very doubtful about this, the Department could find no reason to exclude him. But in this he failed, having reached his level of incompetence. He was incapable at his age of producing the required original work and to his voiced resentment he had to make do with some sort of consolation prize, such as a B.Litt. During his University days he was to be seen about the precinct wearing an undergraduate scarf, very much the student, but with a Chekhovian air. At that time he told me a good deal that was new (but not wholly surprising) to me, of Lewis's offensive ways in the Bradford Grammar School staff common room towards any colleague who (like Glassey) was not a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge.

I passed S.C. 'with Matriculation' in the summer of 1924, gaining credits in everything but art, in which I simply passed, and mathematics, in which I got a distinction – very largely on the basis of the splendid grounding in the subject, which I had received from Sam Robinson at Mornington Road School. However, I was not completely out of the wood. I was still very immature and I was not at ease with the new form. Indeed, looking back I can see that I had lost a great deal of self-confidence and I don't think I ever completely recovered this while I was at school. However, I was now fourteen and ready to fit into the Bradford Grammar School pattern of pressurised promotion into the scholarship machinery. This ideally required a boy to spend four post-S.C. years, one in the Remove and three in the Sixth Form, where he would sit the Higher School Certificate (of the Joint Matriculation Board) three times, hoping to pick up a County Major and/or State Scholarship on one of those occasions. In his third and last year in the sixth form he would sit, with a good chance of success, for an Oxford or Cambridge Open Scholarship.

## 12. Bradford Grammar School II (1924-1928)

Despite the fact that I continued to find it hard to keep up a good position in the form, my last four years at Bradford Grammar School were rewarding and stimulating. A great part of the timetable was devoted to classics, and in particular old-fashioned composition in Greek and Latin. From the Remove onwards we did 'verses' as well as 'proses', which, when we became competent, involved turning about a dozen lines of Tennyson, Shakespeare or almost any other traditional English poet into Latin elegiacs or hexameters or Greek iambic trimeters. One indirect benefit of this exercise was that in this way one became acquainted with a variety of English verse, albeit in twelve-line snippets. But it meant that by the time one was in the sixth form, one did four such compositions, two prose and two verse, weekly; and since I was rather slow, this was extremely time-consuming and many evenings and much of the weekends were taken up with homework. Nevertheless it was not a narrow regime. True, science and maths had completely disappeared from our syllabus and that was, I now believe, a great error (though one common to sixth form arts syllabuses elsewhere). Within what could be called the humanities, however, we covered a widish field.

There was of course English Literature, which was taken as a 'subsidiary subject' in the H.S.C. in all three sixth form years; French, likewise, except that for one year in the sixth form we did some elementary German instead, employing, rather oddly, German gothic script; history, taught, not very satisfactorily, by a man called Charlie Hall. Mary also had him as a teacher at the Bradford Technical College and told me that he had informed *them* that his ambition was to retire and open a fish and chip shop called 'Charley's' – not perhaps the spirit that would set a class on fire for the study of history (or literature, which he also taught in part). There was also a rather bright but smooth man



called Jenkins, who gave us a very novel and interesting course on anthropology (with a British Museum Handbook as the textbook) in the Remove. K.D. Robinson, who was in the same form and later became a close friend, when he was Headmaster at Birkenhead School and we lived there after the war, told me that Jenkins had a beautiful wife, who was the cynosure of all the sixth form cricketers and rugby players, when she came to watch school matches; but as I never went near the field except on Sports Day I can only report this as hearsay. Many decades later, either widowed or abandoned by her husband, Mrs Jenkins married another of my Bradford teachers, E.H. Goddard, as his second wife, but this was an easily foreseeable disaster and did not last; I shall say something about Goddard shortly. We also had lessons in political science from a Mr Gibbons, a clever man who (like Sam Robinson) was a victim of the war. He had a glass eye, having lost one of his own from a wound and in retrospect I think he was in constant pain. He was not however a good teacher and used simply to dictate masses of notes (as did Charlie Hall). Eventually Gibbons' life (like Sam Robinson's) ended tragically, for just before the 1927/8 session opened he was found dead in Hurst Wood, Saltaire, having poisoned himself. He was replaced at short notice by an Old Boy, Fred Milner, who had just graduated at St John's, Cambridge and was waiting to enter the Civil Service. It was not an enviable position for him, since we all remembered him when he was still at school; and I am afraid we gave him rather a bad time (though he contributed to this by his supercilious manner and constant references to life at Cambridge).

As I have said, the bulk of our work during these four years was in classics and our teachers were L.W.P. Lewis and E.H. Goddard. In the course of one year we also had some lessons from the Headmaster, W. Edwards. When at the University (Cambridge) he had made a special study of Greek Law and we read some private speeches by Lysias and other Attic orators with him. But he was a dry and uninteresting teacher, who failed

to excite our interest in the intricacies of Athenian private law (though in fact some of these speeches contain fascinating material). About Lewis I have already said a little. He was just over 60 in 1924 (he retired in 1928,\* just as my year were going on to the University). Lewis was a white-bearded, rather venerable-looking old man with a hooked nose and a grand theatricality, which he purposely cultivated and exploited as an aid to teaching. (I suppose teaching and lecturing, if well done, always contains a histrionic component.) Lewis was the author of a book on the teaching of Latin, which I later (when briefly a school teacher in 1932-1933) acquired and found extremely helpful, since it embodied the method I had experienced under him (but I never tried to copy his theatrical tricks). He put a lot of work into his teaching and expected, rightly, to get results. The basic grind of memorising declensions and conjugations was effected by mass chanting. He would enter the room with a gesture of the arm and off we went: *luo, lueis, luei* etc., as far as we had learnt in the paradigm of the verb. We enjoyed the chanting and the sense of growing achievement as we added new tenses to our repertoire. We were encouraged in this by being made to feel that we were an élite, enjoying the rare privilege of learning Greek. True, up to a point, but in doing this Lewis was instilling and exploiting a rather unpleasant intellectual snobbishness, which he found only too easy. But he was a man of contradictions. I remember, on one occasion I was looking at the books and magazines on the W.H. Smith bookstall in Forster Square Station and I noticed Lewis next to me. He was buying the first number of some series called 'Outlines of Science' or the like. Seeing that I was interested, he bought a second copy which he gave to me, and told me I might borrow the later copies, as they appeared weekly (or fortnightly), from him. But this was the same man who railed against mathematics and science as inferior disciplines. On one occasion Lewis was able to arrange an outstanding visit to the school. Gilbert Murray was in Bradford for a League of Nations Union meeting and was pers-  
\* [FWW note] '1929!'

uaded to come and talk to the Sixth Classical in the morning. He talked about Homer and the *Oresteia*, and we found his material and easy manner enthralling. It was on that occasion that Lewis told us that Murray occupied the most prestigious post in England, that of Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford (though Lewis was himself a Peterhouse man).

Our other classics master was E.H. Goddard, whom later, when he became a friend, I knew as Ned. He was a great contrast to Lewis, an Oxford man from Corpus and a stimulating teacher because his mind and interests ranged far outside the usual limits of classics as generally understood. Goddard was of German origin. His family name had originally been Gropius and I fancy his father gave him a very German upbringing. Many years later he made me a wonderful gift of classical books which he no longer thought he would be likely to want to use: they included Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* down to 'Mazaion' and in the *Zweite Reihe* to 'Stluppi' (which I subsequently completed as it came out, to make a full set), De Sanctis' *Storia dei Romani* (all then published), Busolt-Swoboda, Wilamowitz's *Aristoteles und Athen* and several other basic works, mostly in German. The reason I mention this here is that one of these works had been a gift from Ned's father, who had inscribed it with the words: 'Der Mensch muss machen was er will, und wollen was er soll' ('a man must do what he wants, but want what he ought') – a solemn German *Spruch*, virtually untranslatable into English, which perhaps conjures up the atmosphere in which the young Ned Gropius had been reared.

With Goddard we did compositions, which he made very stimulating, for he wrote his own versions and would (when we were in the third year sixth) encourage us to produce more than one version of the same prose passage, in for instance a Ciceronian and a Tacitean style. One can query the place of 'composition' in a curriculum and whether the rewards are sufficient to compensate for the immense amount of time

taken, but if they were to be done, this was a splendid way to get acquainted with the different styles (and genius) of the great Latin prose writers. Turning a passage of quite elaborate English into Greek or Latin involves thinking about its meaning in an extremely analytical manner, which bears no comparison with even the most idiomatic translation into a modern European language. However, I would not advocate the return of this exercise; but having experienced it I feel a certain obligation to record the positive gains I derived from it.

In addition to composition, verse and prose, and reading texts of Greek and Latin authors, Ned, many years in advance of the acceptance of 'general knowledge' as a subject, used to devote one hour a week to what he called 'gas', when he would come along and talk to us about say, the atomic theory, the table of elements, the background of the general strike (1926), philosophical problems, Nietzschean opposites or anything else that came into his mind. One thing that was always very much in his mind was Oswald Spengler and we were all indoctrinated with the cyclical views of *The Decline of the West*, a theory to which he fully subscribed – perhaps part of his German heritage or something he had absorbed in Oxford taking Greats. In fact he and the ill-fated Gibbons were co-authors of a book entitled *Civilisation or Civilisations? An Essay in the Spenglerian Philosophy of History*, which I persuaded the Bingley Public Library to buy and read it with uncritical admiration. It did not, I think, make any great impression on the British public. Later, of course, we all threw off these ideas and many other semi-mystical notions to which Goddard was partial. He was, for instance, an 'anthroposophist', a sort of sect devoted to the teachings of Rudolf Steiner, but I don't think we ever quite sorted that out; I know I didn't.

The Remove and Sixth Forms were expected to take the public examinations in their stride: these were not allowed to dominate the curriculum. For example, we never began working on the classical texts prescribed for the H.S.C. until after

Christmas, which left the whole autumn term for reading other books and authors. Consequently, when we went up to the university, we had already read far more than classics students today have read when they take their final degree examinations. One disadvantage of sitting the H.S.C. repeatedly was that the prescribed periods of Greek and Roman history would also be repeated. So one year Ned had the Joint Matriculation Board (the J.M.B.) approve a special period of Roman history for our school alone (this was permitted under the regulations). The period he chose was Roman History 200-133 B.C.; and this led to a piece of initiative on his part, which was to be decisive for my whole life's work – little though either he or I could have foreseen this at the time. Pointing out that the main Greek source for the period we were to study was the second century Achaean historian Polybius, he produced a small, rather grubby German school edition of this author (I do not know to this day what edition it was) and instructed another boy in my year, Philip Sheard – he was later to become a lecturer in economics at Leeds University – and me to take this up to the prefects' room in free periods, translate and make a précis of it, write this out and duplicate it on a jelly – the primitive form of duplication then used – for the rest of the form. The second century was a difficult period to study (apart from the main wars) and I don't think I ever, at this stage, quite understood how the historian got from the scattered evidence (apart from Polybius and Livy) to the straight narrative contained in the text-books (nor indeed why different text-books gave different dates for some laws and minor incidents). To have grasped that would have been a major step in my training as a historian. But even without that illumination, to read chunks of Polybius in the original (I forget now how far down we went) and to set out the gist of his account, including the constitutional section in Book 6, was a very enlightening experience and, as I have said, fired me with an interest in that author which was later to bear unexpected fruit.

Another good thing that Ned Goddard did for us was to make

us learn lots of poetry by heart – not only Greek and Latin, but also English, Milton, Shelley, Keats, Swinburne. Naturally there were limitations to this: we could only go as far as he could go. I never, for example, heard of T.S. Eliot till I got to Cambridge. And neither Ned nor Bradford Grammar School did anything to further our appreciation of art or music. There was a school choir in the lower school, of course, but I was not in it, nor was there any attempt (as far as I am aware) to organise visits to concerts or plays. Indeed, the school was very inward-looking and I can count on one hand the occasions when outside visits of any kind were organised from school. One was to Leeds University to see a mediocre performance of Sophocles' *Antigone* (in English). Another was to see Sybil Thorndike and Lewis Casson in a thrilling performance of Euripides' *Medea* (in Gilbert Murray's translation) at the Princes Theatre, Bradford. In 1927 there was a very special and exceptional occasion, facilitated by the school, which gave us the next morning free, but not actually organised as a school trip. Along with Walter Sexton, already at this time one of my close friends, I caught a train in the middle of the night to Settle to see the total eclipse of the sun. It was very successful, for we climbed a low hill near Giggleswick and had a full, unimpeded sight of the totality. I recall still the uncanny onset, which seemed to go in jerks, rather than a steady darkening, and the fiery ring around the concealed sun with jets of flame coming outwards from it. Afterwards I left Walter, who had to return to work, and joined my father, who had brought a class of his boys from Keighley to the same spot.

Finally, at the end of each of my sixth form years Goddard organised a day out, once to York, once to Ripon and once walking in the Malham area. On that occasion we took the train to Bell Busk and from there walked up to Malham, Malham Tarn (near which we swam), Gordale Scar and then along Mastiles Lane to Kilnsey, finally getting a train back from Grassington. But these trips were exceptional and we were mostly kept cocooned from outside, in fact living in a little self-regarding

world of our own, which seemed to exclude for the most part even the other sixth forms, science, history and modern languages. We were tempted to think of ourselves as superior; and though it would be nice to be able to say how wrong we were, the truth is that the Classical Sixth during those years 1925-1928 did turn out some exceptional characters. In the group two years ahead of me there were H.L.A. Hart, who was later Professor of Jurisprudence (I believe) at Oxford and Leslie Styler, Dean of Brasenose College, Oxford. Styler is said to have asserted that he was elected to this office in error, through confusion with his younger brother Geoffrey (whom I have recently got to know in Cambridge, where he was Dean of Corpus Christi); but I have no idea what truth there was in that. The year senior to me produced no outstanding figures, but in my own year there was K.D. Robinson, who was school captain in 1927/8, went up to Corpus, Oxford (Goddard's college) and was from 1946 Headmaster of Birkenhead School. He and his wife Marjorie arrived in Birkenhead at the same time as Mary and I and we at once began a long friendship which still continues with Marjorie, though Kenneth died a year or two ago. In his later years he went back to Bradford to be Headmaster at our old school. Our year also contained two remarkable identical twins, R.L. and L.R. Chambers; strangers could not tell them apart, though we all could. They always ran neck and neck in examinations. Both read classics at Pembroke College, Cambridge, but then went different ways, Leslie into the Indian Civil Service and Dick to become (eventually) a headmaster in the west Midlands. There was also Philip Watson, who went to Durham and was later prominent in the Methodist Church and at one time Principal of Wesley House, Cambridge; Philip Sheard, mentioned above as my co-worker on the text of Polybius; and R.S. Illingworth, who was rather despised at school, because he did not aim at Oxford or Cambridge, despite a remarkable facility for writing not quite first class proses while travelling on the train between Bradford and his home in Harrogate (whereas

it took me about three hours to produce a similar prose slogging away with a dictionary at home). Illingworth read medicine at Leeds University and he ended up as a distinguished Professor of Child Health at Sheffield University. In some ways he was the most original boy in that year, with many interests, especially photography and cycling in Switzerland, where by the time he graduated he had covered all the main passes on his bike.

One small way in which we collaborated with the other sixth forms was in the school Debating Society, of which I became Secretary. Like most similar institutions, it had certain idiosyncratic customs of which we were very proud. For example, besides the normal officers, chairman, secretary and treasurer, there was a tribune of the plebs, who, following Roman precedent, could interpose his veto on any business – particularly 'private' business, which preceded the debates and largely consisted of nonsensical motions, such as 'That this house should adopt a baby' (this was in fact carried and there was a sequel in the form of a letter from a sixth form girl at the Girls' Grammar School volunteering for the position). Apart from the Debating Society I played no part in school activities, as I was debarred from sport (except for a little cricket in my last years) and there was not much else. On one occasion, however, I did take part in a performance of Aristophanes' *Clouds* at Speech Day in St George's Hall, which was marred by a failure in communications. Herbert Hart was playing the part of Socrates, who appears in the first scene in a basket. This was suspended from the roof and at the point where Strepsiades exhorts him to descend – 'Come down, Socrates! Come down, sweet Socrates!' – he was to pull a string to signal to someone stationed in the roof, who would thereupon let him down. But the string failed and the basket remained in the air to our general embarrassment and the universal amusement of the audience, until Socrates managed to get a signal through to a boy sitting in the adjacent gallery, and at last Strepsiades' appeal was rewarded and Hart came to ground.

### 13. Life at Home: Scholarship Examinations (1924-1928)

Life out of school during these years was rather restricted because of the burden of homework. My earlier friendship with Denis Wild had already been interrupted in term-time, since he was away at Lancaster Grammar School. Consequently I saw rather more of another boy who lived close by in Park Road, Kenneth Murgatroyd, with whom I used to go walks at the weekend; and indeed once or twice we went on walking holidays of up to a week together. The first of these made a great impression on me. We took a train to Skipton and from there walked on successive days to Buckden at the top of Wharfedale, via Semer Water and Bainbridge to Gunnerside in Swaledale, via Arkengarthdale to Barnard Castle, from there back to Grinton in Swaledale and from Grinton via Coverdale to Kettlewell; from there we walked back to Skipton. There was a lot of rain and we got very sore feet; but it was all quite new and enjoyable and from this holiday I got my first impression of the size and variety of Yorkshire. We stayed at cottages, where in those days bed and breakfast (sharing a bed, of course) cost on average only three shillings and sixpence a night.

Kenneth Murgatroyd was at Bingley Grammar School, where they had what I thought was an enviable arrangement for exchanges with a *lycée* at Auxerre (Yonne). As part of this scheme Kenneth spent the whole of one spring and summer living in Auxerre in the family of a furniture retailer called Corrèze, with a son Jacques and a daughter Suzanne. Jacques in return came to spend some time in Bingley, where I got to know him. Later he made at least one return visit, in 1932, when he joined a holiday party which several of us organised at Cayton Bay on the Yorkshire coast. Unhappily Jacques later became involved in a right-wing thuggish political organisation called the Cagoulards and when we last heard of him he was in jail. But

for Kenneth this exchange proved extremely useful for he came back speaking fluent French (though probably without a vast vocabulary).

During my sixth-form years Denis Wild left his school in Lancaster and got a job as a clerk in the Halifax Building Society at Keighley. On the bus to Keighley he got to know Walter Sexton and for the next few years he, Kenneth, Walter Sexton and I formed a small group of friends who met mostly at the weekend. This was my main relaxation from school work. Walter Sexton was the son of the railwayman, whom my father had taken me to visit in his signal-box, when I was a small boy. Walter was an interesting person, who had opted to leave school at sixteen, because he believed that by going on to a university he was committing himself to teaching. Instead he went into the office of a manufacturing company in Keighley, disliked it and eventually ended up teaching after all – but in commercial colleges, in Glasgow, Manchester (coinciding with my stay there in 1932-1933) and Liverpool, where I was later to see a lot of him. As a result, he was perhaps my closest friend during these years and Mary was also very fond of him. In time I came to realise that he was homosexual, but this aspect never cropped up in any open form and of course he never ‘came out’, as they now say; in those days it would have been highly unwise. But Mary frequently said that she felt very ‘safe’ in Walter’s company. He was a good linguist and taught French and German at his various colleges. Later, during the war, he was called up and ended his military career as a major in Germany. After the war Walter subsequently lived in London until his premature death around 1970 from a sudden heart attack (like his father), supervening on Alzheimer’s disease.

Looking back on this part of my adolescence, I see it as a rather uncomfortable time. One disadvantage of Bradford Grammar School was that one grew up having almost no acquaintance with girls. I had, of course, girl cousins, Ethel and Clarice Bracewell and Elsie Walbank, but I saw them

infrequently and did not know them at all intimately. And although there was a girl slightly younger than myself, Josie Hempel (who later became a good friend), living next door, I hardly knew her at this time. Indeed, my main feelings towards her were of intense exasperation, since she was given to playing the piano loudly as I was trying to compose Latin verses. Our main holidays, which I still took with my parents, were generally joined by their old friends, the Holgates, and their daughter Annie was around my age. But I found her a rather uninteresting girl; she was very plain (taking after her father rather than her somewhat beautiful mother) and she had no intellectual interests. In fact, it was mainly at the regulation Christmas parties that one came into any close association with girls and that, of course, only lasted about a couple of weeks in the Christmas holidays. So I grew up somewhat ill at ease, both on this account and also because I was rather an odd man out in the Wild-Murgatroyd-Sexton group, being still at school and so with much less pocket money than they. I must in fact have been and seemed an awkward and rather immature youth to the Holgates, as these communal holidays became less and less agreeable to me and I found increasing difficulty in adapting myself to their dull routine.

Meanwhile, I moved up from the Remove to the Classical Sixth. In 1926 we had the exciting interlude of the General Strike. For about ten days I cycled the six miles into Bradford on a bicycle borrowed from Kenneth Murgatroyd's elder sister Doreen; then the strike collapsed (to my regret, for I was strongly sympathetic to the miners, whose hard case had precipitated the bigger action). In 1927 we took our holidays at Llandudno and I became increasingly morose, waiting for the news of my H.S.C. results; my grandmother had agreed to send a telegram, if there was anything in the post for me. At length, on the Thursday, to my intense relief we got back to our lodgings from a miserable walk on the Little Orme to find the telegram waiting for me. I was to attend the West Riding Education Offices at Wakefield

on the Saturday to be interviewed for a County Major Scholarship. I returned to Bingley alone the next day and my Saturday journey to Wakefield was an exciting one, for I had to travel on a Pullman Car from Bradford Exchange (at an extra cost of 1/6d), which made me feel very grand and grown up. At Wakefield, in the Education offices, I almost immediately encountered the well-known figure of a councillor from Bingley, who assured me that I need not worry, for I had indeed been awarded a scholarship. This was the famous Tom Snowden (famous in Bingley, that is), a cousin of the Labour Minister Philip Snowden and like him from Cowling, above Keighley, on the road to Colne.

Tom Snowden's main claim to fame was that he had sponsored the erection of a much needed public convenience just above the Myrtle Cinema, at the 'top of the town'. This useful edifice was always known as 'Tom Snowden's Palace', except when it was referred to by a coarser expression. But whenever I think of Tom Snowden now, it is in connection with a more sombre incident, which occurred some years later. Along with Mary I was visiting the Hempels at their house in Villa Road (they had moved there from Bromley Road) the day after Mr Hempel's sudden death, and Tom Snowden arrived to offer his condolences. After a short stay he left with the extraordinary exhortation: 'Bear oop, Mrs Hempel, and in time you will coom to see the majesty of it all.'

In the late autumn of 1927 I was a candidate for a Hastings Scholarship at Queen's College, Oxford. Each year a small number of Hastings Scholarships were offered to boys attending any one of eighteen northern schools and Bradford Grammar School was one of these. I now had the rather terrifying experience of travelling up to Oxford in November, staying at the Isis, a small private hotel in Iffley Road, where I found myself surrounded by other Hastings candidates, all (I was sure) much better than myself, and sitting papers for several days at the Old Schools in High Street. It was a very great strain and I

was afflicted with severe stomach disturbance and nausea, brought on entirely by the nervous pressure. In fact, during the last paper, which was verse composition, I fainted and had to abandon it. I did not win a Hastings Scholarship, but I came *proxime accessit* and was given a consolation prize of five pounds, which in those days paid for my railway fare and part of my hotel accommodation. It was also a considerable encouragement for my next attempt, which came in December, this time for Cambridge.

The school strategy was to spread our applications as widely as possible, so that we should not be competing with each other. The really high fliers, like K.D. Robinson, were put down for the 'difficult' and prestigious colleges such as Corpus, Oxford or Trinity, Cambridge; the rest of us were encouraged to choose one of the less formidable institutions. My own choice was based on what I later realised were very unsubstantial reasons. From a set of cigarette cards, which I had collected some years earlier when I was in the third form, I had discovered that the oldest college in Cambridge was Peterhouse, founded in 1284. I knew absolutely nothing of its reputation or who would be teaching me, should I go there. The fact that it was L.W.P. Lewis's college counted for nothing one way or another. However, on that basis I applied to Peterhouse and in December went up to Cambridge, where I was accommodated for the week in a college house in Tennis Court Road. Throughout the first night my uneasy sleep was constantly interrupted by the chimes of the Roman Catholic Church in Lensfield Road. Meals were taken in Hall and I had the same nervous reaction that I had had in Oxford. However, one break in the week's tension was an interview with B.L. Hallward, the classics Fellow, who was most charming and welcoming and made me feel very much at home in the college. I came away from my interview with him feeling that I had made a good choice and hoping very much that I should be successful.

About a week later I heard that I had been elected to a Minor

Scholarship at Peterhouse worth sixty pounds per annum. Along with the County Major Scholarship, worth a hundred pounds, it now put me within reach of the two hundred and twenty pounds estimated as necessary to cover a year at Cambridge; and later an Old Boys Foundation made me an additional grant of thirty pounds, bringing the total to one hundred and ninety, and leaving only a small amount for my father to find. The winning of Oxford and Cambridge Scholarships was of course a major industry at Bradford Grammar School and had its attendant customs and ceremonies. Chief among these was the obligation for the winner of a scholarship to present a Scholarship Cake, a large iced fruit cake. This my mother, who was excellent at such things, baked and iced herself and I conveyed it in due course carefully to school, in itself a difficult operation. In the prefects' room it was cut up and I was released from a lesson in order to take round slices to all the staff who taught me, or who had taught me, in their class-rooms and, of course, to bask in the glory of the occasion before all the small boys, who knew the full significance of the ritual and would, it was hoped, be encouraged to later emulation. There were, naturally, slices for one's own form and for the other prefects. And for the headmaster. I had none myself, since I could not abide anything containing currants, an absurd phobia which I did not lose until I was in my seventies!

In June 1928, already confident in the knowledge that I was going to Cambridge anyhow, I was entered for a State Scholarship. But I caught a bout of 'flu' after a visit to the Bingley Swimming Baths just before the examination and took half the papers with a temperature. I passed, as I had done before, but I did not improve my showing nor did I get a State Scholarship. In July I left Bradford Grammar School. It was a year of change there too, for Lewis was retiring\* and Ned Goddard moving on to a job in Edinburgh. In the summer I had a walking holiday with Kenneth in the Dales and in October I went up to Peterhouse.

