

PART II
THE GROWTH OF A SCHOOL
Covered Fire
1811—1914

A FAMILY BETWEEN WHITE WALLS

“A rural villa surrounded by pleasure-grounds, gardens and trees”: the boys and girls probably found Malcolm’s description very misplaced. A change to a school had brought no extra comfort. Rising at dawn, the children washed in long troughs. After an hour of lessons they came to a breakfast of bread and milk: “the milk to be skimmed or new milk and water in equal quantities.” The meal had to be eaten in silence. So began the severe order of the day. If the buildings seemed attractive to passers-by, they sheltered an austere life for the family within.

As families go, a hundred and fifty may seem large—though the School rarely approached, and never exceeded, this number for a hundred years. Living together all the year round, within the same walls, the teachers and children made school their home. When the boys and girls came, at seven or eight years old, they would still need the care and direction of their new “parents.” Some of these parents would seem more like didactic elder brothers and sisters, being only in their teens; even the Superintendents of Islington and Croydon days were young. The Dymonds, who were placed in charge when the School moved to Croydon in 1825, had only just left

A FAMILY BETWEEN WHITE WALLS

Sidcot, the Committee there not approving of young teachers who fell in love.

To a surprising degree, this school family interrelated. Several families came along in the full power of their numbers: Appletons and Ashbys, Farrands and Freeloves, Reynoldses and Richardsons, mix together through the years, so that one mistakes brother for nephew, or sister for cousin. Often there is a strongly regional root to a family: the Essex families of Barritt and Marriage persist throughout the Croydon days. Perhaps this was an inevitable feature of a school serving the members of an enclosed religious society in the southern counties of England. The emphasis on membership had helped to link these family groups together into a complex and far-reaching network. Where links of blood failed, all children belonged together to the same religious society. Even when non-Friends came in after 1827, the local Monthly Meeting had to promise “that he had been educated in the attendance of our religious meetings.” In a denomination which so coloured one’s thoughts and prompted one’s habits, the School was a family, sharing many ways in common.

The ways of a family lead also to the kitchen. For the children, class-work was only part of a busy day, which also found them carrying coal, laying tables, and being servers for the housekeeper—little time was left for play. Even in “play-time,” the teachers on duty had to be vigilant to see that the children had washed the potatoes with a birch-broom under the pump, swept the rooms, or polished batches of shoes. For the girls, especially, school-life was a very domestic affair. Since many were intended to be servants, or the useful wives of working men, their work took the form of a rigorous training. With six girls

kneeling on the floor, each with a separate bucket, a mistress drilled them in the art of scrubbing. For a community which lived together all the year round, clothes repairs for everybody were carried out by the girls. When repair was no longer possible, the girls would make a new article: a new smock-apron for a boy, or a dress for themselves, to say nothing of the undergarments. When John Sharp became Superintendent in 1842, he tried to alter a system, whereby 16½ hours a week were given to needlework out of the 33¼ hours for school work. He had seen, at Ackworth, that the girls spent only 6 hours out of their 30¾, and even that time was for training in fine work, not for rough mending and making as at Croydon. It was not until 1860, that the Committee asked parents to supply their children with outer-clothes; even then the underwear remained the task of the girls. A few of the elder girls assisted "1 day in the week, in washing and getting up the small linen under the direction of the laundry maid or mantua maker." In such ways the Workhouse tradition lived on. Life at Islington and Croydon was not so much that of a school as of a great household where everybody took a hand with the work. And to many Friends, the work seemed as useful a part of learning as the hours spent at the school-room desk.

This closely-knit community busy about the house was not least like a family in providing for its own continuance. Not only did the next generation of a family often come to the School, but the teachers—the elder brothers and parents as it were—came from the school community. Apart from the numerous apprentice teachers, two Superintendents, E. F. Brady (1833-1838) and John Sharp (1842-1852) were former pupils who had spent almost their entire teaching lives at the School. Both Edward and

Elizabeth Brady were there during the same years. Even if they did not get to know each other when pupils, they would certainly have some contacts as apprentice teachers. They both seemed to have lived up to the advertisement of 1816, for the master "to combine with maintenance of necessary authority a mild and tender treatment." Brady's journal reflects his care to guide the School with a fatherly authority. He wrote to his own daughters, during his fatal illness:—

Dear Children, although writing is not a very easy task to me just now, I think I shall hardly be satisfied without telling you . . . how much I have thought of you in the past week. . . . Remember, dear children; your teachers are placed over you in the absence of your parents, to endeavour to train you up in knowledge and virtue . . . "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves" is a gospel injunction, and is an acceptable means of testifying your love to your Heavenly Father.

(ii)

The Superintendents lived out the rule for the stewards of 1780, to act "as parents and directors of a well-ordered family." For although it was intimate and domestic, the community was to be guided with strictness. The small family pattern of the School made it possible for the rule of the Superintendent to be all the more dominating. Since the School was not large, there was no leaving it to ushers to control the boys. Nor was there any attempt in the 'thirties to follow the lead of Arnold of Rugby of giving the seniors responsibility as prefects: the children were too young for that to be thought of. Apart from about two teachers on each side of the house, only the apprentices

stood between the children and the direct rule of the Superintendents. Yet these apprentices might be as young as 15, and themselves only newly free from being children under strict rule. The family pattern of the School meant that the Superintendent lived very close to the children, and knew them individually, however much he seemed to the children remote and aloof, and despite their being called not by name but by number. (This practice was dropped in the 'fifties at about the same time as the Superintendent ceased to read the children's letters.) Intimacy helped supervision.

This strictness was more than a personal thing: it was a persistent feature throughout, and sprang from a moral concern. The family must needs be good. The increasing length and preciseness of the Rules was the most obvious sign of this urge. This is found even in the out-of-school life of the Junior Literary Society. This Society began early in the School's history—at least several years before 1818—and probably offered a richer experience to the child than he knew in the classroom. In its organisation the J.L.S. was a mixture of the strict and the intimate, the autocratic and the voluntary. The key positions of President, Treasurer, and Secretary were held by teachers, who probably also saw to it that the subject matter was improving and safe. Yet a lot of work—Door-keeper, Assistant-Secretaries, Librarians—was carried out by the boys. Membership was voluntary, though not easy to obtain. Once entered, however, the discipline of the Society was strict: for damaging books, for showing them to a non-member, or for divulging the Society's affairs to outsiders, fines were exacted as penalties. In April, 1818 the minutes record: "On account of improper conduct of J. Brown and T. Ridet . . . it is agreed that

they shall be fined 1d. each and the former of them expelled from attending our meetings . . . during the pleasure of the members." Almost a year later Josiah Brown was allowed to resign, "this meeting considering him a useless member." Often a teacher was "asked" (as the minutes say) to speak with a certain boy about his behaviour. Yet this pattern of strictness was probably enforced by the children themselves. Periodically a concern arises for essay writing, which lives briefly before declining again, suggesting the sudden interest of boys rather than the regular control of a teacher. Even the writings of the children mostly have a moral tone: "and while we are speaking of excess in dress we wish our members to be careful *not* slovenly in their habits, like some who go without braces, garters, shoe-strings and almost every other requisite for tidiness. . . ." Young children sometimes echo father's words!

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Strict fathers rewarded virtue, a feature which gave scope to the human side of family life. No one took more advantage of this than Peter Bedford: he entered as a member of the Committee in 1814, and remained in the life of the school as a warm-hearted Prospero for over 50 years. If the world knew him as a social reformer, to the children he was one of the kindest and most important men in their lives. "In the evening," he typically records in his diary in 1821, "went to Islington . . . spent about an hour with the Boys, rewarded 5 of them who had committed some verses to memory, the children appeared very happy and we had a good account of them." Peter Bedford was responsible for a system of merit-tickets, and

of monitors. "In the evening," he records two months later, "Cornelius Hanbury accompanied me to Islington School, and we spent some time with the little party of monitors who for the first time met and had Tea in the little School Room. They were afterwards entertained with Cornelius Hanbury's microscope—the plan fully answers my expectation." Many of the improvements and small pleasures of school life were due to Peter Bedford. "The children," he notes, towards the end of the same year, 1821, "were unitedly of the opinion that it will be well to establish a Bank for savings—which is to be carried into effect. The exchange of tickets was satisfactory. Samuel Durston came to me there and exhibited a new invention called a Geographical Panorama which was very much admired and the children were much pleased with it."

Because the School was so much a large and busy family, the full influence of a man like Peter Bedford was felt. The community was small enough for him to watch all that happened and to be a friend to everybody. Peter Bedford often shaped and directed affairs more profoundly than any of the Superintendents. As the School became more complex and professional, the danger of such beneficent power in a visitor became more obvious. Meanwhile there was a place for such a rich and genial uncle.

Personality also began to be evident among the boys and girls. There was now a place for the child with a will of his own. Such a boy was Barton Dell, who was to become an outstanding character as a Sidcot teacher. As an active member of the J.L.S., he was elected to several committees: to investigate "the damage to Chinese Puzzle," or to look into the purchase of a chess board, and

Paradise Lost, or to thank a senior Friend for his gift of four volumes of church history. In November, 1819, however, there is this minute: "Barton Dell having applied to withdraw from this Society and having given the meeting to understand that the books of the library are incapable of affording him further instruction, and that he felt no interest in its welfare, this meeting, anticipating his being speedily brought to a due sense of his error, after mature consideration accedes to his unprecedented request." So triumphed a young gentleman 12 years old.

(iv)

This little family world with its work, its rules, and varied personalities, was still very much a lonely kingdom, walled in upon itself. Traditions persisted. Walks were still under guard. The children must not mix in the local life, even to buy sweets. As a School for the South, its isolation was increased. As a Workhouse for the London area, children's homes had at least been near, and one could quickly reach them on the short holidays allowed. But now, children with homes as far distant as Dorset or Suffolk, were more cut off. After having travelled on the top of a coach for several days, they were likely to spend most of the next seven years within the same walls. Irregular holidays occurred—not least to help building repairs—but there were no regular holidays until 1848, and then only a month in the summer. Visits were not encouraged—a rule equally strict for those who lived near: "Parents and Friends of children of (London) Monthly Meetings be not allowed to visit them oftener than once in 3 months and that with permission in writing

from one of the Committee . . . and not to stay on the premises for more than one hour. No visits to be allowed on any First Day, nor any of the children allowed to go home without leave from the Committee." Letters—scrutinised by the Superintendent—were rare, as postage costs remained for many years beyond the means of poor parents, and still more so of the children with their penny a week pocket money.

So the life of the school community continued, largely unchanging for half a century: an overcrowded family, with little privacy, but very remote from the world. The move to Croydon in 1825 brought little change. The new building was good, a delightful Queen Anne house, enlarged and adapted for its new use. The situation was healthy and safely clear from a growing London. The walls, however were as solid as before. As a child sat in the class-room, there was still nothing to stare at but these walls, annually white-washed, but unrelieved by pictures. A child could not look out of the windows because they were too high. Yet the children knew that outside were the gardens and lawns, with the fields and country beyond. Sometimes they made excursions there, a practice which was later to bring so much new experience and interest into school life. Occasionally the whole family had a treat—a spontaneous holiday with cakes and good fare, provided by the bounty of a Committee member, with running and games and (so a school magazine of 1831 boasts) "each boy had a glass or two of wine."

When the family returned to this Croydon home after such a holiday, the artistic iron gates closed behind them. Next morning they would rise early, as they did in all weathers and every day. For the boys there was the heavy work of the water-pump or the task of fetching the milk

from the farm. For all, on a winter morning, there was the difficult task of keeping warm. And as the family met together for a silent and frugal breakfast, the thing they would never find on the table would be news of the outside world.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD

One autumn day a young man stood at the entrance to Croydon Fair giving out tracts. It was lonely work, and the young man felt oppressed at some of the sights he saw. Here was a place where men and women flocked together, so he must needs be severe with himself to call them to Redemption. He was John Sharp, for 11 years Superintendent of the School.

