FOUR YEARS

AND

A

TERM

BY

BRUNO SCARFE

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1956 and 1957.

C O N T E N T S

I L L U S T R A T I O N S

Photos

'Four years and a term'

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF A PUBLIC - SCHOOL.

It was the beginning of the summer term ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~year~~ 1952; Bruno was now thir-
-teen and a half years old, and ~~he~~ was going up to A.College, ~~in~~ Yorkshire, to try for a scholarship there. He was still at his Prep School in Oxford, where he lived, and had never yet in his life stayed in a school as a boarder. It had always been his ambition to escape from home and its unecessary chores, and this was his chance. He was determined to do his best, and he hoped.

The journey up to the school was a long one. The train part of it alone took some six hours or more, and had it not been that his father was coming with him, so as to see what the school was like, he would have been thoroughly dispirited long before his arrival. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon they ~~arrived at~~ reached York, where they were dexterously met at the station by one of the Brothers from the school. He took them to Terry's, where they all had tea, before catching the Reliance bus to the school. During tea, as during the journey by bus to the school, Bruno ~~dived~~ delved as deeply as he could into the school statistics: how many candidates were usually expected, how many awards there were, and whether, as not having passed through the school's own Prep - department, he stood much of a chance. To all these questions the Brother answered as well as he could, without either revealing too much or too little: he was helpful, and extremely friendly, giving Bruno, and his father too, a sound boost in morale. Thanks to his statistics, however, Bruno was already feeling just that little bit unsure of himself, just that little bit more uncertain than ever that he would gain an award.

When they arrived at the school, Bruno's father went on to the village, about half a mile further ~~on~~, where he was staying for the night, while Bruno, escorted and guarded by ~~the~~ good Brother D., was shown to the Headmaster's room. He was introduced, and left with the headmaster for a few minutes. Bruno's first impres-
-sion of the Head, who was to be his ruler for only two years of his school career, — when he died of a heart-attack, — was that of awe, unfeigned. The noble monk soon comforted him, however, in his famous and charming way, giving Bruno back his lost confidence and welcoming him to the school. He was perhaps the greatest headmaster the school had ever had; he came of a very old family, he stood some six and a half ~~feet~~ oo high, with thin, and straggling, but fine, silvery hair. His face was deeply furrowed with the years, his voice was strong and powerful, yet still retaining a certain softness, in harmony with his austere but all-friendly mien. After a few brief words of encouragement, Bruno was told where he would be staying ~~for the time he was~~ WHILE trying for an award; ~~and~~ he then left the room, again under the guiding

influence of Brother D. He was taken to the school Infirmary, where several other possible candidates for the forthcoming exams were already assembled. There he was to pass the night, and for his meals he was to go up to one of the outer houses, ~~called~~ St.Edward's.

Bruno was considerably bewildered for a while, especially ~~because of~~ by the alien influence of the other boys staying in the same, large-sized ward. They spent their whole time talking shop - which considerably distressed him. They kept on mentioning names he had never heard of, talking of different systems of essay--writing he had never heard of either, and then going into minute details over some quaint mathematical theorems which, similarly, he did not so much as know existed.

Later that evening there was an interview for everyone, and Bruno had to submit to the ordeal. This meant waiting for about half an hour in front of the head--master's room, while everyone else had his turn: ~~you see~~, Bruno, owing to an alphabetical system that does not need further going into, came at the end of the list ... and so had to wait until ~~the~~ last. Eventually his turn came. He went in, and was told to take a pew by the Headmaster himself. On either side of the Headmaster sat several other masters, but as yet they kept quiet: the Headmaster was the first to start interrogating him. The questions were simple enough, at first: how long had he been learning this ? how long had he been learning that ? was he any good at this?- for a hint had been dropped somewhere that he was not (this must have been mathematics) /. Then he was shown a sheet of paper, covered over in neat handwriting: did he think it was good or bad ? and why did he think so ? Bruno thought it was beautiful writing, and gave his reasons - it was all sloping the same way, it was well spaced, and so on. The Headmaster asked him several times if he was certain ~~he thought~~ it was good; Bruno insisted it was. ~~Later~~, About a term later, when he was in the school, he discovered that the sheet he had been shown was a ~~copy of some~~ model done by the master in charge of handwriting in the school - and was therefore meant to be ~~model~~ perfect writing, flawless. More questions were put, and then by the other masters present. He claimed to be able to speak tolerable French, and ~~thus~~ so had to answer questions and converse in French for about five minutes: what French books, if any, had he read ? when was Notre Dame built ? and to this question Bruno answered quite wildly - for he frankly did not know: he supposed it must have been built well over a hundred years now, perhaps a bit before Napoleon's time ? Everyone laughed hilariously, except Bruno, who was somewhat mystified. Eventually the ordeal was over, and he bolted off to bed.

He had his first written papers on the following morning ... and they did not

seem unecessarily impossible, ~~save~~ except for the maths paper, which he could hardly do more than look at, and put his name at the top ~~of his paper~~ afterwards ! They sat the exams in the school gymnasium, which was large and airy, and struck Bruno then as incredibly well-equipped: the whole place was littered with metal cross-struts, with wooden beams, vaulting horses, and innumerable piles of horse-hair mats; and, of course, at every step one's head caught on ~~to~~ a hanging rope and sharp hooks.

What struck Bruno most in the school was its size, the cleaness, the height of the boys, their what seemed to be good manners, and the apparently marvelous meals.

The school was certainly fairly large. There were some four hundred and eighty boys, divided up into eight houses, four of them being embodied within the actual main school buildings, and the other four being seperate, or 'outer houses'. In each house there were about a dozen monitors, or prefects, and they seemed to be able to do practically anything with their juniors ... which, however, they always appeared to do in a most gentlemanly way. Speaking of size, the school buildings themselves seemed interminable. There was a theatre, alone as big as Bruno's own Prep School in Oxford, a gymnasium of about the same size, countless still inex-plicable outer buildings ... such as garages, refectories, laboratories and store rooms. Then, a big surprise, there was an outdoor bathing pool, about three hundred yards away from the main buildings, ~~and lower~~ down in the valley. Here Bruno swam in the sultry afternoon, and enjoyed himself: he also, ~~by the way,~~ caught a wonderful cold, though it only revealed itself when Bruno arrived home again, after the exams were over. The school straggled untidily along the side of a steep hill, and he was told that it was miles from one end ~~of it~~ to another: in fact it was half a mile. Everywhere there were hills: behind the school, on the left of the schbol, and on the other side of the valley, opposite the school: only on the right were there no immediate hills, which was a slight relief. So much for the school: it was undisputably vast, far larger than Bruno had ever dreamt a school could be ; it was atrociously planned, and every seperate piece of building was of a totally different style - as far as he could see, ran-ging from two outer houses, like a soap factory in shape and colour, to a ~~neo-gothic, or~~ pseudo-gothic church. Some buildings were elegant, others propped up on every side: some were pale yellow, others almost black: ~~it~~ they seemed to present an unanswerable charivaria of loosely-knit boxes and lumps, with innumerable tall chimneys, from which unseemly wreaths of dense black smoke were for ever emerging.

Inside the school there was an exquisite, but too highbrow-looking, library, and

everywhere the floors were of brilliantly-polished wooden blocks, over which it called for the greatest effort to walk in anything approaching safety. Besides the immaculate floors, and what struck Bruno just as delightfully, were wooden lockers, wooden desks and tables, all ~~in~~ of some quaint, rustic design, all in oak, solid and massive, with a touch of local beauty and age. This woodwork, which could be found all over the school - and especially in the school library - was made by a local ~~woodworker~~ craftsman, from ~~a neighbouring~~ the village ~~called~~ of Kilburn. Bruno later discovered that he was called Thompson, and ran under the symbol of a wooden mouse: he also discovered that some of England's greatest cathedrals were furnished in part with this particular type of work, which had earned their designer great fame. Thompson of Kilburn was to die four years later, towards the end of Bruno's career at A.College, at a time when his woodwork was so well-known that it was proving impossible for the school to continue buying it, so high had the price soared since Thompson had started out as an unknown village artisan.

Another, more frightening aspect of the school was the boys who inhabited it: most of them seemed to be outsized giants, hairy, powerfully built, towering away into the heights above. Most of them also appeared to have the best of manners: whenever they happened to knock some one smaller than themselves flying, at one of the many sharp and unexpected corners in which the school abounded, they would offer at least a passing word of apology, which struck Bruno as very much the thing.

Finally, whenever he had his meals, he took them up at St. Edward's, one of the outer houses - ~~it was~~ linked with St.Wilfrid's - and it was this joint that provided the soap-box effect. The house refectory was panelled on three sides, the other side looking out over the valley, and consisting of plain glass. It, too, was a highly polished room, gleaming all over, spotless, and smelless. The meals were, if not over-abundant, at least of good quality; when Bruno later joined the school, he went to St. Oswald's, where, on the contrary, the food was abundant but ~~of questionable~~ the questionable quality. Here there seemed to be lettuce with every meal, ham, and many tomatos: maybe this could be accounted for as it was then the summer term, when the school menus always suffered a slight alteration - the only one in the year.

Bruno sat his exams, and then went home again, pondering over his many probable mistakes, and over the terrible maths paper. He had enjoyed his visit to such a vast and prepossessing establishment, where central-heating and gleaming vistas of untarnished woodwork graced the bare and austere surroundings of bleak moors and grey morning mists: he had seen a little more of the unknown world; he had discovered the existence of unheard of giants, of a courteous and vigilant discipline.

INTERLUDE

~~Here, the author intends to attempt the portrayal of~~ This is a typical conversation, or, rather, argument, between a house-monitor of A.College and Bruno, who as yet has not reached so exalted a status in the school hierarchy. The theme ~~will be~~ is set in the Big Passage in the morning, at about 8.40, prior to the headmaster's reciting of before-study prayers. The passage is about ~~three~~ four times as long as it is broad, and there is room (enough) for the entire senior school of some five hundred and more boys; all ~~of whom are~~ standing. Along one of the walls stand the house-monitors, according to house, and within each house according to seniority in monitorial rank. Suffice it to add that there are about nine, sometimes ten, house-monitors to a house, and about fifty non-monitors or juniors, under their sovereign sway. The ~~theme or~~ argument concerns being late to Mass in the morning: you are ~~regarded as being~~ late if ~~you are~~ not past the house-monitor appointed for the day, when the bell tolls or rattles its warning call at twenty-five minutes past seven ~~in the morning~~. The Oswald's house-monitor stands at the foot of the house stairs, and it is his duty to take the names of all ~~as~~ who pass by him ~~after~~ once the bell has rung: they will be penanced later, usually before morning prayers, at 8.40.

Monitor: (shouts out)"Bruno!".

Bruno, feeling considerably embarrassed, weaves his way through the other boys of his house and eventually stands in front of the monitor, who keeps to his place against the wall. Of course, being essentially a well-disciplined person (!), Bruno is fairly obedient: some boys, on being called, turn a deaf ear to their summons, either in the hope that their being called was a mistake, or else in the more dubious trust that the monitor will not have the audacity to call them again.

Monitor: (more quietly) " You were late for church: thirty lines ! ".

Bruno : (unevenly) "Was I ?".

Monitor: (decisively)"I said you were late for church: go away and do me thirty lines and don't argue !".

Bruno : (assumes an air of hurt innocence) "The bell went early".

Monitor: "You were late for church: the bell went before you were past the foot of the stairs: don't argue!(with air of patient persuasion): now do me thirty lines and don't be cheeky !".

Bruno : (stung to the quick) "I wasn't being cheeky: the bell did go early, I swear it did".(A glint of rebellion and cheek in his eyes).

Monitor: (dangerously) "Don't swear! Do me thirty lines and shut up".

Bruno : (suspects trouble afoot and thinks rapidly) "I'll complain !".

Monitor: "Stop wasting my time: go ahead and complain, ... and do me thirty lines".

Bruno : (desperately) "How many ?"

Monitor: "You heard me perfectly well !".

Bruno : "Did you say twenty ?"

Monitor: "I said fourty !".

Bruno : " Um, um... I thought you said thirty... ?"

Monitor: "Well why did you pretend you didn't hear ?" "You are a dirty liar: do me thirty lines and scram !"

Bruno beetles off, lest his penance be doubled or turned into the threatened fourty lines instead of thirty. He is furious: he will, of course, complain. As a rule he will be found to have completed his penance by evening prayers at nine o'clock, without even bothering to complain. Threats of his complaining are used mainly as blackmail, so as to pluck at the house-monitor's allegedly bad conscience and force him to reduce or cancel his punishment. Besides, when you complain, you are confronted ~~by~~ WITH the unpleasant task of facing the head of your house in his own room after prayers in the evening, an ordeal not specially in favour with people such as Bruno, who have already had far too many lines in the past week. It has also been known in the good old days that the head of the house sometimes doubled people's penances, if they were unjustly complained of. Only genuine down-and-outs make it a point of complaining, for sometimes the head of the house gives them a clean slate - cancels their lines.

The scene as described above varies very little: every boy has a slightly different technique ~~of~~ for trying 'to get off lines', but the main points at issue, those of cheek, attempted twisting of words, are usually expressed in the same way. Sometimes the bell does ring early, and if the penanced person has pretty firm proof of this he ~~does~~ complains, and either the head of the house or the house monitor on duty will let the culprit off.

It is before morning-prayers that people argue most. The idea of a day spent with lines overshadowing it can be irritating: such was Bruno's conscience, that he always tried to complete his penance as soon as possible. Other people, either with stronger characters or less conscience, always left this until the last mom-ent, in the undying trust that their threats might succeed, or that the monitor might suddenly feel more leniently disposed. Everyone, at least those who were not monitors, ~~were~~ was firmly convinced that the monitors were a bad lot, unfair, unduly severe, without moral scruples as regards punishing their victims. Con-versely, the monitors regarded the others as a pack of rogues in bad need of some firm discipline.

A DAY'S WORK

Bruno's first term, and indeed his two first years, did not prove very happy ones. Any suffering, however, of which at some times there was far more than at others, was due not so much to the school and its quite sensible discipline, not even entirely to Bruno and his own character. Any suffering to which Bruno was subjected came as a result of the inevitable clash between one unchangeable way of life, and another, also, until then, permanent approach to life; ~~which~~ they were, unfortun--ately, ~~were~~ very different. If Bruno can in any way be said to have developed in the school sense of the word, it was ~~at least~~ only a partial development. Both sides, school and character, had to a certain degree to give way, but neither of the two sides gained a victory or was defeated.

Bruno's character on his arrival at A.College was very firm, but Bruno was not aware that he had ~~a character~~ one: whenever he suspected some trace of character, he would rise in what too often proved to be an illogical and senseless way ~~so as~~ to try to protect and preserve it. He was, in a ~~way~~ same, an unsure and as yet an unsteady guardian of his own character, and, as often as not, ~~he~~ did not even know exactly what ~~his own character~~ it was or signified. His career there can be termed a search for self-knowledge, a search to know himself, to find who he really was, and only then to react correctly in such a way as to safeguard the essence of a man's life, his own character. For his first two years, and even for some of his third and fourth years at the school, Bruno often, and at first constantly, found himself in trouble, physically and mentally, over how to protect ~~his~~ this character, and, at the beginning, this was because he did not know anything about ~~his own character~~ it: that only came later. Perhaps the fundamental trouble was that Bruno could ever in the first place have been aware that such a thing as character existed. Maybe, if he had not in the first place realised that there was such a quality within man, he would not have worried over trying to discover and protect ~~his own character~~ it, ~~which he knew he must have, as being but human~~. Nevertheless, although he suff--ered in his search, it was with a heroic end in mind; and the search was not unrewarding, in so much as before he left the school he had very certainly learnt who he was, and ~~of~~ what kind ~~was his~~ of a character he had.

Bruno's difficulty lay in protecting an unknown interior person: it also lay in his as yet immature and illogical mind, and yet further in his own self-will and often impractical stubbornness. It was thus badly armed that he sought to protect a mythical character, and it was, partly, by his searching for this that he both formed it and then discovered it. And so it results that just as the school and

its just but militant discipline forced him along and goaded him to suit its own dictates, so too, Bruno set out in revolt to protect this as yet undetermined character which others were, to his mind, attempting to subjugate into the common fold of thought and behaviour. He felt very strongly on the right of the indiv--idual, the right of one character against the dictates of an unfeeling and auto--matic discipline. He was obsessed with a yearning to preserve himself, ~~as it were,~~ from mass thought and action: he wanted to continue acting as his character seemed to demand he should, as a person with feelings and thoughts of his own, as opposed to what his superiors, and many of his own year seemed to be doing - who acted and thought, progressively more unconsciously, in the identical, organised, community way. It may be said that he was extolling the ego - but it was not deliberately that he did this. As soon as he perceived the fate of the self-centred person - which most people who are over concerned with self-preservation turn out to be - he made an effort to conform with more regular and normal inter--course with others: it was then that he began to co-operate with discipline, with community life and action.

But by then he was safe. It was during the two (first) years that school dis--cipline was hardest, and he just, by the merest of gaps -, succeeded in passing or surviving them. He had held out against this primary form of discipline, at its severest, and had even established a very much despised cult of the self, by which means he had attempted to preserve himself as a person, as distinct from one of a crowd: it is true that this cult of the self, for the preservation of the self, had often plunged him into deepest water. At the beginning of his third year he was more fortunate: he was graced at one and the same time with a lesser discipline, and with an awareness that he had overstepped himself in trying to preserve his individuality. Thus he began to conform, knowing that his character was firm enough to resist complete conformity, and that he must seek to improve his character, not merely let it stagnate, as mere preservation was doing.

It can be seen that, perhaps ~~owing to his knowing~~ because he knew more than was good for him, school discipline did exactly the opposite to him from what it did to others; yet in the long run Bruno did not end up any the worse for it. It can be said that he seized the wrong end of the stick - in every sense of the stick - by first def--ying discipline, and then conforming lovingly to it, whereas others first of all obeyed it, and then gradually drew apart and began to hate ~~discipline~~ it - which is why the good authorities allowed greater freedom as people progressed up the school.

Yet Bruno did not in the first instance defy authority for no reason whatsoever.