\* [FWW note] 'no: 1930'

## 14. Cambridge and Peterhouse (1928-1931)

In 1928 Peterhouse was one of the smallest Cambridge colleges, with an annual intake of about fifty undergraduates and a negligible number of graduate students, perhaps a total of eight or ten at any one time. A total of around 160, excluding Fellows, were too many to be fed in a single 'Hall' and consequently there were two 'Halls' each evening, at 7.00 and 7.45. You could change your assigned time of Hall on any particular evening, if you could arrange a swap. There was a fixed charge of 2/8d per dinner and you were allowed to sign off one dinner a week. Commoners had their second year in college and their first and third in licensed 'digs', i.e. private lodging houses closely associated with the college and often college property tenanted by college servants; these were mainly in Little St Mary's Lane, Fitzwilliam Street, Tennis Court Road and Tennis Court Terrace, with a few far off on Parkside, overlooking Parker's Piece. These lodgings were subject to the same controls as rooms in college, as regards time of locking up, etc. Apart from Hall, one usually ate in one's room. 'Commons' were provided automatically from the buttery, viz. a loaf and a pint of milk daily and half a pound of butter per week and this went on the college bill. Other things could be bought at the buttery and one could get lunch in Hall or, if one was entertaining guests, the kitchen would send out meals to rooms either in college or digs (with the loan of special crockery or cutlery if required). They also sent out a cooked breakfast dish daily (it cost 8d) and this I took, since I was used to a cooked breakfast at home, and was not flexible enough to contemplate any change in that on top of the considerable revolution involved in having my main meal in the evening and a light lunch with soup or salad or the like at one o'clock.

Scholars and exhibitioners were privileged in being allowed to have their first two years in college; and I found myself, on

arrival, assigned rooms at B6 in Old Court. These were on the top floor of a range built in 1425-1426, but faced with ashlar in the middle of the 18th century. A circular staircase, stone up to the first floor and wooden afterwards up to the second, ended in a small landing, from which two sets, B5 and B6, went off. Mine, B6, contained a fairly large 'keeping' room with a sloping roof and two dormer windows overlooking Old Court; off this was a small bedroom between the chimney stack and the court, and at the entrance to the main room there was a small area between my door and the outer door, the so-called 'oak', which one 'sported' (i.e. locked) if one wanted to be undisturbed. It was not normal to lock one's room when one went out; theft was something we did not envisage. The keeping room, which otherwise might have been rather dark, had cream walls and light oak furniture, a table, desk and bookcase and one or two chairs. The room was heated with a coal fire and coal was brought up to college rooms by a man whose special job that was; he was a rather rough-looking individual and was known (somewhat offensively, as I now realise) – but not to his face – as Caliban. Except in very cold weather one did not light one's fire until evening or, if one was working in one's room in the afternoon, in time for lunch; this was of course an economy measure.

The cleaning of the room, laying of the fire and washing up was done by a college servant known as a gyp; one tipped him one pound at the end of each term. There was also a bedmaker (or 'bedder') who got ten shillings a term, a clear case of sexual discrimination. My gyp was called William Summerlin. He was a middle-aged man with a very beery face, who had reputedly been batman to the Senior Tutor, Paul Vellacott, during the war. I found it intensely embarrassing to address him as William and be called 'Sir' by him. The bedder was Mrs Willis, but William always referred to her as 'the woman'. Part of her duties was to empty slops, for all hot water for shaving and washing had to be brought up each morning (William did that); and the nearest 'rears' or lavatories (the word 'loo' had not yet gained currency)



were two courts away and through a gate in a wall at the far side of Gisborne Court, where the modern baths and lavatory building now stands (the so-called Birdwood, named after Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood, who became Master in 1931). In 1928 there were two baths in a small outbuilding, where Fen Court now stands, and these had to cater for all undergraduates, whether living in college or digs. It was not unusual to see undergraduates in pyjamas and dressing-gown coming down Fitzwilliam St in the early morning with a towel, to take a bath in college.

I soon found that the undergraduate intake of my year divided fairly clearly into two groups, those from public schools and those (who included all the scholars and most exhibitioners) from grammar schools. There was no hostility between the two, just the absence of a common background and a different way of talking, so that both found it more comfortable to associate with, and sit alongside in Hall, those of their own kind. The exceptions arose mainly in the case of men who were good at sport, for example a mathematician, Hugh Tranter, from a midlands grammar school, who was an excellent tennis player and through this got to know the public school group in a way I never did. There were some common college activities, for instance a Debating Society, at which I spoke once, but briefly, nervously and badly, and a Classical Reading Society, which met several times a term in the Upper Parlour to read Greek plays or occasionally to hear a paper from someone like Hallward, Professor Adcock or some other Cambridge senior luminary. There was an Amalgamated Sports Club, of which one was automatically a member (the fee came on the terminal bill) and I played occasional tennis and also used the University Sheds to swim in the Granta at Newnham. But throughout my four years at Cambridge I relied mainly on walking for exercise; and this was evidently adequate, as my health was good throughout. Outside college there was the Union Society, a private club behind the Round Church, of which I became a life member for

(I think) fifteen pounds. For the aspiring politician (which I was not) the Union provided weekly debates and these I sometimes attended without ever envisaging taking part. At these debates, in addition to undergraduates one sometimes heard distinguished figures from the political world. The Union also had a restaurant where one could take visitors for a meal at around 3/6d and there was a library, useful for light general reading, and a plentiful supply of note-paper, of which I made good use for my weekly letter home.

We were still, in those pre-war days, subject to what would now be considered mediaeval restrictions, some of which varied from college to college. At Peterhouse a late return after 11.00 p.m. was penalised with a fine of 6d up to midnight. To arrive after midnight was a heinous offence and would involve a terrifying interview with Paul Vellacott, the Senior Tutor (later Master of the College, but after my time). One could obtain an occasional *absit*, which was necessary if one wanted to be out of Cambridge in term-time, together with a 'late leave' if one wanted to return from, say, London on a late train. Wearing a gown was compulsory at all lectures (and for those in Trinity the porters required it to be put on when entering the college – I have no idea on what authority), and on all official visits to the Tutor, one's Director of Studies and any other college or university official. Also one had to wear a gown in Hall (when it might not be combined with the wearing of a blazer, which constituted 'sports dress') and in the town after sunset, when the streets were paraded nightly by a University proctor (a college Fellow) in full academic dress and two 'bulldogs' (college servants), reputedly chosen one for weight and one for speed. The proctors formed a kind of University police, although (since a famous case which eventually went to the House of Lords) the University no longer maintained its private prison, the so-called Spinning House, in which it incarcerated women arrested by the proctors because they were adjudged to be 'of loose character'. This right had disappeared at the end of the nineteenth century,

but the proctors could still apprehend those *in statu pupillari* for such offences as smoking while wearing (compulsory) academic dress, being found in a public house or sitting in the gallery seats at the Festival Theatre on Maids' Causeway. Since the gallery seats cost 1/- and those downstairs 2/6d, a thriving industry grew up in a small house adjoining the theatre, where, for 2d, you could deposit your gown and so avoid identification, should the 'progs' (i.e. the proctor and his 'bullers') choose to descend on the theatre, as they did from time to time. These petty rules were of course regularly transgressed, ignored or in some way thwarted, but we did not, I think, *challenge* them as absurd. They lasted unchanged until the Second World War, but since then, and particularly since the sixties, they have mostly disappeared.

Among them was the (as it would now seem) antediluvian rule that a student from one of the two women's colleges (which were still not technically part of the University, so that women took the examinations, but could not receive a degree, only 'the title of a degree') might only go out to tea in a men's college or entertain an undergraduate in her own room, if accompanied by a chaperone (who could, it is true, be another student). This, as I know from my own later experience as Chairman of Halls' Committee at Liverpool, was a region in which old attitudes were very slow to die. Basically the whole pre-war situation can be summed up by saying that an undergraduate was felt to have no *rights* as a person. By entering the college *in statu pupillari* he or she was deemed to have accepted the whole body of rules (going back in many cases to mediaeval times, when students were no older than schoolboys are today) and until graduation his or her whole regime was controlled by a body of (fortunately on the whole well-disposed) Fellows. But to illustrate the difference between then and now, I recall one incident, which occurred in the final term of my last undergraduate year. Two or three Peterhouse men had visited Oxford and there got involved in some rowdy brawl, in the course of which their names had been recorded by the Oxford proctors, who passed them on to

their Cambridge counterpart or perhaps directly to the Senior Tutor at Peterhouse. They were summoned by Vellacott and without more ado (and with no right of appeal) were sent down immediately, thus forfeiting all opportunity to take their finals. They thus received no degree and their whole academic career was destroyed through a single offence – but one which obviously was especially repugnant to the Senior Tutor, since it appeared to put his college in a bad light in the eyes of the proctors in 'the other place'. One cannot imagine such an incident going unchallenged today.

## 15. Some Cambridge Figures

My three years as an undergraduate were a time of considerable change for me personally and one disadvantage of this was that I found myself developing, as it were, away from my parents – not in any way to cause a break or in any loss of affection for them, but increasingly I was doing things and was acquiring interests in which they had no share and often for which they had no real understanding. This is, I think, a typical situation and fortunately it did not involve any breach between us. The telephone was not at this time a normal part of everyday life, but throughout their lives, so long as I was living away from them, we exchanged weekly letters. I gained a lot from mixing in college with undergraduates reading other subjects – though conversation in Hall, when not about games, tended (especially towards examination times) to consist largely of boastful and exaggerated claims about the number of hours one had worked, probably a reflection of the strain of approaching examinations. I received more stimulus from the man who during this time became my closest friend in college, W. Allan Edwards, a Lancashire man from Bolton Secondary School, who was reading English. It was largely through him that I became interested in modern painting, especially the French Impressionists, and I got rid of two prints by Watts and Holliday, pre-Raphaelites, which I had hung in my room, and substituted Van Goghs, taken from an album of his paintings published in Germany and costing 5/- for eight reproductions.

Through Allan Edwards I learnt something about the exciting goings-on in the English school and on one occasion I went with him to visit the Leavises (though this was not till my post-graduate year); and I heard all about I.A. Richards, and acquired and read his *Practical Criticism* and *Meaning of Meaning*, which were then the very latest topic of discussion and for a long time influenced my thinking. I was introduced to the poetry of Eliot

and Pound, in fact I got all the latest fads of the English school, which seemed to me far more exciting than anything going on in classics. Edwards and I became great addicts of the Festival Theatre, which, under the directorship of Terence Grey, was at the forefront of theatrical experiment, and had some excellent and later famous actors in its company, Flora Robson, Robert Donat, Ninette de Valois (for ballet); they also put on a series of exciting plays, without the need of most repertory companies to compromise in quality in order to pay their way. I think it was the gap which ensued when the Festival Theatre later closed down, that led Keynes to sponsor the foundation of the Arts Theatre.

In the afternoons we often walked the Grantchester-Trumpington round, while Edwards talked pretty uninterruptedly about whatever he was working on and later, in our third year, about his intentions for the future and how he hoped to finance them. If my role was (in retrospect) mainly that of listener, I cannot complain, for I must admit to having absorbed a great deal in this way (though admittedly his private financial anxieties were not of absorbing interest to me). Allan Edwards and I remained friends after we went down. I was best man at his wedding to Gladys (Judy) Shuttleworth and later, in 1934 or 1935, Mary and I stayed with them (and partly without them) at a cottage they were then renting in Toft. Allan kept himself for a time by W.E.A. lecturing and then took a university post in South Africa; and he ended up as Professor of English Literature at Perth, Western Australia. He is, of course, now retired and, since Judy's death, has remarried and he and his present wife spend our summer in Weybridge in south London and the Australian summer in Perth.

Another stimulating influence was that of Bertrand Hallward. He was a good teacher and a very down-to-earth lecturer, who provided what was needed to pass examinations. In addition he put me on to a group which I had not learnt about from Allan Edwards, since they were no longer up-to-the-minute in the

English Faculty, namely Roger Fry, Clive and Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, in short the Bloomsbury group: Hallward was himself a King's man.

Finally, in my third year, I lived in a house in Little St Mary's Lane (it has since been demolished to make way for the Graduate Centre). I had a small ground floor room with a bedroom in the attic. On the third floor was a third year English student called Roy Morrell, whom I saw a lot of in the late evenings, when we were both locked in after 10.00 (for if you were in at that time, you could not go out again, officially: Roy did occasionally get out through my window, which had a very shaky lock). Roy had an interest in all kinds of novelists and also in anthropology. Through him I met Dingwall, a social anthropologist and a very odd character; and together with Roy I visited Finella, a show-piece of a house on Queens' Road, then the property (or in the tenancy) of Mansfield Forbes, a Fellow of Clare, now a Caius house. Roy inspired me with the ambition to get abroad with his exciting accounts of a vacation spent in Strasbourg. His room was adorned with African spears and posters in several languages and he made life sound as if it could and should be very exotic. Roy is another Petrean who remained a friend for life. His first job was in Helsinki, where he met and married Liise Pesonen. They had a spell in Singapore, where he taught and also wrote a study of the butterflies of Malaysia. Back in England he turned up with Liise as a sixth form master at Wirral Grammar School, Bebington, when Mary and I were living in Liverpool, and we often met and sometimes shared Chinese meals. At Wirral he had the distinction of briefly teaching Harold Wilson. When war broke out, Roy was called up and in South Africa met his second wife, Dorothy: his marriage with Liise broke down, but we remained friends with both, and Mary once went to stay with Liise in Helsinki (for she had gone back to her own country). More recently Roy used to come to lecture on art to a Japanese association in Cambridge and we would meet in Peterhouse Hall. He died in 1991.

## 16. Cambridge Teachers (1928-1931)

I have said little so far about classics in Cambridge at that time; yet my central activity during the years 1928 to 1931 was working for the Classical Tripos. The main difference between then and now was the lack of any one place that could be identified with the Faculty; indeed I do not remember ever hearing anyone refer to the Faculty as such during the whole of my four years at Cambridge. What we had was a menu of available lectures given occasionally in the buildings off Bene't Street (the Arts Schools), but usually in a lecture room or the Hall of the college of which the lecturer was a Fellow. For Part I of the Classical Tripos there were no prescribed books. The main papers were those in Latin and Greek prose composition (with optional papers in verse composition), translation of verse and prose passages in both languages, along with single papers in history, archaeology, literature and philosophy and an essay paper. The four translation papers thus made up the greatest single block within the examination and as there were many passages to translate in each three-hour paper, recommended strategy was to read as widely as possible, so that about half of them would be to some extent familiar and not 'unseens'. For an examination of this kind any particular set of lectures was only marginally relevant and one's decision which to attend depended on a number of rather arbitrary considerations, viz. (a) what one's Director of Studies recommended, (b) what caught one's fancy, (c) how lectures fitted into a coherent pattern over the week, and (d) how far it was feasible to get from, say, a nine o'clock lecture ending at 9.55 at St John's to a ten o'clock lecture beginning at 10.05 at Peterhouse without a bicycle (which I did not possess).

The quality of lecturers varied considerably. Moreover, one's judgement of a lecture depended largely on what one hoped that it would provide. On the whole, I think the form of the Tripos

examination prevented an over-utilitarian approach. A course of lectures on Theocritus by A.S.F. Gow, a renowned Fellow of Trinity, was not going to pay great dividends in June, but we attended it because it was interesting and opened up a new world of Hellenistic poetry. From the outset I regarded myself as primarily a historian and I never had any doubt that I should take Group C (Ancient History) in Part II, a decision strengthened by the fortuitous advantage that Bertrand Hallward was himself a historian and could provide the necessary teaching within the College. But I attended a wide range of lectures on other aspects of the subject in both Part I years.

Of these I recall especially those of A.D. Nock, at that time Fellow of Clare, who shuffled down to a small lecture room at 9.0 a.m. to talk about Propertius or, in the second term of my first year, literary criticism, in a rather squeaky voice. His lectures were extremely learned but showed little understanding of what the average undergraduate knew or was likely to find of interest. He would, for example, quote from the *Etymologicum Magnum* without ever explaining what that work was or what value a fact contained in it might have. Nock later went to Harvard and became a most distinguished scholar, known throughout the learned world for his work on ancient religion; but in 1928/9 I derived little from him. In my first year I also attended the lectures of George Thomson at King's. He was later to make a mark as a Marxist interpreter of Greek literature and an inspiring professor of Greek at Birmingham; but in 1928/9 he was mainly interested in Greek metre and the theories of Walter Headlam on this, illustrated from the *Prometheus Bound*. D.S. Robertson, who was elected to the Chair of Greek while I was an undergraduate, lectured on Pindar. He was also a specialist on Greek architecture, but I never heard him lecture on that subject. His wife, the mother of Martin Robertson, who later held a chair in classical archaeology at Oxford and has now retired to Cambridge, was one of the few civilians to be killed in an air raid on Cambridge; she was acting as an air raid warden.

The other lectures I recall from my first year were those on Roman history given by Bertrand Hallward (whom I have already mentioned) in Peterhouse Hall. These lectures were very popular, for in contrast to the learned and mousy Nock, Hallward had a fine presence and delivery; he was also very handsome and I remember a cartoon in the college magazine entitled 'Mr Hallward will lecture...' and showing only a row of ladies' bicycles lined up along the college railings. C.F. Angus of Trinity Hall gave us a very utilitarian course on 'literary passages' (!). I do not remember now which passages they were, but they were evidently chosen to introduce particular literary or historical problems or cruxes. Since these were the kind of thing likely to turn up in examination papers, these lectures were naturally popular. F.L. Lucas lectured in King's Hall on Aristotle's *Poetics*: he was very good value. Finally, at St John's there were two lively lecturers, Martin Charlesworth, red-faced and ebullient (I heard him once begin a lecture with 'But...', an obvious piece of theatricality), who, had he not died prematurely, was certainly destined to succeed Adcock in the Chair of Ancient History, and T.R. Glover, who was reputed to have been disappointed at not getting that Chair when Adcock was elected, a stimulating teacher, whose lectures were well delivered and full of exciting ideas – though afterwards one was not too certain just what one had got from them beyond generalities. My later friend Howard Scullard, who had been at John's, remarked in a letter to his parents (which I read after his death, when investigating material for a memoir on him) that Glover was not much use 'except for general education', perhaps a rather narrow judgement. Charlesworth was a much more original scholar and introduced us to what were then quite novel concepts about the ideology of the early Roman principate and about problems of exploration and trade, which were only beginning to filter down from the work of Rostovtzeff.

One or two other lecturers also deserve mention. This was a period which still felt the influence of the Jane Harrison school:

she had died the year before I came up and her name was often mentioned (typically we were never told who she was – presumably we were expected to know). I am thinking here especially of Professor F.M. Cornford, who lectured in Trinity on Greek literature and, later, on Plato, and A.B. Cook, who lectured on tragedy in the Museum of Classical Archaeology (the ‘Ark’) down Little St Mary’s Lane (which now provides a splendid college library and lecture theatre for Peterhouse, which took it back a few years ago, when the lease expired). Jocelyn Toynbee also lectured here in a rather dry manner. Indeed, my general recollection is that most teachers at Cambridge at that time, though many of them were fine scholars, had given little thought to the problems of getting their material across in an interesting and useful way to the ordinary student. Two exceptions to this generalisation both belonged to King’s. One was Frank Adcock, the professor, who, despite (or perhaps assisted by) trouble with his ‘r’s, was an adept with an audience. He was very witty and had obviously planned his lecture down to the smallest detail, with a suitable sprinkling of jokes, no doubt repeated from year to year. For example: ‘If the Womans had had bicycles, they would have had a goddess called Punctuwa.’ Adcock was in fact a rather hard and superficial man, who used wit to steer him round problems. He once confessed to Nick Hammond that he ‘didn’t like batting on a sticky wicket’. Most of his career was devoted to editing the *Cambridge Ancient History* and to a comfortable style of bachelor life in his college, with enjoyable visits to Newmarket. Once, staying with us many years later in Birkenhead, when he was in Liverpool to lecture to the local branch of the Classical Association, he commented on the hardships which the war had inflicted on King’s College, where they were reduced to having wine only twice a week. Adcock’s personal contributions to scholarship are slender, though his books on the ancient art of warfare contain some acute observations. I should also add that he played an important part in both wars in organising the operations at Bletchley Park.

But all this I learnt later. During my student days he was (*ex officio*) a figure inspiring some awe and I tended to take over the exaggerated view of his greatness propagated by Bertrand Hallward, a King’s man and his pupil.

The other extraordinary King’s man was J.T. Sheppard, later to be Provost of that college. His lectures, usually delivered in a large lecture room in the Bene’t Street Arts Schools, were public affairs and attracted vast audiences from all sections of the University. They were invariably masterpieces of histrionic skill. Sheppard cultivated the role of the prematurely aged old man, employing a walking stick, which constituted one of his valued theatrical props. He usually lectured on Homer or a Greek tragedy and he would take up a position sitting on a table or adopting some other unusual posture and from there play the role of a *goes* or wizard, rather like Dionysus in the *Bacchae*. The comparison rather forced itself on me, when I saw this done as the triennial Greek play in the Lent Term of my second year (1930), with Andrew Cohen as an effective Dionysus. Sheppard could hold an audience spellbound and was a great draw at Classical Association meetings throughout the country. His views on Homer, whom he regarded as a single author who had constructed his epic in the most subtle fashion, did not win very much support at a time when Millman Parry was beginning to write on formulaic poetry (though Parry’s views took some time to percolate). Sheppard patently belonged to that generation of King’s men who made no secret of their homosexual slant; but in my undergraduate days I was barely aware of this issue, or – to be more accurate – I knew about it from my classical reading, but never associated it with people I actually ran up against in the world around me. Sexuality was not yet in the programme of topics to be discussed in studying classical authors.

Though they occupied most mornings, lectures were not the really essential part of one’s work. That lay first in doing one’s compositions and translation exercises and writing the occasional essay, in getting these back at tutorials, which were

usually held in college between tea and Hall, and in reading widely in Greek and Latin, sitting in one's room with a dictionary and, usually, some sort of commentary. Teaching at the tutorial was brief and, compared with what we had had at school from Ned Goddard, uninspiring. Hallward farmed out the teaching to young graduate students or fellows in other colleges and we had some (later) very distinguished teachers – Donald Lucas of King's, Walter Hamilton, later to be Headmaster of Eton, Westminster and Rugby and finally Master of Magdalene, W.K. Guthrie, the Greek philosopher, who became a Fellow at Peterhouse in my post-graduate year and was later elected Master of Downing, as well as others, such as G.V.H. Heap, who was for a time Head of the Classics Department at Exeter University (where he appointed the famous Jackson Knight as Assistant Lecturer) but later abandoned an academic career to run a second-hand book shop in Wells (where Christo, my son, got to know him when teaching there). Tutorials usually lasted only ten minutes. The tutor went through one's prose or verse with a few corrections or suggestions and then sent one away with a printed 'version', *not* written by himself. In fact many of these versions were already familiar to us, since we found several volumes of bound versions, including these, in the Ward Library. In retrospect I wonder how much my skill in these compositions improved during the two years 1928-1930: certainly not in proportion to the time I spent doing them.

Before leaving this area I would add one remark. The syllabus in classics at this time left some great gaps in one's knowledge. For example, I do not remember meeting any Plautus or Terence in lectures – only in unseens and of course private reading. When in my first year as an Assistant Lecturer at Liverpool I had to supervise the work of a final year honours student who was offering Plautus as a special subject, this landed me with a heavy amount of intensive reading. Similarly, most of our Roman history lectures were concentrated on the republic – perhaps because that was the subject of the *Cambridge Ancient*

*History* volumes which were being written at that time. The exception here was Martin Charlesworth, who lectured on the early empire. Furthermore, there seems to have been little or no overall planning to avoid clashes. In my third year, when most of my lectures were in history, since I had opted to take Group C, I see from my diary of the year 1930/1931 that Adcock was lecturing on 'Greek history 600-478' on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Glover on 'Greek History 600-510' on Wednesdays and Fridays. It should perhaps be said in mitigation that the two lecture courses had very little in common.

Apart from the weekly meetings with Hallward and his assistants, and those of the Classical Society, there was not a great deal of contact between undergraduates and the Fellowship. You had to visit the Senior Tutor at the beginning and end of each term to report arrival and obtain an exeat; and he was available at other times if one had a personal problem. Part of a scholar's duties was to take his turn (for a week) at reciting the Latin grace in Hall – here the approved procedure was to do it correctly but as quickly as possible and a 'good' performance was sometimes greeted with stamping – and, secondly, at reading the lesson in morning chapel. Chapel was not compulsory (as I believe it still was at Oxford) and apart from a choral service on Thursdays, there was usually no-one in the congregation except the Dean, the scholar reading the lesson and Professor Emery Barnes, an aged Emeritus Professor of Divinity (whose later bequest led to the building of Fen Court). It was usual for the latter to invite the officiating scholar to breakfast one day during his week as reader. This was a rather alarming experience, though he was a kindly man. Fortunately the meal ended around 8.50, when the host would say: 'Well, now you no doubt have your work and I have mine.' I was also once invited to lunch by Lubbock, an engineering Fellow who had his rooms on my staircase, and once by the Hallwards to lunch at their house. Otherwise, apart from a large tea party at the Master's Lodge (the Master at that time was Lord Chalmers, an

orientalist) and tea on one occasion with Guthrie, I do not recall any social connections with Fellows during my four years at Peterhouse. I learnt afterwards that a little before our finals Hallward took a small reading party away somewhere, but it included only public school men and not, I think, any of the scholars. He may have thought the former had a greater need or that the latter would not so easily have been able to afford such a trip – perhaps rightly. I should certainly have been embarrassed at such an invitation, for while generously supporting me throughout my education, my parents had always managed to convey the impression that they were making a considerable sacrifice in doing so; and in consequence my rather puritanical upbringing made me very hesitant about spending any money unnecessarily. This was, I think, unfortunate; it is a fault I have found it difficult to correct and I suspect I shall never wholly get it quite right!

## 17. Hellenic Travellers' Cruise (1930)

During the Michaelmas term of my second year at Cambridge (1929) I read in the *Times Educational Supplement* that the Hellenic Travellers' Club was offering four prizes, two for 'undergraduates at Oxford or Cambridge' and two for 'sixth form boys at public schools' for essays on specified subjects; these were to take the form of free places on Club cruises. I was not at the time so struck by the appalling social and sexual bias implied in this announcement, which excluded students at other universities, boys at other types of school and all girls, regardless of where they were studying, as I am now. What interested me was the first subject, 'Federalism in the Greek World', and I at once decided to have a shot at it. So in the Christmas vacation I did some reading of Freeman, Tarn and one or two other books and wrote my essay (using the reference room in the local Public Library as a quiet place in which to write).