The Superintendents, as the fathers of the family, had a pastoral care over the children, and these young men felt about religion with an intense seriousness. If the community was to be committed to an evangelistic crusade, here were the dedicated priests to kindle the enthusiasm of the soldiers, and of no two men was this more true than of Edward Brady and John Sharp.

Early every morning one found these young men alone with their journals, closely examining their lives. Again and again they gave themselves bitter answers: "during the month now about to close, I am not sensible of having made any progress in my heavenward journey. I deeply lament my dwarfishness; and truly I have no power in me either to go forward in the way of holiness, or to withstand the fiery assaults of the enemy." In these brooding moments, before the rest of the house was awake, they

promised to improve every moment of their lives. John Sharp pledged himself:—

1st. To guard very carefully against wandering thoughts during religious meetings. . . .

2nd. To be more diligent in the duty of frequent waiting on the Lord.

3rd. To guard against angry feelings, particularly in my conversation with the boys, or in their presence.

4th. To rise earlier in the morning, which would enable me to devote the first part of the day to communion with Him who alone can enable me to fulfil the least of his commandments. . . .

To these young men sleep was self-indulgence: every minute was a solemn trust.

Over-strain showed itself. Brady no less frequently than Sharp watched anxiously "lest my hasty temper get the better of me." Apart from the emotional intensity of their lives, the demands of their day were very heavy. As apprentices they had forced themselves to get up early, to fit in an hour of study before their daily duties began. This brave attempt to equip themselves as teachers was one more burden in a life where they were never free from their work. In a community in which everybody lived close to everybody else, the apprentices and teachers were perpetual supervisors of every activity from boot-cleaning to Bible-reading. As Superintendents both Brady and Sharp had additional reasons for this experience of strain. Brady himself was a sick man. When 22, he had watched a close friend die of consumption; he himself was a victim of the same disease. For the last two years of his life he was wheeled round the School on a couch—dying at the age of 36. Sharp, for all the exacting duties of a school, took on himself a great deal of travelling in the Quaker ministry, including visits to Germany and France. No

wonder if sheer over-strain often helped to make these men depressed and over-critical with themselves. "My mind," Brady wrote, "had been in a distressingly low state for some time past."

It was natural for such men to find an answer to strain in prayer. "My engagements," wrote John Sharp, "press heavily upon me: may I strive increasingly to break through all, and repair daily . . . to the inexhaustible Fountain. . . ." Prayer meant more to them than a personal salve: they prayed with intense conviction for the well-being of the School in their charge. "The state of the boys' school," wrote Sharp, "continues to press on my mind, with desires that way may open for encouraging the right-minded among them, and repressing the bud-dings of evil in any. Be pleased, O Lord, to contrite the hearts of these dear children, and make them sensible of the flowing of thy love and tender mercy towards them." And again, "I had some serious conversation with (one of the boys) in the evening. I hope not without some good effect. Lord help his feeble endeavours to walk in the way which thou wouldst have him go. . . ."

Every day the family would come together for Bible-reading and worship, and at such time the Superintendents might feel it right to offer prayer. The family act of worship centred on the Bible, which lay at the heart of the Victorian religious life of all denominations. At times, there was a personal interview between a boy and the Superintendent, or between a girl and a mistress, with a strongly emotional appeal to the child's sense of right and wrong. A small group would sometimes meet together with the Superintendent and an important visitor. "Dear Peter Bedford," John Sharp recorded, after the School had passed through a serious measles epidemic, "having

felt his mind attracted towards the children and teachers who have recently recovered from illness, came to spend the evening with us. After tea we sat down with 24 boys and 3 of their teachers. We were favoured with a feeling of solemnity from the first, and our dear friend was enabled to address the objects of his tender and Christian solicitude with great freedom and power. I believe it was in my position to be covered with the spirit of prayer, and under this feeling a vocal offering was made." Illness and even death were not infrequent experiences of the School; at such times the religious ethos of the School must have pressed home with "a feeling of solemnity" upon the disturbed emotions of the children.

(ii)

The religious ethos of the School was more than the personal impact of its fatherly Superintendents. Every detail of School life was dyed with this religious colour, as though a fervent flood had seeped into every corner of it. If one entered the class-room, one would have quickly met the notorious *Lindley Murray*. This grammar book, written originally for the Girls' School at York, became the heart of the matter not only for Friends' Schools, but for many others as well. Charlotte Brontë used it at Roehead. First published in 1795, Murray's grammar held the field at Croydon until a government inspector suggested a change in 1863. Under rules for punctuation—"containing applications of the comma"—one finds this example: "The path of piety and virtue, pursued with a firm and constant spirit, will assuredly lead to happiness." Such was the zeal one would expect from a man whose first work was called *The Power of Religion*

on the Mind in Retirement, Sickness and Death, written the year after the school moved to Islington Road.

If one leaves the classroom and watches the leisure-time activities of the boys, the same earnestness is seen, even if it is more often in an ethical dress. The Juvenile Literary Society embraced a wide field of general knowledge and actively encouraged an interest in natural history, as well as in drawing and model-making. The value of each of these activities was seen not in the enjoyment they gave, but the moral discipline they involved. The value of art is thus its training in imagination and patience. Here contemporary practice was in tune with the Quaker emphasis on accurate detail. History nearly always meant the "lives of such persons only as may afford either instruction or useful information." If the cleverness of a man like Diogenes was admitted, yet the "depravity of his morals" was "enough to lower him in our esteem." Natural science was especially cherished, because (as the editor of a school magazine in 1836 remarked), "the study would keep us from idleness, form an agreeable amusement, and is calculated to exalt our ideas of the wisdom, power and goodness of our Heavenly Father."

School magazines share this moral colour, especially those which appeared in the 'thirties. The aim of two magazines of the middle 'thirties—*The Monthly Instructor* and *The Critical Gleaner*—is referred to in a poem called "On Writing Essays":—

One's for embellishing the mind,
The other's of a different kind.
'Tis for correcting all defects
The Editor knows of or suspects
Of scholars of this worthy School
Not by example but by rule. . . .

In a dialogue between two boys on punishment, one advises the other: "The inward Monitor should reign; and should never for a moment be compelled to bend to interest, or even to have its seat usurped by any unworthy motive to do good."

On the girls' side also, one would have met the same odour of sanctity throughout the well-scrubbed rooms and corridors, and above all, in "The Girls' Society for the Improvement of the Mind," of which records exist for five years 1837-42. It was only to be expected that the discipline for its own members would be strict. The character of each applicant was considered: several were rejected "as the meeting cannot feel pleasure in unity with such." Each girl had to read the rules and promise to obey them. The officers were made to bear the sins of the many: the librarians were fined twopence when books were found lying about. When they left school, girls might receive a "certificate of approbation." At times this was refused: "we feel impelled by justice to come to this decision, although it is very painful to us . . . but . . . we bear in mind that her behaviour among her companions out of school has much endeared her to many of her school fellows." The motive of the society was IMPROVEMENT. A mysterious letter (for which one suspects the governess was guilty) declared to the girls: ". . . If any of your members, who wish to conquer anger, passion, pride, self-will, talkativeness, levity, untidiness or any other besetting fault, likes to write to me upon the subjects, I shall be pleased to receive and answer their communications to the best of my ability. When you write to me, I daresay your Governess will kindly allow one of you to take your notes every 7th day afternoon and lay them on the Hall table before 3 o'clock as I am

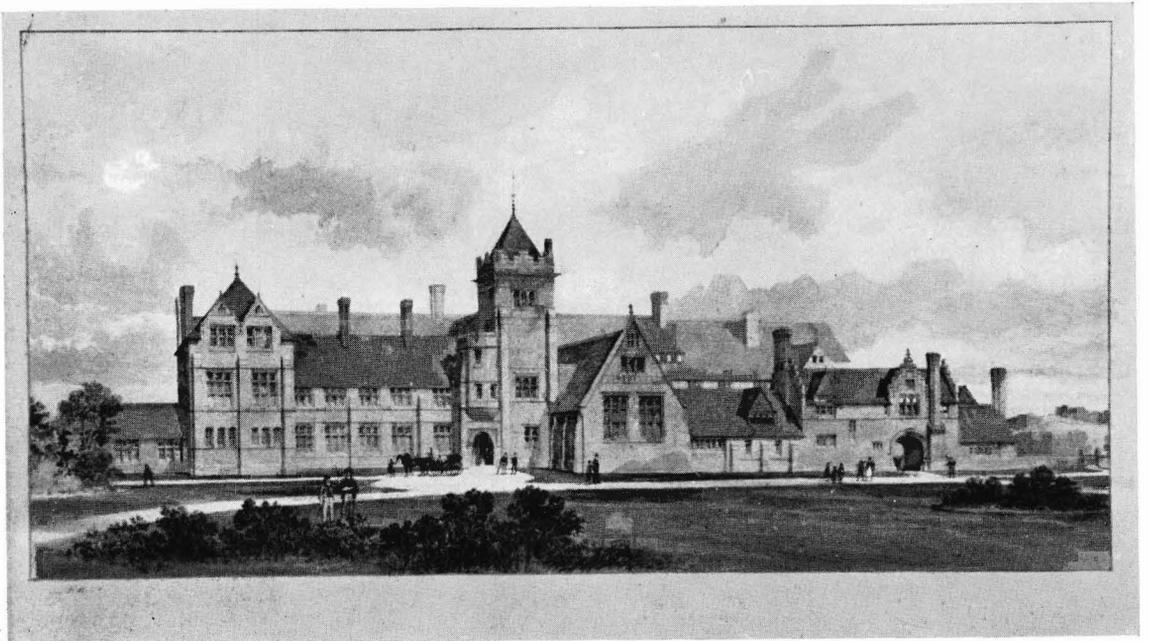
often there. . . ." Whatever success the mysterious "Ellen Angus" had, the affairs of the Society show improving comments on round shoulders, early rising, the grammatical pitfalls of the plain language, wasting time, working on First Days, as well as thoughts on politeness, gratitude, cheerfulness and eternity. As one girl said to another:

Louisa: ". . . my dear Matilda, I have loved thee even better than I did before and felt much happier in thy society since the day on which we agreed to seek our own and each other's improvement and I very much hope we shall persevere."

Their piety was not words alone: alternate meetings seem to have been spent in sewing garments for the poor:—babies' pinbefores, chemises, caps, stuff frocks and flannel petticoats. The girls took their gifts to the homes in the district, and saw the illness, poverty, drunkenness and death in the outside world.

(iii)

The School, however, was not just an isolated hot-house of piety, supervised by very keen gardeners: it was a small part of the great force of religious concern, which, for all its excesses, has contributed richly to the social and political life of England. Here was the passionate tide of which the distinctive Quaker current engulfed and flooded the School in every detail. The result was total: Quakerism dictated the whole life of the School from its single minded, ideological aim. First, this meant a censorship of the evil from without—and much that was "non-Quaker" was "evil." Theatres were inevitably banned, as well as many books and magazines: *Swiss Family Robinson* was removed from the library. At a later



date, a vendor of undesirable magazines, who had a shop on School property, was threatened with notice to quit unless he stopped selling them.

Once a year there was a Day of Judgment. The Committee and a body of Important Friends from the southern Quarterly Meetings came as inquisitors to examine the awed children. The day was closely planned to enable every child and every aspect of the School to be inspected. When the Friends had scrutinised the routine subjects—whether reading was “free from tone,” or if grammar had “been taught . . . so as to have a good knowledge of the rules”—these scripture-trained men and women examined the children on the “Historical, Prophetic and Practical Parts of the Bible.” In 1819, they were pleased at the “ready answers” to questions “promiscuously proposed out of the tract of John Kendal, entitled *Principles and Precepts of the Christian Religion explained by way of question and answer*”; while in 1847 the women minuted that “The readiness with which (the girls) repeated and applied Texts of Scripture illustrative of the Truths of Christianity and our various duties was very satisfactory, and proved that much pains had been bestowed on this important branch of their education.” And the Friends generally finished by observing “an harmonious co-operation for the general welfare of the Establishment; and we desire, in conclusion, gratefully to express our belief that the Divine blessing has not been withheld from this Institution.”