Even when he had been at the school for four or five years, he continued to be of the opinion that, as far as the younger boys were concerned, school routine and discipline were infernal, a maddening incentive to all that is worse in man, to hatred, envy, and revolt. As far as Bruno was concerned, it was not only the discipline, but especially the bloodthirsty, murderous sense of rhythmical routine, day after day, class after class, term after term, indefinitely, far into the unforeseeable future, that ~~had~~ aggravated his sense of wanting to preserve his own sanity. As far as he could see, everyone who, with him, in his first two years, succombed to the routine without further grumbling and reacting, ~~everyone of such people~~ had ~~so~~ obviously given in to the overwhelming, mass-insanity of a futile, individual-killing community-life. He was called crazy for not willing to conform, for wanting to remain a person apart, a person with his own ways of thinking and feeling: as far as he was concerned, it was the foolish multitude of weak-minded, yielding automatons, ever ready to do as they were told without thinking twice about it, it was they who were the lunatics, slaves of discipline, lovers of an unthinking form of routine behaviour. Obviously the ideal lay some--where in between these two extremes: but Bruno only saw what happened to those who willingly gave up the struggle, who became unreal and unthinking puppets: he only saw what happened to an already weak-minded cross-section of the fellow-boys, and he was horrified. So he reacted, and went to the opposite extreme: he feigned a deep dislike of normal school activities: he said he was not interested in who won such and such a rugger-match, such and such a contest: he cordially hated that perfect symbol of ~~uniformity and~~ conformity, P.T. : he mistrusted such things as debates, where he believed that the only thing that could possibly happen would be ~~that~~ ~~he would~~ his eventually ~~be~~ contaminated ~~by~~ ion with the common spirit, ~~by~~ the efforts and prod--ucts of the routine mind. He decided at an early stage that co-operation with the enemy - routine and discipline - would lead to anihalation and his conforming with it. He decided that if he tried to follow a via media he would fail; there lay the slow but steady path that led inevitably to the enemy's castle. He feared for his own strength of mind, for his own ability to stand out in a normal, yet still not totally routed, attitude: he felt that to act quite normally might seem to be giving in, might seem to be a retreat. And so it was, that, ever fearful for his own weakmindedness, fearful and lacking confidence in his own, as yet not fully plumbed character, he retreated to the opposite camp, the camp of the rebel--lious, immovable, violently individual minority. This he did because of his utter contempt for routine, and, to a lesser degree, for discipline. It was victory in

this minority party that eventually led to his co-operating with the enemy, at a stage when routine and discipline no longer held their iron sway over his every thought and deed, at a stage when he had asserted his right to think as he chose.

Whereas, when Bruno reached the upper end of the school, his contemporaries were finding it hard to apply any original methods of approach to their work, and usually managed to gain the same, steady but unelating marks for their work, Bruno found ~~that either~~ either he was producing work of originality, which won him the heighest of marks, or else, following his original system of thought less successfully, winning the lowest of low marks for essays 'verging on the absurd'. Such was the reward for following his own path: it was an exciting reward, with either brilliant or phenomenally poor potentialities. ~~Often~~ Often he later wished ~~that~~ he possessed the steady, well-trained, routine mind, where one was at least always certain of a steady, inevitable result. Yet, he later decided, maybe he had made the better choice; he decided that by originality alone, with its tremendous potentialities, could anything startling be gained in the world as it hit him. As when he was still a new boy, he felt sorry later on for those who had succombed to the iron and unthinking rod of the uniform, of conformity, as for them it now proved quite impossible to produce anything above the ordinary, either in work or in games: they were the sorry results of successful 'training'; they were the good and sound products of an infallible machine; they were 'normal'.

It is also fairly clear that had Bruno not in the first place possessed a type of character disposed to original action and thought, he would never have reacted against discipline. People without that gift - often that drawback - of original approach to life, soon followed the dictates set before them, neatly trimmed, on a plate at every meal of every day. Thus it follows that one cannot, logically, expect to gain originality by reacting against one's surroundings for no inner reason at all; it is, instead, a sign of originality - which is of course not always a well-disposed originality - to want to think and act differently. Nor was his originality an unthinking one, which is surely the most tragic kind; but he firmly upheld his views and ideas, and could at any time put forward some reasons for his so different approach to the expected everyday form of life - and his main reason lay in hate of routine above all things, not in the extolling of the ego. Thus the theme of routine is the predominant one in his early experiences at A.College, and resulting from this, his search for his own character and the preserving of it. The fruits of originality, especially a creative form of it, are always many, and are often troublesome, and Bruno's career swung ~~often~~ from one extreme to another.

INTERLUDE

As You Like It

- 1952 -

The water rippled on the lake
Like scratched icing on a cake.
There was a walnut on the icing,
Which like a melon was enticing.
The melon's skin was hard and dry
Like a meteor in the sky.
The meteor came, then it was gone
Like a bullet or a bomb.
The bomb exploded with a bang,
Like a sausage in a pan.
The sausage burnt without delay,
Like a fire in the hay.
The fire gave a lot of smoke,
Like a dragon just awoke.
The dragon snorted, rose and stretched,
Like a cat who's had a rest.
The cat was black, as black as night
On a moor without a light.
The moor was wide and there was no-one,
Like on Pluto or on the Sun.
Pluto's warm, the Sun is hot,
Like oil that's boiling in a pot.
The pot got cracked and broke in two,
And so for lunch there was no stew.
The stew was good, the stew was nice ....
Like sugar mixed with sweetened spice.
The spice was strong and knocked you over
As though you were weak and full of clover.
The clover grew, and multiplied,
Like defects in a lantern slide.
The ancient slide began to flake,
Until it went into the lake.

Etc. . . . . .

A DAY'S WORK

Work proceeded in almost the same way on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, with but the slightest variations in the summer term. Sunday and Wed--nesday had an order of their own, ~~so they will be discussed seperately~~: it is by the routine of the normal days of the week that Bruno was so often upset, and it is this inevitable routine that is therefore of the greatest interest, and not so much what happened on holidays and special occasions ... which never meant as much either way for Bruno as the thought of what constituted the essence of school life, sound routine activity. As this routine, for various reasons, was the most marked in his two first years, and part of his third, it is of that time in his career that any study should be made, as being of greater importance than his later days there. Whatever his later memories might turn out to be, his first reminiscences will always remain acutely stabbed into his mind.

The day would start at ten minutes past seven in the morning. The Housemaster, or a senior monitor of the house, would come round the dormitories, each in turn, would clap his hands loudly and stride ~~down or~~ round the room once or twice, calling out the time, and would ~~then~~ disappear. The lights would then be put on fully; dormitory-monitors would struggle out of bed and tell the others to get a move on, and people would wend their sullen ways towards the wash-basins. There would, at the most, be a quarter of an hour in which to wash and dress; as you were often called three or four minutes late, so too, on many an occasion, there was only a period of about ten or eleven minutes in which to get ready. Once dressed, combed, and fairly respectable, you dashed out of the dormitory and made for the Church and Mass. In fact, the dash was not so much to go to Mass, as to be past the monitor of the day before the bell rang at twenty-five past seven: if you were past him after the bell had rung, or even when it had started ringing, you were regarded as being late, and at morning prayers you were doled out with a penance of thirty lines. Thirty lines were not, paradoxically enough, thirty lines: they came to about forty-seven or fifty lines. This was because one line, as it was termed, consisted of two verbs, a Latin one and a French one: the verbs, or a sample line, would go up on the school board at about ten in the morning, and belonging to this verb there would be the main parts, usually very irregular and tortuously long, with plenty of troublesome accents. If you were given your penance of thirty lines at morning prayers, they had to be completed and handed in to the donor by nine o'clock in the evening of the following day. Sometimes you were not so lucky: for instance if you were given lines in the dormitory, or anywhere else, in the evening, they

still had to be 'in' by nine of the following evening, which only gave you a mere day in which to do them.

Mass would start at about twenty-seven minutes past seven in the morning, and would only end at about five past eight, because of long chains of people going to Communion, which considerably retarded affairs. Once Mass was over, everyone straggled up to the refectories - whilst those who lived in outer houses would first hear Mass in their own house chapel, and then have breakfast in their house ref--ectory, both contained in the same building. Thus it was that half of the school had breakfast in their houses, and the other half, consisting of the inner house people, had breakfast, and indeed all their meals, in a large refectory block, about twenty yards above and behind the rest of the school buil--dings. This Inner house refectory block was quite a pleasant affair; it was of a modern design, and each individual house section was partitioned off from the neighbouring house by a screen reaching from the floor to the ceiling. These wooden screens could easily be swung back, revealing a vast view the whole length of the seventy or eighty yard long building: but the partitions were only drawn back to facilitate cleaning, and on great occasions when, for some reason or other, there would be a celebration involving enough people to want to dine en masse.

Breakfast started with porridge or corn-flakes: you could decide whether or not you wanted any, and, if the person serving out on your table was in a good mood, you could even ask him for such and such an amount of porridge. There were four tables to each house: at one of them there would be the Housemaster and the monitors, and the senior people in the house: then, in order of seniority, there was the second, the third and the bottom table. After the porridge came fried bread - almost infallibly - with either bacon or sausage or a fried egg. Then there was the good, nourishing, filling, bread and butter - usually margarine, all washed away with tea; good, strong, dark and thick school tea, brewed in one boiler, in one kitchen, for over two hundred people. There would be one vast tea-pot to every table, and it would soon start emptying. Grace would be said for the whole house at about eight minutes past eight - and everyone was meant to be present: on the other hand, as at tea and supper, you were allowed to say your own after-meal grace whenever you chose, and you could leave, within reason, when you wanted to. It was at breakfast that the mail would be distributed, and again, at supper time, there were usually a few more odd letters. You were allowed to read your correspondance as you ate, but not, needless to say, newspapers. Breakfast went on, if you ate a normal amount, until just after twenty-five past eight, when you left for

the house and made your bed. If you were a speedy bed-maker, you could stay in the refectory until almost twenty-five to nine: the main point at stake was that you should have made your bed and left your dormitory by twenty-two minutes to nine, two minutes before the next bell would be due to ring.

Bed made and breakfast made the most of, you would walk along at a leisurely pace to the Big Study, where, during your two first years, you kept all your work books. As the bell started ringing, you would choose the books necessary for your first three classes, and take them with you to prayers. If you forgot a book, which so often happened, you would have to return for it at some later date, perhaps in the middle of a class. This meant entering the Big Study and asking the boy presiding over your section of the school - that is, over the boys in your own house then doing their prep in the Big Study - asking him for permission to fetch a book or two. He would give you permission and at the same time a penance of twenty or thirty lines, according to the validity of any excuse you could offer him for having in the first place forgotten to take your books with you to class.

Once you had sorted out the books you needed for your first few classes, you went to the Big Passage, where prayers were said by the Headmaster at eight-forty--five. At these prayers, or rather just before they were due to be said, the monitor of the day would give you your penance for having been late down to Mass, or, if you had been down in time, he might want to ascertain whether or not you had cleaned your shoes since the previous evening, the most recent 'checking-up' time. At eight-forty-five the school monitors, as distinct from ordinary house-monitors, came down from the locker passage just above the Big Passage and filed down one side over the length of this Big Passage, turned round, and knelt for Prayers; which the Headmaster, who had followed them for part of the way down, would then say. Prayers said, a school-monitor then called out the forms in order of seniority, starting with the Sixth form. As he called them out, they would move away from wherever they had been standing and make for their classrooms, if they were due to have classes, or else to the Big Study if they were about to have a Prep.

Preps did not take place in the evening, but were interspersed throughout the course of the day: thus there would be preps going on all the time in the Study, and as soon as you had done your Prep you waited for the next five minute changeover before going to a class. Everyone had his own times for classes and preps, and it was only within a 'set' that these times would be identical: nor did a person belong to the same set for more than one subject, or at least not usually: one might meet the same person for many of one's classes, but if so that was mere luck,

and not out of any master's design.

Work went on until eleven o'clock, when there would be a twenty-five minute break. It was termed the eleven o'clock 'break', though in fact there was only an interval of about ten minutes in which to do as one chose. You had to do P.T. for ten minutes, which meant about two minutes waiting for it to start and another minute afterwards tidying oneself up and returning, as one usually did, to one's house. There you munched a hasty slice of cake - which had to be from home, or else there was nothing to munch - before the next bell rang at twenty-five past eleven. When it did ring you made once more for the study, took up your books, and beetled away for the next class. Work was resumed at half past eleven, and went on, with one change of periods, until one o'clock. Periods were meant to last three-quarters of an hour at the most, but, due to the changeover from one classroom to another, they were often as short as twenty-five or thirty minutes. A fantastic amount of time was wasted every day in looking for books and in going from one room to another, in tramping along corridors, in going from your house to the study , from your house to the refectories.

At one o'clock you went back to your house, tidied yourself, combed your hair and brushed your shoes, and at ten past one, to the tune of the bell once again, you made en masse for the refectory where you had lunch. Lunch opened with some soup, traditionally either very clear, like water, or else as thick as what porridge should have been like and probably was not. After the soup there was meat, or the same piece of fish for every Friday of the year, and either mashed or boiled potatoes. If the potatoes were mashed, they were full of lumps; and these lumps were as a rule raw. If they were plain boiled potatoes, they were bound to be full of black pockets, and usually presented a hard, dark-blue and somewhat grisly sight. If you complained that they had not been done, you were termed fussy: if you said they were as soft as water you were fussy too: if you said that they were just right, for once, you were informed that they had been done in the same way as usual, and were, in fact, the same as usual: if you found them to be all right for once, that meant you were usually fussy, but that to-day you were being sensible. Then there would be a dessert, which as a rule was quite good, but was served out in rather inabundant portions. Lunch drawing to a close, grace would once more be said for everyone, and you filed out and back to the house. There would be a brief call in at the Church - which was called making a 'visit' - for some four minutes, and then back up to the House once more. You hung about for perhaps ten minutes, depending on when lunch ended, and then, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday,

and ~~on~~ Sunday too, you made a rapid change into rugger clothes, or cricket ones, and went down to the playing fields for your game. If it ~~was~~ were the Christmas term there would be rugger, and there was a longer way to walk for your game: in the summer term you walked down at a gentlemanly speed, arrived either on the Oval or ~~on~~ some adjacent ground about five minutes late, and began to consider the after--noon's prospects. In rugger seasons you started your game at once, played hard for about an hour and then ran back for a quick wash. In the summer the terrible game of cricket dragged on, hour after hour, and then, more disillusioned than ever, you walked dreamily back ~~up~~ to the school buildings. In the wet months, or the Christmas and Easter terms, there was plenty of washing to be done after your game, and it had to be done rapidly. The fateful bell rang again at ten minutes past four, and by a quarter past you were meant to be in the Big Study, this time, for communal prayers. Prayers said - only a matter of a minute - there was one class or prep until the break for tea - ~~only~~ a matter of twelve or thirteen minutes.

Tea was always a scrappy affair. You came in when you could, and as soon as you had raced up from wherever you had been working, you sat down in a lather, called for the tea, butter, bread, milk, sugar and jam, which always seemed to be at the other end of the table, and then ate as fast as you could. If you were very lucky or a thorough-going hog, well acclimatised to eating at an incredible speed, you could 'put away' as many as three or four slices: Bruno's usual was two slices, if lucky. ~~The thing that~~ What held up tea was the everlasting shortage of food: if there ~~was~~ were plenty of bread - and there usually was - there was no more butter, or else you had to wait for five minutes until the maid had fetched some more from the far--distant kitchens. If there was butter, there might well be no jam, and if there was plenty of tea, the maids were usually discovered to have mislaid the stores of milk, or else forgotten to set out any sugar. And so tea was put away at an incredible pace: everyone shouted for something or another, everyone was fully occupied trying to eat enough to last until supper, and yet be out of the refect--ory by twelve minutes past five, when the next bell for work rang. Tea was rather a chaotic affair: it was next to impossible to have a conversation, and hard not to leave with the feeling that you were about to have indigestion.

Tea over, you went back to work until half past seven in the evening, when ther e was supper, last meal of the day. There was one course, of potatoes and sausages, or bacon, or egg, or some weird meat mixture. There was always plenty of bread and margarine, and a little tea. You could leave when you liked, and on most nights there would be society meetings to attend - they were optional. This might eke out

the one hour's free time of the day, or else ~~one~~ you might quite well have rather a lot of lines to do then, or letters to write, or preps to complete, or papers to read. There was usually far too much to do in this one solitary hour, and as a rule ~~one~~ you could only get done half of what ~~one~~ you had intended doing. It was a very cramped hour. At five to nine the bell rang for the last time, and there were evening prayers, sometimes followed by a speech or exortation by the Housemaster, and even by the Head of the House at times. After prayers it was bed: you washed, made up your laundry if it was a Tuesday, cleaned your shoes, read a book, or just thought. At a quarter to ten the lights were put out, and there was a night's rest.

This, of course, ~~is~~ was all very theoretical. Such was the main plan of a day, but it was not every day followed quite as precisely. Sometimes there would be a long sleep in the morning - this, if at all, would be on Thursdays - and then Mass would be cut out, leaving only Communion ~~for the majority~~. On certain occasions the Headmaster might have an announcement to make, and he would make it just before reciting prayers after breakfast. It might be an announcement on school discipline, on bad habits, on leaving litter lying about: it might be so as to tell people ~~that~~ there would be a lecture that evening by someone visiting the school, and that he thought it would be a good idea if people attended. It might be an announcement on some master's behalf, giving news about changes in horariums: it might be a lost property call; it might be a highly specialised piece of news for scholarship candidates and their culture sessions. In a word, it might be quite a few things. These announcements varied, also, with the season; in winter terms it might be an announcement ~~about~~ on shutting doors, ~~about~~ snowballing in certain places, or ~~about~~ the dangers of unguided sledging: in the summer it might be about not wearing enough clothes when away from the school, and at Guy Fawke's night it was inevitably on fireworks and the Catholic spirit.

This might be the first slight change in a day's routine. There were yet other possible changes: if it was raining, only half the usual P.T. squads would have to work, as out-of-door training would be out of the question; thus P.T. for the unlucky squads would be held in the Big Passage and not outside; unlucky squads, of course, went in rotation. There might be yet another change. After the one o'clock bell, instead of going straight up to your house to tidy up, a notice might have appeared telling everyone to assemble in the Big Passage at one, where they would hasten, according to the order. Once assembled, the Captain of Rugger, or Athletics, or Cricket, according to the time of year, might award some colours to

good first team players. He would make a speech about the team as a whole, and then about the player whom he was about to decorate: for the first few moments of his speech everyone would ~~roar with laughter~~ hurrah at his every attempt to make himself heard. After a few mock attempts to speak in earnest, and having been interrupted several times by the enthusiastic mob, he would then dive deep into his bitter criticism of the school spirit. He would exhort people to watch the school matches; he would tell people how to play better rugger; he would drop hints; he would warn, threaten and encourage. His job done, and the colours awarded, everyone would surge wildly forward up the steps at the top of the Big Passage and bolt for ~~their~~ his houses. Then would follow lunch.

There might be another change after lunch. If the grounds were unfit for play, then there could be, and usually was, a long run across-country, and runs were so delightfully unpopular at A.College! Everyone in authority knew this, and ~~their~~ one excuse was probably that the boys should 'get some fresh air'; nobody ever realised that a walk was quite as good ... such was school emphasis on producing healthy boys, even out of people such as Bruno who were the least adapted to such energetic, back-breaking toil.