Some weeks into the Lent Term I heard to my great delight that I had won the prize for that subject. The examiner was T.R. Glover and I went to see him and got the essay back from him. Shortly afterwards a man in my year at Peterhouse, James Mason (he later became famous as a film star) told me that the other undergraduate prize (for a modern history subject) had gone to a Trinity man, Peter Matthews, whom Mason knew because they had both been at Marlborough and he very kindly invited me to tea to meet him. This was my first contact with the 'other world' of the public schools and I found it rather an ordeal. But I got on very well with Matthews (and Mason) and we later met on the cruise and became good friends, at any rate until we went down, when, as so often happens, our acquaintance lapsed. Matthews had had some eye injury as a child and was almost blind, but this did not prevent his being a very active and lively person. He had been abroad and spoke fluent French, which I found both impressive and enviable. Later, after graduation he went to



Germany, where at first he was rather less critical of the Nazis than I was. Eventually he had a highly responsible communications job at the House of Commons until his premature death.

The cruise took place in March-April 1930; and this was the first time that I had been out of Great Britain. It was also the first time that I had mixed socially over an extended period with people outside my own narrow circle in Bingley and Bradford and the men I had got to know at Peterhouse. I probably made many gaffes, trying to modify my pronounced West Riding accent – not very successfully, I fancy. But on the whole I found that I got on fairly well with the group into which Peter Matthews and I were soon incorporated. This consisted of two sisters called Silk (the elder, Muriel, had been a friend of Evelyn Waugh's family and she claimed to have bathed him as a child), Helen Cam, Fellow of Girton and a distinguished mediaevalist, and her sister Mrs Harkness with her son John, who was studying architecture in London along with Audrey Silk. Later we added two Irish girls from Dublin, Honor Purser (who was related to the Purser who helped edit Cicero's *Letters*) and Betty Jellett, who were finding it very dull at their own table, where they had been landed with a small Roman catholic clique consisting of Father Ronald Knox, Lady Lovat and her teen-age son, the Master of Lovat (who had been entered on the passenger list as Master Lovat). He, incidentally, as Lord Lovat, became a distinguished leader of what was almost a small private clan army, Lovat's Scouts, in the Second World War. I was rather taken by Honor Purser, who was a medical student in Dublin, and I soon took to going around with the two Irish girls (though for at least half the holiday they remained Miss Purser and Miss Jellett, for in 1930 manners were still very formal). Later I exchanged one or two letters with her and once, after Mary and I were married, she came over to visit us in Liverpool, when she was doing hospital work in Manchester. After that I lost touch with her.

The cruise itself had many formal aspects. For dinner and the dances which took place afterwards we wore dinner jackets, a preposterous convention which fortunately disappeared once air travel forced people to cut down on their luggage. The cruise was from and back to Marseilles, reached of course by channel steamer and overnight train. We visited Olympia, Aegina, Piraeus and Athens, Delos, Istanbul, Argos, Tiryns, Mycenae, Heraklion and Knossos, Syracuse and Taormina (reached by train from Messina). Arrangements were excellent and the only disaster occurred on my first day ashore, when I lost my borrowed camera from the platform of the railway carriage on the way from Katakolo to Olympia. There were the usual lectures by celebrities getting a free cruise, who on this occasion included Gilbert Murray, W. Ross, the Aristotelian, and H.A.L. Fisher, the Warden of New College and a well-known historian and politician. He was accompanied by his wife and schoolgirl daughter Mary (whom I later got to know as Mary Bennett, Principal of St Hilda's College, Oxford and Hon. Secretary of the Roman Society). Mary was unfortunately convalescing from measles and, despite being kept in some degree of isolation, managed to introduce it widely among the passengers, so that on our return to Marseilles we were flying the Yellow Jack, a sign of plague aboard. Other lecturers were Capt. Liddel Hart, the military historian, a now forgotten Dr Saleeby, who wrote on health in the *Daily News*, and Sir Anthony Hawkins, famous as the author of an early thriller, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and a book called *The Dolly Dialogues*, from which one evening he gave a reading. The official tour lecturer was a somewhat legendary and ebullient figure, Canon Wigram (Hellenic cruises seem always to have provided berths for superannuated clerics). Father Ronald Knox I have already mentioned. He had an, I think, inflated reputation as a wit, but on this occasion he was rather a recluse and stuck to the company of his own small gaggle of co-religionists.

At the end of the cruise I spent a night in Paris with an

Oxford man from Merton, Kenneth Maidment, later Vice-Chancellor of some New Zealand University. For both of us it was a first visit to Paris and we ended a strenuous day's sight-seeing with a visit to the Folies Bergères, mainly because we were quite sure that that was what one ought to do on one's first visit to Paris. Briefly these three weeks were very important to me, not only for the liberating experience of a first visit to Greece and the Hellenic world, including Sicily, but also in breaking down some of my social inhibitions and in making me more at my ease with a variety of different people. I should perhaps add that in the previous Lent Term I had attended Hallward's modern Greek course and the smattering of the language I acquired was quite useful to me when I got to Greece.

## 18. Final Year and Graduation (1930-1931)

In the following term I worked hard and in July got a first class in Part I of the Classical Tripos with a distinction in Latin Verse and a credit in Greek Verse (the two optional subjects). I had already obtained a first in the college examination the previous year (known then as 'Mays') and both years I was therefore awarded a college prize consisting of a sum of money to be spent on books. More important, my scholarship was now upgraded to a Major Scholarship worth £100 per annum. In the summer of 1930 I had no plans for a holiday, but my cousin Alan invited me to join a group which included *his* cousin, Clifford Waterhouse, and other members of the Pudsey Ramblers' Association, in a ten-day walking holiday in the Black Forest, staying at Youth Hostels and small hotels. This, my second trip abroad that year, was very enjoyable. We were generally up by 6.0 a.m. and so got in a very full day's walking. In the ten days we walked from Baden-Baden to Basel, following a track, the Höhenweg, marked out with a red triangle, which took us over the highest mountains such as the Feldberg, Hornisgrinde, Belchen and Hoch Blauen. From Basel the rest of the party returned to England, but Alan and I went on for a further week's walking in the Bernese Oberland, from Lucerne up the lake to Flüelen and then round to Interlaken and Bern via Göschenen, Gletsch, Meiringen, Grindelwald and Mürren. Alan, who was three years my junior, was still at Bradford Grammar School, but in the course of the next year he sat for Peterhouse and obtained an Exhibition in Classics. He therefore came up in October 1931, when (as I shall explain) I was just beginning a year's post-graduate work; so we coincided for a year in Cambridge. Later he abandoned classics for English and took a mixed degree.

My final year, 1930-1931, I enjoyed greatly. I was happy to be rid of the compositions and able to spend the bulk of my time on my main interest, ancient history. The two special subjects

were, in Greek history the sixth century, and in Roman history the Second Punic War. But there were also longish prescribed periods of Greek and Roman (republican) history for the more general papers. Historians banked on getting through the philosophy paper with the aid of a small Oxford manual on Greek philosophy by a Miss Taylor, with one or two more specialised pieces of work. For example, I remember that for some reason we read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book A and I did an essay on this for Keith Guthrie, who was now Bye-Fellow at Peterhouse. Work now centred on weekly essays, for which we read widely in the original sources and articles in such journals as the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*; and since, at Hallward's instigation, I had learnt some Italian between my Part I examination and the end of term – enough to read a sensational play by D'Annunzio called *La città morta* – I now read quite a large section of De Sanctis' *Storia dei Romani* on the Hannibalic War. We were lucky in Peterhouse in having the 'Ark' with its fine library practically on our doorstep and we spent many hours there preparing our essays. As I was living in Little St Mary's Lane, work in the Ark was extremely convenient.

In this third year I still saw a good deal of Allan Edwards, who was taking his Part II in the English Tripos; and it was, I think, about this time that we both became sufficiently interested in politics to join the Socialist Society and the League of Nations Union, both of which had interesting meetings with outside speakers. But it was not until the summer of 1931 that the national economic crisis, following on the American depression, really developed; and by then I was out of England.

I took Part II in the first week in June. By this time I was seeing a good deal of Kenneth (K.D.) White, who had come up to Peterhouse in 1929 from Liverpool, where he had already graduated and was therefore allowed a year, with the result that he was taking his examinations at the same time as myself. We were therefore in the same year and, as he was also taking Group C, we worked a good deal together. Incidentally, K.D. White is

the only man whom I have ever seen fall asleep while actually talking; this happened one evening in his room and when I saw what had happened I quietly left. The examinations went well. I was ready for them all and at the end I felt fairly confident about the result. For the short time between going down and the publication of results on June 20th I went to stay with my uncle and aunt in Barnes. On the evening of June 19th I received a telegram from Hallward summoning me back to Cambridge and returned the next morning to learn that I had got a good first with distinction in both the general part of the examination and (more important) in the special Ancient History papers. Would I care to stay on for a fourth year and do a 'piece of research'?

In the course of the year I had, naturally, been thinking about a job and I had put myself down with the University Careers Department (or whatever it was called) and also with Gabbitas and Thring, the scholastic agency, hoping to get a post teaching classics. In this context I had assembled a set of testimonials from my old school teachers such as Lewis and Goddard and had applied for several posts without success. I had in fact a forthcoming interview the next week at Emmanuel School in north London; but Hallward's suggestion was very attractive to me and at once I agreed and withdrew from the school interview. I now had to decide what I should do my research on; and since the Committee which dealt out scholarships and awards was meeting that afternoon, an early decision was essential. I retired to the Ward Library to ponder and write down ideas. Only two stick in my mind. One was the Delphic Oracle; but when I saw Hallward, he said too many people had already worked on that (not quite true, I think, though later Parke and Wormell certainly cornered that market). However, I had a better idea. In my essay on Greek federalism for the Hellenic Travellers' Club competition, I had come across an Achaean statesman called Aratus, who had played an important part in the rise of the Achaean League in the third century. Would a study of Aratus do? Bertrand Hallward gave his approval and so later did

Adcock, so that this was put forward as the subject of my research. I was given a University grant from the George Charles Winter Warr fund and by the College a Hugo de Balsham Research Studentship; and later, with a West Riding County Studentship and a Drummond Studentship from the Bradford Grammar School Old Boys' Association I made my income for 1931-2 up to over £300, which was untold wealth.

While still in Cambridge I had an interview with Professor Adcock and he insisted that for research it was essential to learn German. He was of course right. I had French and enough Italian by now to read the only other monograph on Aratus, one by A. Ferrabino; and I could manage some modern Greek. But, having studied German for only part of one year in the sixth form at Bradford, I knew very little. So it was arranged that I should go to Jena in Thüringen, take a room in a *pension* and Adcock would then send me a letter of introduction to Professor Judeich, who at that time held the Chair of Ancient History in the University of Jena. It was also decided that I should aim at writing a thesis on Aratus, which could be submitted for the Thirlwall Prize; this was a bronze medal and, more importantly, carried with it the expectation that the winning essay would be published by the University Press. Registering for a Ph.D. was never mooted. I have the impression, looking back, that my successful result had taken Hallward by surprise, for he had never previously so much as hinted that I might stay on to do research. But I was (and am) grateful to him for having seized the opportunity on my behalf and steered it through the necessary committees; for I knew nothing about these, unlike Allan Edwards, who seemed to spend half his time exploring every possibility of raising funds to enable him to stay on in Cambridge. My mother came up to Cambridge for the graduation ceremony, but not my father; apparently he could not get a day off work (for he would have had to come up, as my mother did, on the Friday). I think he lacked the confidence to insist and I feel sad that he missed an occasion which I know would have

made him very happy, in view of his having been deprived of a similar success himself.

## 19. The Bradford Pageant (1931)

The four weeks between my coming down from Cambridge and my departure for Jena proved unexpectedly decisive for the whole of the rest of my life. Almost immediately I found myself, along with the other Old Bradfordians who had just graduated, involved in a pageant that was being held in Peel Park, Bradford. We were expected, so we discovered, to impersonate the original body of School Governors (or whatever they were then called), who received a charter for the school from Charles II. This involved several rehearsals over the next fortnight and the actual performances the week after that. This was therefore quite time-consuming. At the same time, however, I became unprecedentedly involved in social activities nearer home. Josie Hempel, who lived next door, had recently been on exchange in Germany with a family living at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder and Ali Wichmann, the German boy involved in the exchange, was now visiting the Hempels. Naturally Josie was anxious to arrange parties and walks to entertain him and his elder brother Lebrecht, who was there for, I think, part of the time. I was quite happy to be roped into these activities, since for perhaps the first time for many years I felt free from any immediate pressure of work.

At a party at Josie's I was introduced to two sisters, Mary and Wendy Fox. Mary, who was about the same age as Josie, was a fairly close friend of hers, but I had never to my knowledge met her before, since she lived at Nab Wood, about a mile and a half down the valley from Bingley. I subsequently learnt that Mary and I had in fact both been present at a party in Bradford when I was about sixteen and Mary thirteen; but the small girl had made no impression on me then. With Ali and Lebrecht Wichmann we all went out on several joint walks or visits to the baths etc. over the next week or two. Moreover, Wendy Fox was also, I discovered, performing in the Bradford Pageant. She was in an earlier episode and formed one of a

group of Saxon maidens, whose lot it was to be carried off by Scots raiders who galloped in on horseback, a dramatic incident. The coaching had been extremely thorough and when the wild northerners appeared with their weird Gaelic war-cries, the Saxon girls, well aware which raider was to carry each one off, ran eagerly towards them to facilitate the action. On one occasion it so happened that I was to join the others at the Foxes' house and as I had to go on to a rehearsal afterwards, I had my Stuart costume with me. Coming up the hill I put on the wig and Mary's youngest sister Joan, who was only then a child, ran screaming home at the sight. She constantly brings up this episode against me, but I have a shrewd suspicion, from my later knowledge of Joan, that her terror was synthetic. I got to know Mary Fox fairly well during this brief period and later I wrote to her from Jena. Our acquaintance grew during the next year and we were eventually married in the summer of 1935.

## 20. 'Jena, Jena, Dein gedenke ich...'

I left for Jena towards the end of July, travelling of course by boat and train. It was a tiring journey from 7.20 a.m. to my arrival at 5.00 p.m. the next day; today one could travel half way round the earth in that time. I went via Dover and Ostend and then through Cologne, Kassel, Erfurt and Weimar; naturally I travelled third class. On arriving in Jena, after staving off the attempt of a man I hired to carry my luggage to persuade me to rent a room in his house, I booked in for the night at the Schwarzer Adler on the Holzmarkt. The next morning, after a good night's sleep, I set out to look for a *pension*, with a list I had previously obtained from the Verkehrsverein. The first one I came to was that of Fräulein Helene Kiesewetter, which occupied the first floor of a large house at the corner of the Gartenstrasse (no. 1). In my primitive German I enquired: 'Kann ich hier bleiben?', literally 'Can I remain here?' – for which I was later much teased. Fr. Kiesewetter had a vacant room, which I secured for DM 35.00 per week with full board i.e. about 35/-. It was a large and excellent bed-sitter with a comfortable easy chair, a table and everything else I required. Almost at once I was made to feel at home. Fr. Kiesewetter rang up a man to fetch my bag from the hotel. Looking back I have sometimes thought that she wanted to make sure that I didn't sneak away; nevertheless it was very pleasant not to have to go back for it. There were several other guests staying in the pension, including two Swedish girls, both rather older than me, who took me off at once to swim at the river baths at Lichtenhain, a southern suburb of Jena.

I very soon established a satisfactory routine, noting down new vocabulary and systematically learning this in its context, listening to conversation at the table, where we all ate together, and talking to the constantly changing guests. Fr. Kiesewetter was probably in her seventies. She had to work hard, though she

had sometimes one and sometimes two maids to help her with the rooms and the work in the kitchen. When full, the pension probably held about ten guests. The income was small and she was clearly hard put to it to get by. She would frequently borrow DM 5.00 from me or ask me to pay a little in advance; but she always repaid these loans scrupulously, and we were well fed. It was *norddeutsche Küche*, north German cooking, which meant having the main meal at about 1.00 p.m. and an evening meal with sausage and other mixed cold meats around 7.00 p.m. I had by sheer good luck hit on what was thought to be the best pension in Jena.

Besides the Swedes, Greta Westman and Birgid Ericson, who were semi-permanent residents, working in laboratories in the town, there was Helga Harrer, a girl from Baden-Baden with a very marked Baden accent, which involved turning most nouns into diminutives: she was therefore known as 'Harrerle'. Helga Harrer only appeared towards the end of my stay, having just returned from a holiday in England; but she made contact with me on a subsequent visit to England, and I met her in Liverpool and showed her the city and the river. Mary and I also visited her mother in Munich in 1935, when we were on our honeymoon, and we have been in touch ever since. We were able to send her and her family parcels for a time after the war ended and her boys did an exchange with the sons of our friends Geoff and Mary Calvert. This was the one Jena link that lasted.

There was also another girl who used to visit the pension, where she had apparently stayed at some time (but now had a room or digs somewhere else in Jena). She was a rather naive and garrulous girl called Anneliese Jauchen. I never discovered what exactly she was now doing in Jena, but she seemed to have a good deal of free time, so we went occasional walks together. Her garrulousness was an advantage to me, since I was mainly interested in having someone to listen to and talk to, in order to improve my German. Later, when I got back to England, we exchanged letters for a time, and Anneliese corrected my

German. But I began then to realise that this brief companionship had been misinterpreted by her as meaning far more than was ever the case; and I became alarmed when her mother started sending me boxes of chocolates! Perhaps I ought to have been more perceptive; but I was really very innocent in those days. When I told Anneliese about Mary she stopped writing, which was as well. But some years later I had one more irksome letter from Frau Jauchen about the 'terrible Jewish conspiracy' against which the Nazi government was battling and urging me to spread this news widely and not be deceived by the lies told by our own misguided press. I cannot remember now whether I replied to this or simply ignored it. That was of course a year or two later. But already during my stay in Jena in 1931 the Nazi Sturmabteilungen (SA) were unpleasantly in evidence, marching in the streets, especially at the weekend. On one occasion Hitler was billed to speak at Gera, not far from Jena, but I did not make the trip to hear him.

Meanwhile my German went steadily ahead; and Fräulein Kiesewetter was most helpful in giving me what were in effect free German lessons. We would sit on the little balcony with its fuchsia plants in boxes around and I would read aloud to her from a romantic novel, to which she was much attached, called *Eiserne Jugend*, 'Iron Youth', which centred on the rise of the Burschenschaft, a kind of national youth movement which had originated in Jena at the time of Napoleon. Frl. Kiesewetter's determination to correct my pronunciation of German was somewhat handicapped by her own Thüringer accent, so that she normally pronounced the proper name Georg (which figured in the book) as something like 'zheorzh', and was then slightly embarrassed when I tried to imitate this outlandish noise. Napoleon was of course closely connected with Jena on account of the famous battle fought up on the plateau north of the city, the Cospedaer Grund. One possible consequence of Napoleon's visit to Jena was to be seen at Cospeda, where the innkeeper of the very ancient Gasthaus there bore an extraordinary likeness to

Bonaparte. That, as was widely alleged, the tenancy of this establishment had remained in the hands of a single family for over 150 years and that Napoleon had passed the night after the battle staying there, were traditions which I had no means of checking. But the likeness was undeniable and at all local pageants and celebrations of Jena history 'Leberecht, nicht Napoleon' was proud to play the role of Bonaparte. His inn, which I visited along with another guest from the pension, a Saxon called Herr Naumann, had a collection of Bonapartiana, which he proudly exhibited to us.

One agreeable aspect of life at the 'Kiesewetterei' was the excursions which our hostess organised from time to time, sometimes accompanying her guests personally and sometimes dispatching us on carefully organised programmes, which we usually followed obediently, since she was a strong-minded old lady. In this way I visited Eisenach and the Wartburg with its Lutheran associations (and the famous, frequently renewed, ink-splash caused by Luther throwing his ink-pot at the Devil) in the company of a middle-aged woman called Frl. Steiver, who came from Saarbrücken. Another weekend I spent the whole of Saturday alone seeing the main sights of Weimar and the next day went back again with Frl. Kiesewetter and others to see what I had missed the first day. My programme had been carefully mapped out, since, as Frl. Kiesewetter truthfully explained, there was far too much in Weimar to be seen in one day. I also visited the Leipzig Fair (but found Auerbach's Keller too crowded to stay for lunch), Naumburg with Schulpforte (famous as the school of Wilamowitz and other eminent German scholars and writers), Dornburg with its castles and Saalfeld with its caves (for this we had quite a large party of pension guests).

After I had been a week or two in Jena I received the promised letter of introduction to Professor Judeich from Professor Adcock. This was a very skilfully worded epistle, in which Adcock recalled his great debt as a young man to Wilamowitz in Berlin and subtly suggested that the situation

would now be repeated for me with Judeich as it were playing the role of Wilamowitz. I took the letter along to Judeich at his home and he greeted me very warmly. Unfortunately Adcock's writing was, as usual, almost indecipherable and there were, also as usual, many crossings out and corrections; and I saw at once that Judeich could make neither head nor tail of it. Eventually he spotted and seized upon one legible and comprehensible word – 'Berlin' – and therefore enquired: 'Also, Sie fahren weiter nach Berlin?' ('So you're going on to Berlin?'). As I was in fact planning to spend a couple of nights there on my way home after leaving Jena, I said: 'Ja, das werde ich tun' ('Yes, that's what I'm going to do'), and he looked relieved at having sensed at least some of the meaning of Adcock's letter. However, he realised what I needed and gave me a key to the Seminarbibliothek in the Fürstengraben and from then on my routine included spending the morning in the library, where I read the Pauly-Wissowa article on Aratus and the relevant parts of Niese's *Geschichte der griechischen und makedonischen Staaten*. This book became my speedometer. As my German improved and I became more used to Niese's style and vocabulary, I got through more and more each morning, until eventually I was reading quite quickly. And my spoken German and understanding of others also improved.

My seven weeks in Jena were a happy time and I carried away very fond memories of this delightful University city lying at a junction in the Saale valley and surrounded by impressive hills – the Fuchsturm, the Jenzig, the Tatzend, the Friedensberg and several others less prominent on all sides. On my last evening I provided some wine, Frl. Kiesewetter baked a special cake and we had a regular Abschiedsfest with Harrerle, the Swedish girls, Anneliese Jauchen, Herr Naumann and a certain Herr von Knobelsdorff who was by chance staying there. I left at 3.00 a.m. the next morning to catch the train to Berlin; and after two days in Berlin, visiting the main museums and making an excursion to Potsdam (when it poured continuously), I went on

to Hamburg and from there took the boat to Grimsby. I was not to see Jena again for 59 years. But in May 1990 I returned, on the invitation of Detlef Lotze (now, since the collapse of the DDR, professor) to lecture in the Department of Ancient History. All was sadly changed. The centre of the town had been destroyed by allied bombing and instead there was now a high cylindrical Hochhaus, intended for Zeiss Glass, but eventually assigned to the University for which it was unsuitable. I was put up in a University guest house in the former Fürstengraben not far from the old seminar library; but the name of the street had been changed for ideological reasons to the Goetheallee. Hanging over all was an air of squalor and decay, for my visit took place just before the dissolution of the DDR. However, I was able to enjoy one nostalgic glimpse. I walked up the Wagnergasse and found to my joy that 1, Gartenstrasse had survived the bombing unharmed and that I could still look up and see the small balcony where I had sat in 1931, reading *Eiserne Jugend* to Frl. Kiesewetter.



## 21. Research Year in Cambridge (1931-1932)

I returned from Jena to start upon a year's research. Having got my subject accepted by the appropriate University Committee, I had a clear goal: to produce an essay of about 60,000 words on the Achaean politician and general, Aratus of Sicyon, and submit it the following summer for the Thirlwall Prize. I came back to Cambridge to a room at the very north end of the terrace of college houses in Tennis Court Road, a smallish ground floor sitting-room and a bedroom two floors above. Allan Edwards was still up: he had to keep an extra term before he could graduate, as he had arrived late in his first term through illness. After that he stayed on, teaching W.E.A. classes to finance himself. I remember that at this time his financial problems and prospects figured largely in his conversation. At the B.A. table there was an interesting group (which for stupid reasons of protocol, as he had not yet graduated, Edwards could not join until after Christmas). It included an American, Aydelotte (whose father was a distinguished academic), Grahame Clark the archaeologist (later to be Master of Peterhouse) and a certain Carolus Oldfield, who later held a chair in Moral Philosophy (I think) at Oxford. Our status as B.A.s was recognised by our being allowed to have port after dinner (which we took it in turns to provide, though not every evening): undergraduates might only buy beer. But we were regarded in college as a somewhat anomalous group for there was at that time no notion of a regular body of Ph.D. students forming a 'middle combination room'.

During this year I was not lonely, for I had several friends and a fullish programme of relaxations, walking, the Festival theatre, occasional cinema visits, teas etc.. But I was not in contact with anyone doing similar work. K.D. White, with whom I had worked a good deal in my Part II year, had now gone down; he had been lucky enough to get an assistant lectureship at Leeds University. So I had none of the stimulus that I have seen

present-day students getting from seminars and contact with each other in the Faculty Building (though this is indeed a recent innovation). I had some help from Bertrand Hallward, who towards the end of my first term read a piece I had written on the source problems of my topic. And Adcock, besides giving me a little advice on books to consult, borrowed a German dissertation from the London Library for me, since it was not in the University Library. The latter, my main source of books, was still in the Old Schools behind the Senate House. The splendid room which is now used as the University Combination Room was then the catalogue room, and had the vast array of catalogue volumes round the walls and up the middle. I usually borrowed books and worked in my room; and that has remained my practice.

This isolation at the graduate research level was in fact typical of conditions common to the study of the humanities at all levels in Universities at that time. When I compare the character of published work in classics then and now, what stands out most is, I think, the large number of new books containing the proceedings of conferences and seminars on particular themes. These of course reflect the great increase in occasions for 'getting together', and although the international conference can be an obvious target for satire, the increase in the number of colloquia, especially on quite sharply defined themes, is a valuable development, which is to be welcomed generally and not merely for graduate students. Of course the basic work has still to be done in one's own room or the library.