The main energy of the Committee, and of the Society of Friends in general, was not spent in censorship of the world or of scrutiny within, but in positive indoctrination. In such a work, the solemnity of Croydon Meeting probably made at times the same compelling impact as

Peel Meeting had done, except that the vigorous, horse-riding, message-carrying of Thomas Story's days had changed into the more conventional intensity of a later age. Visitors to the School were frequent and included the famous Quaker Ministers of the day: “Uncle Shillitoe,” “wonderful little man in his undyed garments”; Elizabeth Fry, “with her queenly presence”; the well-beloved Peter Bedford and Richard Barrett. One of the most impressive visitors was J. J. Gurney. Going out on to the playground, he would gather the boys around him. A lecture might follow on the bee, to show that, thanks to the “Divine Artificer,” it constructs its cell on mathematical principles; or the snowdrop was shown to be formed not by chance, but by the “Great First Cause.” Having discoursed on the “Book of Nature,” he met the boys and the girls together to talk on the “Book of Scripture.” A more lasting witness to his visits was a set of rules:—

- “1. Be a whole man to one thing at a time.
2. Always make the best use of our times of meeting. . . .”

In these visits of important Friends, the circle was completed: the ideological concern of the Society, seen in its travelling Ministers, formed the personal link with the Superintendents, whose fervour was the centre of the family life. “A dear Friend,” wrote John Sharp, “having expressed a desire to see some of the older boys in small companies, and kindly wishing me to be present, we commenced this evening. The first company of five boys evinced much tender feeling, and it appeared as if the counsel extended found ready entrance. . . .”

One is left wondering what the children thought of it all. Their natural defence of humour was probably forgotten

UNBROKEN COMMUNITY

the next moment, and has left hardly a trace behind, though Stephen Grellet "gave us an address, which was 'non understood' from his French accent," and an elderly Friend who retained Quaker gaiters was to be satirised as "sparrow-legs." A young teacher writing to one or two of his fellows, training at the Flounders, describes a significant incident: ". . . Hannah Marsh who is now paying visits to Friends in our Meeting, had a sitting with the boys this afternoon after the recess. Before they separated, J. Sharp reasoned with them a little and requested that they would by not rushing out to active play, dissipate any good impression that had been made. . . . But to our great surprise, as soon as they were out, they showed such impatience and dislike to the hint, and were disposed to scoff and ridicule it that was very painful to witness. . . . I may not make sufficient allowance for their age . . . and natural heedlessness, but what I see is not mere buoyancy and animal spirit, tis the working of something bad, too deeply rooted to be soon eradicated. . . ." Whatever he thought, here were small flames which could not be stamped out: the life of the School would be disturbed until authority uncovered the source of the fire, and came to terms with it.

WILD LIFE

WILD LIFE

A bell sounds—"The Parcels Bell! The Parcels Bell!!" The boys press round the table for their share of the good things which sometimes come from the outer world:

Meanwhile the knife has well been plyed,
And now a monstrous gap and wide,
Deforms the raisin-studded side,
Of many a noble cake.

And one by one the crowd depart,
Each pressing to his joyous heart
The pudding, fruit pie, cake or tart,
Thinking of friends that with skilled art,
These fragrant dainties make.

The regular life of this Quaker household could be disturbed by an unpredictable burst of young life.

Everyone also enjoyed those days when a party of boys surged out through the iron gates for an excursion. Sometimes on a free afternoon, sometimes Authority's response to a bright day, an excursion was always a break from routine, a break away from enclosed quarters. The masters delighted in a walk as much as their followers. Even if they passed an important Elder, he would doubtless nod approvingly: youngsters enjoying the glory of God in the safeness of the countryside. And was not the much admired Mr. Ruskin writing of the moulding and cleansing value of the natural world?

Hills, fields and woods provided pleasures round the widening circles of Addington and Croham Hurst, Mitcham and Beddington, Riddlesdown, Purley and Warlingham. Boys who fetched the milk from the farm and dug for vegetables were young countrymen in a land

covered to-day by an alien suburbia. These walks were reported with zest in *The Monthly Gleaner*, or in whatever magazine was then leading a brief life. Arrived at a well-loved place, the boys were allowed "to perigrinate for about an hour over the wide-spread hurst. The Botanist with his case slung over his shoulder, the Entomologist with his net, the Conchologist with shell-spoon, each with his eyes open for the specimens of his trade, wended his way to the spot where his valuable merchandise flourishes in abundance. . . ." The same reporter mentioned the wilder spirits who went helter-skelter down a steep pebbly slope to make a catastrophic pile-up at the bottom. However, they quickly found "a vendor of sweets, lollypops, gingerbread and other palatable ingredients for schoolboy mastication." Having met together at an arranged time, the party returned homewards, one boy "delighting his eyes with peering into the vessel that contains the valuable collection of Marine Stones; others tussling together in a manner natural to their age, endeavour by strength and stratagem, to push each other into the furze-bushes, and others plunge about very vigorously, endeavouring to extricate themselves from this precarious situation. . . ."

(ii)

The young botanist could have told you the real name of furze was "Ulex Europaeus." Official policy encouraged, and some young brains delighted in, such feats of general knowledge. Many boys had a passion for collecting. On walks, this meant the amassing of specimens of all kinds. Back in School, this meant making a museum, or writing essays which read like encyclopaedia articles, or, above all, asking questions. Questions were posed and answered with all the verve of a quiz-

programme, a very surprising fact. Questions are very deeply rooted in the life of Quaker education, but not in the ways which appeal to boys and girls. It has been seen how Fox began the practice, followed at Clerkenwell and Islington Road, of making Biblical Catechism the main work of the class-room. The children would have been familiar with the Quaker queries, and their appeal to a searching of heart. Questions, too, were the everyday drill of the class-room: the repetitive grind of lesson-book facts and figures. And even though the leisure-time questions were the choice of the boys themselves, one wonders what human appeal a boy found in such questions as:—

Q.—Who founded Salisbury Church and how many windows, marble pillars and gates has it?

A.—Bishop Poor founded it and there are 365 windows, 8,766 marble pillars, and 12 gates in it.

The most prolonged researches could not answer the question, "Who first invented the Mangle?"!

Religious fervour is not missing:—

Q.—Why do we go to Meeting and refuse to do any work on the first day of the week, seeing God rested on the seventh day and hallowed it?

A.—Primarily originated from the resurrection of our Saviour from the dead on that day. . . .

The main impression of these questions is one of chaos: subjects ranging promiscuously over the ancient world, natural history, morality, the cosmos, and much miscellaneous material as well. Nor to our modern notions could all the answers claim the virtue of accuracy.

"Q.—Who founded the Chinese Empire? A.—Noah.

Q.—Who first tamed a lion? A.—Hanno the Carthaginian."

And so the questions ran on in their chaotic variety.

Yet no such criticism damned for a moment the rush of interests in questions. Questions were the substance of meetings of the J.L.S. from the earliest days, and especially of its Select Committee. The spate tended to continue even when the flow of essays lessened. In the 'fifties, the J.L.S. exchanged questions with the Literary Society at Ackworth. Croydon boys had the same enthusiasm to collect fragments of knowledge as modern boys have for the numbers of railway engines. The knowledge collected covers so vast a range, that the pleasure seems to have lain in the collecting rather than in the subjects themselves.

For all that, the range of the library of the J.L.S. was by now certainly wide and the reading of the books was jealously guarded by its members. By 1858 a catalogue had been printed, showing that the Society possessed just under 1,000 books, catalogued under the headings of:—Arts and Manufacturers, Biblical Literature, Biography, Ecclesiastical Literature, Education, French Literature, Friends' Works, Geography, Topography, History and Antiquities, Morality and Religion, Natural History, Physiology and Health, Philanthropy, Poetry, Science, Voyages and Travel. A formidable list!

Less is known about the life of the girls, but they too, seem to have been caught up in the same enthusiasm for reading and questions. Unaware of the great questions which were perplexing Victorians, the children benefited by the popular search for knowledge, which was marked by cheap books, public libraries and evening classes. The boys and girls indeed were often learning things their parents did not know. No wonder they collected facts with such zest.

(iii)

Unexpected fields for high spirits were the School magazines, an attempt, as one editor remarked, "to unite the entertaining with the useful." The earliest magazine was *The Monthly Packet* of 1830, and by 1860, at least ten different magazines had appeared. All except one were hand-written: they were meant for home enjoyment, often copiously illustrated, and mainly written by the boys themselves. The one surviving copy of *The Monthly Packet*, under the headline "March of Luxury" describes a blackberrying expedition and the messy exploits of jam making. On the same sheet is the story of an attempt to clear the School of mice by the methods of the rick-yard, and an account of a gay outing to Carshalton. Unfortunately (apart from this fragment) it is only the more didactic magazines, in the 'thirties and 'forties, which have survived: the delights of *The Gooseberry Bush*, *The Record*, *The Phoenix*, and *The Rainbow* have disappeared along with other boyish treasures. *The Schoolboys' Magazine* of 1851, survives, with all the humour of its articles and illustrations. The magazine contains many lively dialogues from schoolboy life: waiters arguing as they lay the tables, boys gossiping in the bedrooms, still addressing each other by number. The chief delight is in the illustrations: a paddle-steamer; a journey in an open train of the period; John Gilpin's visit to the Great Exhibition of 1851—first his house, then paying for his ticket, and a racy poem as well. Above all, there are the pictures of their own doings: waiters grabbing the largest shares, the scene when parcels are distributed, sweeping the class-room, pillow-fighting, scrambles, the wild life of he play-shed, standing on stools for punishment, and

three boys in their aprons up to some prank in the cupboard under the stairs. The whole thing is padded out with poems, puns and anecdotes, weak and wild, about the holidays, food, excursions and about hangmen, Irishmen, horses and country yokels. If any teachers discovered the grubby sheets, as they passed from hand to hand, perhaps they too, enjoyed the fun.

The *Monthly Gleaners* of the middle 'fifties are a far superior production. Having lost some of the flavour of the play-shed, they have gained in literary quality, with a richer variety of subjects and types of articles. "Papers on all subjects," the editors declared, "will be acceptable, whether scientific or literary—historical, biographical or ethical—descriptive, argumentative, didactic or poetical—and those of a facetious turn of mind need not hesitate to forward specimens of their humour, provided it is of a refined character." True to their word, the "Gleaners" include vivid accounts of excursions and visits, news items of school-life, London, and "Foreign Intelligence," a Quiz corner, a serial story, playground and schoolboy scenes, biographies, poems, weather reports and autobiographies of animals and objects. These autobiographies were specially popular. Subjects range from a pony, a goat, and a dormouse, to "The Recollections of a Dilapidated Tub," "The Life and Adventures of the Grandmother Tabby," and "A Disquisition on an Old Hat." This generous plenty of the "Gleaners" was the fruit of a close co-operation between the older boys and the younger apprentices. Much of the planning and the more ambitious articles seem to have been the work of young men, whose own schooldays were so close. The ring-leaders were almost certainly Joseph Radley and T. F. Ball. Radley was to give almost 20 years of service

to the School before he became Headmaster of Lisburn School, while Ball was later to co-operate with William Beck, a Chairman of the Committee, in writing an outstanding history of Friends in London. Meanwhile, both just turned 20, heavily overworked, they flung their imagination and kindness into these high-spirited magazines.

(iv)

The apprentice teachers not only helped with the magazines but joined in the games of the playground. One taught fencing, another wrote a long poem mentioning the games of each month. January included skating and sliding, while "joyous still is the schoolboy's laugh as his snowballs fly through the air." The playground Elm and the Mulberry tree watched over many sports—Hare and Hounds, Prisoners' Base, Hopscotch, Cricket and Football (though not as we should recognise them nor against outside teams), Kite-flying and "Cutters." In quieter moments the boys could enjoy their gardens; they met serious competition here from the excellent plots of the girls. And when winter had turned the playground to slush and mud, the "Shed" came into its own with whip-top and skipping rope.

And in the shed the long rope
Was blithely whirled around
In whose circles, a troop of laughing boys,
Skipped light o'er the ground.