On Mondays and Fridays there were never any games, but there would be Corps in--stead. This meant changing before lunch, in the ten minute break allowed, into military uniform: it meant hours of frantic boot-cleaning, brass-rubbing, and gaiter-blancoing. ~~The~~ Actual Corps meant drilling up and down the uneven roads in front of the school; it meant attending boring lectures on the different parts of a rifle, on how not to clean one's weapons, on how to assault an unprepared enemy. It was always the same story of right-flanking movements, of arrow-head formations, and of one's own side inevitably winning the infallible victory. It was the same story year after year: there was always the rush to change into one's uniform in time, there was always the kit to be cleaned in time, there were always the dull lessons in fieldcraft, riflecraft, mapcraft and mudcraft.

Such was the essential routine of a normal day: of a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Such was every day of every week of each ensuing term: a maddening routine, where one's life was penned in by bells and chores, always the same, always identical. Most people grew resigned to it: Bruno was in a constant state of revolt, always seeking to enjoy life as it could not be enjoyed within this framework, always seeking to find variety. He tried to act and think in an original way: he argued untenable points, he did unseemly things, he thought in a bitter and unusual way, and suffered for it: but he always enjoyed a varied existence .... which is just what he sought, so as to preserve sanity and character.

INTERLUDE

On Getting Support

It is a Thursday morning; on the evening of that same day there is to be a Lingua Franca Society meeting, with a lecture on Foreign Travel. Mario is one of the Society secretaries, and Bruno one of its members.

Bruno is making his way back to his room, after the last morning class: lunch will be in ten minutes. Mario accosts Bruno and edges him cunningly into a dark and shady corner.

Mario: "Hello Bruno, glad to see you: I was looking for you:(he pokes him lightly in the stomach) .... found you at last. Well ?"

Bruno: "All right, all right; what's the matter now ? Do let me help you ?".

Mario: "What d'you mean, 'what's the matter now' ? As if you didn't know !".

Bruno: "Don't know what you're talking about, I'm busy, can't you see, I've got to take an exam soon and you're preventing me ...." He tries to escape, but Mario blocks all means of exit. He continues ... "Hell, what d'you want now ?"

Mario: "You know perfectly well, don't pretend you don't. Coming to-night or not ?"

Bruno: "What to ? ... Not if you're going to treat me like this, I'm not ! Can't you see I've got buckets of work to do .... ?"

Mario: "Can't fool me !" He then becomes exceeding courteous. "You are coming, aren't you ? ... you know, the society needs your support."

Bruno: "Well ! If only you'd told me in the first place what you were going on about you'd have saved me half an hour !"

Mario: "D'you mean to tell me you didn't know there was a Lingua Franca meeting on tonight ? I'm ashamed of you ! You are coming, though, aren't you ? You're such a nice chap you know .... don't know what would happen to Lingua Franca if you didn't turn up !"

Bruno: "It would prosper, I assure you !"

Mario: "Ha ha, tell me when to laugh, won't you ... but say, you will turn up, won't you ?" He starts disappearing ... "Be seeing you at the meeting tonight, and you'd better not forget ... I rely on you one hundred percent !"

Bruno: "Who said I was coming ... don't think I can, you know, buckets of work to do: look; I'll come next time instead, how about that ?"

Mario: He continues making off, with Bruno slowly following " Well you won't forget, will you ..... be seeing you later .... busy now ... you're definitely turning up !"

Bruno: aggravated, "Well, I might consider it, but I won't promise anything...."

Mario: " .... that's a good chap, knew you'd not let us down ... see you tonight !"

A DAY'S WORK

Towards the second half of his career at A.College, the discipline and the routine became somewhat more palatable, ~~somewhat~~ less sordid and stringent. They by no means ceased to exist, nor did they ~~by any means~~ cease to bear upon his shoulders and his mind. What matters is that they began to pass by less noticed than before, and this was due not only to his own frame of mind and a change of mood within him, but also to a change in the form of discipline as enforced upon him. Conditions were varying for a change, and with these conditions the discipline assumed a different aspect, and Bruno a change of mood: the surroundings, and with them the discipline and Bruno's attitude of mind, all formed an inextricable bond, and changed almost imperceptibly, and in unison.

As Bruno progressed up the school he came in partial possession of a room, in--stead of having to continue living with fifteen others in dormitories. At first he had to share with two other boys of about his own age, then with only one other boy, until he eventually had a room to himself. Once you were in a room, where you slept, did your own spare-time reading, and then your actual preps, you both became a different person, happier and freer, and at the same time were freer to react against the discipline, which began to loosen its fingers from your person.

Taking the same days of the week to start with, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, it is interesting to see the already apparent change in a day's routine, the loosening of the arteries within, as it were, the same body. For the essential day's programme never changed, and in that sense the same routine existed in Bruno's fourth and fifth years at the school as during his earlier years there. Whereas the essential framework remained rigid enough, the connecting links, the communicating bonds and the background, began to vary considerably: to all appearances everything should have been the same as ever, and so too in theory. In practice, things, even hard and fast fundamentals of the day's routine, assumed a new significance: nor was this only because Bruno took a new angle to his work, though that is also true as far as it goes. The point is that, ~~for better or for worse,~~ Bruno began to enjoy himself far more, despite the fact that everything at first glance seemed the same as when he had arrived ~~at school~~ there.

When you were called ~~in the morning, still~~ at ten past seven, and if you were in a room, as soon as whoever had called you had ~~already~~ left ~~to call the people in~~ for the next room or dormitory, you lay back in bed and fell asleep for another few minutes ~~rest~~ before getting out of bed. That was luxury ! Now, in a room of ~~one's~~ your own, and even if ~~it was~~ you had to share it, there were carpets on which to step out of

bed - which you had bought ~~yourself~~, of course, from someone who had just left the house. In a room, even if you had to share it, you could sit in one of your own armchairs to put on your shoes; you could sit at the window to do up your tie, and, if you felt so inclined at that time of day, you could talk; you were not likely to be heard by anyone outside the room ~~at that time~~ then. There was still the rush to be past the monitor of the day, who stood at the foot of the St. Oswald's steps, but by this time in your career you had probably learnt to dress at just the right speed, so as to be about fifteen yards past the monitor as the bell started ringing. Once you had a room, which implied that you were now in the Sixth Form, you were allowed to decide for yourself on which morning of the week you wanted your long lie, or lengthier sleep than usual. All you had to do was sign your name on a list in the headmonitor's room before ten in the evening, and on the next morning you were only ~~awoken~~ awakened at twenty to eight.

Thus, although the times for Mass were the same as ever, and although the dis--cipline for being there on time did not vary in the slightest, there was just that little difference in the routine for getting up and getting dressed, a routine now rendered somewhat more homely and bearable, slightly more human, than previously. Mass ended at the same time as usual, and breakfast was the same. By now you might be sitting ~~on~~ at the top table. Once there, you no longer had to serve out the meals one week a month as before, to your fellow-sufferers: by now you were being waited on hand and foot by incompetents from the third table, who, as often as not, spilt soup down your neck or dropped all the plates on the floor. And, once on the top table of your house, you were far more liable to have 'seconds' of anything you liked - that is, a second helping, which was usually non-existent if you were on the second, third or bottom tables. Finally, if you were near the top of the house, and even if you were not a house-monitor yet, you would probably have to preside over either the third or the bottom tables. You had to do this once every four or five weeks, and it went in turn. It was regarded rather as being in temporary exile, though it was by no means ~~meant~~ intended as a punishment. When you presided over a table in the refectory, you had to keep the servers awake, tell them when to serve, remind them to clear the plates after a course; you were also expected to keep the table in order, to keep the noise not too loud, to preserve discipline, stop fooling, teach people slightly better table manners than when you first arrived ~~on that table~~ at there, and generally exert a good influence. Some people found it hard enough to keep the servers on the move; ~~though~~ Bruno made it a point to try to keep the table in order ... at times no mean feat, owing to people's gen--eral inability to behave rather than any desire to be awkward. It was the third

table that was the worst in the house refectory. On the Bottom table the boys were in their first year, and ~~usually~~ simply did not know what to do and what not to do: on the third table, which was the next upwards in seniority, the boys knew exactly what was what, and made it a point to see exactly how far they could go without actually getting into trouble. The conversation was abominable, dealing mainly with film-stars and masters at the school, with the school discipline that they all loathed and ~~all~~ the lines they had to have in by that night.

While the meals remained the same, and their times never changed in the course of his five years there, there was this subtle difference within refectory control and the connecting bonds of routine, as it were; Bruno gradually reached the safe end of the stick, which turned meals into what they were meant to be - a social occasion - and not trials of endurance and patience. Again, after breakfast, you made for your house and there went to work on your bed. The same bell rang at twenty minutes to nine, but this time, instead of fetching books from the Big Study, you sorted them within your own room, and so in comfort. There would be the usual prayers, and then work until eleven o'clock.

If you were in the Middle Sixth you could do all your preps in your own room, which was an admirable privilege. Whereas in theory it meant very little, because prep still existed as much as ever, in practice it meant that you could eat a piece of cake while you worked, or look out of the window to solve an equation; in the study it was claimed that it was ~~an~~ impossibility to work if you were looking out of the window, so this is exactly what you did once you had a room. Or, if you did not feel particularly inclined to work with the sun outside, you could clean your corps equipment, or write a letter, or even do some lines. All this was very illegal, of course, but no-one not in the room could ever prove that you had not been working - and it was extremely rarely that anyone unexpected entered at such times. The only proof of not having worked during your preps lay in the preps themselves, which obviously had to be completed just as much as ~~ever~~ before: for Bruno, what mattered was that they should be completed in time, and not how they were completed, nor when, ~~strictly~~, they were done. To be in the Middle Sixth, you had first to be in the Lower Sixth: to be in that venerable form you had to be sixteen, and have passed your General Certificate Examinations at 'O' level in at least five subjects, which must include Latin, French and English Language. If you were having a prep, and if you were in the Sixth form at any level, you might be called upon to preside in your section of the Big Study as often as three times a week. At first this was a big thrill, because you (probably) were not yet a House-

-monitor, and ~~as yet~~ had no form of authority or control over anyone else within your house. After a few weeks it became an indifferent task, and after a year or two in the Sixth form, it became a positive menace; while presiding in the Big Study it was almost impossible to concentrate on your work, or indeed to get anything done thoroughly. As far as Bruno was concerned, this was about the only opportunity he ever had ~~of~~ for spare-time reading, ~~for~~ since at other times he was always busy writing letters or finishing preps.

At eleven o'clock there was the usual deadly P.T.. As you progressed up the school, theories of physical betterment began to influence your mind, and you almost began to believe them yourself. As for Bruno, they never had much effect on him; it is true that he started doing his P.T. slightly better as he passed on his way up the social scale, but that, in truth, was so as not to be given a double P.T., as it was termed - or ~~another~~ period (extra). After P.T. he now retired to his room, tidied himself up as usual, and slowly cut a few slices of cake for himself and the usual 'chance' visitors at that time. The bell would start ringing, and he slowly gathered up his books from wherever they lay in the room, to make his way at a leisurely gait to his class-room. Classes went on until one o'clock. There would be lunch on the top table or the second table, with conversation fluctuating from politics to the last amusing class of the day, with a few caricat-ures of the favourite masters - from the comic point of view.

Lunch over, there followed the usual scramble into rugger clothes, this time with Bruno changing in his own room instead of in a dormitory. On a Corps day, he would make a visit with the others, then dash up to his room for his beret and his belt, and down again for the early parade. The main difference between his third and fourth years as opposed to his (two) first ~~ones~~, was the varied emphasis from ~~the~~ dormitory life to room life, from absolute rigidity of routine and discipline to a more humane and less concrete form ~~of them~~. There were still classes, still the constant bells, rugger, corps, and more classes, still the organised meal times. The difference lay in a changing atmosphere, a feeling of slightly firmer peace at certain times, and a slightly more broad-minded discipline at others.

After rugger or Corps there was the expected hurry to change or wash, but again you changed in your own room, sitting on your bed - against the regulations - and treading on soft carpets, finally relaxing, if you had time in hand, in an arm-chair, instead of having to read in a common-room or the Big Study as in your earlier years at the school. Prayers would follow at ten past four, and then there would be a class before tea. Instead of having to rush with the others

from the Big Study, where those in their first two years would be doing their preps, you walked at dignified speed from your classroom or, better still, from your own room, up to the refectories. Tea would be as chaotic as ever. After tea, with bells in your ears, more classes, and then supper, followed in close succession; if you were feeling sleepy by this time of day - as Bruno often felt - you relaxed in your room for a prep and either read a novel, of great cultural value, such as one by Evelyn Waugh or Graham Greene, both of whom were banned - or else you just slept.

After supper there were the usual societies, which most people continued to frequent. Bruno prefered, however, to make use of this time of day so as to read newspapers and magazines, which he otherwise ~~he~~ never found time to read. There would be prayers at nine o'clock in the evening, and then you went to your room, unless you wanted to work in the library. Once on the Gallery, as it was called, where most of the house's Sixth form rooms were, you could have a bath now if you chose, and then read a book, write letters, do lines, your laundry, or talk with your com--patriot until lights out at ten-fifteen. You could even go to sleep early if you felt inclined to ~~do so~~ - though Bruno seemed to be the only person ever desirous of so doing. If it was a Thursday evening, the house-monitors might be having their weekly meeting with the housemaster, and in that case everyone would ~~have~~ make an unholy row on the Gallery until about eleven o'clock, when the monitors' meeting ended.

The same times and the same bells had to be obeyed when Bruno first arrived at A.College ~~and~~ as when he was in his last few terms. The change in the atmosphere was due to the privileges accorded to age and experience and genius. The main priv--ilege lay in the use of a room for working in, instead of having to rely on the Library or the Big Study both for work as for spare-time reading and the writing of letters. In the Big Study and the Library silence had to be observed at all times, whilst in a room you could talk at practically ~~all~~ any times: thus in a room, there was no longer a feeling of imminent catastrophe, of inevitable lines for being caught talking. When you wanted peace you could go to your room, whilst in the dormitory-stage of your career there was nowhere to go except your bed - and that with special permission from the Housemaster. When you had a room you had a great degree of privacy, missing at first: you could relax, you could think, you could muse, and read your books in comfort otherwise unobtainable. While the same routine did exist, you were treated as someone with a certain amount of responsability, and more as a friend, less as a potentially dangerous stranger. You began to be trusted, and soon you were on better terms with your own friends as with the masters and monitors, holders and keepers of the laws and bylaws of school rule, life and peace.

INTERLUDE

It is a Friday morning, fifth and last class before lunch .. It is the summer term, with good weather all around. The class is Religious Instruction, of which there are three a week.

The master enters, nine minutes late.

Master: "Ah, good morning !" He takes a pew, whilst everyone sits at his desk. He continues: "Well, well: it is a good morning, isn't it ? I'm sure you ap--reciate a change."

There is a general murmur of assent. Everyone fidgets in his place, either scribbling on his desk or on an exercise-book. Bruno looks dreamily out of the window: the classroom is distinctly warm.

Master: He suppresses a yawn. Suddenly "Well, well: I suppose you'd all like to be outside basking on the grass: isn't religion grim ! Or do you think it is ?"

Freddy: Looks up from a book he is reading "Sorry, I didn't hear what you were saying Sir; could you repeat it please ?"

Peter: "He said 'is religion grim ?'".

Master: "That's right; don't you ever think it's grim ?" There is silence. "Come on, doesn't anyone think religion's grim ? .... Surely someone thinks it's grim ? I've never seen such a lot of sleepy fellows !" There is silence. "Oh, it's Friday, isn't it ? .... I suppose you're all wanting to get changed for Corps..." There is a definite murmur of assent, though it is hard to say who is doing the assenting.

Master: "You know: sometimes I wonder exactly how much of what I say ever stays in people's heads at the end of class. Come come, can't anyone think of some--thing to say ? I didn't think you were quite this sleepy !" .

Mack: "Do you think we're going to win the match Sir ?"

Master: "What match ?"

Mack: "Oh you know Sir, the one against the Jays ?"

Master: "Golly ! Religion must be grim if you're so far away ! .... I think we should .... what's general opinion on it ?"

Bobby: "Do you think monkeys can type if they're given really good opportunities to learn, Sir ? .... or is that too much of a red herring ?"

Master: "Really ! I suppose that comes under instinct and necessity ...."

Bruno: "Please Sir, don't you ever think religion's grim .... ?"

Master: "I was waiting for that !" .... "Well what do you think ?" Everyone grins at Bruno's discomfiture.

SUNDAYS

Sunday had a completely different routine of its own, for which everyone was of course very thankful. Allied with Wednesday, these two days provided the only real rest ~~of~~ in a week: during the course of a normal week, excepting Wednesday and Sunday, there were only five free hours at one's disposal. Although ~~one~~ you could not go out - cycling, or to visit neighbouring villages - on a Sunday, at least there was next to no work, and although there were plenty of Church services on the Sunday, that meant ~~one~~ you could sit and sing for a change, instead of doing P.T., or sitting, and writing. Sunday had a routine, and any routine was detestable to Bruno: the worst routine was the everyday stuff, and Sunday routine, coming only once a week, was not so bad.

For his first years at the school, Sunday meant an opportunity for cleaning his Corps kit, cleaning his shoes, and writing his letters. He would spend, in fact, most of the morning writing letters to his Mother, his Father and Grandmother, and in the evening he would read a novel or write - poetry. The day was simple enough, and therein lay its wonder - that a day at school could ever be simple ! There was a long sleep in the morning until twenty to eight, when you were called: you hastily donned your suit, and Bruno usually put on a white shirt with stiff collar, which at first took him hours to put on, so that he was always having hefty penances for being late down to Mass. Mass proceeded smoothly, but was ~~much~~ longer than ever, because the whole school, or nearly everyone present, went to Communion ~~on Sunday~~. Then there would be breakfast, consisting of a boiled egg - which was almost regularly hard-boiled, fit to be cut into minute slices - corn-flakes and tea, with bread and margarine. In fact, Sunday breakfast was an enjoyable affair, beacause there was none of the greasy fried bread and fried bacon: on the other hand it was far less sustaining, and you were hungry long before lunch-time. After breakfast you made your bed, and at ten past nine the bell rang for prayers: after that there would be a prep for everyone except those who attended art class, of whom Bruno was one, and again at ten o'clock the bell would clang for High-Mass.