The thirties are remembered as the time when the Universities were politicised; but this hardly hit me until my third and post-graduate years. I had been a Labour sympathiser since at least 1926, when I felt strongly on the side of the miners and went with Walter Sexton to hear A.J. Cook speak in Saltaire. And I recollect one Sunday about that time when, very unusually, I had been roped into accompanying Denis Wild and his family to Holy Trinity Church and was filled with

indignation to the extent of contemplating walking out, when the parson preached a blatantly political sermon against the miners. My father and all his family (as I explained earlier) were liberals; he took the *Daily News*, which later became the *News Chronicle*, both reputable popular papers. I think the first theoretical work that influenced me was Bernard Shaw's *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*, which I read while at Cambridge; I recollect a long walk with another old Bradfordian called Carter, during which I argued the Shaw case with great conviction and naive absence of critical judgement, for I still believed that if there was a rational case for something, there was no reason why it should not be introduced straight away; if only the rationale were explained to them, people would see the light and act accordingly. But, by and large, politics did not impinge in any marked degree on my undergraduate days.

A change came in my fourth year, however. While I was in Jena the National Government had come into office (August 1931), and the Labour Party had split. I had had no hesitation, though cut off from English papers, in accepting the main Labour Party line in opposition to Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden and J.H. Thomas, who had joined the Conservatives to form this new National Government. Also while in Jena I had become very conscious of the dangers presented by the Nazi movement. I have mentioned the street processions. But there was also an SA man in his khaki uniform often to be seen in the seminar library, reading, I noted, works dealing with the Treaty of Versailles and post-war Europe; and I had the impression that he gave me hostile looks (this was probably pure imagination!). Allan Edwards was also by this time a Labour supporter; as I have mentioned above, in our third year we had both joined the Socialist Society, which had interesting speakers, such as Arthur Greenwood (whom I had last seen as a child at Ingleton) and Jenny Lee. At Christmas (1931) we took part in an improvised play, in which J. Bronowski had a prominent role and also several others whose names I later recognised when they turned

up holding important positions in politics or the trade unions. This play was a farce in which one set of 'progs' disguised themselves as undergraduates to spy out the student body, but clashed with another set of 'progs' who did not penetrate their disguise; the classical *agon* which ensued was eventually resolved by a *deus ex machina* in the shape of the 'Master of Magdalene', who was in the news at the time for having sent down William Empson for having contraceptives in his room (information had been laid by his landlady). Various versions of this *cause célèbre* circulated; one alleged that the Master had referred to 'these erotic engines', but this was surely a fabrication.

I also joined the German Society, with the idea of keeping up and improving my German, for it was a rule that only German should be spoken at meetings. Here it was a doubtful advantage to meet Lucy Bailey, a neighbour from Bromley Road, Bingley, whose sister was a close friend of Wendy Fox; indeed the whole Bailey family was acquainted with the Foxes. Moreover, it is questionable whether reading plays by Grillparzer or Goethe was going to be very much help with either colloquial German or the sort I was likely to run into in my history reading.

During the Christmas vacation my relations with Mary became closer. A group of us agreed to do a play at a social organised at St Michael's Church, Cottingley, to which Mary's parents belonged and which Mary herself very reluctantly and occasionally attended, when she could not persuade her parents to let her stay at home and prepare the dinner. It was an absurd play (chosen, I suspect, by Kenneth Murgatroyd), and it proved a complete fiasco, since at a crucial point in the action all the lights had to go out, whereupon the largely youthful audience resorted to real or simulated panic. However, rehearsals allowed us to pass the vacation very agreeably (when I was not working) and enabled me to see a good deal of Mary – which was really why I had agreed to take part in the play. When I went back to Cambridge in January we both agreed to write regularly to each

other.

The Lent Term was very similar to the Michaelmas, and my work on Aratus made good progress. Life was a fairly steady routine; but my diary reveals one exciting week in mid-February, beginning with a visit on a cheap day excursion from Bradford by Mary and Josie, whom my cousin, Alan Walbank, and I took round Cambridge, after which we gave them tea in my rooms and dinner at the Union before they caught the train back to Bradford. Alan had come up to Peterhouse the previous October and had rooms in what was then called New Court and is now the Hostel (next door to the Master's Lodge). Two days later I heard that I had been awarded a Leaf Travelling Studentship from a college endowment, worth £50, with which I was to visit Greece in the Easter vacation. The same day I appear to have visited a Soviet Exhibition, heard Eric Gill the sculptor give a talk (or was it rather a visit to an exhibition of his work?) and in the evening attended the Commemoration of Benefactors Feast in Peterhouse – an event which I remember clearly, since I sat next to Professor Ernest Barker, who told me in his aggressively Lancashire voice that he could not feel much respect for my intelligence, when I admitted to reading T.S. Eliot. Finally, in this week, I have a note that I went to tea with the Leavises – having been taken there by Allan Edwards.

Early in March I went off directly to Greece without returning to Bingley. It was a long grind of a journey, third class train via Paris, Milan, Bologna and then down the east coast of Italy to Brindisi, from which port I took the steamer to Piraeus. En route I developed a cold, which didn't make travelling any easier. At Athens I discovered that there was no room at the British School. Hallward had given me the impression that I could just walk in and stay there; but obviously I should have written in advance to secure a room. However, they sent me down to the city centre, where I got a room at the Excelsior Hotel on Omonia Square. I had the first week in Greece alone and visited Athens itself, Piraeus and Sunion. Sunion was at this

time only to be reached by early morning train to Lavrio, followed by a hot walk in the sun from there; I was aided by the inebriating effect of a large bottle of Fix beer and on arriving I first looked at the temple and then slept for an hour or two on the hillside before walking back to Lavrio. I also visited Eleusis, walking the whole distance along the Sacred Way, which was less polluted then than it is now; and I climbed Lycabettos and Pentelikon and went part of the way up Hymettos.

At the end of the week I was joined by a Peterhouse man called C.H. Chapman, who was in his second year. He had not been able to come out with me, as he had to keep his full tally of 59 nights in Cambridge. Once he had arrived, we went off with rucksacks for a splendid three-week tour round Greece. We took a train to Levadhia, walked from there through snow to Osios Loukas, a monastery in Phocis, where we stayed the night, and on through Arachova to Delphi. From Delphi we took the boat across the Gulf to Aegion and from there the train to Olympia. We tried to walk from Olympia to Andritsaena, but heavy rain and an uncrossable river, the Erymanthus, obliged us to return to Olympia. So we then took another train to Meligala, walked in bitter driving rain and hail round Messene and eventually reached Kalamata. The bad weather had made the Langada Pass impassable, so we came round to Sparta by slow train to Tripolis and bus from there. From Sparta we visited Mistra and the battlefield of Sellasia, which was important for my work on Aratus, and then came north to Argos, Nauplion, Epidauros, Mycenae, Nemea and Corinth; and finally, after a night at a very low-grade hotel in Megara, we crossed over to Salamis, walked to the eastern end and caught a ferry back to Piraeus. On my way home to England (by train) I stayed one night in Salonica, one in Budapest and two in Vienna.

The next term I finished my book on Aratus and applied unsuccessfully for university jobs at Leeds and Birmingham, where I was interviewed by E.R. Dodds and given lunch, along with the other short-listed candidates, at his house. I was slightly

horrified to hear him tell of collating manuscripts of Proclus while on his honeymoon; this, I felt, was a height of intellectuality to which I could never aspire. I also had a couple of interviews for teaching jobs, one at Sunderland and one (I think) at Keighley. Eventually in September I was appointed to a post as Latin master at the North Manchester Municipal High School for Boys, Chain Bar, Moston, not the summit of my ambitions, but at any rate a job. In the summer a group including Josie Hempel and her brother Martin, Kenneth Murgatroyd, his French exchange, Jacques Corrèze (who was over on a visit), my cousin Alan and two other friends of Josie, Mary Bell and Mary Sharp – and of course Mary Fox, had a holiday at Cayton Bay a little south of Scarborough. Later in the summer Mary and I spent a weekend with her family when they were on holiday at Saltburn. We were not yet engaged, but virtually so. At some point in the summer I submitted my *Aratus* for the Thirlwall Prize. I had typed it out myself, having bought a second-hand typewriter in Bradford (for, I think, about £5) and having been taught by Josie to use all fingers in typing – a lesson for which I am still grateful. The typewriter, incidentally, a portable Remington, remained in good shape until about two years ago, so I had over fifty years' use of it. In September I moved to Manchester.

## 22. School-teaching in Manchester (1932-1933)

North Manchester High School was a new 1920s building, consisting of two courts with the classrooms constructed round them and the school assembly hall in the middle. The open corridors, into which the classrooms opened, would have been splendid in California, but were less than ideal in North Manchester; for Moston (etym. 'Moss-tun') was a settlement on a boggy plateau and, throughout the winter, fogs would roll along the road and envelop the building; colds were endemic. The headmaster, Mr Burnett, who had persuaded the committee to appoint me, was a Tynesider and a mathematician, a huge man and a good headmaster, who favoured appointing young graduates, even at the risk of their moving on fairly soon. He used to walk around the school wearing a mortar-board and no gown, to protect his balding head from the Moston mists. I was one of three new appointees, each of us at the start of his career; they were Mosby (English), Rogers (History) and Walker (I forget what he taught). It was a mixed staff, overwhelmingly from the provincial universities; there was only one other Cambridge graduate and no-one from Oxford. I found out almost at once that we were expected to stay for the midday meal, and this was quite a good thing, since we had a staff table where we talked not only 'shop' (a little) but about all manner of things: conversation was good and the food was not bad either, at 10d each. I was to spend four terms at this school and I was fortunate in my lodgings, which were in the first house in Rose Mount, alongside Moston railway station, which, however, lay in a cutting, so that the noise of the trains was minimal. I had a sitting room and a bedroom and from the latter I could see all the mill chimneys in Oldham, a Lowry sort of view. My landlady was Mrs Dean, who had recently been widowed, and there was one other lodger, an assistant teacher in a primary school, Miss Rosalind Hill, who was engaged to a somewhat uninspiring

young man, a Moravian by religion, called Edgar Butterworth. I paid 27/- a week for all meals (including high tea and supper but excluding the five midday meals taken at school) and I had a further reduction of 2/-, if I went home for the weekend – which I very soon took to doing every week, for there was a convenient bus from Failsworth, just along the road from Moston, which went direct via Halifax to Bradford.

My four terms at Manchester proved eventually to have been a kind of interruption in my career, a blind alley one might say, for I was not likely to have developed into a very good or a very enthusiastic school-master; but I learnt a great deal from the experience. I greatly missed the research work which had occupied me for the last year. Happily I heard the following February (1933) that I had been awarded the Thirlwall Prize (jointly, along with a modern historian) and I was able to put in some time first revising the text (once I had got it back from W.W. Tarn, the examiner) and later, from May 1937 onwards, correcting the proofs; for the essay had been seized for publication by the University Press, without anyone consulting me, which I thought a little odd. But in general it was a broken sort of existence, with teaching in Manchester during the week and a growing number of activities, along with Mary, in Bingley at the weekend.

My salary was meagre. Since, following the economic crisis, teachers had recently accepted a ‘voluntary’ reduction in their salaries, mine came to about £17 a month; and this included an extra increment, which the Education Committee had agreed to give me in view of my first class honours degree and year’s research. I managed to supplement this small salary by coaching two girls from a neighbouring girls’ school for School Certificate Latin (I was relieved when they both passed – as did my cousin Clarice Bracewell and later Mary’s sister Joan, both of whom I also coached at the weekends). I attended some functions in Manchester, art exhibitions, concerts organised for the schools, occasional films, and once or twice Mary came over at the

weekend and we went to the theatre. Manchester was a lively city and there was a great deal going on. I remember, for instance, a splendid Van Gogh exhibition, the first time I had seen his pictures *en masse*.

In my first term there was a visitation from H.M. Inspectors, which was something of an ordeal, since I was quite inexperienced, having had no professional training; for, though usual, the post-graduate year in education was not compulsory at this time. The Headmaster told me that the inspectors were quite satisfied with my work, but thought that it would be helpful if I were to spend a week observing classics teaching in a school with a strong classical tradition. Accordingly, it was arranged that I should have a week’s leave of absence (with full pay) and should go to Liverpool (I suppose because it was outside the Manchester area) and sit in on classes at Liverpool Collegiate School. It was agreed that this should take place early in my second year, in October 1933, and I was lucky in being able to stay for the week with Walter Sexton, who had just recently moved to Liverpool and had taken a ground floor flat in Catherine St. It proved a very pleasant and instructive week, but I did not know at the time that my school-teaching career was nearly over and that my week in Liverpool was to be the prelude to a much longer association with that city.

During my time at Manchester Mary and I were both becoming increasingly interested in politics; and this continued throughout the three years before we were married (in 1935). We read a lot of left-wing books, including Palme Dutt’s *Fascism and Social Revolution*, which we found persuasive; today with hindsight it looks very different. Furthermore, we saw Nazism at first hand during a holiday in the summer of 1933 and this confirmed us in our move towards the left. We had arranged with my colleague Frank Mosby and his fiancée Betty to have a joint holiday walking in the Harz Mountains, which Josie had visited during her stay in Germany and recommended enthusiastically as a place for a walking holiday. But Betty

chickened out of the arrangement, so Mary and I said nothing of this at home, but simply went on our own. We were by now engaged (since autumn, 1932), but even so there had to be some subterfuge and I do not know even now how much our respective parents were aware of the absence of Mosby and his Betty from this holiday. Now, however, we encountered the victorious Nazis on their home ground, with Hitler in power. When I had seen them in Jena, they were still only one party of many. On the train from Goslar to Hamburg, on our way back, we talked to a student, who boasted of the new Nazi concentration camps. We met Ali Wichmann, who was now a policeman in Altona, and his elder brother Jochen, another policeman, for a very jolly evening at a *Lokal* on the Reeperbahn called Zillertal. He had toughened up considerably since we first met him in Bingley in 1931 and he now took the police line that if people didn't agree with Hitler 'they just had to'. Later Ali was to join the Kondor Legion operating against the Republic in Spain and he died on active service in the Luftwaffe over England in the course of the Second World War. In 1931 he had envisaged becoming a pastor. His life and death were an illustration of the corruption and ruin brought about by National Socialism. While still in the Harz we made an *Ausflug* from Thale to Kyffhäuser in the southern Harz and there saw a rally of SA-men and students in their *Verbindungen* uniforms (such students were usually right-wing and many of them had *Schmisse* on their faces from duelling). This rally took place at the impressive national monument to Barbarossa, who (traditionally) was buried underneath the hill and would emerge to rescue Germany in her hour of need – rather like King Arthur under Richmond Castle or Drake and his drum. In a central building were exhibited the flags of 'the lost provinces', which included, significantly, South Tirol, though this area had been lost, not by Germany, but by the old Austro-Hungarian empire. But all was grist to the German mill. An inscription read something like: 'Was einmal Deutsch war, muss wieder Deutsch

sein' ('What once was German must be German again'). The location and the wording combined to point the lesson that something very sinister was afoot.

In September 1933 an Assistant Lectureship was advertised at Liverpool University to fill the vacancy created by the appointment of R.B. Onians to the Aberystwyth Chair of Latin. I decided to apply and in due course was called for interview on September 19th. *Aratos of Sicyon* (in this book I used the -os forms for Greek names) had been published ten days before and I was therefore able to send a copy to Professor J.F. Mountford, the Head of the Department, in support of my application. Meanwhile we decided to celebrate the publication in a more festive way. 'We' here included Kenneth, Josie, Mary's sister Wendy and Eric (Bill) Hartley, who lived quite near to me and whom we had our eyes on as a possible partner for Wendy (thus taking her off Mary's hands – for, although Mary was very fond of her sister, she was sometimes an inconvenient third party); there may have been others, but if so I forget who they were. We all walked over Baidon Moor to Hawksworth and Guiseley for a fish-and-chip supper at Harry Ramsden's, which had opened two years earlier and was already famous, though not as famous as it is now with branches at Heathrow and all over the country.

At Liverpool two of us were interviewed, the other being Stanley F. Bonner, who had that summer graduated at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He too had no university teaching experience, but he had read the literature option in the tripos; also he came from the midlands, which may have subconsciously influenced Mountford in his favour, for he too came from that part of the country. Anyhow, the small sub-committee chose Bonner and I assumed that Mountford's expression of regret that there were not two vacancies was just a formal piece of considerate politeness. However, fortune was with me after all. For on Saturday, November 25th, I got a letter from him to say that another member of his department, C.G. Cooper, had been appointed to a chair in New Zealand and offering me the job, as

Assistant Lecturer, at £200 for the period January to September 1934.

This letter stands out in my memory as one of the turning-points in my life and puts a golden haze over the whole of that weekend, when, exceptionally and by great good fortune, I had arranged not to go home. Instead Mary was coming to stay with me in Manchester and we were to join Mosby (and Betty) for a meal and then go to see Elizabeth Bergner at the Opera House. Having had the Friday evening free, I had been to a meeting in Manchester to hear Middleton Murry. I record these details as they are all linked together in my mind with the joyful news from Liverpool, which I at once passed on to Mary on the train between Victoria Station (where I had met her) and Moston. We had been intending to look at houses around Moston, thinking that we might well be living there, and indeed we had been invited by a nice man in the English department called Tom Seabridge to look at his. We were very happy at the thought that we should not be living on the north Manchester moss. On Monday morning I went at once to see the Headmaster, who was very friendly and helpful about getting me permission to leave at the end of term (I could have been held to giving a term's notice). A month later I left Moston for good.

## 23. Early Years in Liverpool (1934-5)

My first lodgings in Liverpool were in a first floor 'bed-sitter' in an early nineteenth century house on the south side of Bedford Street North (no. 98); it no longer exists, having been demolished as part of the post-war development of the university site. My landlady, whose name was Miss Gore (Walter Sexton always referred to her as Hetty), was a gaunt pale woman, whose immense social pretensions were belied by her constant difficulty with the letter 'H'. I paid 35/- a week, which included all but weekday lunches (for which I generally joined Walter at a café in the city). At that time the University had no club or canteen apart from the independent University Club, with its impressive rooms and fine collection of Augustus Johns, over Boots Chemists at the junction of Mount Pleasant and Renshaw Street; but its subscription was beyond the salary of an assistant lecturer (or so it seemed to me). At the end of my first term I moved to lodgings at 22, Mulberry Street, where for the same price I had a separate bedroom and sitting room and all meals provided. My new landlady there was Mrs Robertson, a Scot like her husband (who, like so many at that time in Liverpool, was out of work). It was a little further from the main University buildings in Brownlow Hill, but the walk was good for me.

During the next year and a half I did not go home every weekend, but only from time to time, while Mary also came for occasional weekends in Liverpool. With more spare time at home she developed her political activities more vigorously and I was drawn into them on my visits and in the vacations. We were entirely at one in our political views, but we differed temperamentally. I had the academic's inclination to talk and discuss and then to leave it at that: for Mary a conclusion was the first step to action. She now joined the League of Nations Union and, in the face of some opposition from the 'old fogeys', set up a Youth Club as part of the Bingley Branch. She then set

about soliciting money from various charitable and well-disposed individuals (such as Walker Wild, the spring manufacturer and grandfather of my friend Denis Wild) and arranged to rent a disused army hut which stood adjacent to the Wesleyan Chapel in Mornington Road. She then organised a group to clean, decorate and furnish this and the result was the Geneva Club, which opened on 29 September 1934 as a centre for the neighbourhood long before youth clubs were fashionable. Lectures, debates and dances were held there and through it our acquaintance was widened.

In particular the scheme got great help from the *Keighley News* reporter in Bingley, a Lancashire man from Kirkham in the Fylde, Harry Hodgkinson, who was to remain a close friend of us both for life. Harry used his position on the newspaper to give the Club great publicity. It certainly flourished and expanded; among its members, briefly, was Denis Healey, whom I had known as a small boy travelling on the train to Bradford Grammar School, and who was later to be famous as the best prime minister we never had. I may here interpose a short digression about Harry. In 1936 he left his job and joined another Geneva Club member, David Luscombe, in a scheme to walk to Bethlehem and arrive in time for the service on Christmas Eve; this (as he has since told me) was a well-planned operation, with no religious overtones, but devised simply with the purpose of getting Harry out of what he felt was becoming a dead-end job. The enterprise was highly successful; and it was partially financed by weekly accounts sent to the *Keighley News*. By a coincidence Harry and David had reached Albania in the summer of 1936 at the very time that (as I shall explain shortly) Mary and I were in that country. Later we were all involved (and Harry and I still are) in a variety of Albanian affairs, which went on through the war and afterwards. Later Harry was private secretary to Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Liberal leader, was stationed at Bari as a naval officer during the war (and there met our friend Homer Thompson, the Canadian-

American archaeologist) and eventually had a career in an oil firm. He is now President of the Anglo-Albanian Society and he and I meet regularly in London or Cambridge, usually to visit art exhibitions.

I should return to 1934. Besides starting the Geneva Club, Mary also joined the Shipley Branch of the Communist Party; and, feeling that she needed to know more about current affairs, she got together a group of potential students and persuaded the W.E.A. to put on a course in Bingley. As I have already mentioned, it fell to my lot, when in Bingley, to impersonate any absentee male member of the class. On one such occasion – this was probably in 1934/5 – an inspector turned up. She proved to be one Dorothy Edwards, whose husband L. John Edwards was himself taking a class in Bingley the same evening. Afterwards Mary and I walked down with her to meet John Edwards and we discovered that in the coming session they were removing to Liverpool, where he was to take up a post as head of the Extra-Mural Department in the University. This was the start of a long friendship. While they were in Liverpool we saw them regularly. Later he left to become General Secretary of the Post Office Engineering Union and was then elected Labour MP for Brighouse. He was a Junior Minister in the Labour Government after the war and at one point was sent to negotiate in Argentina. On hearing that he had met Eva Peron, our mutual friend Mary Palmer commented: ‘I always said John would go far, but I never thought he would go *that* far.’ John died prematurely of a heart attack while at the Council of Europe; there is a street in Strasbourg named after him. Dorothy (we always called her D) lived to an old age.

In the summer of 1934 Mary and I had another holiday with political overtones – or at any rate that is how we saw it. We took a seventeen-day excursion ticket to Hendaye Plage, the last place in south-west France, and from there walked over the international bridge to Irun in Basque Spain. From there we went on a fourteen-day walking holiday in the Spanish Pyrenees. My



senior colleague, Professor Allison Peers (who wrote *Redbrick University* under the pseudonym 'Bruce Truscot') had given me some information about the passes over into France (and had tried without success to persuade me to join his personally profitable summer school at San Sebastian); but we did not attempt anything very high. We did cross over into France, however, going straight over the plateau and returning by the Pass of Roncesvalles, famous in the *Chanson de Roland* and a little to the west of where we had first crossed. We stayed at villages where tourists seemed quite unknown; and we both suffered off and on from acute diarrhoea (for which we had brought no adequate remedies). We also made the mistake of lighting midday fires to boil soup, an excellent idea in the Harz, but quite unsuitable for Spain. However we enjoyed this (for 1934) adventurous holiday and we were impressed by the signs of progress under the new republic and by the inordinate number of priests like crows who seemed to be on every bus (and were apt to try to collect money for some obscure religious purpose). The political aspect of this was that when the Civil War broke out in 1936 we both felt very strongly committed to the republican side against Franco and the fascists.

Meanwhile I had settled in quite happily at the University. I shared a room in the New Arts Building with Bonner (who had got the job the previous summer) and the lecturer in Greek, G.B.A. Fletcher (later Professor of Latin at Newcastle on Tyne). Sharing the room meant playing Box and Cox for small classes and supervisions, which we did amicably. But Fletcher was a strange man, and would sometimes come into the room without even saying 'Hello' or 'Good morning'; and when my first article was published and I left an offprint on his desk, he made no reference to it and left it untouched. So after about a week I removed it. Bonner was an uninteresting man (though his writing was quite lively and he lectured well). But his interest in the world seemed rather restricted and he was slow in his thinking and his actions. I very soon discovered that we had nothing

beyond Departmental interests in common – though, looking back, I think I could have perhaps got more than I did from his expertise on the literary criticism of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. In 1936 he married Eileen Holme, one of our honours students who graduated with a first class that year. To me she was, of course, Miss Holme, for, odd though it may now seem, we addressed all our students as Miss or Mr. This strange and formal practice went on, I think, until well after the war.

Besides Bonner we had another Assistant Lecturer, Mildred Hartley (known to the students as 'mournful Mildred'). She was a clever, rather disorganised person, whose primary interest was in classical archaeology. She published an article in the *Liverpool Annals* attacking our colleague Professor Droop on the attribution of some kind of pot, and entitled it 'Facts and Fancies'. Droop replied in the next number in a counter-attack entitled 'Facts'. This struck Mountford as shadow-boxing. Why, he asked, couldn't they just get together and talk it out? But I suppose that then, as now, a publication was worth more than an argument to a junior lecturer without any tenure. And in fact Miss Hartley was in a rather unenviable position, since the regulations at Liverpool (as in many universities at that time) had no provision for promotion from Assistant Lecturer to Lecturer. Unless a vacancy at the higher grade occurred, however hard you had worked and however competent you had been, at the end of three years out you went. And Miss Hartley's three years expired at the end of September 1934. There was, however, no catastrophe, though there was a great deal of belly-aching, both metaphorical and, I suspect, literal. Eventually Miss Hartley got a post as Tutor at Somerville College, Oxford, where she remained very happily and successfully for the rest of her teaching life. Like many (though by no means all) Oxford Fellows, she published to my knowledge virtually nothing; but she was a good teacher in a good college.

Mountford let her go. Indeed, he could only have saved her by getting the regulations changed. But he was evidently

prepared to lose her services with equanimity, for in the next year (1934-5), when he was due to lose both Bonner and myself, he used his very considerable diplomatic and administrative skills to get the regulations changed, so that we both moved up to full lectureships (with a three year probationary period in Grade II) without a hitch. This was not, however, before I had had a protracted bout of indigestion requiring a visit to a doctor (Dr Dunsby, who will crop up later in this story). He put me on an effective diet, which involved drinking before but not during meals and effectively put an end to the trouble, which I have no doubt was caused mainly by worry at the prospect of being out of a job. My diet at Mrs Robertson's may have contributed.