At times the apprentice teachers would share in all these enjoyments, as freely as the big brothers of a family; at other times, however, the high spirits of the boys must have caused them harassed moments. One glimpses the

routine difficulties of a teacher in an account by a boy of his first day at School, so a magazine records. On his first night, he was beaten up with bolsters, and pulled out of bed. When he entered the schoolroom early next day . . . "boys were rushing round in all directions after one another, battering into each others uncombed heads with dusty jackets and pinafores, some retired to a quieter corner of the room, and with the aid of a dilapidated looking-glass, at which they took occasional glimpses, combing and brushing their hair, others with their fingers applied to their ears endeavoured to read amid the riot and racket."

(v)

The story began with austere adults and ends with gay young hooligans. The conflict between piety and high spirits was real. Probably only a few of the older boys were able to enjoy to the full such an outlet as the J.L.S. The core of this society was its Select Committee. This was a "steering" group, advising on the purchase of books, changing rules, and censoring articles, as well as being the most active group in plying questions and writing essays. Yet the Select Committee was as exclusive as its name suggests. When it began in 1827, it was limited to 14 members, and never seems to have been above 20—and this included apprentices and teachers.

The enemy of both boys and girls was time. What with household work, lengthy punishments, staying behind until all one's sums were correct, there was little time left over for play. One girl remembers that her safety-valve was to wake up early, and read or day-dream in the quiet bedroom. The girls had a more difficult life than the

boys. Much more housework was asked of them—even to darning the boys' socks. They were more strictly watched, and they have appeared little in this story, because so little is known about their life—especially their leisure time. No entertaining magazines survive to show the lighter side of their lives. They had, however, a better literary education than most girls of their time. One of the happiest glimpses of them is from a poem called "'Tis the Essay Meeting Night"—taken from their Literary Society records in the middle 'fifties:—

Come draw the curtains, wheel the sofa there,
Bring in the forms, and let us place a chair
For Sarah Fryer, who if she's at leisure
Will come, and we shall all be pleased to see her.
"Juvenile Members" one is sent to call.
Here we've assembled, one, two, three, four, all
Except the washing-girls, whom Sarah begs
The drying-ground to search, for all the pegs.

One also finds them busy in many of the same ways as the boys—going out for walks, digging their gardens, painting, writing essays and poems. They were especially keen it seems on neat lettering work. Nor was all of their needlework humdrum. The activity in which they far outdistanced the boys was in their helping the poor. The "Dorcas" meetings, as they were called, were as frequent as the literary circles—sometimes they were combined and the girls worked away at flannel vests and other gifts while one read a poem or essay. The "Dorcas" work gave the girls a closer knowledge of the district and its life than the boys had, as well as giving them interesting links with Friends' work in East London.

For all its "improving" worth, the life of a girl cannot have been exciting. Perhaps that is why the girls' side

was never full; during the years 1840-60 there was an average of 73 boys, but that of the girls was only 49. The girls were in a less happy position. The boys' literary society began about 1815; there is no evidence of one for the girls until 1837. The boys had printed annual reports for their society from 1850; the girls had to wait until 1888. When the boys went out for a walk, the rules said the master must take care that they "be not out of call"; with the girls, the mistress had to take care "to keep them within view."

Two fragments give a glimpse of the life of the girls. One tells that they felt so hungry after some meals, that they went down to their gardens to eat nasturtium leaves, and one girl tried the young suckers of rose bushes! The other glimpse tells of a little dance and play got up by a few girls in the early 'thirties. They had turned their pinafores round, and added finishing touches with a few ribbons and collars cut out of paper. Unluckily the girls were discovered. All the finery was taken off, made into a pile in the middle of the yard, and ceremoniously burnt.

In the end, it seemed that the people who feared the Lord, feared also the wild life of the children. Such a harsh answer to high spirits was especially real on Sundays, both for boys and girls. The Committee Friends watched carefully how the children "spend their leisure time on First Days"—at least, such leisure time as they had after a ninety-minute Scripture lesson, two full-length Quaker Meetings, and the demands of Bible-reading. A young teacher remarked of Sunday duty that "it must be the most difficult part of the week's duties and requiring the most efficient disciplinarian." Another teacher noticed the re-action on the following days: "I always find," he said, "the boys unsettled on second-days, and sometimes

it extends to third-days." No wonder that by long-rooted custom (surviving right into Walden days) the boys beat a vicious tattoo with their boots on the Meeting House benches on the last Sunday before a holiday. Here again were the flashes of covered fire which it was dangerous to neglect.

Flashes of Anger

During the Crimean War, the price of sweets ran high and so did the feelings of the boys. A mock petition was drawn up for Parliament :

. . . And moreover that he the aforesaid Newman, dealer in sweatmeats, oranges and buns hath of late given in exchange for the like sum of one penny only four toffees and they of dimensions considerably smaller than has heretofore been the case within the memory of the oldest inhabitants to whom the question has been referred. . . . We your petitioners have therefore RESOLVED to intreat your honourable house to take under early consideration some measure or measures calculated to restore to our country the blessings of peace, and to us the boys of Park Lane School the enjoyment of toffees at a reasonable rate; lest our loyalty and allegiance become impaired, through the unpopular action of the aforesaid Newman. . . .

Complaints were not always so good humoured. At times there are hints of deeper protest, but for the most part they are hidden by the "top-level secrecy" of the authorities. The intimate letters (through 1850 and 1851) of H. B. Smith, a young teacher at Croydon, to William Pollard at Ackworth reflect this attitude. "A very trying circumstance occurs," he wrote, "which completely disconcerted and discouraged me, startled all of us, and drew down on the unhappy cause the just displeasure, severity and pity of John Sharp. It is too serious a matter to be handled further or to be spoken of beyond our walls." Stray phrases add to the feeling that all is not well: "I have had to refer to John Sharp rather more often than I like. Some (boys) are getting quite desperate and champ most furiously."

Sometimes an individual boy became especially difficult. "Hayward Hargrave," wrote H. B. Smith, "determined to be a hero again, has signalized himself a good deal lately by his disorderly and half-witted conduct, but this evening, having been in punishment till Reading time, steals out of doors just as the other boys are going to their places—takes off his pinafore to avoid being seen, stands at the bottom of the playground for more than an hour, while we are running about the gardens and other parts with our candles alight searching . . . his object seems to have been to get into bed while we are calling over the marks and so avoid being seen and kept down to say a task."

Thieving was another problem which perplexed teachers. At Islington Road, Peter Bedford had been called in to deal with several boys who were involved in a bad case of theft, and 30 years later H. B. Smith was amused at himself and his colleagues at "10 o'clock with the tub and sieve, candles etc. strewing the flagstones and door steps with sand . . . then again early, the Crusoe or Indian inspection of their trail." Smith also records, "another Gunpowder Plot at 6 o'clock" in the morning. Two boys were guilty: a sign that such behaviour was often a gang escapade, rather than that of a misfit. Such a gang life was pictured in the serial "Edgar Barclay," which came out in *The Monthly Gleaner*. Edgar is caught up in a gang who climb over the paddock wall one evening, into Mint Walk, and go shopping. On walks the gang avoid the other boys, buy contraband from shops, throw stones at animals, as well as light a fire. Such things are not improbable: the story has a completely Croydon setting, and the climax is the igniting of gunpowder in a corner of the playground.

Sometimes bad behaviour takes the form of conscious

protest against the school. An Old Scholar (at school between 1850-1855) recalls a "rebellion"—a revolt, in his opinion, against the "too much toeing the line" and writing out texts, which left some boys with little more than "half an hour's play a week." "There were meetings held at the house of Peter Bedford (formerly living near the Islington Road School, and now removed to Croydon) . . . he was a sort of arbitrator." There is no other evidence of this "rebellion," certainly nothing to suggest that it was as formidable as the meeting at Sidcot in 1859, nor on the same scale as some of the rebellions Public Schools had known. Several Old Scholars remember a sense of antagonism between masters and boys: an antagonism which seems to persist until about 1860, when William Robinson became Superintendent, though even this kindest of men was to have to face a protest against food. Rather than eat the hated "Buster Pudding" the boys got together in the play-shed and lustily sang:

Starvation! Oh, Starvation!
The doleful sound proclaim!
Till each remotest school-boy
Has learned Cock Robin's name.

When the same pudding was served up a third time the boys gave in. Robinson (with his affectionate nick-name) saw to it that the pudding never appeared again.

(ii)

Gentle tact had saved the situation. How did teachers normally face indiscipline during the first 50 years of community life in the School? One method was to isolate the offender, hoping that he or she would come to a personal sense of wrong-doing. After warm-hearted

Peter Bedford had spent about two full days on close investigation into the thefts, he put four boys into confinement. Twenty-four hours later he records in his journal: "Went to Islington and found the solitude and restraint had produced a good effect upon three of the boys. One was restored to the Society of his companions and I hope another of them will be released this afternoon." Two of the boys stayed there for four whole days, though Peter Bedford noted, "they appear to be going on nicely, my plan has fully answered my expectation." When the Croydon buildings were organised for the School's entry in 1825, three confinement rooms were constructed for the boys, each about 4 feet square. This was a feature of other Friends' Schools too. In the early 'thirties, one girl was wrongly accused of taking a pin-cushion. None the less she endured two weeks of varied isolation, was forbidden to sit at table, forbidden to play games, was locked in the umbrella closet, stood outside the governess's room, and kept in the class-room while the others were in bed—one evening she was even forgotten there. In the end, she pretended she had stolen the cushion; for a lie was the easiest way out.

Also in the early 'thirties, a girl once avoided going to Meeting. She was confined in the box-room, her bed was made up on the floor, and she had to eat her meals from off the governess's bonnet-box! Isolation was the punishment of "Edgar Barclay" 20 years later. "As he sat in the library by himself," the story ran, "through the long hours of the next day, his solitude only varied by the appearance of a teacher with his meals at the usual times, he felt wretched in the extreme." He stayed there until after the boys had gone to bed, when the Superintendent came to speak with him before his release.

The aim of the Superintendent's talks to an offender was the same as that of isolation: to awaken in the child a sense of his own wrong-doing—a Quakerly appeal to the "Inner Light." The master of this personal approach was Peter Bedford. One of the apprentice teachers sent Josiah Brown to him (the boy whom the J.L.S. had thought "a useless member"). "I had much conversation with him," wrote Peter Bedford, "and his mind was led into a very desirable state." Once Peter Bedford found a boy copying out: the boy had boasted that an ancestor of his was Lord Mayor of London, but the name not being found on the list, the boy was being punished for lying! "I went to Peter Bedford's house," records the culprit, "and received condoned punishments, and he took me on his lap and cuddled me up and gave me sixpence and sent me back to School, and I am sure that he did me more good than all the punishments." Another line of appeal to an inner sense of wrong was the forced learning of Scripture texts. This was more frequently used than either isolation or the personal interview. Texts had the additional advantage of guiding and nourishing a child in the ways of the Lord.

The ways of the Lord had a communal expression: a child's wrong was more than an individual thing. A decision of 1809 laid down that when a window was broken, the School would pay half, but the other two quarters were to be paid for by the individual and his school-fellows respectively, by stoppage of the 1d. a week pocket money. The good of the community was not generally looked after by such a sharing of the blame: the commoner method was to publicise the fault of the offender to his fellows. Until the early 'thirties, talking in class caused the girls to have their feet put in a kind of stocks, whilst they held up a black-board (presumably as

in other Friends' Schools with their offence chalked up). The practice was stopped after a girl fainted. Peter Bedford noted, after confining the four boys, that "the scene was highly interesting and affecting, and it is likely to make an impression on the whole School, that will have a striking and highly beneficial effect."