High-Mass was a very tiring process. It lasted for about an hour and twenty minutes, with a fifteen minute sermon in the middle. As often as not, there would be parents there to visit their sons, and they too would come to the High-Mass, crowding all lawful possessors out of their seats in Church. The dispossessed would either have to go round to the monk's part of the Church, behind the altar, where they could ~~would~~ barely see a thing, or else stand in a dark and spidery corner for the length of the service. After High-Mass you were free until one o'clock, to do anything within reason that did not necessitate your leaving the school-buildings. You could listen

to the wireless, which was always commandeered at this time by ~~jazz~~ pop-addicts, so here Bruno never found much consolation for his troubles. You could play table-tennis, if you were that sort of person, or go round the school sucking ice-creams, if you belonged to that type of set. Lunch would be at one'o'clock, and there would be roast-potatoes instead of the normal mashed ones: for his first years there, there used to be fruit for the dessert, and towards the end of his career there would be ice-creams, with somewhat less ~~of the~~ fruit; Bruno, ~~needless to say,~~ disliked the school brand of ices.

There would be rugger or cricket in the afternoon, and to-day the afternoon would no longer be subject to the ever-present state of emergency and apprehension - for there would be plenty of time to wash afterwards. Tea would be at four-thirty, and there would be up to half an hour granted, which meant that you could eat in comparative peace. After tea you could read or do more or less as you liked until vespers at six-fifteen in the winter terms, and twenty to seven in the summer. In the winter you had to stay indoors, because it was soon dark, but in the summer you could practise at that game of cricket in the school nets, if you wanted to. Also, in the summer term, you could go for an evening walk, to the village perhaps, or across the valley, and generally laze about outside in the cool evening twilight, to the sound of humming tennis-rackets and angry bats. Vespers was another long affair, with four lengthy psalms to sing at first, followed by frequent half responses and a constant rising to one's feet in expectation and then hastily sitting down again for a short-lived rest. Vespers were at times almost like P.T., except that you were allowed to give full vent to your feelings with some loud hymn-singing, and, as you progressed up the school, you could doze lightly instead of singing at all - no-one noticed. After Vespers came supper, always cold - without any tea. This was one thing Bruno really hated: the last and only cup of tea came at half-past four in the afternoon, which meant that one could only partake of this at all times invigorating beverage twice in the course of a whole day. Bruno felt that the whole supper lost its meaning, even its social status, without the presence of tea, a drink that warms one's heart, one mind and one's conversation - as well as one's slow and ill-treated digestion; instead of tea there would be cold and rather watery milk. There was usually a slice of cold ham and some cold tomato, with a monolithic piece of hard-boiled potato. After supper there was a meeting of the debating societies, Senior and Junior, which Bruno rarely attended.

This debating system was supposed to be very good and improving. When Bruno attended the Junior debate, he was at once disillusioned by the weekly rumpuses,

by the frightful riots and the noise over which it was impossible to make oneself heard. As for the Senior Debate, at one stage it went completely out of control, and had to be shut down for a year. When Bruno was at the school, the debate was more or less ruled by a vast, fat, bloated faced boy of about Bruno's age, son of a millionaire as far as Bruno could see. This boy, although only as a rule the leader of the Opposition, would never recognise reason or even a good speech. If he had something to say, it was always deprecatory: he never really caught hold of the essence of someone else's speech, but merely scoffed at the person who had been so bold as to make it. His was not attack and logical criticism, but slander and insult - which he regarded as the core of an enjoyable debate, from his point of view.

The Debating societies were the only ones to meet on Sundays. On the other evenings there would be meetings of other societies, the Lingua Franca or Modern Languages Society, the Scientific ~~Society~~ Club, the Forum, Historical Bench, Geographical Society, Railway Society, and Leonardo Society. Of these, Bruno in his time only attended the Lingua Franca and the Railway Society, though ~~for a while~~ he was a short-lived member of the Scientific ~~Society~~ Club. Lingua Franca only started ~~up~~ in Bruno's third year at A.College, but it flourished and grew with great rapidity. There were lectures once every ten days, and ~~they~~ there would be on travel, or culture, or art, or customs in France and Spain, ~~mainly~~. Twice a term there was a film, one French and one Spanish, which ~~were~~ was usually very good. The Spanish films nearly always had a section on bull-fighting, to the great glee of one bull-fighting fan who attended the society's meetings. Besides the bull features, there would be a short section on Spanish politics, with views of processions involving his own Generalísimo, Franco, surrounded by a Moorish guard. Then came scenes of Spanish daily life, of life in Spain's ancient towns, life in the holiday resorts; there might be a documentary film on art, usually Baroque, or pictures from the Prado treated in minute detail. The French films were on the whole less interesting, though better produced. In a French film, geographical and economical surveys and lessons predominated over the artistic, of which there was little; on the other hand, to make up for the more serious views of life as seen by the Spaniards, there were ample tracts on skiing in the Alps, cave exploring and mountaineering. The weekly lectures, often illustrated with slides, would be given by masters for the most part, and a few might be given by actual members of the society; these were quite as good as films, and were sometimes excellent. One friend of Bruno's gave a gruesomely detailed account of life with the Incas; the illustrations he

showed were perhaps the best and most suitable - from Bruno's point of view - that he ever saw while at school. As Bruno was sharing a room with him during the term in which he prepared and gave the 'paper', as it was termed, he had the pleasant experience of watching ~~others~~ someone else at work trying to dig up enough material and make it presentable - enough material for a violently intelligent cross-section of the ~~boys~~ school, which had to last for the greater part of an hour. Having delivered his paper, ~~I~~ Mike had to retire to the school infirmary for a week so as to recover, having been overcome by fever on ending his lecture ! Another friend gave a lecture on the works of a certain Doré, French caricaturist of the nineteenth century. He was rather young, perhaps, for the task, but he was keen; one of the troubles of his lecture ~~was that~~ being that the illustrations he wanted to show were too large to fit into the epidiaioscope ! This kept everyone very amused for the length of the lecture. Tragedy occured, in the eyes of some, when a master who volunteered to give a lecture for the society had read all his material within less than fifteen minutes, having rushed through masses of illustrations at incredible speed lest he make the lecture last over-long ! Even Bruno gave a lecture, or rather a 'paper' as it should have been called. This he did in his penultimate term, the same term as he sat for a scholarship to Oxford, whose results may be made known later in the course of this book. He took all the material needed from a Diary ~~that~~ he kept while in Spain for his summer holidays. In the 'paper', he spoke ~~about~~ on Spanish traditions, habits, weaknesses: sometimes he went into great detail, at others, a few words were enough. One of the more interesting descriptions was of an old Spanish Taberna at Santander, called the 'Riojano', an account of a train-journey from the mountainous northern regions of Spain into the plain of Castile, and descriptions of some of Spain's greatest cathedrals, including León Cathedral and the Escorial. Later in the course of the term, three short articles on some of the features he described in his 'paper' appeared in the school journal, to his extreme delight. It was a pleasant experience giving a 'paper', seeing how to time it and so on: there was too much material to get through, he found, and he only had time to show three or four of some two dozen illustrations he had on Spanish art and architecture, which he had gone to Spain to study. The Railway Society was all right while it lasted, but when Bruno had joined it, he thought ~~that~~ the society's object was model trains, and not real, live ones; in real ones he was not so interested and, as in the Scientific ~~Society~~ Club, he discovered within a very short time that the interest shown by fellow-members was far too technical and scientific for him to be able to follow. Societies, however, were one of the school's main ~~supports~~ means of ~~in~~

preserving people's happiness of mind in the course of ~~the~~ two very arduous and exhausting winter terms; societies ceased to meet in the summer term, when it was possible to make more of use the neighbouring countryside ~~more~~ in one's free time, and enjoy the fresh air for a change.

At nine o'clock the bell rang its warning notes, and people retired either to their dormitory or their room. Lights went out early on Sundays, at ten in the evening if you had a room, and at nine-thirty instead of at nine-forty-five if you were still restricted to dormitory life.

This, again, would represent an ideal Sunday, and Sundays were not infallibly the same. The main point of interest in a Sunday as opposed to a normal day, lay in ~~that there was~~ time being little in the way of work to be done by compulsion. When Bruno was still at the bottom of the school he did no work at all on a Sunday - for he never regarded art as work; as he climbed the academical ladder he began to miss his art classes more and more frequently, until, in his term prior to taking a scholarship, he was unable to attend one single class. In his scholarship term, he spent every Sunday writing Spanish literature essays, which, in fact, he very much enjoyed doing. While at the bottom of the school he wrote a good deal of poetry, and also read a fair amount: he had been writing poetry irregularly since the age of eight, and he loved doing it. The only thing that made him gradually give up writing it, was that it took days to perfect a poem, and he never left a poem in a half-finished state if he could help it. Of course he not only wrote poetry on Sundays, but this was certainly his main opportunity for doing so. An other aspect of Sundays was the rugger matches and, in summer, the cricket matches. He enjoyed watching the school fifteen at work, especially in his last years at school. One of the pleasures of a Sunday afternoon lay in watching a good ~~school~~ match against a rival school such as Giggleswick or Sedburgh; it was usually very cold, with a biting wind; you went down to see the game all wrapt up in various coats and pullovers, buttoned up at the cracks with mufflers and layers of protective clothing. You shouted yourself well nigh hoarse for over an hour, ever speculating as to the probable result, and then, with the final whistle, you rushed back to the school buildings, a quarter of a mile away, changed into better clothes, and then fled up ~~to~~ for a warm cup of tea. In the summer you just lay on the grass and dreamed, ever and anon opening an eye in the direction of the score-board; cricket, in Bruno's opinion, was dull, and too slow and gentlemanly: he very certainly pre--ferred rugger.

Whatever people said about the religious services, Sundays were definitely days of rest: they meant peace and quiet, time to think and relax, and a change of routine

INTERLUDE

A Lull in a Storm. - 1953 -

Trees, darkness, jagged flashes
Of lightning downwards streaking.
Rain, noise, a river rushes
Fast by a woman weeping.

Silence sudden, wind at rest:
Bird disturbed rebuilds its nest.
Clouds disperse, dark light ensues,
Tragic Moon, nocturnal ruse !

WEDNESDAYS

Whereas Sunday provided a day's rest indoors, almost an organised rest, on Wednesdays you could take your rest away from the school buildings, and you were indeed encouraged to do so. Sunday did not rank really high in schoolboy esteem, but Wednesday was the next best thing after a whole holiday: thus it is clear that what people were after most, was a time when they no longer needed to follow any routine at all. Sunday had a routine of its own, even if it was a simple one, and less intricate than on the normal day : Wednesday only kept the normal, every day routine until twelve o'clock in the afternoon, from which time onwards you could do practically as you liked: after twelve o'clock there was no such thing as rout--ine. In the course of a normal week you regarded Sunday with satisfaction: there at least you could write your letters and read a book, and work was at a minimum: Sunday was a day of restrained rest, rest to be devoured mainly within the school buildings, mainly in the House common-room or your own room, if you had one. Yet Sunday, with all its tranquility, had a routine that persevered all day long, without at any stage giving up. But Wednesday was different: in the course of the week you thought of Sunday with satisfaction, but of Wednesday with hope and exhilaration. Wednesday meant unrestrained freedom - or as unrestrained as any sensible person might desire - and no discipline or routine was forced upon you after mid-day: you could leave the buildings when you chose - with permission - and go wherever you chose - again with permission, which was almost always granted.

Wednesday was liberation day, day of hope, day of unrestraint. You were woken at the normal time - ten past seven - there was Mass, then breakfast, then work until eleven o'clock. At the eleven o'clock interval there would ~~not be any~~ be no P.T., and there would be one last class or prep from eleven-fifteen until twelve o'clock. Then things started moving, if you were that sort of person; for the Wednesday afternoon was committed entirely into your own hands to do with as you liked; if you decided to waste it and do nothing, nobody minded; if you were determined to go all out, make a pig of youself eating cakes, or cycling hundreds of miles, or fishing, or anything.... nobody minded. At twelve o'clock, once the Angelus bell had stopped tolling, you put your books away as fast as you could and made for your house. It was at this time of the Wednesday that you were expected to obtain per--mission for whatever you intended doing in the afternoon, or else , if you placed your pocket-money for safety in the Housemaster's hands, you could now draw it for use in the afternoon.

In his first years at A.College, Bruno either went to Helmsley for the afternoon,

or else to the school lakes. Later on, graced with the help of a bicycle and more pocket-money, he went further afield, to Kirbymoorside, or Wass, or Coxwold, or even, in the other direction, to Malton. At first, however, he found quite enough satisfaction in going just to Helmsley. He would queue up at the bus-stop, behind the school buildings, and catch the twelve-twenty bus into Helmsley: it was usually crowded with villagers or else with fellow adventurers from the school, and Bruno often had to stand for the twenty minute trip. Arriving at Helmsley, he invariably made straight for Allenby's Café, where he hid himself discreetely in a corner at the back so as not to be seen. He never discovered for certain whether or not it was allowed to have what he had at that time of day. He would order three or more crumpets, toasted, and perhaps a slice of toast as well, with a cup of tea to match. As he progressed up the school he changed gradually from crumpets to toast and poached egg, and from a mere cup of tea to pots of it. In the summer terms, when Wednesdays were different, almost non-existent, he would not have as much time free, and then he would have tea-cakes and tea. In the summer term there were 'cricket afternoons' when there would be no work until six in the evening: this happened then three times a week, but you were not free in the same sense as in the winter term Wednesday. There was compulsory cricket almost every time, and even when there was not any, you had to have lunch in the house with the rest, and were thus only free from about two in the afternoon, instead of from twelve. Only in the two winter terms could you do as you chose from twelve o'clock onwards.

Bruno would eat as much as he could on a Wednesday afternoon - for in the days when he had this habit of eating at Allenby's café on a Wednesday, the food was still cheap. After four years at A.College, the food crept up in price to weird fortunes. While at first a good tea cost about one and nine at the most, when Bruno was in his last year it was about three shillings; such was the cost of living. Thus Bruno made the most of this world, eating when food was cheap and buyable, and when it went up in price taking to the study of ruins instead of to a further study of victuals. He very much enjoyed this habit of having something at Allenby's on a Wednesday. It was a change to be able to order whatever you liked, and then to be able to eat it as you liked, and pay for it afterwards: it was good to be able to eat in silence for a change, and it was to a certain extent thrilling to know that perhaps you were not allowed to do as he was doing at this time of the Wednesday afternoon: finally, it was an escape from his fellow-tortured.

After this welcome repast, Bruno emerged, with a pleasant feeling in his stomach, rattling the remainder of the money in his pocket, and making slowly for the

nearest Bank - as they all closed at three o'clock.

One may wonder why it was that Bruno frequented Banks, wherever he went, and especially when he was still about fifteen or sixteen years old - and indeed for a while afterwards. It was not because he was a miser, and loved the sight of piles of gleaming cupro-nickel or nickel-silver - in the place of traditional silver and gold. Nor did he have a vast account at the Bank, on which to draw as he chose. Bruno was an amateur numismatist, and almost a fanatical one for three or more years. He genuinely loved the feel of ancient silver pieces between his fingers; he adored working out the worn legends on the coins, studying the heads of the sovereigns, the changes in the lettering, size and purity of the English monetary system, which he ~~always~~ remained convinced was the best in the world. Whenever he went to Helmsley, he made it a point to see the Bank workers and typists, and ask them if they had anything out of the ordinary in ~~at that time~~ then; quite often they did, certainly whenever people from the neighbourhood and the small Yorkshire villages died, at a colossal old age; then indeed the Banks were ~~for a time~~ inundated with Victorian half-crowns, florins, shillings and other curious pieces. The trouble ~~then~~ was ~~to see if~~ whether he had enough money on him with which to pay them for their pieces, which they were all too willing to exchange for more modern currency. Sometimes, of course, there were bank managers who were troublesome enough to collect pieces themselves, which considerably irritated Bruno. On the whole, however, the Bank workers were very helpful and interesting people, always willing to hunt round their tills and cash-boxes for odd pieces, if they suspected they had any at the time. This sport - or study - of hunting coins, gave Bruno a very pleasant hobby for quite a long time, and even when he no longer so fanatically searched ~~out~~ for old pieces, he had by then acquired an eye for pieces of value; he could tell one coin from another, and had developed a consider--able taste for certain pieces as opposed to others. Finally, even when no longer madly interested in coins, he had a fairly valuable collection, housed proudly in an elegant case, which, being a true case, was uncarriable about, and had to be left at home. The point is that this hobby really gave him something to do: it meant visiting old villages - which is always a pleasant experience -, looking round junk shops, speaking to odd characters, and it had a smack of the business-like about it, in the form of bargaining and heckling over prices and possible values.

This, then, was one of the most urgent motives Bruno had for visiting Helmsley: there were as many as five banks to a minute township, or rather, a large village.

Enough to keep him moving in the little time he usually spent there, before returning to school. After touring the Banks, he might buy some more batteries for his torch - they were used up at an incredible rate - or else buy some provis--ions for the evening. That done, he could elect between saving what remained of his money, by walking back to the school, some four miles away, or else between catching the three-fifteen bus back to the school. Catching this bus usually meant rather a rush, so as a rule he preferred to walk back, especially in his later days at the school, when the cost of living had so steeply risen.

It was a pleasant walk, up hill and down again all the way. There was a steep climb on the other side of Helmsley, and once you had reached the top, about a mile from Helmsley, you could see over many miles of valley below you. Then there was a fairly level stretch for half a mile, with the large Duncombe estate on your right and fields on the left. After a while you reached the road branching off to Sproxton, a tiny, sprawling village just out of sight from the main road; you passed an almost model-size, square church, with a miniature, well-trimmed lawn and garden in front; ~~and~~ then you plunged steeply down a giddy, spiralling bend of a hill, down into the plain below. ~~Again,~~ For a time all was level, and ~~then~~ you suddenly entered the realms of thickly wooded forests, and, with them, the realms of steady, painfully constant hills. You branched off to the right for the school, up a narrow, tortuous lane of a road, with pine needles covering the edges ~~of the road~~ up to (almost) its centre. It was a dark road, sheltered, silent, with dense wood on either side, hanging sullenly over it: there was an atmosphere of mystery and lingering death here in winter-time, though in summer it was wel--comly cool and shady. There was hardly ever a person to be seen in this part of the world. When you reached the top of this gradually rising slope, which continued for a good half-mile, you branched swiftly to the left, up a track of gravel, with wood, somewhat thinner, on your left, and open fields on your right. It was still uphill until you were almost vertically above the school; then you plunged at a furious pace down what was called 'Bolton Bank' from the name of the houses below, where you again met the main road, which made a detour round Oswald--Kirk before passing the school.

This, then, was one of the many ways in which Bruno might spend a Wednesday afternoon, and one of the chief ways he did spend them in his two earlier years ~~at the school~~ there. Then, he was concerned with his belly and his coins: later on, he still returned frequently to Helmsley, again for better meals, and often just for the love of a good country walk, which this route most certainly provided: and there was always the old Castle at Helmsley, romantic and forsaken.