When Miss Hartley left, we were joined by Robert Getty, a northern Irishman, who had taught at Aberdeen and whose interests were in Silver Latin poetry, especially the author of the dull *Argonautica*, Valerius Flaccus. He and his wife, Margaret, a Scotswoman, became good friends, despite the fact that he was a rabid conservative, as was natural in an Ulsterman. But he had the merit of humour – of a special kind –, and we never quarrelled, though he would mischievously set up provocative situations, like asking us to dinner to meet his politically active Unionist cousin, Willie McMichael, because he knew I was secretary of the local branch of the National Council for Civil Liberties, which was extremely active in campaigning against the Unionists' domination of the six counties with their oppressive régime and 'B special' police. In 1939 he sent me a picture postcard of Adolf Hitler from Paris, to celebrate the defeat of the Spanish Republicans, a jest I found it hard to swallow. Getty was also a pro-Edward man during the ten days' wonder of the abdication in 1936, a time of sensational excitement. Indeed, our friend, Connie Craven, the left-wing wife of the agent of the Liverpool Branch of the Bank of England, told us that Bold Street (from which she had just emerged) was 'one long sibilance' (i.e. from the word 'Simpson' being uttered simultaneously by thousands of Liverpudlians).

Another of my colleagues at that time was A.Y. Campbell ('Archie'), the Professor of Greek and a delightful man, a poet and a constant emender of Greek and Latin verse of every kind. He had a sharp mind and was quick to spot difficulties in the text and his remedy was invariably to assume manuscript corruption and to search for the palmary emendation which would remove the difficulty. He was wholly convinced by each emendation for as long as 24 hours, but his scintillating mind then turned up something new (and better), to which he then switched his allegiance. Both before and after his retirement to Cambridge he offered many papers to the Cambridge Philological Society and I remember one offprint from him, which reproduced the solution he had presented to the meeting, but then in brackets gave an entirely different solution, which had occurred to him while the paper was being printed. Finally, in red ink, was a third, current solution, quite different from the other two. It was hard to take Archie seriously; but one was bound to admire the skill with which he managed to pass the bulk of the Departmental chores on to his single lecturer, at that time Fletcher, later Harri Hudson-Williams, after Fletcher got the Latin chair at Newcastle. Archie and his wife Olwen had been friends of the Cambridge group around Rupert Brooke, and he had stories of calling in at the Old Vicarage, to announce their engagement, only to find all the occupants quite distracted by a plague of wasps and totally indifferent to what to them seemed a matter of some importance. Another anecdote, which I must recount concerning Archie, is the odd error which he made in one of his books of poems in entitling one poem 'Nymphomania', when he meant to call it 'Nympholepsy'. Having discovered his mistake and filled with embarrassment, he corrected it in the library copy, whereupon the University Librarian, Garmon Jones, who recognised his handwriting, threatened to denounce him in Senate as a defacer of library books.

Campbell's exploitation of his lecturer was a course not open to H.A. Ormerod, the Professor of Ancient History (whom I was

eventually to succeed), since he had no lecturer (and very few lectures). Ormerod was more interested in University administration than in Greek and Roman history, though he had in the past done some chapters in the *Cambridge Ancient History* (on Pompey and the pirates) and had published an interesting book on *Piracy in the Ancient World*, which is still read and quoted and was later itself pirated by an unscrupulous American-Greek publisher, A. Oikonomides. Ormerod was excellent at administration and knew all the ordinances backwards. He was on first acquaintance slightly forbidding, but was really a very generous-hearted man, and he was always very kind to me. Once, when he was ill, he asked me to take his lectures and repaid me in a typically gentlemanly way with a brace of grouse. That was later, during the war, when we lived at St Anne's. Although Ormerod possessed a farm down in Wiltshire, when he retired he stayed on in Liverpool working at a history of the University. But this never made much headway, since he kept going back to forerunners of the University, publishing a series of pamphlets on the history of such bodies as the Medical School. Eventually he was asked to hand over his material and the history of the University was eventually written and published by Tom Kelly, the Head of the Extra-Mural Department. Ormerod was a great sufferer from arthritis and this eventually killed him, after he had had to have a leg amputated. I visited him in hospital in Oxford (where I happened to be staying) about a fortnight before he died. I have warm memories of Henry Arderne Ormerod.

On 27 July 1935 Mary and I were married at St Michael's Church, Cottingley (later burnt down) by Canon Watson, the incumbent, a foolish man, who believed that Darwinism and Genesis could be reconciled, if only one assumed that Adam and Eve had married into a race of lower aborigines. The canon had failed over a number of years to bring Mary to a proper state of grace in which she might be confirmed, for she had persistently and deliberately sabotaged his confirmation classes and

eventually succeeded in alienating all the other confirmands, with the result that in her last year in the class no one was confirmed at all. Since I lived in Bingley, the banns had also to be called out at Holy Trinity Church (subsequently demolished because of subsidence). The fate of these two buildings was of course quite unconnected with our marriage, which really ought not to have taken place in a church at all, since neither of us was a Christian. In retrospect, I blame myself for insisting on a church service out of consideration for my mother, who was, I am inclined to think, motivated not by strong religious convictions but by her passion for conformity. So it was not an occasion on which I look back with pleasure. The date was determined by the Joint Matriculation Board, since Saturday, 27 July, was the day by which School Certificate marks had to be submitted, and I relied on this additional source of income to pay for holidays.

Our honeymoon of four weeks we spent walking in the Bavarian Alps and the Austrian Tirol. Starting from Garmisch-Partenkirchen we covered many kilometres and from Prien on the Chiemsee took a day excursion by coach to Berchtesgaden. It was a varied and enjoyable holiday, but we were conscious all the time of the Nazi threat, now that Hitler was in power. One encountered Nazi propaganda everywhere. At Rottach-Egern I photographed a notice ordering all Jews to leave the district within 24 hours, 'otherwise no responsibility would be taken for their safety'. Many years later I learnt from my friend Victor Ehrenberg that he and his wife had been holidaying there at the time and had been obliged to leave because of the threat. He was then professor at the Charles University in Prague and happily he succeeded in escaping to England with his wife and two sons (the Eltons).

In 1935 the villages on the German side of the frontier were all full of people on holiday through the Nazi 'Kraft durch Freude' organisation. There were also huge camps for German boys and girls, including Germans from overseas, designed for

political indoctrination. The *Stürmer* display boxes stood in every village, enabling everyone to read an unbelievably nasty publication full of racist obscenity. The Tirol, by contrast, was almost deserted, for Germans were not allowed to go across the frontier, a method of exerting economic pressure on Austria. On our way home we spent two nights in Munich, where we were invited to supper with Helga Harrer's mother and her sister Maxe. On the whole we kept off politics; but we did say very firmly that we were convinced that all that we had seen pointed to war. Years afterwards, in 1950, when I visited Helga briefly in Baden-Baden, and her mother was now living with her, Frau Harrer recalled this remark as a remarkable example of foresight. Unhappily, what seemed pretty obvious to any politically alert outsider during the middle thirties, was a closed book to the ordinary citizens of Germany, who were mostly taken in by the propaganda to which they were subjected. After Munich we spent a night at Mainz and then travelled by Rhine steamer as far as Cologne. We got back to London on Sunday, 25 August, and spent the Monday buying enough furniture to furnish a flat from Maples. Over the last four years I had saved around a hundred pounds, which was sufficient to cover all we needed to buy. A lot of this furniture is still in use in 1992. From London we then returned direct to Liverpool, where Walter Sexton had taken a furnished flat for us in Canning Street on a weekly basis, until we could find a place of our own.

## 24. Ivanhoe Road (1935-1938)

In 1935 flats were cheap and easy to come by in Liverpool and after a fortnight we moved into our first home, a second-floor flat in a large house at 19, Ivanhoe Road, quite close to Sefton Park, and just round the corner from Linnet Lane, where Walter Sexton now lived. It contained two large rooms, which we used as sitting and dining rooms, a third room which was originally our bedroom but later became my study and a general use room (we found that the small central room at the front was large enough to take our beds); half a floor down was a bathroom with loo combined and a kitchen- breakfast room. And there was also a kind of attic, approached from the landing, where we kept coal and from which one could see Moel Famau in the Clwyd hills (we showed this view proudly to all our guests). For this we paid sixty-five pounds per annum. Our sitting-room was eventually a startling confection: grey walls and ceiling, a grey broad-loom carpet (the remnants of which are still in use in 1992), a suite with a sofa, two easy chairs and two other chairs in grey and blue broad striped linen, an orange rug, an orange screen (a later addition, introduced to hide the damp patches which soon appeared on the wall, having been hidden by a hastily applied cheap paper at the time we took the tenancy – a typical Merseyside trick) and a full-sized Van Gogh print on the wall. We also had a rather snazzy Zeiss fitting for the light as well as a chromium, globular standard lamp.

The main snags of this flat were not the stairs, which didn't worry us, but the smoky fires and damp from the valley gutter. We had frequently to call in the sanitary inspector and our relations with Mrs Hughes, the landlady, were far from cordial. Mrs Hughes was a sad middle-aged woman with a handicapped daughter, who was hard to get hold of, since every day through the summer she went to Llandudno and back by steamer from Liverpool; this was not for business purposes, but her way of

filling in time. Through meanness she never gave us a properly stamped (and so legal) contract, but we did in fact stay in Ivanhoe Road for almost the full three years for which we had taken the flat. We eventually moved in July 1938, whereas strictly we should have stayed until September. I have described our sitting room, but this did not all come together at once. In fact we had about three months' trouble with Maples of London, who kept none of their promises, delivered our furniture in dribs and drabs and even sent the dining-room furniture 'in the white', so that they had to employ the Liverpool firm of Lewis's to stain it. This was a lesson to us do our shopping locally in future, so that we could get at the responsible people if something went wrong. We had as yet no telephone and had to do all our negotiations by post. Our correspondence periodically worked up to a kind of crescendo, at which point we would receive a grovelling letter of apology from the Directors' Room, but no improved performance. At the end we took a 5% discount (Mary was accustomed to this notion from the Bradford trade) and after a half-hearted resistance and the receipt from us of a catalogue of all that had gone wrong, Maples accepted this. I have often wondered if we were exceptionally unlucky, or if this was how large London firms habitually conducted their business. If so, it is amazing that they managed to remain solvent.

Once the flat was put in order Mary found herself with time on her hands. She was lonely and missed the bustle of her job in Bradford, where she had been working for her father. Through Miss Parry, a friend of Eleanor Rathbone, she agreed to help with classes for adolescent girls at the David Lewis Club below the Anglican Cathedral, where there were facilities for the many unemployed, such as lectures and classes, as well as the David Lewis Theatre, where we saw many interesting plays over the next three years. After a time Mary linked up with the Communist Party (of which there was a kind of university/school-teacher branch) and also the local Labour Party in Aigburth (part of the East Toxteth Division). In addition she

joined and became active in the local Cooperative Women's Guild. She began this, I think, because she thought it should be encouraged (for the same reason we used to take the Cooperative paper, *Reynolds' News*, on Sundays), but she very soon enjoyed organising it. I took on the Honorary Secretaryship of the Merseyside branch of the National Council for Civil Liberties, which had not very much to do until the Blackshirts became more active and there were various incidents involving them and the Greenshirts, who were followers of Major Douglas's Social Credit Party. The Greenshirts were innocuous, but the Blackshirts, Mosley's fascists, aped the continental movements. Eventually the Political Uniforms Act, a very sensible measure, took away much of their glamour. But the N.C.C.L. kept having to intervene by watching court cases and I was frequently involved in writing letters to the local press to counter the professional publicity agent of the British Union of Fascists.

With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War this political work rocketed. We were passionate supporters of the Spanish government as a result partly of our visit to Spain in 1934; and Mary was soon involved as secretary of the Liverpool Spanish Medical Aid Committee and helped to organise public meetings, often in the large Picton Hall in the centre of Liverpool. Another body which soon came into existence was one to help the dependants of volunteers who went out to Spain to fight in the International Brigade. There was also a lot of work to be done helping such volunteers actually to get to Spain, begging clothes for them, so that they could travel out to France on an excursion ticket without a passport and then hop from France to Spain. When we were not at meetings connected with Spain there were ward and divisional Labour Party meetings; and in 1937 (or it may have been 1936) Mary agreed to stand for Liverpool Council as Labour candidate for Sefton Park West. She knew she would not get in, nor did she. But in this context I had my first introduction to Col. Vere Cotton, an important member of the University Council and the Returning Officer for this

election. It was an amicable encounter. Many years afterwards I got to know Cotton quite well, when he was Chairman of the University's Layout and Open Spaces Committee, on which I served for many years (thereby losing more Saturday mornings than I care to count). And when I was Chairman of the Press I had to arrange for the printing of his history of Liverpool Cathedral. Col. Cotton was one of a number of people engaged in industry and commerce in Liverpool to whom the University was deeply indebted for their committed help and influence. Needless to say, he was, like so many of these admirable people, a staunch Tory!

Politically these years were dominated by the Spanish War and at home by the campaign to build up a united front of the left wing and centre capable of opposing and, it was hoped, ousting the National Government, which was committed to the policy of non-intervention in Spain (this was totally farcical, since neither Hitler nor Mussolini ever observed it) and took the view that Hitler's increasing demands had some justice behind them and that if he could be appeased by concessions, he would become reasonable, or failing that, his aggressive moves could be channelled against the Soviet Union. We saw everything in a rather over-simplified way, with too many blacks and whites, and we accepted the Communist Party line, as conveyed each morning in the *Daily Worker* (which we took along with the *Manchester Guardian*).

In the course of this political activity we met a great variety of people. Looking back I am struck by the devotion and effort and readiness to contribute what were (for their donors) quite large sums of money, which most of those in the left-wing movement displayed. We were to some extent naive, but surely not so naive as those solid citizens who thought they could save us from war by concessions to Hitler and Mussolini. Through these political organisations we made a wide circle of friends and there were many more when Victor Gollancz, the publisher, launched the famous Left Book Club, which soon had a huge

membership, meeting in discussion groups throughout the country. I became chairman of the Liverpool group, which Mary and I had started, and we struck up a close friendship with a chemist at I.C.I. Runcorn called Ben Hirsh and his wife Bec (Rebecca or Rifka), who lived in the same Sefton Park area. They were both London Jews, and Bec was a Litvuk, that is to say her family came from Lithuania. The club choices, the books, were distributed each month through a certain Comrade Ebbage, a devoted Party worker, with a stammer, who ran a Workers' Bookshop from his house in Wavertree. Comrade Ebbage felt it was his duty to introduce professional sympathisers to each other and one such introduction sticks in my mind. It was designed to give Mary and me an opportunity to get to know two schoolmistresses, who had joined the Left Book Club. They were Winifred Brett and Margaret McGregor, the former being a classics mistress; and, to digress, when in 1977 we retired to Cambridge, we ran into Winifred Brett, who was living there, resumed our friendship and eventually found ourselves organising her funeral and speaking at it. On this first occasion Ebbage took us along to their flat and all went well until he felt that the time had come for us to leave. So he rose, shook himself and remarked: 'Well, I th-th-think w-w-we'd b-b-best b-be b-b-b-buggering off now!'

The Left Book Club involved us in a good deal of entertaining, and at various times we had staying with us or coming to us for a meal before a public meeting, Victor Gollancz (along with Harry Pollitt, then general secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain), the Earl of Huntingdon (a left-wing descendant, allegedly, of Robin Hood, which was of course appropriate!), and especially Arthur Koestler, whom we put up for the night. Koestler had just written his *Spanish Testament*, which Gollancz had published as a Left Book Club choice; and as part of the deal he had been dragooned, I don't know how willingly, into carrying out a lecture tour to various Left Book Club branches, including Southport and Liverpool.

This was in 1937. Koestler, who had only recently come out of a Franco jail, where he had fully expected to be executed, like many of his companions there, was in a neurotic condition. He did his meeting and dealt with questions brilliantly, but in the evening had to be sustained with lots of whisky, which provided us with a problem, since we had none; not, indeed, on principle, but out of sheer financial need, we were virtually teetotal at this time. However, Ben Hirsh went out and procured some, thus saving the situation. Koestler was also going through a political crisis, since he had become disillusioned with the C.P. in Spain, where his sympathies were rather with POUM in Catalonia (a kind of Trotskyist grouping). At the time we had a calendar, presented, I suppose, by the Workers' Bookshop, with Stalin's head on it (presenting the benign 'Uncle Joe' persona) and Koestler could not bear to sit in a position from which it was visible. He remarked that we should probably report his political deviation to the Party (he was by this time somewhat drunk). We were all genuinely indignant at such a suggestion, which I think shows clearly that we were none of us true communists at heart, but basically liberals! A real communist would have shopped him without the least compunction. The next morning we took Koestler down to look at the Liverpool docks, where he was delighted to see a Russian vessel in dock called the *Karl Liebknecht*; and I remember his then telling us that the Nazi *Horst Wessel Lied* had been stolen from the left wing, to whom the rather effective tune really belonged, and that the original words were: 'Dem Karl Liebknecht haben wir's geschworen, der Rosa Luxemburg reichen wir die Hand usw.' It was evidently a political song of the rising immediately after the First World War and I regret that I do not remember any more of the words. Koestler was a most dynamic personality and even in his neurotic state he inspired one girl to follow him from Southport to London.

Although so much of our time was occupied by these activities, our main friends were on the fringe of it, being neither

Party members nor members of the Left Book Club group. Shortly after we were married Mary was at a public meeting where she met Mary Palmer, the wife of Dick Palmer, a lecturer in the Education Department, whom I knew very slightly. Afterwards she was invited back to their flat in Abercromby Square and later phoned me; we must have had a telephone by now. I had been working at home, but I cycled over to the Palmers. From that time onwards Dick and Mary Palmer were perhaps our closest friends in Liverpool. They were active Labour Party members but never in the C.P. (though in London, where they had lived formerly, they had several C.P. friends, including Jack and Lulu Gaster, members of a very distinguished Jewish family). We were also close friends of John and D. Edwards (whom we had got to know in Bingley); and of course of Walter Sexton, who lived quite close to us in Linnet Lane and was a constant visitor. From 1937 onwards we also saw a good deal of Roy Morrell, who had shared my house in Little St Mary's Lane in 1930/31, and was now teaching at the Wirral County Grammar School and living with his Finnish wife Liise in Bebington. Miss Brett and Miss McGregor were also frequent visitors; and we also became close friends of Leonard Barnes, a Senior Lecturer in Education, who had been in the colonial service in Africa and was actively writing a book called *Empire and Democracy* (later published by Gollancz, but not as a Left Book). Leonard Barnes also helped to edit and publish a series of monthly monographs (selling like Penguins at 6d) called *Fact*, which went on until the outbreak of war. Another friend who remained in touch with us until her death a year or two ago was Dorothy Maxwell, a teacher of dancing, whose father had died in the *Titanic* disaster. She and her husband, Billie Dow (they had met when he came to take dancing lessons from her), later lived for many years at Christleton near Chester and we used to exchange visits. At that time we knew her largely through the Left Theatre, which was very active in Liverpool and usually put on its shows at the David Lewis Theatre.

Despite this active political and social life, I was all this time putting a great deal of effort into my teaching and research, for this was always a very direct and perhaps primary interest. The Department of Latin was well-run and lively. I had a pretty full programme of teaching and lecturing and we used to entertain students fairly often in our flat. I remember being slightly irritated when one girl, who lived in a catholic hostel near Sefton Park, had to reject our invitation to tea, because she was refused permission to come by the Mother in charge of the hostel, who told her: 'It is not the tea, it is what it may lead to!'. I found this slightly insulting, but not surprising, and I mention it here as an example of the sex-ridden attitudes to which catholic students were liable to be subjected. The girl's reaction was rather mature; her comment was: 'I suppose we ought to be sorry for her'.

We also ran a Latin Reading Circle, which met regularly in the evening in the Institute of Classical Archaeology in Abercromby Square, to read Latin plays. Later Mountford started a regular staff seminar group to read Virgil's *Eclogues*, and one or two third year students were also invited. This was an interesting seminar and we took turns to deal with an Eclogue each. Later we went on to the *Georgics*, and as a result I wrote an article, later published in the *Classical Quarterly*, in which I was given considerable help by Mary. It was entitled 'Licia telae addere' and dealt with a passage in the *Georgics* describing the setting up of a loom; most editors had shown a deplorable ignorance of what the words meant and how a loom actually worked. This article was subsequently to be of quite unforeseen importance in my career for when, many years later, I was a candidate for the Chair of Latin, it was quoted to my advantage as evidence that I was a genuine Latinist and not simply a historian in disguise (which of course I really was). The seminar which gave rise to the article later stuck in both my mind and Mary's because I had constructed a small model 'loom' to illustrate the technical points involved and Mountford had been

so impressed by this that he suggested (not wholly seriously) that we kept it in the Department; but I had reluctantly to reject this proposal, since the main beam had been borrowed from our bathroom, where it normally supported the roll of toilet paper.

In 1937 we lost Robert Getty, who left Liverpool to take up a Fellowship at St John's College, Cambridge; and this resulted in an odd interlude. In his place we got George Painter, a young man with literary interests, some affectations and an unusual appearance, for he wore a blue velvet jacket, which was quite striking for the late 1930s. I liked Painter and Mary and I had a shot at converting him to the left, taking him along to one of our political meetings, which he in turn found impressive. On a thank-you postcard, containing a drawing by Blake, he wrote a short poem, declaring that 'Blake more approves | Lenin than my other loves.' However, Painter's future lay, not with Blake or Lenin, but with Marcel Proust, for he was later to be famous as the author of the brilliant and powerful biography of that author. Painter stayed only a term at Liverpool, for already, when he accepted the assistant lectureship, he was in for a post at the British Museum (though, rather naughtily, he did not tell Mountford at the time). And when he got the BM job he resigned. He told me that he wanted a nine to five job, which would leave him evenings and weekends to pursue his own serious interests; whereas in a University there may be great 'job satisfaction', but there is little real leisure, since one's evenings are generally taken up with research into some topic connected, if only tangentially (as in my case), with the subject one is paid to teach.

Painter's departure recalls one amusing story. Mountford announced to the honours class that Mr Painter would not be with us next term, as he was going to the British Museum. This statement was greeted with universal laughter, since everyone assumed (or chose to assume) that he was going there as an exhibit and not as a keeper. Mountford was rather angry about the way he had been let down and decided to play safe in



appointing Painter's successor. He therefore took in C.J. Addison, a very dour Scot, a favourite topic of whose conversation was the various schisms and sectarian conflicts within the Free Church of Scotland, and whose usual outward mark of identification was a bloodstained shirt collar, the result of clumsy shaving. Eventually he ended up, appropriately, as Headmaster of Stornoway Grammar School (where his acquaintance with the Gaelic no doubt came in useful and his interest in church matters will have seemed perfectly normal); in the meantime he had married Margaret Moffat, a lecturer in the French Department, whom he had met during the first year of the war, when they were both among the small group of staff which, as I shall explain below, were evacuated to Coleg Harlech.

It was during Addison's presence in the Department that we became collectively involved in a curious activity. Mountford had recently produced for Macmillan a revised version of a famous Latin text-book, known as *Bradley's Arnold* (and now as *Mountford's Bradley's Arnold*). (I had used it in the fifth form at Bradford Grammar School.) One feature of the new book was the addition of around 150 continuous prose passages for translation into Latin, since the original book had not gone beyond longish sentences (generally concocted to illustrate some outlandish Latin usage rather than to express any sentiments which one could imagine being uttered in normal English). Macmillan's soon discovered that teachers of Latin were demanding a 'key' (or crib), since many of them, it seemed, lacked either the skill or the patience to write their own versions. So would Professor Mountford please provide one? He therefore proposed that we three (Bonner, Addison and myself) should join him, Robert Getty and an earlier colleague, Miss Woodward (who was now in London) in writing twenty-one proses each, for which we should receive (I think) one pound per prose (a sum worth of course rather more than it would be worth today). So for some months we turned these in at the rate of one a week, and then chewed over the versions at our weekly departmental

meeting on Wednesday morning. It was an interesting and entertaining business and we learnt a good deal from it; and later, after the book was published (in 1940), we used the passages ourselves and kept finding errors in our own and each other's versions. At the time I am writing this (1992), there is a plan afoot for the Bristol Classical Press (now a subsidiary of Duckworth) to republish this small book, which rather amazes me; but, if it does appear, it will at least have incorporated in it the corrections which we worked at in the forties.

Soon after I arrived in Liverpool I began to ask myself on what subject, following the publication of *Aratos*, I should now work; and recalling a statement by W.W. Tarn that a series of monographs on the Antigonid kings of Macedonia was a desideratum, I decided to write a biography of Philip V, who had already engaged my interest while working on the second half of the life of Aratus. This constituted my main research project from 1934 to 1938, when I presented it for the Hare Prize in the University of Cambridge. But in the course of my work on this I also wrote several articles, one on the date of accession of Ptolemy V, which eventually appeared in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. With this I had some help from Professor Blackman, our professor of Egyptology, who lived along with his unmarried sister in a large house in Sefton Park, which they ran as a private students' hostel, attempting (as he told me) 'to make it as much like an Oxford college as possible'. This was a strange and somewhat vain ambition, since most of the residents were from Egypt or the Near East and no doubt had no desire to fit the pattern of an Oxford man, as seen by Blackman. Blackman was a colossal snob, his conversation being larded with references to the great whom he knew or had known, such as 'Prince Max of Baden – frightfully nice chap, you know'. Eventually Blackman achieved his private heaven, when he was engaged as personal tutor to the heir to the throne of Haile Selassie, the Emperor of Ethiopia, after which his conversation was full of references to 'His Highness'. Blackman was a first-

class scholar and a Fellow of the British Academy; and he was always very friendly and helpful to me, especially over Ptolemaic chronology. I also had help with this article from T.C. Skeat of the British Museum; this was by correspondence, which was, however, interrupted by long silences, since he was busy moving house, so that I eventually became quite impatient with him.