More routine examples of this advertising of wrong-doers, was the public reading out of marks, and "toeing the line." An Old-Scholar remembers having to stand on a stool in the Fourth class-room for trying to sing "A Life on the Ocean Wave" at 8.30 p.m. He fell asleep and tumbled off, badly bruising his head (the same incident perhaps as that recorded in rhyme in *The Schoolboys' Magazine* of 1851). The "Disgrace Table" also had its monitorial value: its communal lessons, it seems, were not without repercussions; for the girls' "Society" in 1839 recorded that "This meeting has come to the conclusion of not allowing any member to be present at a meeting who has, since the one previous, been sent for more than three days to the disgrace table." For a religious society which disapproved of drama, its teachers had an uncanny sense of the dramatic possibilities of punishment.

Up till 1829 the rules laid down that corporal punishment was to be given only in the presence of the Superintendent, and here the aim was to check excess rather than to publicise the event. It is hard to say when this form of punishment ceased to be officially accepted. The Sub-Committee on Education minuted in 1856 that teachers have "been distinctly informed that all corporal punishment of the children is strictly prohibited by the Committee." William Robinson, who became Superintendent in 1860, regarded himself as the first Head to refuse absolutely to use such punishment.

How far did these punishments lessen or heal the anger which flashed out in rebellious acts? Unfortunately, one fears they made the situation more difficult. Children often resented punishment because it seemed out of all proportion to the offence. A boy never forgot being put on bread and water for three days for being discovered with a dumpling, given him by a servant. A girl never forgot her punishment for talking on the way home from Meeting. "Mary Ann," the Superintendent's wife said to her, "I see thou hast no principle," and sent her to sit on her bed for two hours. Some punishments failed to heal anger, because they tended to intensify the very factors in School life which pressed harshly on the children. Isolation was an ironic answer to the ills caused in a community painfully on top of itself. Lengthy punishments only meant that there was even less time in a heavily-organised day for play or a child's own pursuits. A surreptitious journey along Mint Walk might lead to three hours' standing on the line. There was also the regular staying behind in play-time until all one's sums were correct. The more adventurous or less intelligent seemed especially to suffer from such a system.

(iii)

The life of the community was never just a crude struggle between teachers and children. Life for the teachers themselves was not easy: as members of the same community they experienced its tensions, and were hurt by just as real needs. Probably none of the teachers was more conscious of strain than the apprentices. If their nearness in age gave them the chance to share in much of the life of the children, it also increased the difficulty of

keeping them in order. The children still knew them by their nick-names, and the younger men apprentices still had to have their meals with the boys, or get leave to go off the premises. There were also menial jobs: for the young women, housework; for the young men, the filling of ink-wells and tidying the masters' room. In situations which seemed to call for direct talk, the apprentices knew they must call in a superior, because (as H. B. Smith said) of the "very unpleasant position in which I feel as regards some of them."

With this uncertain authority the apprentice entered the classroom. Inevitably their teaching was little more than routine lesson-drills. If this made the boys and girls more restless, the noise would only add to the difficulties of teaching in a large class-room, where at least two other classes were also going on.

The only way to get more knowledge was to rise very early. No wonder that illness amongst them was frequent, and that some of them deserted teaching to become a "butter-salesman" or commercial traveller. The sub-committee on education noted, in 1850, the "apparent absence of good health amongst the teachers, and the depression of spirits manifest by the apprentices at the expiration of their engagements." Nor were the apprentices free from the rebellious mood of the children. In 1855 they had to be warned that they must be more obedient to a senior teacher. The apprentices had also complained to the sub-committee about the same man. A year later all the teachers were "counselled to observe a becoming and respectful line of conduct towards the Superintendent."

The teacher's work lacked the variety and scope of to-day. For most of the time the teachers, both young and

old, were domestic watch-dogs. The sub-committee drew up a list of duties in 1855 . . . "To be with the boys in the playground-shed, etc. during play hours, to see that no improper behaviour takes place there, that no forbidden or unsuitable games are engaged in, that the boys keep within bounds, that they leave their gardens on the ringing of the first bell and get ready for school or meals, their hands washed, etc., to see that the shed and playground are at all times kept tidy, that the boys on office and other duties (fulfil) them timely and properly. . . ." Teachers were no less pressed for time than the apprentices. The arrangements for William Robinson in 1857 allowed him three and a half hours off-duty in a working day lasting from 6 a.m. until 9 p.m., so that he could go home to have meals! And the teachers were probably more conscious than the children of the restraint of living for almost the entire year in an enclosed institution.

The pivot of the institution was the Superintendent. His work included much petty detail: attending to boys' pocket-money, clothes and shoes; selling the children stationery, and spending his evenings as master on duty. All day long these men felt the burden of their responsibility for the whole community.

The irony lies in the smallness of the authority these men actually had: the real rulers of the School remained the Committee. The choice of staff, the planning of their time-table, as well as the control of the teachers in general, was the work of the sub-committee on education. The domestic life of the School down to the smallest detail of the kitchens was examined by the Women's Committee, while all purchases of furniture, fittings and of material for the children's clothes, were entirely carried out by these industrious women. Important

Friends, as well as Committee members, visited the School frequently, and this visit might be a formidable affair. Two "dear Friends," H. B. Smith once noted, "have now finished their labour in this House, having had 19 sittings, including the servants, all of whom they saw separately." The guardians were not invisible, and they were very thorough in all their ways.

(iv)

Probably no guardian visited the School as often as Peter Bedford; if he felt he was needed, he came every day. Superintendents, teachers, apprentices and children all experienced the hospitality of his near-by home. If the irreconcilable elements were ever resolved, it was by Peter Bedford. His quality as a man made him a great healer to the community. He modified its austerity by his warmth of heart; its religious intensity by his good humour; its high spirits by his understanding appreciation; and its angry divisions by his personal concern for all alike. To the Superintendents he was a personal confessor. For the young apprentices he was a father who helped them to untangle perplexities about a difficult boy, a personal worry, or even marriage. Leavers found he remembered them, and turned to him when in difficulties. Almost every child could remember some kindness of his—not least a little foreign boy whom he helped with pocket-money. The leisure-time work he encouraged by gifts of cash and books. "Our dear friend, Peter Bedford, with his characteristic kindness, benevolence and affability . . .," begins a minute. The work of the classroom was helped by Peter's long service on the

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sub-committee : no member was more frequently deputed to find an apprentice, to look into school discipline, or to plan out the teacher's duties. And he helped to give fuller meaning to the religious life of the School by his work in the world and his sharing in the times of worship. He shared warm-heartedly in everything.

Perhaps no man before or since dominated the life of the School so much as Peter Bedford, nor with a more fruitful kindness. By 1860 he was an old man, with only a few years left to live. The England he knew was rapidly changing : even at school, the familiar remedies of his generation were not always meeting new needs. The School could not hope always to rely on the presence of an exceptional man : Peter's sanity needed to be interwoven into the routine life of the community. Many things required close care, especially personal relations, the activities of the children, and the links with the world of men. All these were to see far-reaching changes through the next 50 years.

Towards a New Community

1860-1902

MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In the decade before 1869, two books were published which held great significance for European life : Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and Marx's *Das Kapital*. At the time educated Englishmen may have been more caught up by Mill expounding representative government or by Newman defending his faith. It mattered more for the growing masses of industrial cities that these years saw Booth found the Salvation Army in "darkest London," and the government drastically reducing its expenditure on education. Against this background, Matthew Arnold published his book *Culture and Anarchy*, showing him to be deeply disturbed by the spiritual anarchy of his age. Arnold felt himself

as on a darkling plain
Swept by the confused alarm of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

These were the turbulent years covered by William Robinson's guidance of the school.

The School, in its quiet corner, was faced by its own particular anarchy. The career of William Robinson pointed to an answer based on the key importance of the teacher. The aloof and austere teacher of the evangelical pattern needed to change into a more spontaneous and kindly one. Amid the tangle of the last 50 years there were roots from which a more fruitful relationship could

grow. John Sharp had struggled with generous ideals for the class-room :

1. Never do a thing for a scholar, but teach him to do it himself.
2. Never get out of patience with dullness; or rather never get out of patience with anything, but especially with dullness and stupidity.
3. Cherish an interest in *all* the scholars and aim equally to secure the progress of all.
4. Do not hope, or attempt, to make all your pupils alike.
5. Assume no false appearances as to knowledge or character.

The eager, warm-hearted ways of young men like Radley and Ball have already been seen, as they plunged into the life of the School and produced exuberant magazines with the boys. For the most part, the details of school life thwarted a fruitful relationship between teachers and pupils, nor did evangelical earnestness provide a sympathetic atmosphere for its growth. A more generous attitude began to pervade Friends' Schools through the example of John Ford, the headmaster of Bootham School, York. William Robinson had a great admiration for Ford. A little over 20, this new Superintendent was kind and gentle in all his ways.

In other directions happy relations were growing. From the late 'fifties, the men teachers began to use their weekly meetings for a careful discussion of individual boys. The whole School was treated in this way—a few each week. Cases of "excessive misconduct" were also discussed between the teachers. And in 1860, the suggestion is put forward of drawing up a careful report of each boy, twice a year, to be sent to his parents, together with a record of his school-work. This was to include comments on his conduct and character and the use of his leisure-time.

The teachers decided upon several changes which gave a new flexibility to the stiffness of a Quaker institution. From 1856 teachers had begun to call boys by name instead of by their school number. In 1862 the children were allowed to talk at meal times. In 1868 the boys no longer had to write repetitive phrases on a slate for punishment. Instead they had a book in which to copy out worthwhile passages in their best writing. Such small changes all helped to add a new dignity to the child's place in the School.

The older boys in particular gained added marks of recognition: a sign, perhaps, that children were staying longer, instead of leaving at 14. By 1904, 13 out of 126 children were 15 or 16. In 1870 the older boys were allowed to stay up till 9 p.m. Two years later seven of them were allowed to go out for a walk by themselves, though permission was hastily withdrawn through an escapade of one or two of the boys. For many years three of the older boys had had the responsibility of being "General Assistant" ("general ass" to his school-fellows), Office Boy and Surgery Boy—menial enough tasks, but from such small responsibilities, the position of the Prefects would develop.

Kindness and goodwill were not enough: teachers needed a fuller training, and the sub-committee on education had made an attempt to improve this. In 1850 a more systematic time-table had been drawn up, giving them more free time; arrangements were also made for a tutor to visit one evening a week to guide their studies in Latin, French, Euclid and Algebra. The apprentices had to keep a diary of their work. Books were bought for a teachers' library to help widen their interests. These changes applied to the young women as much as the men :

from 1856 their French teacher was Juliusz Przyjemski, a Pole with an exciting revolutionary career behind him!

There was a strong concern in the Society of Friends for the training of their teachers, both men and women. In 1867 The Flounders was established as a training centre; in 1895 the Friends' Guild of Teachers began. This interest reflects much contemporary activity—the work of Kay-Shuttleworth and the pupil-teacher system, and the founding of training colleges. Inevitably, the quality of teachers at Croydon slowly improved.

(ii)

Nothing helped on these changes more than the community's third great move in 1879. A series of epidemics showed that the Croydon situation was unhealthy. The houses of London were also creeping too near. Many visits were made in search of new premises. Even a brewery was inspected. The buildings were unsuitable, though the water excellent!

Why in the end did the School move to Saffron Walden? Because George Stacey Gibson would not be denied. The School wanted land; he gave them $6\frac{1}{4}$ acres. It was objected that the Town meeting-house would be too small: he doubled its size. And almost without the Committee knowing it, he had a school dining-room planned, more baronial in size or style than many of the Friends would have approved. The School owes much to his generosity.

When the community moved to Saffron Walden, the buildings were not yet finished. Perhaps that is why the children found them so draughty. Perhaps, too, they found the buildings large and uninviting. For the first

time the community was in premises that had been carefully planned from the beginning as a school. Here at last was space, and the chance to have a little privacy. Walden lost much of the home-made flavour of Croydon; teachers and children said good-bye to many of their former domestic jobs. Class-rooms were now separate, and fast became the centres of the teachers' lives in a way they had never been before. At Walden the Superintendent disappeared; instead there was a Headmaster. This meant more than the flourish of a new title. The administration of large buildings and grounds, the oversight of a community increasing in size, added new responsibilities to the Headmaster's work. And dare one suggest that the 40 miles between Walden and London necessitated the making of on-the-spot decisions, which would previously have been referred to available Committee members?