INTERLUDE

On writing letters.

Mike Friend: "Hey, come here."

Bruno : "Oh, what do you want now ?"

Mike Friend: "Hey come here: look, I'm trying to write a letter home."

Bruno : (Looks at letter) "Well ?"

Mike Friend: "I didn't say you could look!".

Bruno : "Actually,.... you did..."

Mike Friend: "Oh please be sensible. Look, I'm trying to write a letter and I can't think of anything to say. Any suggestions ?"

Silence.

Mike Friend: "Oh come on, can't you think of anything to say?" .... "I've just got to get this letter written by lunchtime. I haven't written for three weeks now and Dad'll be furious and he'll write a nasty note and then I'll be in a proper mess. Can't you think of something to say ? Oh come on; I thought you were brainy ? You're useless !"

Bruno : "Hold on a moment while I think. I'm just trying to remember....."

Silence.

Mike Friend: "Oh do hurry up:it's getting terribly late and I've only written half a line so far: well ?"

Bruno : "Did you mention the weather ?".... "Did you say it rained all Thursday ?"

Mike Friend: "Yes. I've done that already: anything else ?"

Bruno : "I suppose you dropped a hint that there is a holiday next Wednesday ? ... well ? you know, ... for some more pocket-money ?"

Mike Friend: "I haven't got such a short memory: I dropped that hint in the letter I wrote three weeks ago".

Bruno : "Well you can always remind your parents - or whoever it is you're writing to: they haven't all got such a good memory".

Mike Friend: "Oh, ... all right". (scribbles frantically: then stops.) "Any other ideas ?"

Bruno : (with a start) "Oh sorry, I wasn't really thinking. You said you wanted some ideas for a letter, ... ?"

Mike Friend: (in agony) "Do you mean to tell me that you've been standing here....?"

Bruno : (hurridly) " .... and did you mention that we beat St.Bede's in the inter-house league on Saturday ? and lick Giggleswick on Sunday ? Oh, and didn't you say anything about that scene when old Bunse nearly blew up poor old Bobby for

singing too loudly in his bath after prayers ? ... and, heavens, surely you told them about your being promoted to a Corporal in Corps ?"

Mike
~~Friend~~: (interrupts wildly) "Go easy: you've got nothing to say and then you suddenly spout like a chimney: in any case I wasn't made a Corporal: you must be thinking of old XYZ in St.Thomas's ? Aren't you !"

Bruno : (looks intelligent) "Well, you can tell them you weren't made a corporal, and (changing the subject)..... what about your being chosen for the fourth XV ?"

Mike
~~Friend~~: "What about it ?"

Bruno : "Well, you can say you were picked can't you, and tell them that old Donell gave you an alpha-query-triple-minus for your Spanish essay on the comparative whatever it was ?"

Mike
~~Friend~~: "Oh thanks ! I'd quite forgotten that" (he scribbles on).

Bruno : (hurriedly) " and don't forget to say that your essay on Molière's sub-plots only got you a beta-gamma...."

Mike
~~Friend~~: "Oh can't you ever stop talking .... shop ?"

Bruno : "And you can tell them you had a letter from your girl-friend on Friday - come on, I saw you open it ! ... and tell them you are enjoying yourself like mad".

Mike
~~Friend~~: "But I'm not !"

Bruno : "Well you can tell them you aren't enjoying yourself - and would like some more cake please, come on (pleadingly), and what about your sister ?".

Mike
~~Friend~~: "And what about her ?"

Bruno : "Oh come on, be sensible: what do you mean, what about her ? ... you know, is she well after those boils she had last holidays ? And you can always drag in the dog, old what do you call him...? "

Mike
~~Friend~~: "Shags, and don't you be so disrespectful of..."

Bruno : "well, what are you worried about? - that's plenty to talk about for the time being, and there's always the pen you broke and that puncture you had when you were returning ....

Mike
~~Friend~~: "It wasn't a puncture, I told you before: it was a fracturing of the rear.."

Bruno : "Well you can say you didn't have a puncture, but that it was a fracture...."

Mike
~~Friend~~: "Oh scram ..! thanks by the way and all that .... I haven't got long now".

Bruno : "You're telling me ... and don't forget to mention that old Teapot was tanned yesterday ... and that you may get tanned yet " (he disappears fast) .

WEDNESDAYS

The other way in which he used to spend his time ~~at first~~ on Wednesdays was in going to the Lakes: this he still did at times in his last few years there, but for different motives. The journey over to the Lakes had to be done ~~by~~ on foot, certainly ~~so~~ as long as Bruno was not in the Sixth form: even when he was there, the road, more of a track than anything else, proved often to be more mud than gravel. To go to the Lakes, you usually put on some old clothes, for you could never tell whether it was going to rain once you arrived, and there ~~would not be~~ was no ~~any~~where to shelter . Besides, over at the Lakes it was not as clean as in the school itself. All the paths were muddy, all the trees were wet, and, well, Lakes were made of water - and you never knew if you were going to fall in or be thrown in once you were there.

There were three lakes. There was the main one, where all the sailing and rowing, fishing and bathing was done: there was the second lake, smaller and narrower, which was covered with a layer of weeds, very beautiful but not fit for anything, even swimming. Then there was the top lake - for, working from this one, the others lay progressively more and more downhill, - a lake more like a pond, with about twenty yards of almost dry reeds on either side: it was said that a lone fish or two could occasionally be snared out of its complacency in this little hole of water, and that, if caught, would be found to weigh about eight or nine pounds and look somewhat like a coelocanth.

The main reason for going to the Lakes - which was the name usually given to the first, largest and lowest of the lakes - was so as to be allowed to have a sail. In the summer you went for a swim. Bruno also paid a certain amount of interest in the sea scouts, who always met at the Lakes on Wednesday afternoons. He used to help in preparing the meals, which was fun and meant that you could work in comparative comfort beside blazing fires, and have carts of food at your power. Often he helped ~~in~~ chopping wood, ~~in~~ generally making himself useful, and ~~in~~ rigging fireflies. Occasionally he was allowed to have a sail, or more often ~~to~~ row. If you made yourself useful enough, you were allowed to partake of the sea-scouts' afternoon meal over at the Lakes, which Bruno of course always tried to do. Later in his career, he went over to the Lakes merely to be away from the school buildings, to have a good walk, and to enjoy the very rich scenery 'round the Lakes. Dominating the Lakes there was Temple Hill, and from this hill you had a really excellent view for miles - and you could see over to Sutton Bank, some five miles away, and see the Lakes with antlike people low at your feet.

INTERLUDE

Brief Satire.

It is a Monday evening, and the scene is set in a smaller school classroom, with only two boys and a master present - the teaching technique being based somewhat on the tutorial system.

Mac Master: "Now, I would like you to do me an essay on 'Baroque' art in Spain by...."

Frederic: "By when ?.... Sir ?".

Mac Master: "If you'd just let me finish what I was saying instead of so rudely inter-
-rupting my sentence, you'd know, wouldn't you ? Now let me finish my sentence."

Frederic: "I'm terribly sorry Sir: I didn't mean to interrupt you but I just wanted to know when you wanted it in by ... because you see...."

Mac Master: "If you'd just let me finish my sentence you'd know."

Frederic: "Sorry Sir; I'll keep quiet in future."

Mac Master: "As I was saying, when I was so rudely interrupted ...."

Bruno: "Oh please Sir ? I wanted to ask you something frightfully important ..."

Frederic: "Oh shut up, can't you ? Can't you see Mr. M. is busy saying something ?"

Bruno: "Oh, I'm awfully sorry, I wasn't paying attention: I mean, ..."

Mac Master: (Patiently) "As I was saying, before the class so rudely interrupted..."

Bruno and Frederic: "But there are only two of us !"

Mac Master: ".... you wouldn't have to ask if you'ld only let me finish my sentence !"

Bruno and Frederic: "Yes Sir !".

Mac Master: "...it should be in my locker without fail not later than Wednesday night at nine o'clock: ...and I'm not accepting any excuses if...."

Frederic: "Oh, but please Sir ?"

Mac Master: (ignoring Frederic's interjection) "... it's late in: clear Frederic ? clear Bruno ?.... and now turn to the end of scene four act one of the...."

Frederic: "I'm sorry Sir, but....!"

Mac Master: "Now don't sound so indignant Frederic ! You frighten me !"

Frederic: "I'm sorry Sir. I only meant to tell you I can't possibly have it in by Wednesday .... would Sunday be any good ?"

Mac Master: (indignantly) "Certainly not ! If Bruno can do it you can do it by..."

Bruno: (taking the accidental hint) "But Sir, I can't either !" ... "not possibly !"

Mac Master: "And why not ?"

Bruno: "Um, ... um..... because ....um...."

Frederic: (taking his chance) "Because I've got a music class after this, and to-
-morrow I don't have any free time, and on Wednesday I've got to do old Charly's

....I mean Mr.C's, French prose ... you know, twice a week a wacking long piece, and then I won't ~~have~~ even have had time to start preparing your essay: even on Thursday I'm booked all day ...."

Bruno: (Feeling he's going rather far) "Well, how about Friday lunchtime.... not a minute later I promise !"

The Master ponders deeply, scratches his chin with a biro, and reflects further.

~~Master~~ Mac: "Well, just this once: and don't let it be in a minute late or else...."

Frederic: "That's awfully decent of you, honestly Sir !"

~~Master~~ Mac: "And now let's get on with some work !"

It is Saturday evening of the same week: class meets again in the same room.

~~Master~~ Mac: (Chuckles) "Well Frederic ? And why no prep. ?"

Frederic: "I just haven't had time; really Sir, I'm overworked. Look, if you'll give me till to-morrow night at nine ...."

~~Master~~ Mac: "Without fail ! ..... And now let's do some work...."

It is Monday evening of the next week: same people, same surroundings.

Frederic: (As master sweeps into the classroom) "Oh please Sir, I've almost finished your essay on .... what was it ? ....um.... oh yes, on Baroque art in ...."

~~Master~~ Mac: "In Spain. Good. Nice to know you've started, anyway. Try and have it in by Wednesday, will you ?"

Frederic: (With dignity) "Yes. I'll try my level best !"

Bruno: "Oh ? you're still on that one .... ?"

Frederic: "Oh will you shut up ! Just because you've done it for once ! And please Sir, could you give me some ideas on Baroque ... as I'm stuck for something to say at the moment ?"

~~Master~~ Mac: "Who's doing the essay ? You or ~~me~~ I ? .... you can consult A., B., & C. on the subject if you want something to say .... and I don't want you to copy it all out word for word."

Frederic: "Yes Sir" (with resignation in his voice)

Four weeks later, on a Monday evening; same people, same class.

~~Master~~ Mac: "Well Frederic ? anything to say for yourself ?"

Frederic: "Um .....um.....well you know Sir .....um....."

Bruno : "Oh you're not still on that one, are you ?"

~~Master~~ Mac: (Conclusively) "I think you'd better see your housemaster to-night: I'll tell him he can be expecting you !"

Frederic: "Well, I suppose I have had long enough ..... (Silence)"

WEDNESDAYS

Once Bruno was in the Sixth form, ~~which was~~ half way through his third year at A.College, ~ vast new possibilities lay before him. There were many hundreds of things he had always wanted to see since he had first put up in this part of the Yorkshire countryside, many things he had wanted to do, places he had always wished to visit. Now was his opportunity, armed strongly with curiosity and a bicycle, with sufficient pocket-money and plenty of determination.

He began to visit Kirbymoorside, which previously had lain just too far away to be visitable on a Wednesday, and as well as Kirbymoorside, there was Malton. Kirbymoorside was a small town, or a large village, slightly larger, only very slightly, than Helmsley. It was rather more picturesque, and had more possibil--ities, as it sprawled on the side of a hill.

It was a fairly stiff cycle from Helmsley to Kirbymoorside, as Helmsley lay in a low valley, formed by the River Rye, and Kirbymoorside was altogether higher up. To reach Kirbymoorside, Bruno usually took the road that led down into a canyon, over a sort of ford, where everything looked as it might have done some thousands of years ago. It was a steep plunge from the high ground above, down into the twilight of the forest-darkened gorge. At the bottom of the gorge was a small river, usually almost dried up, with short stretches of very shallow, stagnant, dark-coloured water. On the other side of the gorge, hidden from most approaches, were the Kirkdale caves. You entered through one solitary hole half way up an almost sheer cliff, whose surface was treacherously covered in a layer of slippery clay. It was said that through the tunnels - or one of them - you could reach Kirbymoorside, about a mile and a half away. Bruno only once tried to test this legend for himself, and almost with disastrous consequences. One Wednesday after--noon, armed with a torch and a packet of matches, dressed in jeans and a wind--cheater, he made for the caves, and entered them. He tried first of all the tunnel on the extreme left, but soon returned, as it ended up with a blank wall. He then tried the tunnel on the extreme right, and with better success: he crept on for some twenty yards and then, spying a tunnel bearing off to the left, decided to follow it. This he should not have done: to enter this side tunnel, you had to lie almost flat on the ground and squirm your way in: once in, there was almost room enough to stand. But while making his way in, the bulb in his torch was smashed. He fumbled for the matches, realising at once that it would now be impossible to continue without a torch: he found the box, and tried to light a match. Just as it was about to flare up, a huge drop of water fell, silently,

bitterly, on both flame and matchbox, which was open in Bruno's hand. It soaked the head of every single match in the box. Bruno was undecided as to what to do: he thought powerfully for a few minutes, to the steady drip, drip, of the cold, destructive water falling from the roof: every now and again a drop went sliding clammily down his neck ... and he shivered in the coldness of the tunnel. He went on trying to strike a light for quite a time, then gave up in disgust; he must make for the entrance as fast as possible. He wondered if there were still wolves in England ... knowing that they liked caves ... and hurried on his way out. At every step he knocked his head against the low roof, bumped his knees into a hole in the floor or on a ~~bump with a sharp point~~ projection. The ground was wet, with lumps of slimy clay on all sides of him: he slithered and groped his way out ... and at one time seriously thought ~~that~~ he ~~might have~~ had taken the wrong turning back, for no light lay ahead. That was the last time he visited the Kirkdale caves.

Kirbymoorside was about a mile and a half further on: once you had passed the caves, the ground went up steeply on the other side of the canyon, and then flat--tened out. One of Bruno's main delights was an antique shop. It was the only one within about ten miles of the school, and the owner often had old coins: very unfortunately, he usually seemed to know their value ... and when he did not, then Bruno was invariably short of money. When he returned on the following Wednesday, there would, invariably, be none left. All the same, it was an interesting little junk heap, full of keys and Victorian pictures, broken beds and dirty china. Bes--ides this antique shop there was a bank, where Bruno once made an excellent haul, and at the same time made friends with one of the Bankers, whom he was to visit many a time afterwards. Otherwise, however, Kirbymoorside had little to offer: there were many cake shops, many pubs, and a few garages. The town, or village, was interesting, rather, for its own sake. For its old-fashioned houses, the old, winding streets, the quietness and, on market-days, a far heavier amount of traffic than Helmsley could ever boast. One of Bruno's reasons for going to Kirbymoorside was so as to have a good afternoon's cycle, with little prospect of having to spend vast amounts: on the way to Kirbymoorside you passed through a number of small villages, consisting of one main street with a line of houses on either side, and little else. Most of the land round about was agricultural, with either meadows or thin copses, ~~with~~ and the occasional ploughed field in between. There was, certainly, nothing highly dramatic about this stretch of countryside, but the road was a good one, and so was the view ~~from it too~~.

Cycling to Malton was an altogether different proposition. To start with, it

was a good thirteen miles from the school, which meant a journey of twenty-six miles return. The landscape was far more interesting, however, which made up for this extra worry over the distances involved. It was a beautiful run from the top of Oswaldkirk Bank, down steep hills, under towering bridges, and along a gently cur--ving, level road, into the half-way village of Hovingham. As with most of the villages in that part of Yorkshire, everything was in grey stone, with the village church dominating the centre of the Hovingham community. Once you had reached this little village, however, the hard work began. So far all had been downhill work: from here to Malton it was more or less uphill, with gentle slopes into romantic villages of some dozen houses en route. Just outside Hovingham was a quarry: there the road dipped sharply ~~as you passed~~, and you flashed past with a deafening roar of heavy machinery in your ears, and the occasional sound of dynamite exploding in the near distance. Every village you sped through after Hovingham seemed to be the same: there was little to tell the one from the other, except a well-known dip in the road here, or a fork off there. You entered Malton from a steepish angle, speeding rapidly down into the very centre.

Malton was the nearest town to the school, and it certainly was a town. For the boys from school, the main feature of interest lay in music shops, where keen ~~jazz~~ pop fans spent whole Wednesday afternoons listening to the heart-rending wail of a squeaky record mimicking ~~Luis Armstrong~~ Glen Miller. Bruno usually went to Malton with a friend from his own house, a native of Newcastle called, among friends, Jimmy: he was a keen aeroplane enthusiast, firstly building models, and then flying in genuine jets at various R.A.F. camps in England. One of his greatest joys in life was his bicycle, a sleek, extremely light, red affair, capable of extravagant speeds. Bruno got on very well with him, although Bruno to all appearances was no mecanic. They used to ride in on cold winter days (together), taking about fifty minutes for the journey there, and just over an hour to get back. It was a cold affair in winter, and Bruno always found his feet frozen up by the time they were near Malton. Once in the town, they made for a cycle shop where Jimmy had business - for friends as a rule, paying their bills for them, as they stayed back at school listening to the house wireless in the warm comfort of the common room. It was an odd shop. You crept up a steep side street, and then dipped round a sharp corner into a back--garden. There they left their bicycles, and walked stiffly, coldly, up a flight of wooden steps into an attic or loft, where the owner worked. It was rather a mournful hideaway, grimy with oil and cobwebs; but the owner was an extremely pleasant man, very fond of cycling, and a lover of the Yorkshire moors - and boys.

They used to spend as much as half an hour in that loft, generally chatting and trying to get warm once more after the ferociously cold ride to Malton. The owner would discuss competition in the cycle trade, the individual shop-keeper's hard--ships, and lack of customers. As Jimmy could have gone on talking all day - one of his more pleasant qualities when used at the appropriate time - Bruno would start dropping hints on the lateness of the hour after a while, and, slowly, they would make for the door, grope their way down the steps and go off once again on their waiting mounts.