I also wrote an article on the origins of the Second Macedonian War in conjunction with Alex McDonald, an Australian now lecturing at Nottingham, after taking a doctorate at Cambridge. We were brought together by Adcock, who suggested that we might combine two articles which we had submitted at the same time to the *Journal of Roman Studies*. I had already met McDonald when we were both candidates for the ancient history job at Nottingham, which he got, but we now had a close collaboration, which was the beginning of a long friendship. Much later, in 1969, we wrote another joint article on clauses of the Roman treaty with Antiochus III; and in the *JRS* for 1979 I had the melancholy task of writing a short obituary for him. A third article during this period concerned Polybius' 'tragic' treatment of Philip's last years and this appeared in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* for 1938.

In some ways my academic life, teaching and research, and our joint political activities at this time seemed almost like two separate forms of existence; but I managed to combine these successfully, while mostly keeping them apart socially. For we did quite a lot of entertaining of the Mountfords and Gettys and other members of the staff. We also found time for days out and occasional short holidays. At a fairly early date we bought second-hand bicycles; Mary's cost three pounds and mine (which had a three-speed gear attachment) three pounds ten. These were very useful for getting to the University, shopping in town (Mary used to cycle with terrific loads back from the market), visiting the Palmers and taking the odd day off in the Wirral and other parts of Cheshire or even North Wales. In April

1936 we cycled over to Yorkshire and spent a few days walking in the hills on the way back; it was a snowy spell and we saw many dead sheep between Wharfedale and Wensleydale. In July of the same year we had a few days staying at Youth Hostels in North Wales, having cycled out to Llanrwst.

During these years we also had walking holidays in the Lake District and (in May 1938) in Co. Wicklow, during the week between the end of lectures and the beginning of examinations. Ireland was easily reached from Liverpool. A return ticket cost thirteen shillings each and for another five shillings each we got a two-berth cabin each way (for it was a night crossing from Liverpool to North Wall, Dublin). Once in Dublin you could simply take a tram to the southern suburbs and start walking in the Wicklow Mountains. Of our week's holiday in Ireland I have many pleasant memories and one or two rather strange ones. We stayed in Irish Youth Hostels (An Oige), including one in a lighthouse on Wicklow Head (approached along a much-gated path). These hostels were mostly very dirty and at Avoca we joined forces with two Scotsmen to give the place a thorough clean – an operation which disclosed many charms and crucifixes. I think it was at this hostel that Mary reported having pointed out a piece of red flannel which appeared to be adhering to the middle of the brassière of a young woman sharing the women's dormitory. 'That,' said the colleen, 'is holy flannel.' 'What is it for?' Mary asked her; 'is it to protect you from illness?' 'No,' was the reply, 'to protect me from sin.' We decided that, thus strategically placed, it was no doubt very effective, as well as being immensely profitable to the Vatican, from which it had indirectly been obtained. The other thing I remember about Ireland in 1938 was the complete absence of vegetables or anywhere to buy them. I suppose there was no market in the countryside, since everyone there would grow their own (if in fact they ate vegetables). At Avoca we gathered nettles and made a good addition to our meal in that way.

Our holiday in the Lakes I particularly remember from our

having got to know two New York Jewish boys, who were studying medicine at Glasgow, having failed to get into an American medical school owing to the existence of a Jewish quota. We persuaded them to leave their cycles at the Keswick Youth Hostel and to join us walking. One of the two dropped out and made his way back to Keswick by bus; but Willy Shiffman stayed with us and later made one or two visits to us in Liverpool and also to Grinton in North Yorkshire, where (as I shall explain) we spent the summer of 1939. But after the war broke out we lost touch with him.

In the long vacations we were more ambitious. In 1936 we enrolled on an N.U.S. (National Union of Students) tour to Greece and Albania, arranged in conjunction with the *Amt für Studentenwanderungen*, an Austrian organisation, which we later discovered to be fairly thoroughly infiltrated by Nazis. We travelled third class by train to Vienna, where we stayed two nights in an hotel before continuing to Thessaloniki via Budapest and Belgrade. From there we took a small, rather decrepit bus south. The first day or two we had two gendarmes with us, since we had arrived in Thessaloniki on 4 August, the day that Metaxas made himself dictator. Then, since all was quiet, we were allowed to proceed without them, which was a great relief, since picking up each pair at a different town had led to inordinate delays. We slept out on the ground with sleeping bags and mosquito nets and we cooked most of our own meals. We were a party of about a dozen, together with two Austrian guides, Gunther and Olga, and two Greek guides, Kosmas and Kalli Michaelides; when we entered Albania we were also joined by an Albanian, Petrag Peppo. There was a good deal of tension, as it was quite a strenuous business arranging, buying and cooking meals, packing and unpacking the bus and making very early morning starts; and the roads were often atrocious, especially in Thessaly. But we covered a large amount of Greece, crossed the Langada Pass, from Sparta to Messenia, on foot and after visiting Corinth, Mycenae, Tiryns, Nauplia, Epidaurus,

Sparta, Olympia and Patras, we returned across the Corinthian Gulf to Mesolonghi. Crossing the Gulf was rather a hazardous event, since our bus was taken on board at right angles to the axis of the ship, which consequently showed a decided list; to counter this the captain instructed all passengers to move over to the side of the boat which was rather in the air. Fortunately no wind developed.

From Mesolonghi we came north through Aetolia to Arta and then up to Jannina (where we saw Ali Pasha's castle, but not the building on the island, where he was hunted down). From Jannina we went on into Albania, arriving there on King Zog's birthday. In honour of this we were given *loukoumi* at the frontier at Kakavi, while our bus was edged under the rather low triumphal arch which spanned the road in the king's honour. Unfortunately at this stage Mary developed severe ear-ache, due, we suspected, to a chill caught sleeping near a river the previous night. We tried to get something for this in Gjirokastër, but it did not improve; and after passing Tepeleni (where I took a couple of photographs of the entrance to the Aous gorge, which I later used in my book on *Philip V*) we were forced to spend the night sleeping on a hillside, since for the second time the back axle of the bus had broken (this had before happened between Olympia and Patras). The next day the guides, who now included Peppo, managed to get a substitute bus sent along and we continued to Vlorë and there got Mary into hospital.

As a visitor she was there given preferential treatment and paid the honour of being placed in the only separate room, the maternity ward. At 8.00 p.m. the building was padlocked from without (for this was a predominantly Muslim area). Our party was already behind schedule as a result of the back axle breakages and they were obliged to leave us behind. For two nights I slept in a wood behind the hospital, but by that time Mary was much better. She had received no edible food in the hospital, only goat's milk which smelt of the billy-goat, but I had managed to bring her some food up from a restaurant in the

town. On leaving we were not allowed to pay anything: 'Tourists don't pay!', they told us, unbelievably. We had in fact arrived at the hospital at a time of internal crisis. The Director had just been deposed on orders from Tirana in favour of a Jewish refugee from central Europe, because of the heavy mortality rate following his operations. The Albanian nurses naturally all supported 'il direttore', one remarking with admiration: 'molto buono, snip-snap, due minuti'. This dangerous man visited Mary one night after the 'professor' (i.e. the new man) had gone home, and instructed the nurse to pour pure alcohol down her ear. Whether this drastic treatment helped or hindered her recovery, I do not know; but many years later she had difficulty in persuading an English doctor who had to examine her ear that she had not had an operation – from which I conclude that something pretty savage took place down her ear on this occasion.

In Vlorë we quickly made many friends and eventually, after Mary's two nights in hospital and two more in an hotel, we caught a Lloyd Triestino boat up the Adriatic to Trieste and from there travelled by train overnight to Vienna, arriving before the rest of the party. In Vlorë we got to know several people, who spoke a variety of European languages, but the man who helped us most was a merchant called Mendu Sharra, who came to the rescue when I fainted at the table in our café (caused by the usual food infection). Sharra had spent some time in London about 1920 as a young man, and he spoke excellent English. He succeeded in getting us reduced fares on the steamer; it would not have occurred to me to bargain for such a thing. He also went with us and various friends of his and a cousin from up-country called Peshkëpia for a picnic on the shore, where we had fresh fish fried at a small café. Thirty-six years later I found myself one of a small group of four English scholars who had been invited to Tirana to the First Illyrian Congress, where I was reading a paper. This congress was fully reported in the Albanian press and a couple of weeks after I got back to Birkenhead I was

delighted and rather moved to receive a card from Mendu Sharra, written from hospital in Vlorë: he must by then have been very old and whether he ever received the letter I sent back, I shall never know. He had given me no address, so I simply sent it to 'Mendu Sharra, Vlorë'. By now he will have been dead for many years.

In 1937 we had a bicycle holiday in France. We took our bikes by train to Paris, then on to Lyon and from there cycled down the Rhone, through Provence and to the coast at Agde and Narbonne before returning north through Carcassonne, Albi, the Gorges of the Tarn and the Massif Central, with one bit from St Flour to Clermont-Ferrand by train and a final stretch by train from Chartres to Paris. From the Gare de Montparnasse our route through Paris involved cycling across the Place de la Concorde, but the traffic was not so terrifying as it would be now – though it was bad enough! At Arles we made contact with the local communists and were guests of a family, the Bonnafous, for dinner; a year later Walter Sexton (who was apt to take his holiday where we had been the year before) called on them and made a great hit since René Bonnafous (like Walter's father) was a railwayman.

We ended this holiday with a day or two in Paris. Here we visited the famous 'Expo', which was noteworthy for the symbolical placing opposite each other of the not dissimilar German and Soviet pavilions and for the ludicrous impression provided by the British Pavilion that we were, as a people, mainly country folk engaged in such activities as fox-hunting. The Spanish Republican building contained Picasso's 'Guernica', which we then saw for the first time. We also attended a fête organised by the communist newspaper *Humanité* at Garches. There we ran into a young American spending a vacation in Europe before starting on a course as a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. We got on well with him and looked him up the next day at the Cité Universitaire, where he was staying. His name was Howard K. Smith and he later became a well-known

radio personality and commentator on current affairs for one of the U.S.A. networks and the author of a book *Last Train from Berlin*, recounting his experiences in Nazi Germany before the U.S.A. was directly involved in the war.

This French trip, our last visit to that country before the war, had an amusing sequel. In those days taking a bicycle abroad involved a great deal of bureaucratic form-filling and something called a triptych, which had to be obtained through the Cyclists' Touring Club (C.T.C.). Both the entry of the bicycle into France and its exit had to be certified by the proper authorities. On our return we registered our cycles through from St Lazare to Victoria. I then tried to get the appropriate signature on the form which testified that they had left France from an official at St Lazare railway station. But that proved impossible, since they had *not* yet left France: yet we could not get it done at the Channel port, since at that stage we should not see our bicycles at all, as they were registered through. The despairing official explained on the telephone to a superior: 'Tu sais, mon vieux, je me trouve devant un fait accompli!' To complicate matters, our bikes did not arrive with us at Victoria, but only turned up a week or so later in Liverpool. Some weeks after that we had a visit from a policeman. It appeared, he said, that our bicycles were still illegally in France. He seemed very worried by this, but even more worried by a Gauguin print on the wall, which he kept eyeing salaciously as he licked his pencil. When we assured him that the bikes were already in Liverpool, he produced two French forms which were to be taken to 'le maire' for him to sign as proof of this. We felt that it would be rather arrogant to take these forms to the Lord Mayor of Liverpool and so eventually got them dealt with at the local police station.

In the summer of 1938 we moved from Ivanhoe Road to a new flat, not far away at 13, Hargreaves Road. It was on the ground floor, for we had in mind that we might soon (or so we hoped) be having a baby. I should digress here to explain that that had been our plan from 1936 onward, but Mary had had two

miscarriages, one in 1936 and a second in 1937. We had at that time a doctor, whose name I cannot now remember,\* though I do remember that she was the doctor appointed to the University and that she later married Lord Woolton, the very effective Minister of Food during the war. She had treated Mary on the first occasion, but had rated the matter lightly and had not followed it up. When the second miscarriage occurred, this doctor was fortunately away, so we called in a Dr Dunsby, whom we had got to know at one of our political meetings. It was only later that I realised that he was the same doctor who had treated me successfully for indigestion in 1934/5. Dr Dunsby immediately set about discovering why the miscarriages had occurred and soon diagnosed anaemia, which he treated simply with Blaud's Pills, containing iron. So we hoped that a third time would be lucky, as indeed it proved to be.

Our new flat was very splendid and the rent was a little higher, ninety pounds per annum. The two old ladies living in the top flat were, we later discovered, the owners of the house, but we had done and continued to do all business through an agent. They proved to be very nice people. We had excellent relations with them throughout the three years of our lease; and for many years afterwards they sent a Christmas present for Dorothy. Our flat contained a large entrance hall with a huge room on either side, very high in the Victorian manner; that on the left was my study and that on the right our sitting room. There were two bedrooms made out of an original single room, a bathroom, a lavatory, and then further back a large dining room and behind it a kitchen-scully. We had access to a back yard, the walls of which Mary pink-washed (to the alarm of the old ladies upstairs, who were afraid that she might extend these activities to the front of the house). We moved on 12 July (although I was involved in school certificate examining then) and we had the Mountfords to dinner the very next day: it was rather a *tour de force*. We felt that we had made an auspicious  
\* [FWW note] 'Dr Mgt. Thomas'

start to the approaching academic year: but how wrong we were! The year 1938-1939 was to turn out to be a public nightmare coinciding with a private nightmare and, briefly, one of the worst years in the whole of my life.

## 25. Hargreaves Road: from Munich to the Outbreak of War (1938-1939)

With the possibility of having a baby in mind we had planned no elaborate holiday for summer 1938. We did, however, cycle over to the Horse Shoe Pass near Llangollen to spend some days with our friends, the Palmers, at their cottage near the top of the pass; and later in August we had a few days at Deganwy, staying by invitation with the Mountfords, who were on holiday there. Three days after our return the first blow fell. We were sitting in the drawing room when the bell rang; it was a man we knew slightly in a political context, called Raylock, and with him a tall, rather pleasant- looking young German, whose name, we soon learnt, was Hans Bauer. He had been wounded fighting in the International Brigade in Spain and had been evacuated to France, whence he had arrived illegally in England, hoping to move on from there to Canada or the United States. Mary was secretary of the Spanish Medical Aid Committee: could we put him up for a few days, till his difficulties had been solved? I had always shied at doing anything against the law, but this seemed a case where one could not say no. If he had been apprehended as illegally present in England, he would certainly have been deported and, as a Sudeten German (though technically he was of course a Czechoslovak citizen) he would, with his record, pretty certainly have ended up in one of Hitler's already infamous concentration camps.

So we took him in. And there began a long saga, for needless to say, the few days became a few weeks and then a few months. We had him on our hands and it fell to us to try to solve his problem. Mary went to London in a futile attempt to get help from some of the committees there and then to the Communist Party Conference at Birmingham. But she soon discovered that the Communist Party could not care less about an International Brigader who was not English and in their eyes merely a

nuisance. 'Turn him in', they said. The political situation at this time was also very unfavourable to our hopes of getting any attention for Hans. Events in Europe were working up to the crisis and war panic which ended in mid-September with Chamberlain's flights to Germany, to Bad Godesberg and then Munich, and his eventual agreement with the Nazis, by which the border areas of Czechoslovakia – the Sudetenland from which Hans came – were handed over to Germany.

During the week of these to-ings and fro-ings I was at Hardwick Hall in Co. Durham, lecturing on English social history at a course organised by the Durham Council of Social Services for unemployed men. The organiser, incidentally, was a certain W. Barker, who later entered the diplomatic service, was our ambassador in Prague during the 'Prague spring' and finally, as Sir William Barker, my colleague as Bowes Professor of Russian at Liverpool. I was quite convinced in 1938 that there would be no war, but rather a 'sell-out', and that we should buy a postponement of war at the expense of the Czechs, which of course we did. But I must not be too clever about this, for the following year, when I fully expected further concessions, Chamberlain did in fact dig in his heels and declare war: I think his amour-propre was offended when Hitler made him the promise at Munich and then broke it.

Our life during 1938 was governed by the various events and stages in our long and unsuccessful attempt to organise some sort of future for Hans Bauer, so that he could leave England legally. In this we had a great deal of help from many people, for there was a general sympathy for someone in his position. At a fairly early stage I consulted Professor Lyon Blease, our Professor of Law, a well-known liberal, and he put me in touch with a progressive-minded solicitor called Hamish Craig, a member of the Liverpool firm, Dodds, Ashcroft and Cook. Craig decided to send a letter to the Home Secretary, 'putting a case' but not mentioning names, in an effort to obtain official guidance. Meanwhile, the Blue Funnel line were willing to give

Hans a free passage to China (where his skill as a masseur, his professional occupation, would have been useful during the war with Japan), provided his position in England was first regularised. We also approached the New Zealand authorities, since that country had announced its willingness to take some European refugees; but here again the answer was that his position must first be legalised. Mary also got in touch with Eleanor Rathbone, the independent M.P. for the Northern Universities and a member of a famous Liverpool family. She, like most people in her position, was up to her neck in refugee problems; but when she heard that Hans was here illegally, she agreed to see him. However, nothing came of that either. At this time I was Chairman of a China Campaign Committee, set up after the Japanese attack on China with the object of promoting a boycott of Japanese goods. By an odd coincidence, in this connection I met a Dr Kisch, a brother of the Erwin Kisch, who was the subject of a long political campaign to get into Australia. Dr Kisch was about to go out to China; and he turned out to be the very doctor who had treated Hans for his wound in Spain and was able to confirm his story. What he did not know and we did not find out until after the outbreak of war was that Hans' story was in reality more complicated than we had been told. As we then learnt, he had originally gone, first to Ethiopia, and later to Spain to fight on the fascist side, but had then been taken prisoner, subjected to Spanish government propaganda, and so 'converted', after which he had fought in the International Brigade and had, as he said, been wounded, fighting on that side. We were not wholly surprised when we learnt this. Hans was a rather simple, extroverted young man, an adventurer rather than someone who fights for some principle. But that did not, I later felt and still feel, affect the rightness of the decisions we took throughout this harassing affair.

In the winter of 1938 Mary became pregnant; and on Dr Dunsby's instructions, she was required to spend three days each month in bed to minimise the risk of a further miscarriage. Soon

after Christmas we realised that we could no longer keep Hans in the house. The burden was becoming too great and it had been made more oppressive recently by the arrival in Liverpool of Paolo Treves. Paolo was the brother of Piero Treves, an anti-fascist Italian ancient historian, whom I had first got to know through correspondence and had later met in Cambridge. The Treves family had been forced to leave Italy when Mussolini introduced the anti-Semitic laws under pressure from his ally, Adolf Hitler. But the Treves were doubly at risk in Italy, since Claudio Treves, the father of Piero and Paolo, had been a personal enemy of Mussolini, when they were both in the Socialist Party, and had indeed fought an unhappily inconclusive duel with the later *Duce*, because he had referred to Signora Treves as 'an old shoe' (apparently a very offensive remark in Italian). Claudio Treves had died as an exile in Paris (the day after Paolo had been allowed out of Italy to visit him) but Signora Treves and the two sons were now refugees in England, though not I believe penniless. Paolo had just got a job with a body called IALA (International Auxiliary Language Association) to work on a project which was being administered by W.A. Collinson, the Professor of German at Liverpool University, and we agreed to put him up until he could find living quarters. Paolo had to share a room with Hans and they were both intensely jealous of each other: the house throbbed with hostile emanations. Eventually Paolo got a room at the David Lewis hostel, but found it too claustrophobic, as it reminded him of the fascist prison, where he had recently been incarcerated, and in due course he found lodgings in Abercromby Square. But he came regularly to visit us and Mary put in a lot of time helping him with the English of a book he had written about the persecution of his family by Mussolini, entitled *What Mussolini did to us* (it came out in 1941). These sessions with the highly neurotic Paolo left Mary completely 'drained' and, together with the protracted strain of having the responsibility for Hans, I think contributed to the illness which

hit her in June.

Since we could not do with Hans any longer, we appealed to a group of friends to subscribe 2/6d a week, so that he could rent a room in Liverpool 8 (the University area, which was full of bed-sitters). They were Dick Palmer, Leonard Barnes, S.C. Phillips an assistant registrar at the University), Lyon Blease, H.P. Bibby (director of a well-known firm of seed-crushers and a magistrate) and (I think, but uncertainly) W.G. Holford, Professor of Town Planning. This reduced the pressure on Mary, but of course Hans, who had little else to do, was often around and was given to moods of depression, from which fortunately he could usually be extricated by the gift of 2/6d to enable him to visit a *Kaffeehaus*. We found out later that he was mulcting many of our friends in the same way. Throughout the whole year from the time of his arrival, he was of course a very heavy drain on our funds. The case of Hans (though peculiar because of his illegal entry) was only one of many at that time. The Palmers, in addition to helping with the funding of Hans, had got a Jewish girl, Tamara, out of Germany and were keeping her, and Dick had pledged sums far beyond what he possessed to enable her to get her family out of Germany; they arrived on almost the last available train before the frontier was closed on the outbreak of war. And this was all going on against a background of growing international crisis. In the spring of 1939 Hitler marched into Prague and now dominated the whole of central Europe; and he then began to mount pressure on Poland and to our surprise (and disbelief) Chamberlain gave Poland an assurance, which he was in no position to honour effectively or in such a way that it could be of any help to that country.

Meanwhile work in the University was going on much as usual and we continued to have the normal Departmental activities and the visiting lecturers who came to speak at meetings of the Liverpool Branch of the Classical Association. I had joined the Classical Association while still at Manchester and had been to several meetings there; but now, in the



University, we had a direct responsibility for inviting and entertaining visiting lecturers. During the years 1934-1939 we had a variety of speakers, whom I was very glad to get to know or meet again: M.P. Charlesworth (whose lectures I had attended in Cambridge), S.K. Johnson, the editor of the Oxford Classical Text of Livy (he later disappeared in the Alps and his body has, I believe, never been found), Peter Noble (Professor of Latin at Leeds, later in London), Dacre Balsdon, T.E. Sinclair (from Belfast), Donald Atkinson (from Manchester: a very dull lecturer), Ronald Syme (who read a chapter from his *Roman Revolution*, which was to appear in 1939 on the eve of the war and eventually precipitated a radical change in the general approach to Roman history) and B.L. Hallward, my teacher at Peterhouse.

In November 1939 the two worlds I was living in were temporarily brought together, when we put up Professor Benjamin Farrington of Swansea and after a little probing on both sides, he was able to ring up his wife to say that he had 'fallen among comrades'. Ben was a delightful southern Irishman from Cork, whose books on ancient science, though they often missed the mark or drew unsustainable conclusions, were important for their conviction that science and philosophy had to be seen against the background of the society in which they sprang up. He was a Marxist and (as I shall explain later) was to be responsible for my writing my most controversial book, *The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West* (later republished in an extended version as *The Awful Revolution*). Many years afterwards, when he had retired from Swansea, Ben came and taught in Liverpool for Roland Austin, who had a year's leave of absence with a Leverhulme Award, so we then got to know him very well.

The spring of 1939 was also marked by another event which sticks in my memory – a performance of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* in the translation of A.Y. Campbell, who himself took the part of the leader of the chorus. We junior lecturers,

including Harri Hudson-Williams, who had recently replaced Fletcher in the Greek Department, were members of the chorus. A rather striking lecturer in the French Department, Dorothy Knowles, played Cassandra, Colledge in English Language was Aegisthus (and producer), Archie McIlwraith, a very civilised but rather alcoholic Senior Lecturer in English Literature, was Agamemnon (and made an impressive entry into the Arts Theatre mounted on a disguised station wagon on loan from Lime Street Station). For Clytemnestra they had called in a professional actress, whose name I do not remember. Colledge had decided to divide the chorus into old men and young men. Harri Hudson-Williams, as a young man, was given a sunburnt face and looked most handsome, whereas I, as an old man, had a whitish face, a reddish nose and several teeth blacked out. It was a great shock to Mary, who came to a performance with Walter Sexton; he gripped her hand in silent sympathy at the sight. I think she never forgave Colledge and regarded it as condign punishment when, on the death of his mother, to whom he was devoted, he became a priest.

This was in February and in March we went to Cambridge, staying with Robert and Margaret Getty in Gilbert Road, in order to see the Greek Play there. It was the *Antigone*. The Greek ambassador attended and I think everyone felt the tension in the air, since this play embodied so much of what we felt was at stake in the Europe of 1939. In the course of this visit to Cambridge I called on S.C. Roberts at the Cambridge University Press, for towards the end of January I had heard that I had won the Hare Prize with my study of Philip V of Macedon, so that it was pretty certain that the Press would publish it. On this occasion Mary and I had lunch with Guy Griffith, who had been one of the examiners for the Hare Prize and who I fancy had arranged the meeting with Roberts. The Press agreed to publish, but rather meanly required me to put down one hundred pounds. Since the Hare Prize was at that time worth eighty pounds, it left me twenty pounds out of pocket. However, Liverpool University

came up with thirty-five pounds to cover the cost of the illustrations, so I ended up with about fifteen pounds in hand over the whole affair. Jumping ahead, I may add here that I got my hundred pounds back in 1968 (much diminished in value), when the book was reprinted by a firm in America.

At this time Mary's parents moved to Lytham (and a year later to St Anne's). Her father had reduced and reorganised his business and moved his offices and warehouse from Bradford to Manchester and he now commuted daily on the convenient service from the Fylde coast. I mention this because in the new form of his company (Oswald Fox and Co., Ltd.) he took me in as a director. I had put in a hundred pounds towards a small capitalisation of the new company; later I was able to withdraw this when (as I shall explain) we needed to buy a house. Being a director meant primarily being a good listener. I knew nothing about commerce, but the important thing for Oswald was to be able to talk things over with someone and I soon grasped the sort of problems that arose and was able to make intelligent comments. I was very happy to do this, as I was fond of both my parents-in-law (Dolly especially had always been a great ally) and I had a great respect for Oswald's integrity and his courage throughout the years of the depression. On the Fylde coast they were more accessible to us in Liverpool than they had been at Nab Wood, Shipley.