Walden did more than give a new eminence to the Headmaster and his team of teachers. Many of the improvements of the years to come depended on the new spaciousness of the buildings, and on the new opportunities of the surrounding countryside.

(iii)

The School community remained two communities—"male and female created He them." By 1902 this gap had already begun to be bridged in small ways, and women Committee members, teachers and girls had begun to play a deservedly more prominent part in school life.

Women Committee members had done valuable work in looking after the domestic affairs of the community,

and with almost too great a care they watched over their girls—their lessons, their needle-work, their becoming behaviour. Their Committee, however, never had much power.

Even when a woman teacher was to be appointed, the women were invited to join only a sub-committee of the men. The original minute said no more than the truth—all acts will be "subject to the approbation and control of Men's Committee." Over these years, 1860-1902, joint Committee meetings became more frequent, and in 1902 the two Committees were finally joined together.

Far too little is known about the women teachers, the kind of people they were or the life they led. Certainly in 1860 they could look back on a sturdy tradition of service: Abigail Binns (1818-25), Elizabeth Brady (1833-42) and Sarah Fryer (1853-60) carried the burden of the Institution single-handed as Superintendents for 18 out of the previous 50 years—to say nothing of the work of Hannah Sharp, when her husband was away, or of Elizabeth Brady through the years of her husband's illness. This tradition was carried on through the years up to 1902. One memorable personality was Ann Groom Brown, a teacher from 1872 until 1895: She was slim and very upright; her iron-grey hair was parted in the middle, and was always crowned by a lace cap. Girls remembered not her smile, but rather the severity of her ways; yet there is no doubt she was a very efficient teacher. While she was senior mistress the standard of the girls' work was high; inspectors admired it, and the girls found themselves very favourably placed when they went on to The Mount School, York.

The difficulty of the girls' school-work had been its limited range. Friends' opinions on this were divided.

On the one hand was the persistent belief, amongst all classes and opinions, of the restricted sphere of women, intensified, in this case, by regarding Croydon girls as the future wives of artisan Friends. On the other hand was the Quaker emphasis on the equal dignity of women and their need for a full education—a belief underlined through these years by the sensitivity of many Friends to the contemporary crusade for the education of women. In the end the girls were to win, and their lives became enriched by many of the activities described in the next chapter. When the reporter of the London *Globe* came to the School in Croydon, few things impressed him more than the life of the girls.

When co-education finally came, the girls were to hold their own easily with the boys, in class-room and in leisure societies; but this step was long delayed. In 1902 the School seemed almost as much two camps as 50 years before. In order that "our fair friends" could see the Exhibition of Juvenile Skill and Industry, the room had been "speedily cleared" of all boys. Actually, one of the hopeful changes of the years before 1902 was the coming together of Boys' and Girls' Literary Societies. From 1888 they began to have joint meetings. In 1889 they had a joint "Grand Lit" with essay, music and recitations. In 1895 the two societies joined into one. Yet for most of their school life, the boys and girls were separated. Much of their curiosity and ingenuity must have gone into underground correspondence, the discoveries of which called down adult wrath on the scribes. One can only admire the young gentleman who pointed out to a stern Superintendent the Biblical command that little children should love one another.

(iv)

Whether many children loved each other or not, certainly some became man and wife. This continuation of friendship, by a lifelong association, was aided also by the "Old Scholars" movement. This Association grew out of a need. In Clerkenwell days, the Committee had watched over the welfare of leavers for seven long years, but the material side of such after-care was, in Croydon days, limited to London boys and girls only. The common membership of the Society of Friends no longer held all old pupils in a common bond, for several, as will be seen, were now non-Friends. Old pupils were finding themselves scattered at jobs, not only over England, but throughout the world. In short, there was the desire to sustain over the years and long distance, the experience of a community known at school. At the same time, the founding of the Association suggests that the fuller training of Croydon days had produced men ready to undertake organisation and pleasantly proud to help the "Old School," which no longer had the slightest stigma of being a workhouse.

The leading spirit was John Armfield. In March, 1869, he invited four Old Scholars to his house and told them that for a considerable period his mind had been drawn with affectionate solicitude towards those especially who were at Croydon at the same time as himself, and with earnest desire for their spiritual well-being. He proposed an open meeting "of a social and religious character . . . to which such should be invited, whatever their present position or circumstances, or religious convictions. . . ." The idea was "very warmly and feelingly entered into," and from such a personal concern the Old Scholars' Association began.

From almost the first meeting, women took a full and equal part in the activities. From the beginning the Association had something more to offer than nostalgic sentiment: one of its activities, in the 'eighties, was to raise a subscription to help Old Scholars in "necessitous circumstances." Nor was the Association for leavers only; it provided a real link between old pupils and present teachers: Joseph Radley and T. F. Ball made full use of this opportunity to learn of the later experience of the boys they had taught. Again the Old Scholars tried to contribute to the life of the School, not only by their continuing interest, but by their help. When the School moved to Walden, Old Scholars gave a book-case and books, including a set of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In the next two years they tried hard to raise enough money to supply an Art Master for the School, and in the year afterwards began to give money-prizes for the best essays offered by children. Such acts seem small, but they have meant a continuous expression of good will. By the life of the Old Scholars' Association the living community of the School has been enlarged and enriched.

Changes in community life were the School's answer to its own threat of anarchy. The gain was the more flexible and friendly meeting between teacher and children; the loss was still the separation of the sexes; the hope was the continuing community through after years. Yet the world outside still knew the anarchy of which Arnold wrote. How long could the School remain safe by non-exposure? Or, if Arnold was right and the answer lay in the "sweetness and light" of a fearless culture, how was the class-room meeting the challenge?

THE WHOLE MAN

The "ignorant armies" needed to be trained, if "sweetness and light" were ever to grace the life of industrial England. The men of power saw this as a need for skilled technicians. Many socially-minded men and women saw the need for educated workers. Yet Arnold was not alone in seeing "sweetness" as more than a political harmony, and "light" as more than technical advance. The challenge was one of ugliness, of the degradation of work, and of the threatened values of European man.

In 1860, many Committee members were concerned about social problems, and many wanted to see better standards of school work; but as a body, they had little interest in aesthetic values. Radical experiments in curricula were not to be expected. There was no intention of teaching the classics or science—subjects of contemporary debate—to any advanced level; the children were too young, apart from being intended for merely humdrum careers. The problems were simpler ones: how to get the equipment or facilities to teach at least nature study and elementary physics and chemistry; how to improve the teaching in general, but especially that of geography and history; and how far should an introduction be given to French and Latin.

The interest of the story lies in the way the scattered treasures of leisure-time activities became organised and developed as a regular part of the class work. The School, at William Robinson's entry, could begin with clear assets. Among these was the Library which boasted in 1858 nearly 1,000 books. There was also a developing interest in topography, an interest which was to bear fruit in the detailed and well-illustrated articles of *The*

Echo (1862)—one of the most spectacular and ambitious of all the magazines. Above all, there was the interest in natural history which, as a serious study, dated back at least to 1837 when the J.L.S. appointed a committee to look closely into it. By 1856 the study had become developed and specialised sufficiently for there to be separate curators of "Entomology," "Ornithology," "Conchology," "Botany," and "Geology." By 1860 no mean museum had been brought together, including a Herbarium, a wide collection of rocks and fossils, stuffed birds and the "natural curiosities," which pleased the boys' fancy. Besides the museum there was a collection of 40 years of essays, which in a random diversity had graced the affairs of the J.L.S., of the girls' Literary Society, and of the pages of magazines: "Circulation of the Blood," "Planet Mercury," "How do the leaves of trees and plants contribute to the salubrity of the air?"—to name only three from the early 'twenties. Presumably the children made good, if puzzled, use of the science books in the library, such as White's *Selborne*, Mantell's *Wonders in Geology*, or one entitled *Philosophy in Sport made Science in Earnest*. History had also been a strong interest owing to the enthusiasm for Biography. Geography had been examined by the Committee at least as early as 1819; the subject had obvious links with Quaker missionary interests. Much good work had been done on maps. In 1858 some children had attended a lecture on Oriental life, "illustrated by excellent drawings and by the presence of individuals draped in Eastern style." Such were the assets which were handed down to William Robinson, who himself brought to his work an alive mind, wide reading and an especial enthusiasm for Botany.

How these assets were added to and developed is not

clear. At times new suggestions were discussed, such as the proposal for giving familiar lessons on common matters of manufacture. The method of out-of-school lectures by the staff became more frequent. In the 'sixties, for instance, Joseph Radley lectured on "Geology," "Electricity," "Physiology," and other scientific subjects. Arrangements were made for both the teachers and older scholars to attend local lectures, such as a series of six at Walden in 1882 on Physical Geography. Slowly too, the opportunities for study developed. At times this was through the gifts of equipment: Joseph Pease gave a telescope, barometer and a set of thermometers, while a grateful parent offered a gyroscope! The move to Walden brought many new opportunities with it, especially as the surrounding countryside was a rich hunting ground for youthful naturalists and archaeologists. In 1892 a Chemistry Laboratory was added.

Throughout the School standards quietly improved; subjects became more systematically taught. How far were they more imaginatively taught as well? How far, moreover, had aesthetic activities entered the class-room?

(ii)

It is hard to say when Friends first plucked the forbidden fruit of Fancy, and found that it was good. Certainly in 1860 the School had had only an infant taste of this delight. Literature lived but a stunted life in an atmosphere thickened with "improving" facts: imaginative writing is not to be found except in the poems and life stories of imaginative objects in the magazines of the 'fifties, while the class-room never seems to have ventured beyond

Cowper, Gray and *Paradise Lost*. The only hint of drama is in the clandestine recitations in the bedrooms: in the early 'thirties Samuel Hare entertained his room-mates with Campbell's "Downfall of Poland," Mrs. Hemans' "The Better Land," and "Which is the Happiest Death to Die." It may be, however, that times of worship with their fervent ministry, prayers and Bible Readings, fed the imagination in a more exciting and real way than modern man can easily appreciate. The enjoyment of music was certainly forbidden: in 1860 a systematic scheme for learning hymns was introduced, but this was for words only. The study of Art, however, is more disputable. Certainly the J.L.S. had begun the encouragement of Drawing and Painting as early as 1837. Exhibitions were held and prizes given. In 1851 the teachers began to be coached by a Drawing-master for one evening a week. By 1856 there was enough interest in the subject for a "Society of Arts" to be launched, a venture which was hailed with fine words. "Man is naturally imitative" (an introduction explained), "being surrounded as he is by natural perfection from the old lichens of a gnarled oak, up to the star-piled architraves of heaven . . . and so it has ever been to copy nature is the crowning triumph of art." There lay the difficulty: Art was in the School, but rigidly limited to an exact copying. The contemporary prophet, Ruskin, would have approved of this, but he also admired colours and imagination. He defended a refined joy in man's senses against the materialism of an age of successful business. Here was a ground where Friends feared to tread.

Although the School kept to a narrow track, Drawing began to enter the class-room as a definite subject. In 1870 a few children entered for the Drawing examination

of the Science and Arts Department; in 1875 some anonymous Friends paid for Drawing to be taught in the School for half a year. John Edward Walker, who became Headmaster in 1890, taught Drawing to the boys himself, while Lucy Fairbrother, senior Mistress of the girls' department from 1894, held the Art Class Teacher's Certificate. When the Board of Education Inspectors came in 1904, they found very active Drawing classes and found much to praise.