Jimmy, as a rule, with musical 'pop' fans of his own, made for a record shop and bought a record, sometimes, if asked, several - some of them for friends at school. After the musical items, which Bruno did not really mind, though classical music was more congenial to his ear, they made either for a food establishment, where they bought provisions for the Wednesday evening visiting programme, or else for a large sized café on the way out of Malton. They visited this second building almost infallibly, and when Bruno came by himself to Malton, which was rarely, he would still pay it a visit. It was a clean, new place, and they would have toast and tea there, making it eke out until the time came for their return to the school. At that time of day - about half past three in the afternoon - the place would be almost deserted, with not more than perhaps three or four old women present; so they would be served quite rapidly, dressed even as they were in old flannels and windcheaters, definitely rather infra-dig as far as the proprietors would be con--cerned - which they never were. It was most agreeable having this rest, seated in comfortable semi-armchairs, drinking warm tea at a leisurely speed: it was both reviving and necessary, seeing the long journey back that lay ahead.

Laden with various stores, some legal, others not so, they began the slow trip home. It was usually just after four when they rode out of the town, up the steady slope, with darkness rapidly falling. They would switch on lights as late as pos--sible, as a dynamo on the job slows down a bicycle incredibly. High over the moors, with low land on their right, and the setting sun on the left, they sped rapidly onwards, silently through village after village, up slopes, hurtling down again, ever on, with the dark night fast closing about them. The sunset was often wonderful, for they would be seeing it from a high tract of country, where the air was pure and unspoilt by smoke of any sort. These Yorkshire twilights prepared Bruno for what he was to see later in Spain, where all is majestic, and where the Spanish dusk is almost supernaturally brilliant, dramatic and impressive. The miles ticked slowly past. Soon it was impossible to see further than the end

of the beam cast by one's front light; then one's whole existence consisted of in listening patiently to the gentle humming of the dynamo, the murmur of the tyres slipping steadily, evenly over the ground, with blackness all around. On some days they had to contend against strong head-winds, on others against driving rain - or even snow. It was always cold, and on arriving back at the house their faces would be flushed, their limbs aching with exhaustion and cold. They usually ate well at supper.

On the whole, even when he had a bicycle and was in the Sixth form, Bruno rarely went further afield than Malton or Kirbymoorside. Sometimes he paid a passing glance at Gilling, but there was nothing to do there except have tea at the Fairfax. There was always Oswaldkirk, with its three or four shops, and Ampleforth Village, with just one or two more. Also in that direction was Wass, an empty, silent but beautiful place, and then Coxwold, scarcely more inhabited and lively. Of course Coxwold had just one attraction that the other villages could not boast : it had a really interesting church, which the other villages had not. It had a church with an octagonal tower, which seemed to be rather a rare occurence. It was a fine building, rather darkened with age, while the interior was yet odder. It could boast a horseshoe altar-rail, the first, and probably last, of its kind: it was an amusing idea, it was original, but as far as Bruno could see, in no way a practical one.

In his last summer term - the architectural ruin one - he once made a bold attempt in paying Crayke a short visit. He had never been there before, and relied enti--rely on his map: no-one he knew had ever been there before, or particularly wanted to go. Bruno went with a Michael, stoic mathematician with an odd sense of humour, at times a trifle irritating, but on the whole, well, a firm friend. He was about half a year younger than Bruno, with jet black hair, usually somewhat unkempt, and with an untidy, straggling look about it; he was a native of Pudsey, and had in--herited something of the Pudsey dialect, unfortunately for him, as he was for ever being teased about it. He was short and stocky - and was gifted with a truly in--credible ability for putting away food, which he often did in a somewhat unruly fashion. They cycled there together, on a hot day, with signs of a possible storm. It was a hilly ride, at times deliriously exciting, with true Yorkshire gradients at every bend of the road - nor were the roads unduly broad at any time ! There was not very much time left in which to see the Castle, and also the adjacent church, when eventually they arrived. The first impression of the castle was a magnificent one; ~~at first sight~~ it stood like an eagle, lone sentinel on a jagged cliff, proud

possessor of the surrounding plains, low-lying at its feet. At the base of the hill on which the castle was perched there was a small wood, and this wound a grace--ful way for itself up the flank of the hill, and through its midst ran the road. They gathered speed, ready to assault this mighty slope, but soon dismounted. They slowly walked up, pushing their bikes before them. The castle, castlewise, was surrounded by a wall - but a recent addition, as it did not seem to suit the castle in any way. When they had reached the front they saw the castle in its now naked glory. It was but one square chunk of grey stone: each section of stone was of vast dimensions, and there were only about thirty at the most from ground-level to the scanty battlements. Nonetheless it was far from impressive now; it had been repointed recently - perhaps totally rebuilt - and it looked rather a feeble, non-u imitation of what had once been a magnificent edifice. It still had a charm, that was undisputable, and held a wonderful view of the plains below: but it could no longer be termed a true castle, barely more than a minor fort. Bruno was disap--pointed, and sought to alleviate ~~it~~ this by entering the building; it was private, he was informed, and the owner was absent. More vexing yet ! There was nothing to be done about it, however, and resignedly they both made for the church next door. The church was of the same type. Probably Mediaeval, with vast blocks of stone, not more than twenty of them, if that, from ground to roof. The tower was squat, bold and tough: the whole place ran with gargoyles - and very good ones too. They certainly looked as though they could serve their original purpose, that of scaring away evil spirits. They looked so frightening that Bruno expected them at any moment to start spouting jets of evil water over his unprotected head. The interior of the church was not in any way extraordinary. It was dignified, silent and simple - looking as though the weekly congregation might consist of the vicar and one, ancient, married couple, at the most. There was an odd pulpit in a corner, Jacobean, according to a notice Bruno saw elsewhere, ~~and gave~~ giving an impression of a mysterious past: it was rigid, with something like a candle-holder at one side, altogether spooky and quaint: you expected to see a dapper spectre appear, with 'Jacobus' written over ~~his~~ its forehead, and start pronouncing solemn condemnation of the popish spirit. Besides a hewn-up altar-stone of giant dimensions that lay in a corner of the church, reminding Bruno of a similar altar-stone that once be--longed to Byland Abbey, near his school, and was now in the possession and use of the school Abbey church, there was little of interest. They ~~rapidly~~ went out into the fresh air, and cycled back to the school through Brandsby. So much for a Wednesday afternoon, exploring the less known wonders of the Yorkshire moors.

INTERLUDE

The Ballad of Misfortune

- 1954 -

I took to sea, still young in years,
Far, far away went I.
And realised, with many tears,
I missed what was not nigh.

I used to dream, when far away,
Of home and its delights,
Of faded fields where once I lay,
And other pleasing sights.

Twice twenty years ago left I,
I went as midnight came:
The ship was small, I gave a cry -
'Misfortune' was its name.

We sailed out fast, the little bay
Was soon left far behind.
Not long had passed before the day
Cast light upon my mind.

Why had I left, I wondered soon,
The home of my delight ?
Save for the Moon no soul had seen
My fast and fearful flight.

A week passed by, yet was I sad,
I knew I had done wrong.
I'd found no friend, the fare was bad,
The vessel none too strong.

Nigh on a year we saw no land,
But sea and sky alone,
Then all rejoiced to sea some sand
'Round cliffs of gleaming stone.

The cliffs rose black into the sky,
The sand around lay white;
There came no sound - no seagull's cry -
'Twas silent as the night.

We onwards sailed, but could not reach
That island of Despair.
Three days passed by - still was that beach
As distant as the air.

When dawned the fourth, no sun came out,
The sky was overcast.
The rain poured down, the crew did shout
Beneath the icy blast.

The sea rose high, the big green waves
Came sweeping o'er the deck.
The sailors prayed and worked like slaves,
Yet soon we were a wreck.

The Ballad of Misfortune (Cont.)

Fate had it that I held a mast -
Perhaps it was an oar ?
A full day passed - then I was cast
Still living, on a shore.

When I revived, it was to see
A dank and dirty place.
An old man's hand, gnarled as a tree,
Caressed my weary face.

His beard was tousled, thick and grey,
His hair had seen no comb.
His face like oak, tanned by the day,
This hut his only home.

I called aloud "Where am I now,
How long have I been here ?"
The answer came "Two days I trow,
You'll stay more than a year !"

"There has not been a vessel seen
For many years all-told.
This little isle, no royal demesne,
Will hold you till you're old !".

Twice fifteen years and one were passed
Before a ship hove to.
O wretched day when I was cast
Sole living from the crew !

A schooner came, drew near the shore,
Furled sail and slowly stopped.
Down plunged the anchor with a roar,
And then a life-boat dropped.

When evening came, we could not see
That island's dreadful shore.
The sails were full, the waves flowed free,
We flew as ne'er before.

For eight long years that schooner sailed,
It sailed the seven seas;
And then, at last, my home was hailed:
I blessed God on my knees.

WEDNESDAYS

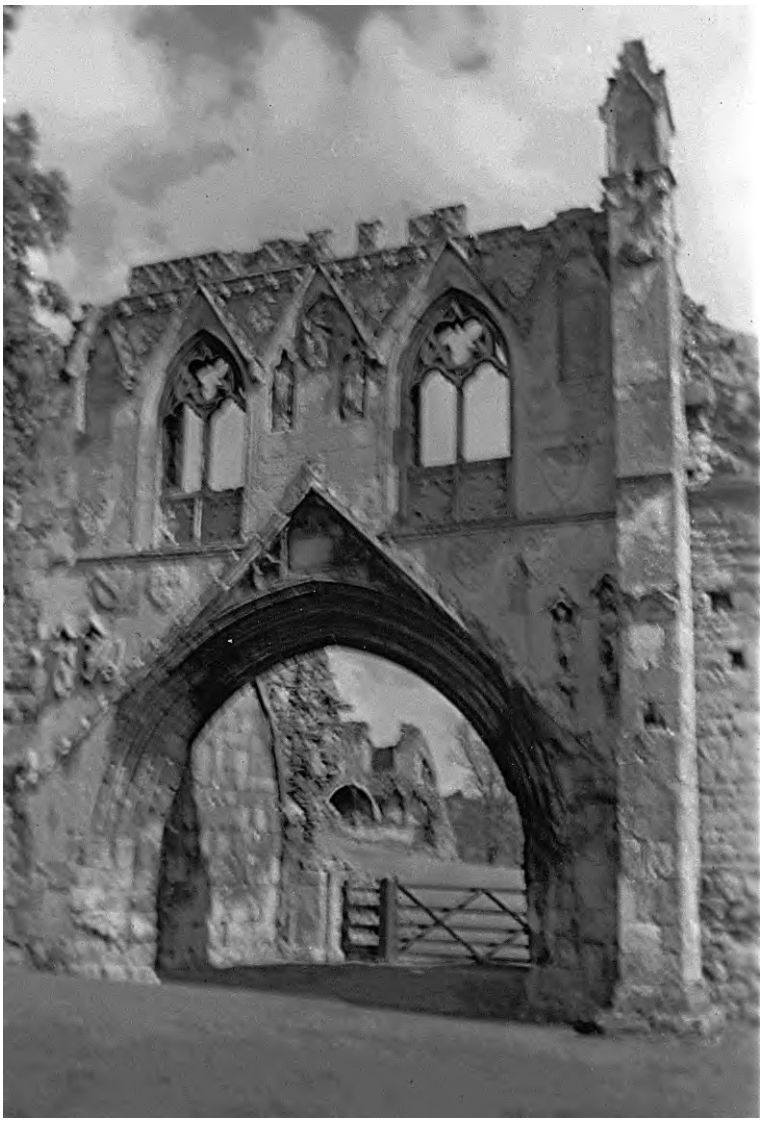
In his last summer term at A.College, Bruno used to spend hours and hours poring over maps of the neighbouring countryside. He was looking for ruins, and unfortunately there seemed to be a shortage once Rivaux, Fountains and Byland had been inspected. However, he one day discovered, by consulting his Pickering District chart, that there was a Priory, in ruins, in what seemed a cyclable dis--tance from the school.

On a summer Wednesday you are not always guaranteed a free afternoon: in fact free afternoons are comparatively rare. So Bruno found himself asking everyone concerned, days in advance, as to whether or not he would be free; he had to beg the cricket-captain of his house for mercy, on the plea that he had been scoring brilliantly for the whole term without respite. On the afternoon it looked as though it would pour any moment. Bruno was determined to go, and he went.

It was to prove an arduous journey all the way, and on the way back, well, he almost despaired of ever reaching school again. Once past Hovingham - it took quite long enough to get that far - there was a monotonous though well-built stretch of road that went straight on, without the slightest bend, for about four or five miles. There were trees on either side, which was a pleasant addition to an other--wise dullish landscape, where the road swung ceaselessly up and down, ever straight as an arrow. It began to rain almost as soon as Bruno had reached this road, and the rain slashed down in torrents, aided in its horizontal flight by a fierce wind. The wind came from behind, which considerably gladdened Bruno, although he dreaded the return journey. The rain was falling rather in the form of showers, and as the wind came from directly behind, you could tell, within about two hundred yards, when a shower was due to reach you simply by looking over your shoulder. This he did, and every time he saw a blanket of white spume closing with him from behind, he leapt off his bicycle and dashed under the cover of the adjoining trees. As soon as the shower had passed, he nipped out again, and followed it as fast as he could, lest the next shower be upon him again too soon. He did this some six or seven times, when at last the miscellaneous rain ceased, and the sun shone furiously down upon him. By then he had reached Castle Howard. For a time he wondered whether to call it a day and stop here, as he had never seen this place - but the sight of gleaming coaches parked in front of the ancestral home soon drove such thoughts very far away: he did not want to go on guided tours with Americans, how--ever good the place might be. So he cycled on, ever on, through ancestral arch--ways never designed for his benefit, ever along the same, straight, cruel road.

Eventually the road came to an end, and branched off in two directions, left and right. Bruno swept off at speed to the left, for time was running short, and sped on towards his goal, only another two miles further on. Through a long, rather drab village he passed, and then on to the main-road to Malton. Here he again had to ride against the wind for a while, before turning off down a steep slope, down into a low valley. A broad river flowed here, and on its further bank could be seen the last remains of ~~the~~ ruined ~~Priory.~~ Kirkham Priory.

He hastened thither, left his bicycle outside, and entered. He was slightly disappointed for, as he had gathered beforehand, the gateway into the Priory was now about the only thing worth seeing. But he decided ~~that~~ he must nevertheless have a quick look round before making back for ~~the~~ school. Perhaps he had already seen too many ruined buildings; perhaps he was simply too tired by his ride, but the fact remained that the place seemed to have no atmosphere about it. There was only one real section left in the form of outer wall, and it was diminutive, standing forlorn in the blazing sunlight, monolith amidst a graveyard of fallen stones. One well-preserved archway took his interest for a while; it was carved with figures and symbols beyond Bruno's comprehension, probably ~~meant~~ intended merely as ornaments. It was a noble gateway - leading nowhere - but smacked strongly of pagan superstition. There were the remains of an ancient washing-place, with the original lead protection stripped off, but otherwise the Priory could boast of little but inch-high indications - put there by some authority for the preservation of ruins - of where the original walls once stood. It was rather drab, with lines of white markings running in all directions, well-trimmed turf ~~concealing~~ preventing any idea of what the place had formerly ~~appeared to be~~ looked like in the eyes of man. One very interesting point was the channel, beautifully panneled with stone slabs, that ran down the far side of the buildings. Water used to flow through this into the river below - thus satisfying the tradition held by the monks of the convent that their buildings should always stand over flowing water. He then returned to the gate--way, where he spent some many minutes more than he could really spare in taking photographs of the very interesting gateway, a gateway covered in ancient crests and mottos, with small statues and escutcheons. It was a fine, well-preserved gate, perhaps the last object worthy of consideration for many miles around. Of grey stone, it was well-proportioned, neither too broad nor too high, thickset, strong but beautiful and very, very English. Bruno thought for a while that had he come only to see this gateway, even then his venture had been amply rewarded. With the sun ever hot above and a strong wind against him, faced with the first steep hill,



he began the ~~long~~ track ~~route~~ back.

It did not take him long to realise that he was already, without the slightest doubt, nearly worn out; but he had to go on, for he knew that work, on a summer term Wednesday, infallibly began at six o'clock, and it was already after half past four. His greatest enemy on the way to the Priory had been the rain and unknown terrain: his enemy now was the bitter heat which he had so missed on the way there, and which was the last thing he wanted now. The road, straight and long, with unending climbs and slopes, had been quite tiring enough in the first instance, but it was now unbearable - for the strong wind was against him. At first he thought he might get back in time, but this prospect soon vanished. At each climb in the road he had to dismount and push his bicycle another fifty yards, his shirt clinging damply to his shoulders, his belt biting moistly into his waist.

It was exactly five minutes to six when he entered Hovingham - the half way mark in his ride. He knew by now that he would not only be late, but very, very late. He was too tired to continue straight away, so he decided to make the most of his already not so negligeable offence: he decided that he must have something to eat and drink. There was a small café affair, mainly shop, where he sat down wearily and ordered a cup of tea and some buttered buns. He soon finished that, and promptly ordered another cup of tea and an apple pie: it was now about a quarter past six; he felt slightly amused. In all probability no-one had yet noticed his absence - except perhaps that he had not turned up for prayers at five minutes to six; perhaps some master was now searching for him, but he also doubted that, as he was not due for a class that evening. So he ate and drank his fill, completely baffling the lady who served the shop: she just was not quite sure as to who he might be at this odd time of the evening, and the fact that he seemed in no particular hurry, yet was fiendishly satisfying an enormous appetite. Eventually Bruno decided to call it a day, and wondered what he should do next. He thought it might be better if he played fair and rang through to the school telling his housemaster that he would be very late back. He guessed that the housemaster would be extremely an--noyed. So he made for the nearest call-box, and rang through: the housemaster was absent: he told the porter to give the housemaster a message saying that he, Bruno, would be back at about a quarter to seven, and was at the moment speaking from Hovingham. Relieved, he mounted his bicycle again, and made for the school. He was glad in a sense that the housemaster had been away when he had phoned, and that the news of his late arrival could be broken to him by an other person: yet, had he been there, then all the trouble would by now have been over: as it was, he

still had to face possible danger and an unknown reception. So he cycled, at first vigorously, then more and more slowly, as his stiff legs began to react against this renewal of strain. In fact, the part of the journey he was now completing was the hardest of all: it was one long upward climb, at times gradual, at times alarmingly steep. When he reached Oswaldkirk, with another mile to go, it was already five past seven: he dreaded the approaching interview. Yet, what could the Housemaster do to him ? He had little in the way of liberties that could be curtailed as punishment for the next fortnight: he could be made to work in the library instead of in his room, but that was not too bad as a penance. The housemaster did not give lines, so he was all right there. Half Bruno's delirium lay in wondering what the punishment might be, not in fearing the punishment in itself, ~~as it~~ which remained as yet unknown to him. Eventually he arrived, completely worn out. He knocked at the Housemaster's door.

There was silence. He knocked again, more noisily.

"Come IN !" . Yes, it was the housemaster's voice, and it did not seem to be in a bad mood, rather in a patient, resigned tone that permission to enter was granted.