On 31 May 1939 our first daughter, Dorothy Joan, was born in a small maternity home in Knotty Ash, Liverpool, kept by a pair of lesbians. Apart from a slightly alarming smell of gas in the room where the babies were kept, this was a fairly satisfactory establishment. Mary stayed in for fourteen days, as was then usual. But shortly after her return home, it became clear that something was seriously amiss. She became very excitable, emotionally obsessed with all kinds of trivialities and very sharp-tempered. Later I learnt that she was in the manic phase of what we now call manic-depression; it had pretty certainly been precipitated by the childbirth (this is fairly common) but also by

the stress of the last twelve months. We had arranged to spend a holiday in a small cottage at Grinton in Swaledale, North Yorkshire, which we rented from Wesley Dougill, a colleague in the School of Architecture; and along with Wendy, who drove us in the Fox car, which Oswald had lent us, we went there in late July and stayed till 2 September. It was a lovely area and a grim holiday. Mary was ill, but did not realise the form of her illness. She was hyperactive, writing articles for the *Daily Worker* and planning all kinds of impractical projects. Her frequent outbursts of rage made everyone miserable. In addition Dorothy was not flourishing, since (I suspect) Mary's illness was affecting the milk supply. I remember a Grinton inhabitant, I think Mrs Barningham, the farmer's wife, peering into the pram and remarking, discouragingly: 'Poor little mite, I wonder if they'll rear her!'

Another problem, which sounds trivial and was indeed trivial in comparison with our other difficulties, was the behaviour of our cat, Peter. We had acquired him the previous year, partly as something to occupy Hans, and we had taken him with us in a cat-box. But Peter was completely demoralised both by the car journey and by the countryside. He had made the drive north into a nightmare by getting out of the box, which he had already fouled; and now on arrival he found the strange wildness of fields and no doubt their unaccustomed smells completely terrifying. He never recovered from the experience and after behaving horribly at Grinton was brought back with difficulty and fairly soon had to be put down. In addition Mary invited a succession of guests to Grinton, which would have been fine in normal circumstances (though indeed our quarters were cramped for overnight visitors) but, as it was, their presence added to our problems. They included both sets of parents, Willy Shiffman (the Glasgow American student, who was in fact very helpful in advising about Mary and, if I remember rightly, making a trip down to Liverpool to see Dunsby about weaning Dorothy), Bill Hartley (Wendy's fiancé), and a Liverpool acquaintance called

Muriel Mee. On 2 September we returned to Lytham and the next day I cycled to Bingley. My parents met me in their car near Gisburn with the news that war had that morning been declared. My uncle Arthur and aunt Ethel had already come up to Bingley to be out of London, for everyone expected early air raids. I stayed the night at Bingley and the next day cycled back to Liverpool. The problem of Hans had now reached a new phase and had to be resolved.

## 26. The War: the First Two Years (1939-1941)

We had reached a sort of stalemate over Hans's future. The letter to the Home Office had never been answered; so all possible schemes had come to nothing. But now, with Great Britain at war with Germany, at least he could not be deported. So on Tuesday, 5 September, he and I went down to the Police Station in Dale St. and there I told them: 'This man is a Czechoslovak citizen, who has been illegally in Liverpool for about a year and he has come to give himself up.' 'You've come to the wrong place;' was the response, 'you'll have to go to the office at the Northwestern Hotel in Lime St.' And with that we were sent away; no one took any details or showed any interest. Departmentally this was a matter for Lime St., not Dale St. That we were at war was an irrelevancy. At Lime St. Hans was detained and a Detective Hickleton said it would be helpful to his case if I let them have a full statement of all the circumstances. This I did, a very full statement (except that I never mentioned the Communist Party, as I thought that to do so would not help Hans at all). I was quite naive in giving such a detailed and self-incriminating account, never dreaming that it would be used as a basis for prosecuting myself and the others who had helped Hans. Hans was charged and sentenced to a month's imprisonment and thereafter was required to move away from Liverpool, since it lay on the coast. During recent months he had got to know a girl called Peggy Shimmin (he always called her Beggy, to our amusement, since Sudeten Germans confuse p's and b's), and shortly after his release he married her.

Somehow we now learnt the full story of his earlier adventures in Spain. I rather think that someone connected with the Communist Party knew this but had failed hitherto to tell us, either through negligence or deliberately. Mary took this very badly; in her current state of mind she was not disposed to forgive Hans for the deception or, should I say, lack of

frankness. Hans now moved to Manchester. He once, later, came to spend a weekend with us in St Anne's, after we got a house of our own there, and we did not enjoy his visit, since prosperity (beyond his deserts) seemed to have made him rather boastful. He wanted to take a taxi to Blackpool at a time when everyone was trying to save petrol. I think it was after that that I once met him by chance in Oxford Street, Manchester, when he told me that he owned the restaurant outside which he was standing; probably true, though I have no way of knowing. Finally, at some date after the war, when we were living in Birkenhead, Hans rang up to say he was in Wallasey, but as we had a Dutch visitor staying with us that night (he had been lecturing at the University) Mary told Hans that it would be inconvenient for him to call. Since then he has dropped wholly out of our lives, after completely dominating them for one whole year. That he should eventually have fallen on his feet does not surprise me at all. He was that kind of person.

In October and November 1939 those who had contributed to supporting Hans and were still resident in Liverpool were prosecuted, together with Hamish Craig. The charge was that we had aided and abetted Hans Bauer in failing to furnish appropriate details to the authorities. Originally we were charged not only with the very serious offence of conspiracy to do this, but also with harbouring Hans; but both these charges were withdrawn. Holford and Dick Palmer were never charged: Holford was now in London and Dick was at Harlech, since a section of the University had been established at Coleg Harlech, in case it proved impossible to continue in Liverpool. As I have already recounted, Addison had gone there with a group of the Latin students. After a year this outpost was closed down – just as bombing began in Liverpool. Who took the decision to prosecute us, we never found out. But the police approached each of the contributors separately for a statement and then used the evidence in these statements to prosecute us; we were never warned that they might be so used. Fortunately Mary was not

prosecuted, though it was clear that all that she and I had done had been done by us together.

After twice being adjourned, the case was heard on 27 November at the court in Dale St. and before a magistrate with the sinister name of Mort. We had a barrister, Scholefield Allen (who gave his services free, like everyone else involved in the affair), to defend us, except that Blease defended himself. First it was decided that there was no case against Hamish Craig and the charge against him was withdrawn. Our side had originally threatened to sub-poena Osbert Peake, Under-Secretary at the Home Office, in connection with Craig's letter to that Ministry, but they offered to send Graham White, the M.P. for East Birkenhead, to speak on the matter, if we would refrain from a subpoena. In view of the national situation we agreed to this; but we were the victim of a typical bureaucratic trick, since Graham White was only able to produce a letter from a permanent official at the Home Office saying that the letter from Craig had been lost; and two clerks sent from London were unable to add anything to this. The outcome, at a resumed hearing on 29 November, was a fine of five pounds each (which was of course a much more substantial sum than it would be now). Blease and Bibby appealed, but we were tipped off by Phillips that the University would much prefer us to let the matter drop, so that is what we did – and paid up. On appeal the Recorder reduced the fine of Blease and Bibby to one halfpenny. Blease told me later that he always carried the halfpenny about with him, in case he was asked for it; but he never was. Though the whole business now sounds rather absurd and a storm in a teacup, it was extremely worrying at the time. Fortunately the University authorities, including the Vice-Chancellor, Arnold McNair, behaved extremely well. And on the day of the hearing Mountford, Ormerod and Campbell suspended their classes to come and support us in court. The incident never counted against me in my subsequent career in the University. At home in Bingley my parents were overwhelmed by the whole affair. They

could only regard it as a terrible disgrace, until my father was approached in the street in Bingley by E.E. Dodds, the history master at the Grammar School, who said he would like to shake him by the hand and congratulate him on what we had done. It cheered him up immensely to discover that there was more than one view about our prosecution.

Meanwhile, on the political front there was a great deal to worry about. Hitherto, within our experience, the communist line had been to oppose fascism and to rally wide support to this end. This was suddenly thrown askew by the news of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Hitherto, the communist *Daily Worker* had argued strongly that the war must be pursued vigorously and all attempts at compromise with Hitler (such as had characterised the National Government's policy up to the spring of 1939) resisted. Now the Party suddenly received orders from Moscow to reverse this policy. Having only a week or two earlier published an excellent little pamphlet on why one should support the war, Pollitt now made a public recantation in the *Daily Worker* and was removed from his position as general secretary; and the Communist party now began to speak of the imperialist war. Seen in retrospect this seems so ludicrous and absurd that one wonders how anyone could have taken it seriously. But at the time this was not so obvious. I never quite accepted the new line, but for some months I was confused and shaken about what to believe. This political reversal coincided with Mary's breakdown and seemed to be part of a shattering of all previous points of reference. However, I now increasingly distanced myself from the Party, which was not difficult, since Mary stayed on in Lytham, looked after by her mother, and I frequently went over to Lytham at the weekend.

As Mary recovered, which she did gradually, with the routine of looking after Dorothy, she made an occasional visit to Liverpool. But meanwhile I arranged to eat in the evening at Derby Hall, one of the University halls of residence, which lay on the other side of Sefton Park from where we lived and now

had Leonard Barnes as its warden. There were still some political activities. The Left Book Club went on holding meetings into 1940; but it had been shaken, as had the whole of the left, by the communist apostasy. Once the 'phoney war' had got going and it seemed as if the expected raids were not materialising, people resumed normal life. Towards the end of the Michaelmas term of 1939 the Fox family moved from Lytham to a house in Knowles Road, St Anne's. They had discovered a permanent lake of 'ream water' underneath the Lytham house, which rose and fell with the tide, making it unpleasantly damp; and fortunately my father-in-law had taken it on a contract which allowed him to rent it for a year with the option to buy at the year-end – an option which he did not now choose to exercise.

In the term following Christmas, in the early months of 1940, Mary decided to return to Liverpool with Dorothy. But her illness had now reached a stage of depression and it was a brave but unrealistic move. There was a serious crisis and I had to send a telegram to her mother, who at once caught a train to Liverpool and took Dorothy back with her to St Anne's. We got an Austrian refugee girl, a Fräulein Haas, in as a help and for a while Mary stayed on in Liverpool and attended Dr Muriel Barton-Hall's clinic. But in 1940 they had no real remedy for manic-depression and her miserable state of mind continued for some time. Eventually we got rid of the Austrian girl and Mary returned to St Anne's, where she now stayed until she was fully recovered and in a fit state of health to come home.

Shortly after this the war really started up: the fall of France, the evacuation at Dunkirk and the battle of Britain. I joined the Local Defence Volunteers (the L.D.V.), later renamed the Home Guard. I did a certain amount of drill and actually spent one night (with no ammunition) as a member of a force guarding the Mersey Tunnel. But I was then summoned by the embarrassed Commanding Officer and told that I was to resign, no reasons given. I knew, of course, that the reason must be my membership

of the Communist Party or perhaps the Hans case (or both). C.P. membership was now damning, because of the unprincipled switch concerning the nature of the war and former communists were excluded from holding any responsible position. Former appeasers and friends of Hitler and Mussolini, on the contrary, seem to have encountered no difficulties – though eventually the Government got round to interning Oswald Mosley. By this time, however, I was quite clear where I stood in relation to the war and was not prepared to be left out of the so-called ‘war effort’ altogether. So I joined the University Tower Watch, which was later incorporated in the National Fire Service.

The Tower Watch, which started in September 1940, involved spending every sixth night in the University. We worked in conjunction with the University N.F.S. squadron (originally called the A.F.S., the Auxiliary Fire Service). We had a common room, to which the N.F.S. sent an evening meal, usually based on sausages or black pudding, a bedroom for the academics on the watch, where they could work or read if they wished, and in the morning breakfast provided by the University in the Students’ Union. Action was only required if there was an alert. In that case we immediately ascended the internal staircase up the Victoria Tower to a balcony just below the clock, where instruments had been set up with which to take a bearing on any fire that might be started by incendiary bombs. Once we had a bearing we telephoned it through on a direct line to the Fire Service HQ at Hatton Garden. A similar team stationed on the cathedral tower sent in their bearing and, assuming they were looking at the same fire, this could be located at the point of intersection. We had plenty of opportunities, especially in March and May of 1941, to get the full flavour of quite intensive air raids. Up there on the tower one had a curious and quite fallacious sense of being above the fray and immune from danger. Should the staircase have been damaged or blocked, there was an emergency device by which we could descend. But fortunately it was never necessary to make use of this.

I met some interesting colleagues in other faculties on this Tower Watch. They included Trevor Goodwin, later Professor of Biochemistry, but at that time a research student under Professor Alan Morton. There was also Joseph Rotblatt, a Pole cut off in this country by the outbreak of war and later permanently resident here. He played a part in the atomic experiments in America but later became active in the campaign against nuclear weapons and devoted his subsequent career to medical aspects of atomic research. I also met Geoff Calvert, a mechanical engineer, through fire-watching at the University and later, when we came to live in Birkenhead after the war, he and his family became very close friends. Indeed, already during the war I got to know him quite well, since he invited me to join the members of his Department for lunch. Lunch at this time consisted of sandwiches, usually of mousetrap cheese, and I would take them and eat them in the common room in the Engineering Faculty, in that way getting to know several colleagues whom in the ordinary line of business I should probably never have met.

My companion up the tower was usually Gordon Rawcliffe, an electrical engineer, who later got a chair in Bristol and died comparatively young. On one occasion he recounted to us an emotional outburst by his head of department, Professor E.W. Marchant, in protest against the air raids. According to Rawcliffe it ran like this: ‘Those swine, those foul swine, the foulest swine God ever made – if he did make them – coming over here with their Hun blitz!’ We rather liked this and adopted it as a chant, which we would intone as we ascended the tower stairs. From the tower we had in fact an excellent view of the ‘Hun blitz’ and I recall seeing, among other catastrophes, the church in the middle of the east side of Abercromby Square collapse in flames, the massive fire at Lewis’s, and the end of the Argyle Theatre, a famous music hall in Birkenhead. All incidents had to be recorded in a log book and on one occasion, having seen curious lights which we could not identify, we logged them as ‘pentecostal fire’.

Once the raids had begun (which they did from the late summer of 1940 onward) we were rarely without a warning. But the worst occurred in March and May 1941, two intensive periods of about a week each, in the course of which the centre of Liverpool was almost completely destroyed – though, remarkably, the Town Hall and the Cathedral scarcely suffered (like St Paul’s in London) and the Bluecoat Chambers lost only part of one wing, which was replaced once the war was over. To digress slightly, this involved me in writing the only Latin inscription which I have ever composed and seen engraved in stone. At the time of the restoration I was occupying the Latin Chair at Liverpool and I was asked to compose a Latin inscription commemorating the damage of the building by fire-bombs – ‘*facibus hostium de caelo tactum*’ – and the date of its restoration – ‘*pie restitutum*’, a task made more difficult by the fact that I was told exactly how many letters the inscription was to contain. It now stands on the wall of the building to the left as one enters from the Church Street direction.

After the May blitz Liverpool was just about at the end of its tether, but fortunately at that point the attacks ceased. People were amazingly resilient and generally channelled their resentment against some scapegoat more accessible than the Luftwaffe, which seemed singularly remote, so that its bombs resembled what is legally (and somewhat blasphemously) termed an act of God. I remember going into the Harold Cohen Library early in the morning after a particularly bad night and observing that the assistant librarian on duty near the door looked especially morose. I asked her what was amiss and was greeted with this outburst: ‘Last night’s blitz was a disgrace to the Corporation of Bootle! It was five o’clock this morning when the tea trolley arrived.’ After that, on the Tower Watch, we acquired a new chant: ‘This raid is a disgrace to the Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University!’

Mary had come home with Dorothy in summer 1940; she was much better, but still a little depressed. But then, one night,

we had an alert and all three went down into the cellar (which had been set up with beds and sleeping-bags and a reinforced roof). Shortly afterwards there was an all clear, followed very soon after we were back in bed (with Dorothy in the next room) by a second alert. Mary said: ‘I’m not going down again’, so we stayed in bed. Five minutes later I heard the familiar whistle of a bomb descending and as it grew alarmingly louder every second, I recollect sitting up in bed and thinking, absurdly: ‘Now Mary will wish she’d gone downstairs!’ In fact we were nearly past wishing anything, for the bomb hit the house directly behind us, certainly less than 50 ft from where we were lying, completely demolishing it and killing everyone in it. (One body was found on an adjacent roof the next day). Almost before the noise had ceased Mary was back in the cellar with Dorothy, while I went to help the people upstairs to come down to the cellar (which they had to do by way of an outside staircase). The extraordinary thing is that on that occasion we did not lose a single window, though on other nights we lost several. I fancy the back wall of the yard deflected the blast upwards. After that incident we decided that Liverpool was no place for a baby, though Dorothy, now about one and a half or a little more, rather enjoyed the noise and the guns, which she had decided were cows mooing. We did not attempt to correct her mistake. Mary and Dorothy now returned to St Anne’s. Meanwhile I had been trying to get war work in one of the Ministries. I had one interview in London for a post of Principal Officer in the Ministry of Trade, but without success. I had a more satisfactory interview with someone from Bletchley Park – actually on Bletchley station platform – with a view to going there (this on Adcock’s recommendation). I dealt with the passage of German which I was asked to translate quite satisfactorily, but was not surprised when I was rejected on political grounds. At that stage, since both Bonner and Addison had been called up or were about to be, Mountford suggested getting me reserved; and since I saw that I would not be allowed to hold any responsible civilian post

and I guessed that in the army I should be unlikely to make an effective officer, I agreed. As a result I remained at the University for the rest of the war.

About this time I started lecturing to troops, an extremely useful experience, since to have to capture and hold the interest of a tired group of soldiers, many of whom have no intellectual interests, is good practice for lecturing anywhere. Over the next few years I lectured widely on 'Campaigning with Alexander' (actually 'the Great', though an officer at one unit thought I was going to talk about campaigning under General Alexander in North Africa), 'The situation in Greece', 'The Problem of Albania' and eventually a whole series of talks called 'British Way and Purpose', organised through ABCA (Army Bureau of Current Affairs) and designed to get small groups talking and thinking, not least about post-war England. It is my view that this aspect of army education, though clearly not intended to have any such effect, by raising a whole series of social issues and servicemen's (and women's) expectations in relation to them, contributed to the election of a Labour Government in 1945. From St Anne's I was usually collected and taken to the site where I was to speak by a member of the WVS (Women's Voluntary Service) – these were known collectively by Dorothy as 'Daddy's women' – to whom the job was welcome, since it carried a special petrol allowance. Sites included mainly anti-aircraft posts and on various occasions I lectured in bunkers and once beside the ornamental lake at Fairhaven, where my audience were repeatedly distracted by two girls in a boat, who kept rowing backwards and forwards in front of them. On another occasion, when I called for questions from a large hall full of men, a hand shot up encouragingly. 'Yes?', I asked. 'Why', said the soldier, 'do we have to come here and listen to this stuff?' I thought it was a fair question and gave an answer in general terms, starting from the failure of a public, ignorant of what was going on in Europe, to take such political steps before 1939 as might have prevented the rise of Hitler and the war.

Partly true at any rate. On yet another occasion, when a small group near Preston was discussing some issues raised in a 'British Way and Purpose' talk – the topic, I remember, was 'Neighbourhoods' –, I was puzzled by the irrational and emotional way in which they reacted, so much so that I commented on it to the officer afterwards. He looked surprised. 'Haven't you been told?', he said. 'These are all neurotic postings.'

It was while Mary was still in Liverpool that we received pleasant news – a telephone call from Piero and Paolo Treves, to say that they had been released – the very first! – from the Isle of Man, where Germans and Italians had been interned, the former from the beginning of the war and the latter from Mussolini's entry on Hitler's side in June 1940. Paolo was then working for the B.B.C. and had just been asked to prepare a programme on the long friendship between England and Italy. 'Don't you think it is a bit late for that?', he asked. 'Surely, Dr Treves, you are too pessimistic.' But he certainly was not, as he soon discovered as an internee in the Isle of Man. We were delighted to see them both and took them out to a meal before putting them on a train to London.

In summer 1941 we decided that there was little point in keeping on the flat with the risk of losing everything in an air-raid. So when our lease expired in July, we gave up the flat, stored the furniture with a firm called Batty in Bradford, which seemed a safer place than Merseyside, and moved into Knowles Road. During term-time I could have a railway contract and commute to Liverpool; and during the vacation I could cycle in for the fire-watch, stay the night and cycle back next day (it was about 45 miles each way, which was not too bad unless there was a heavy wind). Over the next few years I was to make this journey frequently. On the whole I enjoyed the ride. Occasionally I managed to get a lift from a lorry-driver and quite often I held on to the back of a lorry and so got several miles' effortless riding. But the thing that sticks in my mind from these



cycle rides is the beautiful sight that one got from the top of the hill at Aughton, of Liverpool covered with barrage balloons. These were part of the defences of the city against air-raid attacks. A less salubrious method, adopted later, was to pour out clouds of thick smoke from tar-wagons, thus blotting out the target (and most of its inhabitants).

I kept essential books and one or two other things out of storage and brought them to St Anne's. I should add that before deciding on the St Anne's solution we had considered buying a house of our own nearer Liverpool; and as another alternative we had spent one weekend at the Rawcliffes' cottage near Rhydymwyn with a view to living there and sharing it with them at the weekends. But both Mary and I quickly realised that this was not going to work. The place was dank and stood in an overlush valley, the steps were dangerously steep and we should have quarrelled with Stella almost immediately. So on balance St Anne's seemed the best solution, especially as Dorothy was clearly flourishing there.

## 27. The War and After: St Anne's (1941-1946)

We were to spend the next five years living in the Fylde at St Anne's-on-Sea. During those years we had two more children. Mitzi (Elizabeth Mary) was born on 9 June 1942 and Christo (Christopher John) on 28 June 1944, both at St Anne's Hospital. As I have just remarked, St Anne's was an excellent place for small children, except that playing on the sands was sometimes followed by an infestation of intestinal worms, an affliction which Mary took rather badly. But the winds there are fresh and the climate is good, with distinctly less rain than further inland. By and large, these were happy years. As I have explained, we began by living with Mary's parents in Knowles Road. We all got along very well and, in August 1941, soon after our arrival en masse Dolly looked after Dorothy while Mary and I had our first real holiday for many years (since we preferred not to think about Grinton). We took a train to Carlisle and a bus from there to Gilsland and then walked the central part of the Roman Wall, staying at Youth Hostels at Once Brewed and Acomb; and we ended by busing into Allendale and then walking over the hills via Alston to Langdon Beck above Middleton-in-Teesdale. Finally we had a night at Bingley before returning to St Anne's. It was a splendid break and the only snag was shortage of food, since the shops were pretty empty and the villages full of evacuees from Tyneside. It was a real bonus when we found wild chives near the Nine Nicks of Thirlwall – and an egg laid astray by a hen we saw emerging from a Roman well at Great Chesters. At Langdon Beck we found Upper Teesdale in a state of great excitement. Following a police raid most of the farmers in the district had combined to charter a bus to take them down to Barnard Castle to face charges of illegal slaughtering.

We remained at Knowles Road until February/March of 1942, when we decided that as we were now expecting our second baby (Mitzi), we had better get a house of our own; for it

seemed likely by now that I was going to stay in Liverpool throughout the war. We bought a very convenient house at 21, Grange Road, the next road to Knowles Road. It was close to the common, which was still largely unbuilt-on and a good place for children to play, and only ten minutes' walk from the railway station. It cost us £1320 (999 years leasehold) and we had a mortgage. It was an act of faith, for we calculated that after paying the mortgage instalments we should have virtually no spare cash. In fact I was given an increase in salary the following year, which helped considerably. The night the previous owners left the house I took a bed over and slept there to avoid any risk of its being commandeered for evacuees – a danger for any house that was unoccupied. This house, into which we moved on 10 March, had three bedrooms and three rooms downstairs; there was also a garage (which we let to an R.A.F. officer for six shillings a week) and at the back a medium-sized garden, where we grew vegetables and also wired off a section for four hens. With some help from Mr Hodgkinson, a policeman living next door to Mary's parents in Knowles Road, I built a serviceable hen-house, with timber acquired free of charge from the tip, which was full of discarded wood from the American Air Force Base at Warton. The Americans had recently arrived, so this must have been after Pearl Harbour.

The first hens were called Mary, Wendy, Joyce and Joan and their later successors were named after queens, Victoria, Henrietta, Geraldine (of Albania) and (?) Alexandra. They laid very well, for we surrendered our egg ration in exchange for something called balancer meal, which one mixed with kitchen scraps to form a rather evil-smelling porridge, which the hens devoured with zest. In due course, when they ceased to lay, they were eaten. Rationing on the whole worked very well, though there were some difficulties peculiar to St Anne's. Since the town has many hotels, private individuals had little or no chance of getting off-ration offal (liver, kidney, brains etc.) which was available in Liverpool. In our experience there was little

cheating, though one could and did do a little bartering with superfluous tea, always in high demand; and at one stage, I remember, we registered Christo, quite legitimately, as a Jew, foregoing his bacon ration in order to obtain a superior kosher margarine.

One disadvantage of living at St Anne's was that in term time I had to leave very early in the morning in order to be in Liverpool in time for a 9.30 lecture. St Anne's was very much aligned towards Manchester, for many Manchester business men (like my father-in-law) lived there. Consequently there were quick through trains with club carriages to Manchester. But Liverpool was a different matter and involved changing trains at Preston. For a time I was able to leave St Anne's at 7.30, but then the service deteriorated; my connection at Preston was taken off and I had to leave at 6.45, which was rather unpleasant in winter. Trains were always crowded and the lighting was minimal, so as not to contravene the blackout regulations. Moreover, in the months before we moved to Grange Road, air raids often dislocated the line at the Liverpool end, and one had to complete the journey from Kirkdale to Exchange by bus.

This Manchester alignment of St Anne's showed itself in another context, which illustrates our parochialism. During the frequent blitz attacks on Liverpool, it was a regular St Anne's diversion to go down to the promenade at night and watch the red glow from the burning city. But when the raid was on Manchester, there was universal dismay and no other topic was on the lips of the people of St Anne's. Indeed, the bombing of Manchester was outstripped as a sensation and a catastrophe only by the 'St Anne's blitz'. This puffed-up event was nothing more than the dropping of one stick of bombs at random by a German bomber off course. But life was disproportionately disrupted and when our neighbour, Mr Lloyd, the Head of a Department in the Ministry of Agriculture, which was evacuated to St Anne's, went to collect his morning milk and enquired about the 'raid', asking 'Was anyone killed?', he was not

altogether pleased to be reassured with the reply: 'Only a bloody civil servant'. This was in fact untrue, and probably just a piece of wishful thinking.