Then came Music. In 1879 it was proposed to the Committee that Music should be added as a "voluntary subject," "because girls who leave this school frequently have difficulty in obtaining situations as governesses in families of Friends in consequence of their ignorance of Music." So piano-playing was added for the girls, with a piano paid for out of an extra charge on fees. No longer could the *Globe* reporter comment, "Whatever singing is done there, is done by the birds in the pleasant meadows back and front of the house." Even the printed report of the Girls' Literary Club (1889) could say that "Ballads gave us the opportunity for more songs and music than we generally indulge in, and scraps of 'Bonnie Dundee' and 'Lillibulero' echoed through the house for many weeks after." Literature and Drama came to take a part in school-life. In the 'eighties E. V. Lucas added to the interest of his class-mates by the numbers of *The Tatler* which he edited and produced—a boy who was sometimes as effective with the bat as with the pen! The gaiety of the concerts was balanced by the more hard-working Boys' and Girls' Literary Societies with their dialogues and subject evenings, mock parliaments, debates, impromptu speeches, anonymous essays and lectures and recitations. Shakespeare was beginning to become a

rival of the Quaker saints in providing fuel for the imagination of youth.

(iii)

Mind and imagination need an active body. Years before, Fellenberg and Owen had made manual work part of their educational ideal. Contemporary thinkers praised the dignity of work. Morris brought "News from Nowhere," where men found happiness in working. Ruskin praised the sweat of the labourer. Here and there schools such as Abbotsholme or Dauntsey's, were to blend work on the farm or estate with academic study.

Walden had the unfortunate legacy of the Workhouse with all its taint of class inferiority. The considerable housework of Croydon days sprang from no more lofty ideal than that of saving money. So Walden, set in a rich agricultural area, made no attempt to teach boys the life of the land—not least because such things had been tried in other Quaker Schools for the poor and had not paid. One strand of the old tradition which survived to become a valuable part of school life, was the girls' Needlework and Domestic Science, though at the 1904 inspection it was still of a routine nature. Another strand from early Croydon days was Model-making and Woodwork.

(iv)

In the 'forties and 'fifties models had been a feature of exhibitions—chaises "executed in a careful and even elegant manner," ships, an omnibus, gigs and carts, productions of the turning lathe (1855)—despite the plea of one critic for "good plain boxes, parts of machinery,

scientific apparatus and other really useful things." Perhaps it was in answer that telescopes, and "a working model of a pump" appear, as well as photogenic drawings and calotype. Moreover, from at least 1847, an end of the play-shed had been screened off as a workshop. Only very slowly was Woodwork to enter the class-room: it first became a class-subject under John Edward Walker in 1891. Nor was this for the boys alone. In 1904 the Inspectors found the girls busy in their leisure-time with Wood-carving.

(v)

After the hard work with class-room books, such work must have come as pleasant relaxation. The great relaxation of the early Croydon days had been play-ground games and walks. Both survived, of course, after 1860, and Walden with its large play-grounds and surrounding country provided new opportunities for them. What was new was the way that games and exercises began not so much to enter the class-room, as to be reduced to organised activities. "Gym" began modestly as regular drill for all boys in 1862, two 20-minute periods a week under their class teacher. By 1890 the boys' Playroom had a set of Indian clubs, travelling rings, and parallel bars. Already by the end of the 'eighties there were some organised athletics and a "sports day," with a renowned "tug-of-war."* Masters gained fame for their feats on the football field; Lucy Fairbrother won prestige from her cricket. Frank Arundel even brought out his violin to liven up the play-ground drill.

* *Cricket* was making rapid strides. The first known match against an outside team was in 1868 against "Leicester House." By at least 1889, the girls were also playing cricket with great zest. A diarist records a mixed match to give the boys' team practice!

(vi)

One result of all these changes was a new note of gaiety in school life. Memorable days were the visits of "The Foxes"—a team formed of old scholars of Friends' Schools. After a vigorous tussle at football or cricket, there was an evening concert. The fun may often seem home-made, but such concerts were a chance for both staff and children to enjoy themselves together, and both provided items. A girl diarist tells of sketches or charades, making good use of a clothes-horse and counterpanes; a boy records violin recitals, some "gay songs" on the banjo—the "misadventures of a broken-down old hoss" evidently amused a large portion of the audience.

The contrast of school life in 1902 with that of 1860 was marked: much had been done to enrich the whole life of the children. Questions still remained. How far was there a place for the exceptional child, who worked more slowly, more quickly, or had unusual interests? How far had a truer working together of girls and boys become possible? How far was the work of the class-room preparing the children for their service in the world? An Old Scholar, who distinguished himself as a doctor, felt that far too much time was spent on compound additions, as though every child was to become a bank clerk. Perhaps he was right. Here was the problem of the place of the School in English society.

ATTACK ON THE WALLS

“The boys all ferment at the smell of bonfires and the crackling of rockets.” Not only on 5th November was the world full of excitement which they were not allowed to share. A boy never forgot his longing for the glare of London lights in the sky. Many changes were helping to heal the angry feelings of the children who still remained nervously protected from the world. Even the local boys seemed their enemies, pelting them with stones or trying to turn them off the Common. “’Twas difficult,” a master wrote, “to act up to Peace principles, some of our boys wanting to know if they ‘mightn’t put them somewhere else’.”

Though the gate was closed, only to be opened from the School hall, and though children never went through except under guard, yet there had for many years been underground communications with the world. One suspects those two apprentices, Ball and Radley, were guilty, for certainly the *Monthly Gleaner* betrays them at their best. Their two chief weapons were the Quaker concern for human welfare and the curiosity of children. The News features—especially “Foreign Intelligence”—must have been eagerly read: excitement ranges widely over Australian gold-fields; the surrender of Kars to the Russians; hurricane and desolation in San Domingo; lectures to working men at the Polytechnic; potato disease in Ireland; treatment of convicts in Cayenne; the beating-up of an American congressman who had spoken against slavery; the coronation of the Czar of Russia; campaign of the Early Closing Association; secret return of Florence Nightingale; Austrian atrocities; wild events in Italy; and

climbing Mont Blanc—to say nothing of the Persian ambassador, “in the uncommonly crack-jaw name of Suf-suf-Mouk-Miri-Pundj-Abbas.” Not only did the *Monthly Gleaner* offer this walk through the wall into the turbulent Europe of the middle ’fifties, but also gave many long glimpses of the English scene—Regent’s Park Zoo, the Coliseum, Epping Forest, “the great ship-building at Millwall”; holiday excursions of the boys, as well as the visit to Crystal Palace—a reminder of the triumphant invasion by the School of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

The accounts of social abuses were not accidental: these young men felt deeply about human wrongs and suffering. A strong social feeling is interwoven with the exuberance of these magazines. The wild gaiety of a poem on “Parcels!” ends with a plea for the hungry of the world. There are several long poems written by the same person (probably T. F. Ball) which mix descriptions of school life with reflections on the ills of mankind. An outstanding poem is called “I grieve that still . . .” The writer reviews the human wrongs—social evils of drink, sweated labour, ragged children, and the suffering of slaves—

I grieve that still the slave’s low moan
Is on the southern breezes borne—

and the international conflicts of the Crimean War and
British Imperialism—

England before thy vengeful sword
Spreads havoc through each Persian vale
Remember there is One whose word
Can make thy boasted prowess fail.

Such was the underground work of these magazines. The girls may not have had such magazines, but they were luckier than the boys in knowing some social

problems at first hand—the value of their “Dorcas” work was great. Both boys and girls often gained a life-long social concern. At the same time men were tunnelling from the other side of the high walls of the School. Not only was John Bright active at the centre of English political life, but many Friends were taking advantage of the new chances to share in local affairs and in many voluntary services. The days of pure philanthropy were passing. Friends were now ready to work strenuously in the government of society.

(ii)

The high walls had been undermined. Cracks appeared large enough for new children to slip through. In 1873 non-Friends were admitted. This was a big step forward from the rule of 1827: the “non-Friends” admitted then probably had one parent a Friend, and had always been brought up in Quaker ways. From 1873 onwards, one can find in the School a group ranging from about 5 to 20 in number, of children who had had few previous contacts with Quakers.

From about the early 'fifties foreign children began to enter. They did not include another Scipio, but were mostly from France and Germany and Norway. A link also seems to have grown up between Croydon and the Channel Islands. The boys attracted attention both by their costume and by their names—Adolphus Quertier, Philip Lemprieve and Aubrey Carteret de Carteret. One of these foreign lads stayed on to teach and to enrich *The Echo* by the bright colour of his illustrations.

Not only did new children come in, but the boys and girls began to find new reasons for going out on visits.

Boys and girls joined in the work of the Bible Society in Walden. Once a few of the elder girls were sent round the town delivering handbills for a Peace Meeting. Diarists reveal the humorous incidents which occurred on such occasions. Another rush of life was that of young sportsmen, who scrambled excitedly through the gaps in the wall to challenge local teams. For not only were Cricket and Football matches a happy link between masters and boys, but they also brought the School into contact with teams from nearby schools and villages, as well as those of Bishop's Stortford and Walden town itself. A young diarist wrote in 1889 that one team was “a set of country bumpkins hardly worthy of our steel.” Misunderstanding was still to exist on both sides, but the days of stone-throwing were over, and the sporting battles with Newport Grammar School had begun.

(iii)

The most terrible invader did not come through new cracks in the wall, but through the front door. In 1863 an Inspector of the British and Foreign Schools Society came to Croydon. He was followed in the 'seventies by annual visitors from the Cambridge Syndicate. In 1881 both boys and girls entered for the College of Preceptors' Examination for the first time. These public Inspectors and Examiners disturbed the School more than a century of “Days of Judgment” had done. It was as though the children of a proud family had met the boys of the town for the first time, and discovered they would have to smarten up if they wanted to avoid a beating. The days of the amateur were numbered. In 1871 the Inspector made

stringent criticisms . . . "below mediocrity," "unquestionably bad." With the boys' French, the learned gentleman found "the pronunciation was very bad, the knowledge of grammar defective and the translation worthless." As regards the Algebra, Euclid, and Mensuration of the First Class, "the result can only be described as *nil*. The best boy obtained only 11 marks out of 100: a few boys got no marks at all." The value of such criticism is reflected in the achievement of the following years. By the next year even, the same Inspector could mark a great improvement. A later Inspector declared that in the two years since his last visit, he had not found a School where the reading aloud was of such a beautiful quality.

As well as insisting on good standards Inspectors also made a helpful appraisal of the curriculum. "The feature that seems to me to mark off the School from others," wrote the first Inspector of 1863, "and to constitute the individuality as to instruction, is the amount of subsidiary or rather collateral information possessed by the pupils, combined with the important feature that such information is held intelligently." Later Inspectors, while noting the ready answers of the children, doubted if this knowledge was more than a chaos of facts, with which young children found they could play. As one Inspector put it: "There is a great deal of knowledge floating about which wants methodising."

One result of criticism was to set up a new criterion of entrance—literacy. Between June 1869 and October 1871 (a sub-committee reported) 66 children entered: 12 were very backward. They "could hardly write, indeed ten could not write at all . . . unable to add the simplest figures together." Two are recorded as showing very little knowledge of Scripture History, the remaining

ten none whatever. Eleven could not read in the simplest books. "It is generally found," the report continues, "that those whose education has been thus neglected, are deficient also in moral training, a want of truthfulness being a marked feature." The better children were found to have previously attended "British or National Schools." The Committee decided to demand a statement of a child's attainments before allowing him to enter. The check of the future was not denominational exclusiveness but academic ability. The scale was to be a public one. Already the challenge of public standards was bringing vigour to the changes of the classroom. Very soon boys and girls would leave the School better fitted to take on more responsible jobs in the world.

(iv)

Here lay a crucial test. It was no use to escape through a breach in the wall, if one only went to shelter in a Friend's home. How far did boys and girls really go out to work in the thick of the world? The Clerkenwell children had mostly become weavers, cobblers, and servants in the homes and businesses of Friends who lived nearby. Children from Croydon and the early years at Walden still started with the handicap of the very limited schooling they received: the girls, with their heavier share of housework were particularly held back.

By 1902 both boys and girls were already going to higher schools, and so to the universities. Meanwhile, what was more significant was the variety of work undertaken by Old Scholars—especially the variety that sprang from leisure-time interests. One boy, Bedford Lemere, became

a professional photographer of high repute. Another, J. F. Jeffrey, became Curator of the Herbarium at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh. A third, F. J. Horniman, was to recall all the boyish delights of specimen hunting. Horniman had a highly successful career as a tea-merchant, though he also found time to travel widely round the world, collecting specimens and curios wherever he went. In 1901 he gave his whole collection to the people of London to form a museum.