Bruno entered, and faced the housemaster, who was writing at his desk. He went on writing: at last he laid down his pen, and looked up.

"Well ?" he asked, in an enquiring voice,not too angry.

Bruno thought rapidly, meanwhile keeping the air warm to the sounds of "Um, um.." before going into inevitable action.

"I'm sorry I'm late, Sir ...."

"Silly of you, wasn't it ?" the housemaster answered in a remarkably benign way and, before he could answer the implied question, went on to ask

"And why so late ?"

"I suppose I went too far, Sir. I'm awfully tired, Sir, and I just couldn't come back any faster. I gave myself enough time, but there was the wind and, well, I suppose I went too far ...."

"Are you meant to be having a class now ?" asked the housemaster.

"No Sir: I have two preps on Wednesday nights."

"Well, you know you are silly sometimes, aren't you ? Now go up to your room and lie down: do the preps some other time, will you ?"

"Thank you, Sir. I will" and Bruno disappeared gratefully, oh so gratefully ! It took Bruno many terms to understand why the housemaster had been so lenient with a seemingly gross offence. It appeared that he was strict with petty crimes, and when it came to something big, well, perhaps his heart melted somewhat!

INTERLUDE

That middle-of-term feeling.

There is a sharp rap at Bruno's door. It is work-time.

Bruno: (in a low and bored tone) "Do come in !"

Henry: "Oh may I ? So kind of you, just came in to have a word, no-one to speak to on the Gallery; where is everyone ?"

Bruno: "Don't know."

Henry: "Well, haven't you got anything to say ? (he looks at Bruno's work books spread out on the desk before him) Hm. Working, I see. Always working. Nothing better to do ?"

Bruno: "I'm not always working. I'm absolutely sick of books: absolutely sick of them I tell you ! ..... Oh, I'm fed up: absolutely bored stiff - and just look at the weather !" (It is raining hard outside)

Henry: "Hm. Not so good, not so good, is it ? I'm sick of shack: isn't a thing to do. At home I'd be...."

Bruno: "I know. I know, all right, stop making me more fed up than ever."

There is a knock at the door.

Bruno: (Sullenly) "Come in !"

Peter: "Oh hello ! Oh it's Henry ! Isn't it a lousy day ! .... bet there's a run this afternoon, just bet you anything you like !"

Bruno: "Bound to be one !"

Henry: "Oh runs again ! I'm not going on it, just you see: those pifling runs, absolute waste of time...."

Bruno: "... make you a big, strapping young lad you know !"

Peter: "Oh all right, just because you like them doesn't mean other people like them !"

Bruno: "I never said I liked runs, did I" (with an air of hurt innocence)

Peter: "Well stop binding, will you ".

Bruno: "I'm not binding, it's Henry who's doing all the binding ... aren't you ?"

Henry: "I'll be damned if I'll go on another run ! Darned runs....."

Bruno: "I think we're meant to be working, you know ."

Peter: "Oh, I'm sick of working. Can't they ever give us a rest ? Can't have five minutes peace in this place. I've been doing practicals all morning, and then there'll be a run, and them more of those messy practicals. Just look at my hands, just look at them ! I'll never get them clean for weeks ".

Bruno: "They're not exactly clean, are they ? Gosh, what have you been doing to

them ? They're filthy ... green and brown and...."

Peter: "As I was saying, those messy practicals..... Thank goodness it's a Wednesday tomorrow ! Have a good game of golf ... oh, but it'll be soaking I suppose: oh hell !"

Henry: "So it will. That means I'll have to stay indoors I suppose. Might go to the village if it stops raining...."

Bruno: "Oh I'm fed up. Say, what's the film to-morrow ? .... anything good ?"

Peter: "Absolute trash ... already seen it three times last holidays; frankly, I don't think you'd like it .... all slushy love, you know: absolutely wet !"

Henry: "Oh it can't be all that bad, not that bad. Who's in it ?"

Bruno: "But I say, actually, I just love that sort of thing, you know, slushy sort of love films.... and if you think it was trash why did you go three times, eh ?"

Peter: "Got to do something in the holidays; a chap has to live you know ... you haven't got any idea...."

Bruno: "Who hasn't got any idea ? I hope you weren't referring to me ? If you knew what .... "

Henry and Peter: "Yes, yes, we know: what don't you do in ....?"

Bruno: "All right, don't jump to conclusions just because I said I liked that sort of film ! ... do you know, old Paddy was in such a temper because I didn't hand in a decent essay on ...."

Peter: "Oh I know: yes, can't say I've done that one yet. Wonder what he'll say. I'm sick of always getting essays handed in on time, just work, work, work..."

Henry: "Work ! Have I done any work to-day ! a prep for Pop-Eye, one for Bunny, another for Bunse to be in by eleven o'clock ! I never see the end of...."

Bruno: "Work ! Oh drat it ... and only another forty days before my exams, and I'm only just half way through my syllabus, and then there's all the revising to do ... haven't even got time to attend old Bags M's art lectures !"

Henry: "Lucky Devil; wish I could attend art classes ... don't call that work, do you ?"

Bruno: "Yes I jolly well do ! As though I hadn't got anything better to do !"

There is a knock at the door: before Bruno can say 'come in', it opens, to reveal

Housemaster: "You know: you're making far, far too much noise ... and why aren't you working ? I'd have thought you had some sense of responsability Bruno !"

Bruno: "Yes Sir". Silence. "Sorry Sir."

Housemaster: "Now I don't want to catch you wasting your time like this again, do you hear ? Do you hear ?" (he exits with the others).

WEDNESDAYS

Perhaps the best part of the Wednesday was the evening. In the afternoon you could do as you liked, but you were expected to go outside for a few hours at least. The evening was spent inside, and in the best possible surroundings.

At six o'clock there would be supper, nearly always with cocoa or coffee instead of the daily tea: Bruno enjoyed cocoa. As supper neared its end, those in the Sixth form started leaving for the theatre. They tended to leave rather early, so as to reserve seats for themselves and, perhaps, for friends as well. If you were not down quite early, it proved very hard to find a good seat. On the other hand, if you were still at the bottom of the school, you had to queue up in the Big Passage at twenty-five past six and wait until your form was called out and given permission to enter the theatre. Thus the Sixth form had the choice of seats, and the remainder of the school had to make do with normal, wooden ones, packed very tightly together. The film usually began at about a quarter to seven; first with a cartoon, then with a newsreel a few weeks out of date; ~~and~~ then came the main film. This main film, and the film-show as a whole therefore, went on until anywhere between twenty to nine and a quarter past nine. You were under no obligation to attend the filmshow, and could do as you pleased if you did not go.

At half-past eight smoking started for the Sixth form. If you were in the theatre, you had to wait until the film had finished, and then you went up to your room for the smoke. The smoke ended at ten o'clock, and meanwhile you were free to smoke - if you were in the Sixth form - as many cigarettes or cigars as you could stand. At this time of night you could sometimes not see down a passage for more than a few yards owing to the wreaths of tobacco smoke curling thickly from under people's doors.

You had to smoke in your room, or at least in a room - for on this night you were allowed to visit friends in other houses, otherwise prohibited. Besides smoking, an art in which Bruno rarely indulged, you often gave small parties, had something to eat - and drink, though all drink was meant to be non-alcoholic. Bruno, in his first year or two in the Sixth form, used to make Wednesday night cooking night, buying buns, cakes and tarts in the course of the afternoon, and also mixing drinks of his own concoction. Later on, however, when the pocket-money began to get slightly shorter, and when he had to do some work in the afternoon for oncoming exams, he gave up having parties, and the evening would be spent more quietly with only one, or at the most, two, friends, quietly smoking and talking. His room was his pride. The first room he had when in the Sixth form, he shared with

~~three~~ two people ~~himself and two others~~. He remained in this room for two terms, before moving on to another. It was a large room, with a wooden partition from the floor to just over seven foot off the ground: this partition was more or less in the centre of the room. As you entered ~~the room~~, you had the partition on your left, and ~~the~~ his section ~~of the room you entered~~ had two beds; the part on the far side of the partition had only one bed. You passed from one half of the room into the other through a minor triumphant archway. This archway was set at a really strategic height off the ground, for ,if you had the know-how, you could spend hours swinging crazily over it and committing all kinds of vile tricks on your neighbours - besides merely hanging them from time to time.

The room was very high, the walls were light cream, and the counterpanes on the beds were pale yellow: the woodwork at the windows, which were large, and had box seats fitted in, was grey. On the whole, especially in the evenings, when half a dozen private table-lamps were blazing away merrily, the room was charming. The cream of the walls, coupled with the vast dimensions of the room, made the place cool in summertime, and the partition helped the cosy atmosphere in the winter. The trouble was that the room was always and invariably overcrowded on the two beds side, and empty on the other. On the two beds side, besides the ~~two~~ beds, there were two chests of drawers, there was a desk, and a book case had to be fitted in somewhere. The worst time of day was after breakfast, when everyone made his bed: it was a pretty pickle then on the 2B sector. The room was always hung with garlands of flexes, leading off to various lamps, and at one time a crystal--set added to the chaos of wireage (and crystal-sets were, of course, illegal).

In his first term in this room, Bruno had to share with two, at the time tough, fellow-disciples of the Public-School system. One of them was a keen gamesman, a frantic rugger-player, a good cricketer, a goodish athlete, and a maniac on all forms of physical accomplishment. Bruno was always getting it in the neck from him, as Bruno avowedly had a contempt for cricket and most games - being himself at that time not so fit to play them himself. This boy, or Mack as he was called, was a determined fellow. He could be very pleasant, but his system of arguing really got on Bruno's nerves: his precept was never to acknowledge defeat, and to this end he often maintained the most illogical of arguments. Even his fellow-friend, who had known Mack for six years longer than Bruno, often tired of the irrelevant and senseless arguments that took place every day. When Mack had to come near acknowledging defeat, then he would resort to physical strength, and Bruno was in for a troublesome period. Mack had an iron character: at first Bruno tended

to regard him as a minor bully, bent only on winning himself promotion as a boy with initiative and drive. Eventually he did reach a very high position in the house hierarchy, but no-one would ever have suggested him as the type of person fit to be head of the house or in direct charge of others: he was a good disciplinarian, but showed little feeling ~~for others.~~ He was rather insensitive in fact, never noticing, rather than disregarding, what others were feeling or suffering. Many were the times when Mack almost drove Bruno to the verge of tears, and, on showing signs of imminent breakdown, Mack would be utterly at a loss to understand what he had done wrong. What Mack understood perfectly was physical pain; rarely could he fathom deep mental pain. It would only be fair to add that Mack excelled at his own arts, and maybe he should only be judged by his own particular preferences in life - the life of sport. Bruno admired his stoic patience, his bitter determination, his ambition: at times he saved the house's reputation in various fields of games, especially in the House Matches, and he was an admirable captain. On the other hand, sport was, again, in a sense, his shortcoming as a normal person: anyone not much use at games was a loss as far as he was concerned, and he showed the minimum of interest in him. Through not showing interest in non-athletic people, he tended to give the impression that he despised them, even if that was not the case. Bruno often feared the consequences of putting such a person in a real positions of power - which was never done to him at school: Mack was very much the sort of person with out and out favourites, a cult not very much esteemed by most people. What made Mack more human as he grew older - Bruno rather suspected - was the ordeal of mental work at science, and the ordeal of being in love.

The other boy in the room, Bobby, was an entirely different proposition. He had already had several brothers in the school, and for most of his time at A.College, he had a brother directly senior to him. Bruno rather admired the 'Bobbies'. There was a slightly foreign look about him, for his skin was a trifle on the dark side, while his hair was black. He was a steady type of person, with little in the way of moods - unlike Bruno and Mack. It was for this rock-steadiness of behaviour, in so admirable a contrast to Bruno's own character, that Bruno admired him. He was very sincere in his views, and rarely was prone to exaggeration, unlike Bruno: he was, in a word, orthodoxy and normality personified, and yet he had a good degree of feeling for others, of interest in others too. He was a cast-off classicist - and Bruno felt genuine sympathy for anyone cast off by old Paddy -

who had taken to History like his brothers before him, without a murmur of anger. He was reasonably good at games - which means he was much better than Bruno, - and he had a strong sense of what should be done and what should not in the wielding of authority: thus he was also responsability personified, except when he broke school rules, which he did occasionally. He was very English in behaviour, smoked strong tobacco in strong pipes, loved beer and girls, especially Swiss ones. In a word, he loved life and seemed to get along very well with it - for he was ex--traordinarily sane and had a wonderful sense of logic. So much for Bobby, with whom Bruno shared rooms for two terms: even if Bobby did not get on well with Bruno, he put up with him and never showed undue impatience, and Bruno admired him for this, as Bruno knew he was very much a notorious, rather than famous, person ~~in the school~~.

The room had its advantages and disadvantages, like all rooms in school. It had a wash-basin of its own; it was the only room in the house with this unique advantage. This meant that you could wash safely when lights were ~~already~~ out, and did not have to creep along to the nearest row of wash-basins, out-of-bounds after lights out. It meant you could wash your dishes and cutlery in your own room, instead of having to carry dirty plates round the house before having them cleaned; it meant you could wash yourself after rugger in great comfort, and at all times you had the water very much 'on tap'. The view was good, as this side of the house overlooked the valley, and the School monitors' room was directly below: thus you benefited from their wireless, which they kept blaring almost all day, and you could overhear all their conversations. On the other hand, one of the major disadvantages lay in the astounding proximity of this room ~~with~~ to the housemaster's study. ~~Thus,~~ Although officially nobody talked after lights out, once in a room, everyone defied this rule: but those staying in this three-room were in constant dread of being overheard, and were indeed often reprimanded very severely at all hours of the night for arduous and heated conversations. ~~Thus~~ It was a painful process conversing after lights-out in this room, having to keep quiet every few minutes so as to hear whether or not the housemaster was listening outside, or was on the way round. Another advantage lay in the position of the room as regards the house. It was the nearest room to the staircase up which you had to come so as to enter the house, and it was, so to speak, very much in the centre, rather like Madrid to Spain. The main disadvantage was the presence of three people in one room, rather a dangerous combination at times, as Bruno soon found out, but bearable if the inmates were not too unsociable, as on Wednesdays.

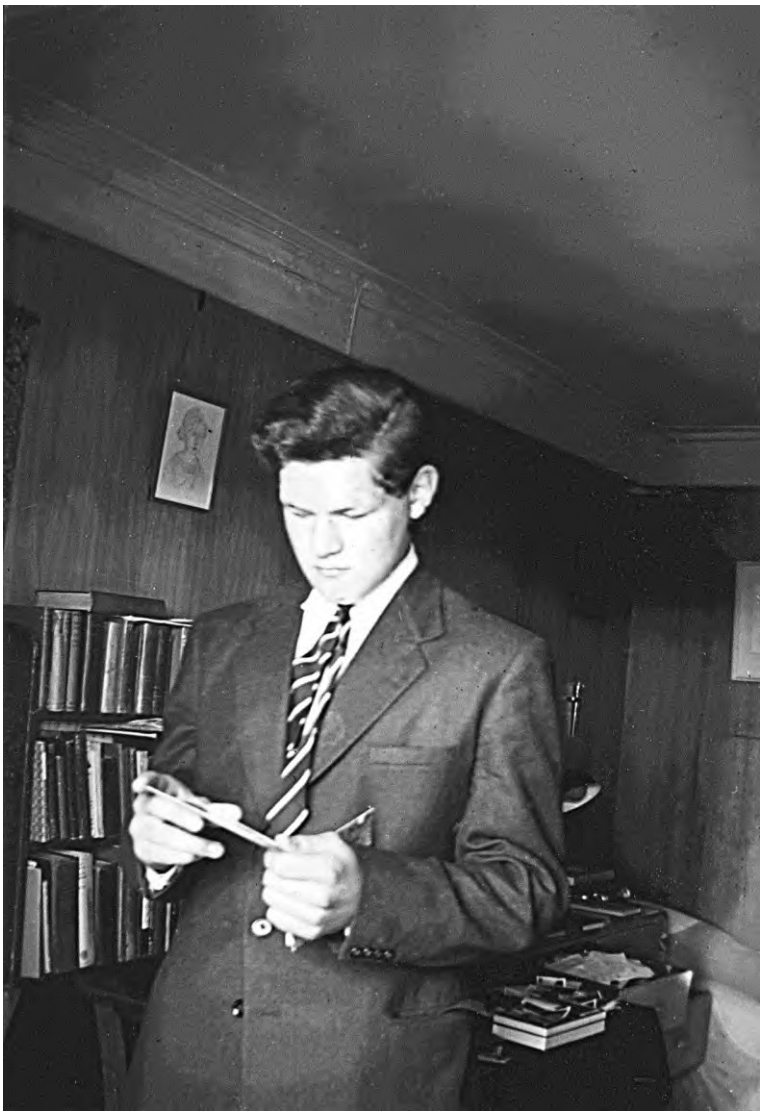
This three-room was on the ~~ground~~ first floor ~~of the house, and on the second floor of the building itself~~. After this room, where he spent an Easter and a Summer term, he moved on to the Gallery, or ~~the~~ top floor of the house, where most of the Sixth form rooms were situated. Here he shared a room with 'Fat Swallow' or just 'Muscles Man', a prospective candidate for the Royal Navy. He was a good chap, and it is true to say that much of the friction that arose between Bruno and old Muscles was not due so much to difference in character as to narrow-mindedness on Bruno's part.