While at St Anne's I continued lecturing to forces; and now I was incorporated additionally in a new section run from Lancaster, which took me to many places in north Lancashire and once, in December 1944, to a very pleasant army course which was being held, at a time of thick snow, on the Langdale Estate in Westmorland, in a charming hotel situated in a converted gunpowder factory in large grounds near Elterwater, a few miles west of Ambleside. I used the occasion, when leaving, to walk over to Tarn Hows and then via Hawkshead and the ferry back to Bowness and Windermere station. I also did a number of talks to Rotary Clubs, beginning with St Anne's Club, of which Oswald was a member, and this went on at intervals during all the years I spent in St Anne's.

Sometime during the summer of 1942 we acquired some new friends in a rather curious fashion. We were looking out of the window one Saturday morning and noticed a very un-English-looking, elderly man walking backwards and forwards in a hesitating manner outside our house. Eventually he plucked up courage and rang the bell. He was Peti Prifti, an Albanian living in Bromley Cross, Bolton, and he had read a letter on the subject of 'Northern Epirus' and the chauvinistic Greek aim to annex that district, which I had recently had published in the *Manchester Guardian*. We at once struck up a friendship and he and his wife, Ila, (who was waiting further down the road) invited us over to their house for the weekend and subsequently stayed with us. From then on they often called on us, for they frequently visited St Anne's. On one occasion John Prifti, their elder son, then around nineteen, brought the two nieces of ex-King Zog to call on us before taking them on to Blackpool. These self-styled princesses we found unattractively snobbish and remarkably complaisant towards their uncle, who had in Balkan fashion murdered their father. I have quite recently

(1991) met one of them again at the Anglo-Albanian Society's November celebration; she is now married to an Englishman but still likes to exercise her little pretensions.

John and Tommy Prifti also appear from time to time at this social celebration; their father died several years ago, but Ila is still alive (in 1992). This friendship with the Priftis strengthened our Albanian interests and we now got to know several Albanians in England, including Qazim Kastrati and Anton Logoreci (who was at the B.B.C. along with others of our friends, including Liise Morrell and Piero and Paolo Treves). We formed a loosely organised Albanian group, including Miriam Tildesley, a craniologist who had worked with Sir Arthur Keith and now lived at Wolverhampton, the purpose of which was to try to ensure that after the war the Albanian case got a fair hearing. Harry Hodgkinson was at this time in the navy and stationed at Bari, but he later was part of this group, which continued to meet occasionally after the war. As far as I can remember, we never achieved anything substantial. But we did write letters to the press, so perhaps this contributed something to general awareness of Albanian problems. And Northern Epirus did not go to Greece.

During these years I continued to examine Latin for the Joint Matriculation Board and to this added H.S.C. examining in Ancient History for the Oxford and Cambridge Board (which was pleasant in involving a stay at either Oxford or Cambridge each summer). I also took on a further job as inspector for the J.M.B during the examinations. This meant going round all the secondary schools in one area of the north-west and ensuring that the conditions were satisfactory and that the rules were being observed. One tried, when possible, to arrive just after an examination was timed to begin. If by then the candidates appeared already to have written a full page or so, then something was amiss. The convent schools were particularly tricky, since after being admitted one was usually taken to a waiting room for a short time, during which, one felt, anything

might be – and often was – happening in the examination room. In 1943 my allotment of schools was mainly in Cumberland and adjacent areas. It was shortly after my return home that I realised that a strange feeling in my throat had been caused by incipient whooping-cough (caught from the children, despite my having had it already as a child) and that I had taken it into most of the secondary schools in Cumberland and Westmorland. I never heard whether there was a subsequent outbreak there. One advantage of this job was that it gave an opportunity to meet various head teachers. I remember in particular the Headmaster of a famous R.C. Liverpool school (St Francis Xavier's) who defined his concept of what he was doing with some relish. 'Other schools,' he informed me, 'educate their boys for life; we educate them for death.'

Work in the Department was fairly heavy, though we had few honours students and those mainly (and later exclusively) women. In 1943, after Bonner had gone off to the army, we had the help of Margaret Getty, who came to Liverpool and lodged with Professor Campbell at West Kirby; Mrs Campbell had gone into safe retreat at Cambridge, where they eventually retired. Robert Getty was now at Bletchley.

Once *Philip V* was behind me and the task of seeing it through the Press over (it was published in December 1940 with a rather pusillanimous print number of only 500), I wrote several articles rather than embark on a large project while the future seemed so uncertain. But in 1943 I began to feel the need for something more substantial. Mountford suggested that I might undertake a commentary on Tacitus' *Histories* to take the place of Spooner. This would be of interest to me as a historian and would also be a suitable task for a lecturer in Latin. It was a good idea and I had some correspondence with Martin Charlesworth about it; he was enthusiastic. So I wrote to Kenneth Sisam at the Oxford University Press with this proposal, but was a little disappointed to be told that Ronald Syme was supposed to be doing that very thing. However, Sisam (who in the meantime

had consulted Arnaldo Momigliano, who was now in Oxford) said he would get in touch with Syme, who was at that time holding a British Council post at Ankara in neutral Turkey, and enquire whether he still proposed doing the Tacitus. In the meantime, in case he did, had I any other alternative project in mind? I pondered and remembered, first having read Polybius with Philip Sheard in the Sixth Form at Bradford Grammar School, and then my constant use of Polybius in my work for *Aratos* and *Philip V*. Moreover, I had recently written an article on Polybius' discussion of the Roman constitution. So I boldly replied: Yes, a commentary on Polybius. The Delegates were interested, but preferred to wait for an answer from Ronald before making a definite decision. In fact it was not until April 1944 that, owing to lost letters and postal delays, they finally heard from him: he relinquished the Tacitus! By then, however, I felt fully committed to the Polybius project, which had always been my preference since I thought of it, and I said that I should like to go ahead with that, perhaps reserving Tacitus' *Histories* to come back to later: little did I realise then that Polybius was going to occupy the next thirty-four years of my life.

So finally in June 1944 the Press authorised the Polybius *Commentary* in the sense that they 'encouraged' it. I estimated 1,000-1,200 pages, but in the end it required 2,355, just about double. It was all done in a very gentlemanly fashion, and for a long time I worked without anything so vulgar as a contract. It was not in fact until July 1956 that I was given a belated contract, by the terms of which I was to receive one hundred pounds on publication and a second hundred when they 'broke even'. On the other hand, I appreciated their having undertaken such a book in war-time, when the future was still uncertain (though indeed by 1944 it was pretty clear that the pendulum had swung decisively in our favour). Volume I appeared in 1957 and Volume II ten years later in 1967. I was considerably helped by two terms as Mellon Visiting Professor at Pittsburgh in 1964 in finishing the final draft of this second volume. Similarly, two

terms at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in 1970/1 enabled me to make substantial headway with the final volume, which came out, twelve years after Volume II, in 1979 (two years after my retirement). I felt no desire at that point to return to Tacitus' *Histories*.

I had meanwhile been working on the Polybius commentary, but not exclusively. For in 1943 I was approached by Ben Farrington to write a book on the decline of the Roman empire in the west for a series planned by the Cobbett Press, a left-wing publishing house with Ben himself, Gordon Childe and Sydney Herbert as Editorial Board. It was a serious and respectable enterprise and other early volumes included one by Grahame Clark (who had been a research student a year senior to me at Peterhouse and was later to be Master of the College) and one (on the alphabet) by A.C. Moorhouse. For me this was new territory. My undergraduate courses had hardly touched on the Empire, but I had picked up a good deal since, while examining papers on the Principate for the Oxford and Cambridge Examinations Board. But the book involved a good deal of reading and I am horrified, as I look back, to think how sketchy my knowledge of the fourth century was when I wrote the first version.

The subject fascinated me and the book, when written, was lively and, I think, quite exciting. I was still a Marxist (of sorts) though I had split decisively from the C.P., whose shifts of policy made it contemptible. (For when Hitler attacked Stalin, the war had in their view once more become a just one and to be supported.) Moreover, especially during the early war years, I was often worried by the problem of reconciling the subject of my work with the world we were now living in – that constantly recurring problem of 'relevance'. This book on the decline of Rome seemed to offer an opportunity to make a statement about how I saw the present and the future. It was going to be a tract for the times and my first sentence speaks of 'turning to the records of the past for light upon the problems of the future'.

This was not objective history as the historian understands it; but it suited very much my mood around the end of the war. By the time the book appeared in 1946 the war was already over and the atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan.

This may be a convenient place to describe the rather strange subsequent history of this small book, which is quite different from any other I have written. I would no longer subscribe to many of its conclusions and it seems to me now to be much over-simplified, especially in the importance it attributes to slavery. Yet it is the book, if any, which scholars in other fields seem to have heard of and with which they associate my name. The first stage in its history came when an American publisher called Henry Schuman wanted to publish a U.S. edition and I agreed to add a further chapter on the fourth century (which had certainly been neglected in the original). I did in fact write this new chapter and he paid me for it, but then he had financial difficulties and ended up in 1953 publishing what was merely a reprint of the English edition. In 1962 I was approached by Iwanami Shoten to authorise a Japanese edition and I told them that I had this additional material, which they could use. So in 1963 the Japanese enlarged version was published. In 1969 the Liverpool University Press brought out a new English edition (the original publishers having relinquished the copyright to me), incorporating the new material. To distinguish it from the smaller original I gave it the new title of *The Awful Revolution*, which was intended to recall Gibbon's remark that we should 'learn the lessons of this awful revolution'. There were later Spanish and Swedish editions; and Iwanami Shoten went on paying me royalties for about 25 years and sold in all over 13,000 copies in Japan.

My concern with the relevance of the classics also surfaced in two other things I wrote about the same time. The first was a short article published in *Greece and Rome* in June 1943, entitled 'Is our Roman history teaching reactionary?'. It dealt with the institution of the Principate as a solution to the

problems of the first century and the tendency of teachers (as revealed in answers served up in H.S.C. scripts) to applaud this autocratic solution and to echo the Roman optimate condemnation of the Gracchi. I signed it 'Examiner', as I thought (unnecessarily) that the Board might object to my using material obtained as an examiner to draw what were really political conclusions. My other 'political' effusion was a paper I read to the Classical Association at its Annual General Meeting, held at St Albans, in 1944 and published in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* that year, entitled 'The causes of Greek decline'. It had grown out of a review I had written (in the *Classical Review* for 1942) of Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* and it was, among other things, an attack on the role of Plato. As an account of the decline of the classical *polis* it was certainly (as Adcock said) 'a little one-sided'. I mention it here merely to illustrate the kind of concerns which were occupying me during these later war years.

The St Albans meeting of 1944 was the third successive Annual General Meeting of the Classical Association which I attended; the two earlier ones in 1942 and 1943 were both held in Cambridge. I enjoyed these meetings very much and especially the opportunity they gave me to get to know, and hear lectures by, various scholars. Thus in 1942 we had Rattenbury, Cornford and L.J.D. Richardson and in 1943 Ernest Barker, Norman Baynes and Cyril Bailey. But in 1942 there was also something much grander. In August of that year, when the war was still in a fairly desperate state, thanks to the brilliant and confident initiative of Miss M.V. Taylor, the formidable editor of the *Journal of Roman Studies*, there took place in Oxford the first Triennial Meeting of all the classical societies and the British Schools at Rome and Athens; it lasted a week. We heard Cornford, J.L. Myres, Bowra, Hugh Last, Sherwin-White, Norman Baynes, Charlesworth, Adcock, I.A. Richmond, Wade-Gery, T.B.L. Webster, Miss Levy, L.J.D. Richardson, C.E. (Tom Brown) Stevens, Isabel Henderson, Pringsheim, Ed. Fränkel,

Gilbert Murray, Arnaldo Momigliano, Egon Wellesz and Gervase Matthews. It was a tremendous display of talent and all who were there felt amazingly encouraged and excited at such a gesture. It looked as if every British scholar who was not prevented by war work had taken part.

In 1944 we had Paolo and Lotte Treves to stay with us on what was virtually their honeymoon. Lotte was originally from Germany (Augsburg), but had been trained medically in Italy before coming as a refugee to England. She was a splendid person and we were very happy that Paolo and she had married. I recollect that it was during their visit that we were walking over the bridge and down into St Anne's Square and noticed the tricolour flying over several buildings. We realised that Paris had been liberated and all spontaneously burst into the Marseillaise. It was really surprising to see the enthusiasm that this news created in St Anne's. There were even some people dancing in the sober morning light.

Our third child, Christopher, was born in June 1944. The following winter was not easy. I think everyone was feeling a little weary of the war which, after the Normandy landings of that year, seemed to have got bogged down; and Mary was not only finding looking after the three children – Dorothy had now started at Heyhouses infants' school – very exhausting, but in the winter she had some kind of flu and bouts of rheumatism, which depressed her. My own spare time was restricted, since I had taken on a W.E.A. class at Lytham on current affairs and recent European history, which was fairly elementary stuff but involved a good deal of reading in order to mug up facts with which I was not familiar.

With the spring of 1945 there came a change. In April I had a break attending the Classical Association meeting at Oxford and later in the month we both spent four nights on the Langdale Estate (which I had got to know in connection with army lecturing), walking in the area and climbing Bowfell and Scafell Pike. In May came VE day – 8 May, to celebrate victory in

Europe; that day I was talking to the St Anne's Rotary club on 'Is history bunk?' Shortly afterwards came the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the capitulation of Japan. At last the war was over – there were neighbourhood celebrations with the drinking of champagne at the house of our next-door neighbours, the Kenyons – and almost at once we had a general election, in which we were both involved, working for a rather disagreeable Labour candidate called Hilditch. He was a schoolmaster from Chorley, and one of those Labour supporters who resent their own middle-class allies and suppose all virtue to reside in the working class. It was, however, mainly middle-class Labour Party members who were doing all the work to get him in – which of course we failed to do, for this was the Fylde. I took the chair at one public meeting but did not canvass; I rather think Mary did. The Labour victory was of course a great delight, though not among the burghers of St Anne's. I remember going into my bank (the Midland) the next day. It was full of gloomy-faced customers. The cashier, however (who had a fair idea of where I stood) leaned over to me and with an expressionless face whispered: 'Sometimes I laugh and I laugh!'

The end of the war released a log-jam in the Universities and people began to move to new jobs. A chair of Greek was advertised at Bangor and I applied, was interviewed in London and then on 30 May at Bangor. There I was one of the two chosen to be interviewed by the College Council, but they elected R.E. Wycherley, not unreasonably, as I had done no Greek teaching. I found this near-miss rather encouraging and was not entirely sorry – nor was Mary – not to be faced with the problem of bringing up three small English children in a Welsh environment. At Liverpool the Vice-Chancellor, Arnold McNair, now resigned to go to Cambridge and shortly afterwards Mountford told me in confidence that a successor had not yet emerged and that he was to be Acting Vice-Chancellor for 1945/6, which meant that I should have to carry more departmental work. Soon, however, there was a further

development. The appointing committee decided – and events proved the wisdom of this decision – to offer Mountford the Vice-Chancellorship outright. Mary was gratified, for she had insisted from the moment we heard of McNair's departure that J.F. Mountford was the man for the job, whereas I had argued strongly and wrongly that the University would never make such an internal appointment. Mountford accepted and as a result I was appointed Acting Head of the Latin Department for 1945/6. It was an obvious appointment, since Bonner had only recently returned from the forces, having been invalided out after a breakdown, and he was out of touch with affairs in Liverpool. Before we knew of this further development, we had invited the Mountfords over to St Anne's for the weekend and we thought that they ought not to be deprived of the experience of visiting Blackpool. It gave JFM great satisfaction to espy on the South Shore a booth containing Professor X and his Flea Circus. 'Now', he observed, 'I realise the true value of the title of Professor' (which he was – though I did not yet know it – on the point of relinquishing).

The war was over, but we stayed on in St Anne's for the time being, since there were likely to be senior posts going and we did not know where we might find ourselves, if I were fortunate enough to be appointed to one. Nothing happened in the autumn term, but then chairs were advertised at University College, King's College and Royal Holloway College, all in the University of London. In April 1946 I was interviewed on two successive days in London for the King's and Royal Holloway posts; and at the first interview I learnt that the U.C.L. chair had been filled internally. I got neither; nor was I successful at Reading, where Cormack, the acting head of the department, was preferred. This was all rather discouraging and I remember feeling a little disconsolate when, a week later, I spent a night with Gordon Rawcliffe (my tower watch companion) at Bristol, where he had been elected to a chair the previous summer. This was on my way to the Classical Association A.G.M. at Exeter.

There we stayed in the University, only recently evacuated by American troops; and I remember that some of the older and less sophisticated C.A. members were puzzled by the notice in some bedrooms exhorting them to pay a visit to the prophylactic centre before going into the city. It was at this meeting that I first met Ben Meritt, later at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, who lectured on the Delian League. I also read a paper at Exeter on 'Polybius and the growth of Rome'.

As a result of Mountford's appointment, the Latin Chair at Liverpool was now advertised and, after asking his advice, I put in an application and was called for interview on 28 May. This interview came as the climax of a somewhat hectic four days. At the weekend I had been invited to a rather exclusive gathering of ancient historians at Bedford, run on a sort of patronage basis by Norman Baynes, F.E. Adcock and Hugh Last. At that time we used to meet at the Bridge Inn, Bedford. Later the venue moved to Wellingborough and now, much democratised and furnished with a regular programme of papers and discussion, meets as the 'Baynes Weekend' at Keele. On the Sunday night I went on from Bedford to Cambridge and spent it with my old friends Robert and Margaret Getty – a rather piquant situation, since Getty was also a candidate, and I believed a very strong one, for the Liverpool Latin Chair. On the Monday I went up to Birmingham, where I had promised to lecture at the University on the Hellenistic age; and that night I returned to Liverpool, where for the first time in my life I stayed at an hotel in that city. Normally the Mountfords would have put me up, but in the circumstances that would not have been appropriate. So I booked in at the Shaftesbury Hotel at the bottom of Mount Pleasant (which figures in the film 'Letter to Brezhnev' as the rendezvous for the two scouse lasses and their Russian pickups).

The interviews took place in the old Senate Room in the Victoria Building and there were four candidates on the short list, all with Liverpool connections. The other three were Robert Getty, Stanley Bonner and G.B.A. Fletcher. I knew all the

Committee members, including Maurice Bowra and W.B. Anderson, the two external advisers. The interview went reasonably well, but I was a little disturbed when Mountford, who was in the chair as Vice-Chancellor (somewhat anomalously, since it was his chair that was being filled), asked me what my reaction would be if I were appointed now and later a chair were to come vacant in the near future in, for example, Ancient History. This was no hypothetical situation, since Ormerod was due to retire in about five years' time. Apparently my non-committal answer to this question was thought to be satisfactory. But there was of course no indication of the likely result.

In the early afternoon I had to attend the Faculty Applications Committee, sitting alongside several of the colleagues who had been interviewing me that morning. No-one gave the slightest clue to their decision and I felt very uncertain. But, on my return to my room, I found a note from the Vice-Chancellor's secretary, Miss Kay, asking me to go at once to his office. When I got there in a state of some trepidation he at once thrust out his right hand and told me that I had been appointed to the Chair. It was one of the great moments of my life. My immediate reaction was that we could now return to Merseyside with a reasonable salary and that Mary would be able to have a rather easier time than she had had over the war years. A few minutes later Ormerod came in and asked me if I had seen Mountford; when I said I had, he burst into smiles and congratulated me with obviously very genuine warmth. Although I could have phoned Knowles Road with the news – we had no telephone ourselves, having economised on this – I wanted Mary to be the first to know, so I sent her a telegram. But when I got back to St Anne's it had not arrived and Mary, who tended to be pessimistic, had warned the children that I should probably be arriving in a downcast state. Instead there was general jubilation. We at once told the grandparents – with another telegram to Bingley – and Dolly insisted that she would look after the children that evening while



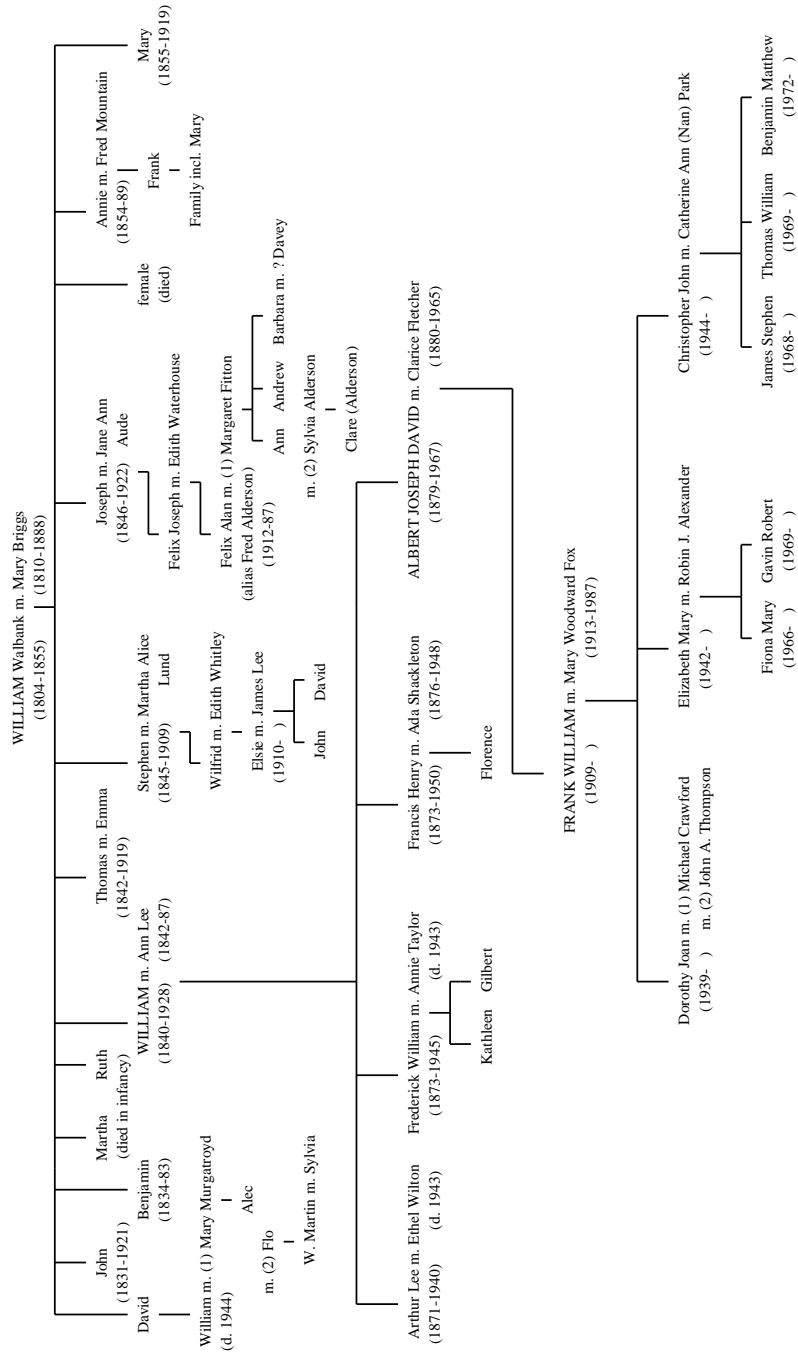
204

we went out to celebrate. This we did, but very modestly, with a drink at the Clifton Arms at Lytham.

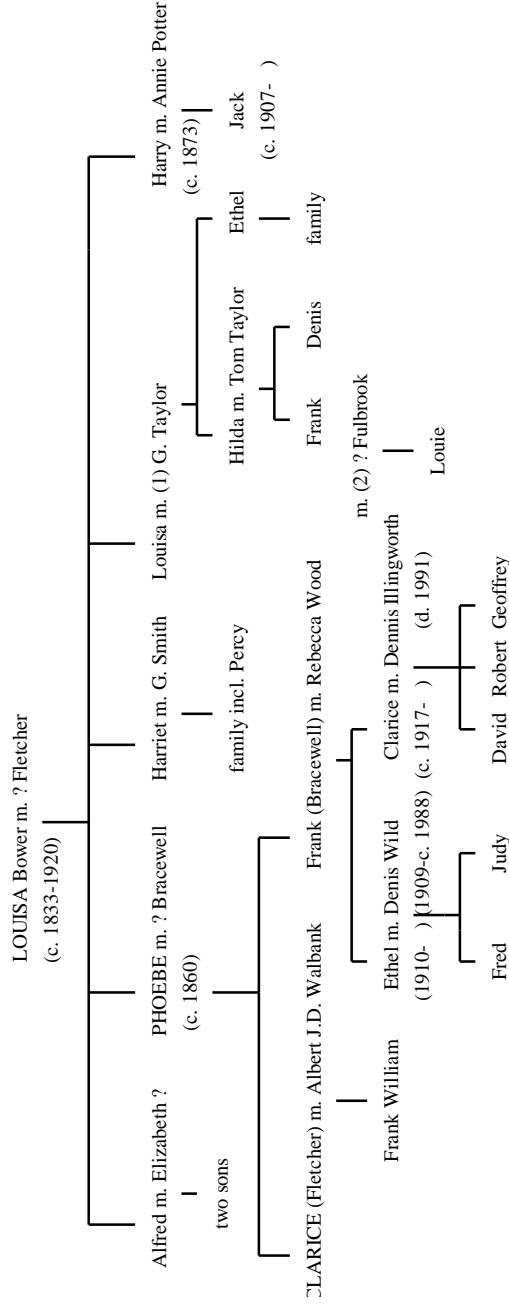
There followed all the chores. After discussion with the Mountfords we decided to go for a house in Birkenhead, where the schools were better than in Liverpool; and eventually we bought one in Glenmore Road, Oxtun, where we stayed until 1951. In that year we moved to Hope Lodge, 5 Poplar Road, where we were to remain until I retired in 1977. But that is another story.

F. W. W.

April – July 1992



## SOME WALBANKS



The children of Louisa Fletcher are not necessarily in the right chronological order, as I have no record of dates of birth; but Harry was certainly the youngest, and Louisa younger than Phoebe since Hilda was considerably younger than my mother, whom she used to call Auntie Clarice (though really her cousin).

## SOME FLETCHER RELATIONS