Not only was the work of Old Scholars more varied than that of the Clerkenwell apprentices, but they were carried to all corners of the earth. . . . "I am on a cattle and horse ranch," wrote an Old Scholar, "in a beautiful valley where the Red Deer River winds in and out, and enjoy the fine gallops over the prairie." The list is long and unpredictable: farmers in Australia and New Zealand, a tea-planter in the Far East, an engineer at a tin mine in Nigeria, a nurse in Rhodesia, a notary in Florida, a director of a steel works in Pennsylvania and an assayer for a "gold reduction" company in British Columbia.

These are only a few of the contrasting colours which build up a striking picture. Perhaps it was no accident that most of the Old Scholars abroad were in either the United States or the British Empire; that most had taken on humble jobs, particularly on the land. Three families, for instance, found themselves within easy Canadian distance, running small farms. They were part of the stream of English men and women who emigrated during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Out of the 1,378 Croydon Old Scholars still alive in 1882, 189 (i.e. almost one in seven) were living and working abroad: the proportion for men alone would be much higher, since over twice as many men as women went abroad.

A few of the Old Scholars abroad were missionaries, such as Ernest Sawdon, Headmaster of Chungking Friends' School in China, or Alice Wood, the Lady Superintendent of Brummana Hospital, who crashed over a precipice when taking a consumptive Syrian back to his village—a job no one else would undertake. In many small ways Old Scholars tried to help in the work of the Society of Friends—often they were Clerks at their Meetings, or helped in a local campaign against drink, the Boer War, or some other issue disturbing Quaker consciences at the time. Their most outstanding contribution was probably to Quaker education. Among those who became teachers in private schools and in Friends' Schools, are included nine future heads—Joseph Radley (Lisburn), Benjamin Townson (Leighton Park), Frank Arundel (Ayton), Elizabeth Brady (The Mount), Frederick H. Rous (Rawdon and Wigton), George Wilkie (Rawdon), Edmund Ashby (Sidcot), James Harrod (Sibford). Perhaps the most formidable figure was Lydia Rous, who for many years was the queenly ruler of the Mount School, York.

Education was one of the many ways in which Old Scholars tried to contribute directly to the life of their times. One became an Inspector of Schools in Canada; another organised schools in the Transvaal—sometimes improvising a school from tents; another (a woman) became supervisor of the Women's and Juvenile Departments in six Labour Exchanges in Yorkshire—fitting girls into the local industries of cutlery, silverware, textiles, mining, fish curing, glass-work and boot-making. Some Old Scholars managed to combine a heavy life of business with help in local or national politics. One became a Canadian M.P. and helped to draw up the report for

the Toronto Agricultural Commission. Several gained recognition from their fellow townsmen by being asked to serve as J.P.s, Councillors, and at times, as Mayors.

In 1902, a former Mayor of Gloucester, Samuel Bland, was President of the Old Scholars' Association. 1902 was a significant year for the School; it marked 200 years of continuous life as a community. For England, it witnessed a great Education Act, which opened the door for English children to gain a Secondary-school education. In November when the Old Scholars chose a new president, Bedford Pierce was elected. Leaving Croydon in 1875, at the age of 14, he had entered a firm of pharmaceutical chemists. By evening classes and sheer determination, he had qualified himself as a Doctor. For 30 years he was head of "The Retreat," the Quaker mental hospital. He had helped to raise the status of nurses for the insane, and had become widely loved. When he gave his address to Old Scholars he criticised his school days with a gentle wisdom, appealing for the School to be a family in which varied individuals could happily grow. Exposure to the world had strengthened, not broken, the community, and those who went out could freely return, bringing good things.

"A Place of Delight"

1902—1914

" . . . a school should not be a mere House of Correction but rather a Place of Delight and Recreation; which Masters may make by their Discreet and Prudent Conduct. . . ."

—JOHN FREAME.

Places are stored with legends—the strange mixture of facts and fancy which memory enjoys. It is rewarding to follow in the steps of His Majesty's Inspectors, and visit the School about the year 1910. None of the buildings was much over 30 years old. From some, the last builder had scarcely departed. Around these buildings legend was quickly to wrap its own revealing commentary.

One of the newest buildings was the Master's Block, the place where teachers had less need to be discreet and prudent in their conduct! Both men and women were gaining a place which they could call their own. They were also gaining new responsibilities, in particular, the senior master and mistress had new tasks of organisation and of watching over the children's development. When teachers left their rooms to go into the clatter of the corridors, their conduct was doubtless prudent, but it no longer needed to be severe. The old system of lengthy impositions was quietly being changed. Instead of 30 minutes' writing, a child would now have 30 "words"; wrong-doers were branded but not kept for long from the playground. Too many words meant that one must play in a "gated" game!

Two other rooms of the School had gained a new use; for a selected few of the older boys and girls had entered

UNBROKEN COMMUNITY

the ranks of the privileged as "prefects." As yet the title had more glory than substance. The bearers did little else but hand out bread in recess to the boys and girls, whom at other times they tried to chivy into line. The presence of prefects meant there were now boys and girls in the School old enough to help to guide their school-fellows. In 1908, 12 out of 160 children were 16 to 17. The prefects would normally be the leaders of team games, and they would probably be among the receivers of leaving scholarships. By 1906, 74 had been granted, and 11 of the recipients later gained university degrees. So, however untidy the prefects' rooms might be, they would not be without a flavour of prestige.

Although the younger children had few places in which to amuse themselves on a wet half-holiday or in the evenings apart from their classrooms or the play-rooms with the cold stone floors, these young barbarians were not without culture; for they had recently gained Literary Societies of their own. In 1910 the young boys were debating "That all punishments at schools ought to be abolished," and "That boys ought not to be allowed to bring Tuck back to school." The diary of the girls has vivid accounts of walks, of bedroom tournaments, of being invited out to tea by mistresses and of taking part in "Lower School" concerts. Everywhere one goes in 1910, for teachers and children, young and old, there seems more fun about the place—or perhaps legend deceives.

(ii)

Even legend cannot deny that for some years the trees of the Avenue were small and not the shady glory of green that we know to-day. Here was the decreed strip of land

"A PLACE OF DELIGHT" (1902-1914)

where brothers and sisters (and others of near connection) might walk up and down at stated times. In June 1910, the Committee passed a small Minute: "The Headmaster has laid before the Committee proposals in detail for introducing mixed teaching throughout the School." Little need to say more. The younger children, and for a few lessons the older ones, had been taught together for some time; the Inspectors had suggested that to teach all boys and girls together would be an economy in staff. Above all, the proposal for mixed teaching came from the teachers themselves. They had carefully discussed the idea; differences of opinion were real, but in the end the plan put before the Committee had the support of all.

In October, the Headmaster could simply report "that the classification of the School into Forms II to VI and the adoption of mixed classes throughout the School came into force at the beginning of the term." In 1799 four men drew up a time-table, unaware that they had swept out a Workhouse and started a School; in 1910 the Committee agreed to a revolution and almost forgot to put it in the Minutes. Leisure societies, meal times, the life of the playground, came to provide the strange delights of being "mixed." Boys and girls could stroll down the Avenue without looking at half the buildings as forbidden territory. If you ask when all the ritual of "couples" began, only the trees could answer.

(iii)

Two "places of delight" to visit during these years were the Swimming Bath and the "Gym," only eight years old when the Revolution of the Sexes took place. The Bath was used not only in class-times, and the boys were

already keen on learning life-saving. Some boys and girls looked for pleasure by themselves. In a quiet corner of the buildings or grounds their school-fellows might disturb them, but teachers no longer felt it necessary to watch over children in all their movements. At School during these years were Aylmer Maude and Ronald Dunlop, later to gain reputations for literary and artistic work. One wonders how far the able child fitted into the communal pattern. At least one could escape into the countryside from which day-boys and girls were now coming to School. Many boys and girls gained a close knowledge of the fields and woods, villages and churches, by their own tours of exploration.

An outstanding example of an individual's discoveries are the diaries on architecture of Henry Skelton. Some of the accounts describe outings with parties of his school-fellows; most are of his own excursions, undertaken not least in holidays and including visits to castles, churches and cathedrals all over England. The diaries are the product of the five years before 1914, and fill out 11 inch-thick volumes. Some of these volumes contain up to 150 of Henry's own illustrations, sketches, brass-rubbings, and photographs distinguished by the clarity with which they bring out minute detail. The great joy of these diaries is in the coloured shields and coats-of-arms. Each required long, patient work, but no fewer than 45 brighten the pages of one volume alone. No wonder Henry gained the first prize three years in succession, in a competition open to scholars from all Friends' Schools. He was also active in leisure-time societies, in writing poetry and articles for *The Avenue*, and as a prefect. From a non-Quaker home, he stands out as one of the boys and girls who were coming from outside to enrich so happily the whole life

of the School, just as he would have enriched the world if he had not been tragically killed in the Great War. His diaries remain as the unequalled record of an adventurous and sensitive boy.

If the countryside recalls the pleasure of boys and girls, by themselves or in twos or threes, the "Lecture Room" suggests those times when teachers and children enjoyed things together. The name of the room is more formidable than true; lectures were held there, but so, too, were concerts and parties. For two years, the whole School had come together there on Sunday evenings for the now familiar Meetings in which boys and girls took a share in the readings. The times of sharing were full of contrasts. What is this lively room full of people? Twelve boys and a few teachers discussing books! In 1910, with five years' history behind them, the boys had a busy year reading a dozen books and plays as varied as *Heroes and Hero Worship*, *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, and *The Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft. To this day the boys have rigidly excluded the girls from their Reading Club.

For a last glimpse of teachers and children enjoying life one must leave the School and go to Keswick, where a party of 26 were climbing mountains, singing and bathing, through a week of delight together. These "Tramps" had begun in 1906, as geographical excursions, for a party of boys and one or two masters. A close interest in the countryside persisted, but that did not prevent "Tramps" being very enjoyable occasions. This happy scramble through the Lake District was in 1910, and for the first time the girls were there, too.

(iv)

For well over half a century of its story the School had scarcely been more than a kind of residential Board School, in its class-room drill, and in the age and social background of its children. It comes almost as a surprise that by 1910, Walden was offering "a sound education of a Secondary School type." The curriculum was like that of a County Secondary School, and the children were taking the same public exams. The social background of the boys and girls would be similar; in 1908 the parents of 39 children were classed as "Professional and Independent," of 30 as "Merchants, Manufacturers," of 27 as "Retail Traders," of 16 as "Farmers," of 41 as "Clerks," of 7 as "Service, Postmen and Artisans"—and it is unlikely that any were in the higher income ranges of any group. Walden differed from a County School in being a co-educational, boarding community, religious in inspiration, though it had few points in common with the traditional boarding school. Less conservative, and less experimental, Walden was without the worship of the classics, and without the adventurousness of Oundle under Sanderson. As a community Walden was more flexible in human relationships, and was inspired by a different life-ideal from that of most Public Schools. A more fruitful comparison might be the "Progressive" schools. Walden was less concerned with aesthetics than an Abbotsholme, more limited in its opportunities than a St. Christopher or Bedales, and more traditional in order and behaviour. Walden's gain was in being less self-conscious, less aggressive against the old standards and beliefs, and far less dependent on outstanding personalities to dominate its affairs; for the community life had a

hidden strength of its own. Walden had all the soundness, kindness, security of a school guided by men who brought insight learnt in business, personal friendliness and their Quaker faith to the task.

There was no pause; many things needed immediate attention. Friendly critics had pointed out deeper weaknesses—one is only amused that they are former faults in reverse. Instead of too much strictness and organisation, the school work as a whole seemed badly planned, and even careless. The heavy days, when a child had little time to himself, had been replaced by half-holidays when some children wasted the hours in boredom. A pattern of rigorous order had broken into an easy system, which regularly filled the punishment room with far too many children. These critics were His Majesty's Inspectors. They had found much to praise in the "corporate life." Even official jargon helped to build the legend of delight.