Bruno had, until then, always been convinced that anyone joining H.M.Forces was either an incompetent, unfit for anything else, or a fool. Bruno tended to keep this elementary precept in his mind rather too unquestioned, and believed in it almost as though he were himself the fool. Besides, old Muscles had a sticky past, marred by a couple of house tannings, and had belonged to the 'Remove', lowest of low forms at A.College. Bruno was at that time an intelectual snob, and thought of anyone below his own standard in work or study as being mentally deranged; this might well have been because he was often convinced - was persuaded by others - that he was slightly below average, and a potential maniac. Thus the people to blame for this attitude - 'anyone worse than me is a washout' - were ~~in effect~~ the people who suffered consequently, such as Muscles. Muscles was a historian of sorts, a very amateur one, it is true, but with strong theories and opinions of his own, usually inextricably in opposition to Bruno's ideas. Muscles' hero was Nelson, while Bruno's was Napoleon: there were long arguments every night as to what constituted a great man, as to whether ambition was permissible, and whether Napoleon, ergo, was a great man, which ~~as~~ Nelson, being English, must surely and undisputedly be. Old Muscles had the most adorable of theories, very heretical, on the succession and the private lives of Mediaeval Popes, and ~~had~~ some rather original beliefs as to the prime causes of the French Revolution. Muscles was most certainly a character. He was, like Bobby, an out and out, often down and out, Englishman; he drank rather more than was good for him, and was subsequently caught more often than was good for him: he smoked a pipe. Muscles' chief and unquenshable defect was laziness: he hated hard work. He saved his skin thanks to great common-sense and natural intelligence, and yet it was a shame that he never allied this natural talent with a little willing work; Bruno always thought that if a day came when Muscles began working, he would then, surely, soon become Prime Minister. He was a good friend, and many a time later on did Bruno regret his maltreatment of Muscles. This mis--use lay largely in trying to correct Muscles less tidy ways; but the fact remains

that Bruno went about it in what must have proved to be a most pedantic manner. When Muscles entered the room after his 'Services' P.T., he left his stockings in the centre of the room, his shirt on his bed, his shorts on the desk, and so on. After a class, he used to rush in, say 'frightfully sorry' in a friendly way, and then dash out again, having cast all his books in one chaotic heap on the nearest object of repose. He tidied his books about once a month, and by the next morning everything was once again in a mess. Bruno's remedy was simple, yet it must have proved exasperating to poor old Muscles. Anything that Bruno found lying on the floor he would kick underneath Muscles' bed, where it lay until its harrassed owner had to go in frantic search of it. Most of the things on the floor were clothes, so they were not exactly improved by their often lengthy sojourn on the spidery sides of the floor and on the damp planks in the dirty corners. Many a time, four minutes after a bell had rung, with but one minute to go, old Muscles would be on his hands and knees in the corner, or grovelling under his bed, searching amongst heaps of old, muddy rugger boots for a pair of socks or a vest. He usually dumped his books on his bed, so Bruno took those and thrust the whole lot in Muscles' bottom drawer, amongst heaps of other junk, including biscuits and cigarette cards.

Muscles was pre-eminently a friendly fellow. It was wonderful speaking to him, for he really knew how to talk - and go on talking. He had innumerable stories up his sleeves, not all of them over-respectable, and a knack for understatement. He could be rather shy - or maybe Bruno was too forward. Bruno admired Muscles' muscles, which, even if rather soft and with somewhat too much give in them, were at least impressive. Bruno loved stroking them, especially his arm and leg muscles; this, needless to say, seemed to irritate Muscles, who always, for some unknown reason, seemed to think that Bruno was being sarcastic. Bruno was not. Bruno genuinely admired certain aspects of the redoubtable Muscles; his thick shock of black, wavy hair, his Anglicisms, his squat and sturdy figure, and, indeed, in an off-hand way, his laissez- aller, which Bruno in no ways possessed, and often wished he had. Muscles ended up by failing his examination for Dartmouth, and instead had to join the army, probably rather a blow.

The room was, on the whole, smallish. It was dark, and the paint was in a trully disgusting state. Consequently, Bruno spent half his free time putting up more and more decorations to hide the walls ; in the end, for better for worse, you were lucky if you could see any wall at all, with all its peeling plaster and black cob-webs. Bruno imported his own curtains from home - rather good, modern ones - and many of the pictures on the walls were of his own design - copies of great works.



Amongst other trinkets that littered the walls in mass profusion, there was a wine-skin from Spain, a pair of castanets, and a large sheet of brown paper care--fully decorated with Spanish Bullfighting ~~playing~~ cards. These playing-cards were one of the key attractions, and whenever visitors came from other houses, it was to the cards that they turned, and of the cards that they spoke for many an hour, discussing th various moves depicted thereupon, the advisability and morality of bull-fighting in general, and the wickedness and slyness of the Spanish race.

Wednesday evenings were wonderful in here, with plates of cakes and other odds and ends; on one occasion, Bruno filled his wine-skin in advance with cider, and the evening was spent in passing the skin round and round, until the floor was quite soaked - for few people had much idea as to how to drink out of a wine-skin. Inevitably the room was a vast hall of billowing grey smoke - and it was at this stage in his career, more or less, that Bruno gave up smoking, too disgusted with the smell of stale tobacco left in the room on the morning after a smoke. So here we have one remedy for smoking !

After a term spent, with little good done to either party, in this pedantic form of telling people what to do, Bruno shared a room with a different person. He soon learnt that not everybody was as patient as Muscles, with his slow but steady ways, and that his new companion had to be treated with a certain degree more ~~of~~ consideration and broad-mindedness.

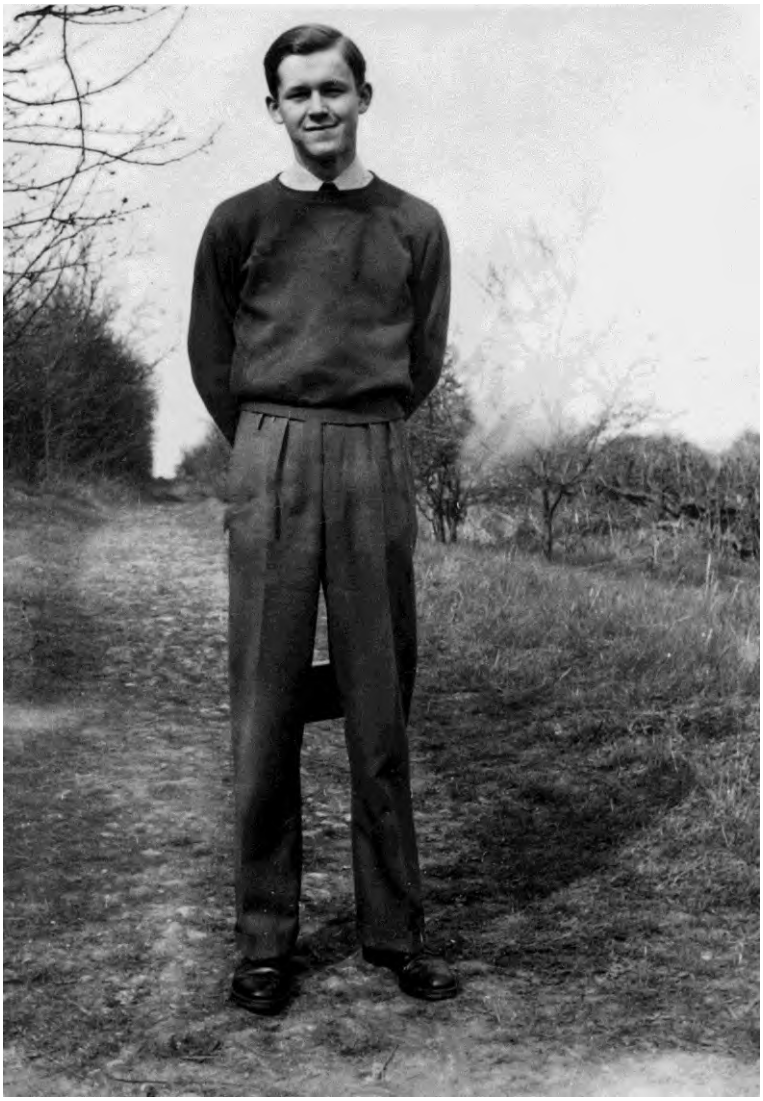
His new companion was an entirely different problem. He was the senior person of the year below Bruno, and was sharing a room with Bruno on the housemaster's assumption, drawn from the previous term's experience, that Bruno was not much good at sharing life with unintelectual types. Nor was Mike altogether intelectu--ual, however: he was a keen 'gamesman', rather in the tradition of old Mack in the three-room. Allied to this sense ~~for~~ of what is good in the world of balls and bats, he had a strong ability and determination as regards work. Moreover, he studied practically the same subjects as Bruno, French and Spanish, with Latin thrown in as well. He was a hefty chap, rather awkwardly built. When in a suit, he looked more like a freshly-quarried piece of stone, near rectangular, and slightly off-centre. Like Muscles, he had black hair, though in less abundance and rather ill-treated. Mike must have weighed some fourteen stones: Bruno weighed ten: Bruno was in constant fear, and often he had good reason to be slightly apprehensive. Dear old Mike: he never knew when he was hurting, like Mack below, nor could he understand what pain was when applied by him to others: he regarded himself as a weakling - which he most certainly was not. Yet, on the other hand, paradoxically,

if you so much as tapped Mike on his shoulders, he would emitt an apprehensive squeal and yell out "Ouch ! My shoulder !", and would then glare furiously round at his oppressor.

Mike had much in common with Muscles, except as regards work. They both acted at the last minute, and they were both pretty untidy, though maybe Muscles was the worse in this respects. If a bell went, Mike would look at his watch, would then synchronise it, and sit on his bed and go on reading. Fifteen seconds or so before the dead-line he would snatch half the stuff he needed for his next class and would bolt ou t of the room at a fantastic speed, leaving the door wide open. He quite inevitably left the door open. Mike was rarely late for prayers - whereas Muscles was late almost every day of the week - yet Mike was every single time within some three seconds of being late.

Mike was a hard-worker - when he worked. He was one of those unfortunate people who belong to book-clubs, and about once every two weeks he received a book of the month, in the same sort of wrapper every time, which he would continue reading from first page to last until he had finished it, completely neglecting any other chores, such as classes, that might clash with his reading of it. Once he had reached the last page, he would frantically dive for his preps, of which there would by now be quite an accumulation, and would set to work. He would be quite irritable until he had finished them. This usually involved working after lights out, under his blankets, by the light of a torch, trying to translate some frightful piece of Livy or a French Prose. Once at work, it was dangerous to try to interrupt him. Sometimes he welcomed interruptions, but that was only when he had not received one of his book-club donations within the past few weeks, and was up to date with his work. In the end, as Bruno, it is true to say, was an infernal chatterbox at this stage and even long after, Mike resorted to the school Library for working, where he was guaranteed some peace for at least an hour or two.

Bruno shared rooms with Mike for two terms and, on the whole, they got on quite well. Bruno was developing a little more broad-mindedness than before, and a little more patience - which is the ability to overlook other people's shortcomings, especially of the sort latent even in oneself. Bruno was pedantic, and little by little he began to improve - merely by not thrusting his pedantry upon others quite as much. Bruno began to apreciate Mike's sound ability at games, which was joined to an ability, at times dangerously rival, to work with good results. Finally, Mike had a certain liking for things artistic, which pleased Bruno, and was well turned towards practically any sort of hobby or craft - photography, cycling, and



even a soundish knowledge of the interior works of alarm-clocks - which he loved dismantling and then reassembling. Mike could almost be termed a Jack of all trades: he was not a master of any, but he certainly knew more than any Jack might.

Bruno shared rooms with Mike for an Easter and a summer term. Here, in this time of the year, one became most aware of Mike's chief defect - a defect he could in no way improve upon. His stockings were powerful - and this made itself very much felt in the summer term. But Mike was a good chap and, as soon as he was aware that his feet were becoming inconvenient, he bought a large-sized bottle of Eau de Cologne. Unfortunately, it was very, very cheap stuff - and as far as Bruno was concerned, it smelt almost as bad as the cheese. Every evening, on going to bed, good old, innocent Mike, brought out his Eau de Cologne and liberally sprayed the room with it: the smell was indescribable ! A thick, sour-sweet mixture, heavy and unbreathable, permeated the room for about half an hour before driving Bruno to deepest sleep for another eight hours or so. Mike never noticed the smell, because he spent most of the time at the bottom of his bed reading a book - which he would go on doing, sometimes until midnight.

Mike and Bruno had a good influence on one another. Bruno learnt not to be too trying, not to be too pedantic or fussy, and not to bully his companion: Bruno became acquainted with patience and broad-mindedness, and began to take more of an interest in other people. Bruno ceased focusing all his attention on his own likes and dislikes, and began to heed other peoples' requirements: Bruno became aware that not everyone in the world had the same ideas on life as he, and that Bruno was not the only person who inhabited this world. Bruno even made a bargain with Mike - to the benefit of both. Bruno always hung his pyjamas on the door with his dressing-gown in the morning: this irritated Mike; Mike always took his vest, shirt and pullover off at one go, and left the three, together, just as he had been wearing them, over the back of his chair; Bruno regarded this as awefully unhieg--enic. So Mike agreed to take his shirt, vest and pullover off seperately, and to hang them as three articles, not as one, over his chair, while Bruno agreed to fold his pyjamas and put them under his pillow. Many were the agreements thus made, and much did they both benefit from them.

Bruno enjoyed his Wednesday evenings wherever he was. In the three-room they tended to be noisy and boisterous; with Muscles they were smoky and, again, noisy; with Mike they were quieter, as Mike usually visited friends in other rooms, or else worked in the library. When sharing with Mike, Bruno's Wednesday nights were spent reading, or amiably chatting with a sedate friend from Aidan's: he was learning to be quieter and more sensible .... and Mike was exerting a strong influence.

INTERLUDE

On Borrowing.

A sharp rap at the door of his room wakens Bruno from his stupor. It is, of course, work-time.

Bruno: "Come in !"

Ivan : "Oh hello ! See you're in: working, eh? Can't fool me !"

Bruno: "I was thinking actually."

Ivan : "What I came to ask you was ... say, have you got any cake ? ...I'm just dying for a bite of something."

Bruno: "Well, you know, you're really meant to be working..."

Ivan : "What's in that drawer ?" (he has a look). "Shirts". "Let's try the other one". (he has a look). "What's this ? Plugs ... shoe-polish ... no: nothing doing. Let's try the other one; must be something there". (He looks).

Bruno: "I say, you know, ..." (his hint passes unobserved)

Ivan : "Ah, that's better: a tin." (he opens it). "Thought so, I knew there would be something here: never take no for an answer ! Come on, (looks appeal--ingly at Bruno) let's have some ... you've no idea how I'm suffering ... absol--utely famished. Just a slice ? Here ... (he cuts two, and gives Bruno one, and taking silence for consent, eats the other piece at one mouthful) ... ah! that's better: you're a hero, jolly good chap and all that, thanks a million, always rely on you ...."

Bruno: "You shouldn't really just help yourself, you know: it's not done ... "

Ivan : "Ah, but it's a free world you know old chap: nothing like giving a chap something to eat when a fellow's dying..."

Bruno: "Why didn't you eat more at breakfast ? If you ate more you wouldn't be pestering me all the time ... especially when I'm meant to be working..."

Ivan : (incredulously) "Eat more at breakfast ? Absolute tripe ! what was there ? just bits of dry meat ... bacon ... and that gritty rock (by which is meant fried bread) ... and the tea was absolutely lousy ... plain down-to-earth dish--water again ... time some-one complained".

Bruno: "If it's alright for me, it's alright for you: you should eat more at the right time ... like me. Gosh, I'm hungry, aren't you ?"

Ivan : "You're slow off the dot ... how about another slice ... just one ?"

But his voice lacks conviction.

Bruno: (firmly) "You can wait till lunchtime; I've got to: now hop it, I'm busy".

Ivan : "So I see ... but say, what I came in for was to ask if you could lend me a

two point five ~~and a half~~ d stamp ? 'Course you can ... you can't let a chap down like this ..."

Bruno: (Very indignantly) "Look here, you monitor, ought to be ashamed of your--self coming in like this and robbing a poor chap of all he has. I've already given you a chunk a cake..."

Ivan : "Didn't ! I had to take it myself...."

Bruno: "Well let bygons be bygons, and I've got some work to do. Don't you realise I've got to take a vital exam. in a couple of months time ... and you can never start too soon. Just because you've got nothing to do ...."

Ivan : "Come off it ! I've got more to do than you ever had...."

Bruno: "Well why don't you get on and do it ?...."

Ivan : "Because you're a good chap and and there's someone who needs a two and a half d stamp urgently .... Oh cough up, as though you didn't have one !"

Bruno: "Oh leave me alone ... I'm busy " (digs his head into an exercise book and starts changing notes).

Ivan : "Oh all right, spoil-sport ..." (he starts going out).

Bruno repents his undue harshness of treatment, (especially seeing that Ivan is a house-monitor and a powerful though underhand friend!)

Bruno: "Hey, where do you think you're going ? I didn't say you could go ..."

Ivan : "That's better ... well what I really wanted to know was if you could just lend me for the time being one single two and a half d stamp ? I'm in an aweful hurry .... got to have it written by break and then I've got a prep two days overdue and...."

Bruno: "Why can't you buy yourself some stamps ? You aren't much use always coming here for stamps, because that means I've always got to go buying more for me !"

Ivan : "But I pay you tupence halfpenny for them ..."

Bruno: "Which means I've got to buy myself some more afterwards ... and I'm not an athletic type like you. You can afford to go running about after things with no work to do .... nay, you should, I say, enjoy it !"

Ivan : (Threatens to open the door and exit) "Well, be seeing you later, ~~you~~ spoil--sport...."

Bruno: "Oh come back: who told you to go ? Here ... here's a stamp: where's the money ?"

Ivan : "hey, you've got stacks of them ... let's have two (takes two) that's a good chap ... thanks awfully... jolly decent of you." (Drops twopence halfpenny on Bruno's desk and beetles out, leaving the door ajar and Bruno in an icy draught)

Bruno: "You might close the door next time !" (bellows out) "Iiiivaaann.....!"

WHOLE HOLIDAYS

Like most school traditions, whole holidays served a purpose. They were not designed to give one a joyous and completely carefree day in which to do as one chose - though a strong element of choice did exist, - but so as to revive one, and provide an opportunity wherein to learn about such subjects as were not taught at school. School societies would run excursions or 'outings' to neighbouring ruins, to factories and other interesting institutions, to museums and places of cultural value. No-one was ever bound to go on any such outing, nor indeed to spend a whole holiday in an educative way: you were free to do more or less as you chose, provid--ed that you had your housemaster's consent.

Bruno's approach to the idea of a whole holiday varied very much as he proceeded slowly, steadily, up the school. At first the idea seemed to be that of spending as much as he possibly could in the course of the day, of eating himself silly, and of laying in stocks both of food and of renewed vitality to last another five or six weeks. A whole holiday meant a day away from the routine and deadly humdrum of school life: it meant an escape into the wilds of an unknown countryside, an escape into the all-engulfing depths of a busy city, away from harrassing masters, as they then were, away from interfering friends, if 'friends' they could be called.

To start with, whole holidays simply meant a reaction ~~to~~ against work, a reaction against life as it had to be lived every day: it was a reaction, in fact, against every--thing that had been instilled in him in the course of the term: it was a revolt. Later on, however, whole holidays began to assume a different aspect, ~~a~~ more ser--ious and interesting ~~one~~. They began to develop into a test of personal initiat--ive, wherein Bruno set out to see what curious and unusual things could be done by even such an apparent fool as himself. Towards the end of his career at A.College, they had assumed a yet more formidable aspect: they now provided a much needed op--portunity when he could learn for himself such things as were not taught at school, such things as he genuinely loved, not because they meant better exam results, but because they meant a more enjoyable, a fuller, education. This was the true aim, in all probability, that the school had in mind for its scholars when it instituted whole holidays in the first place: it took Bruno nearly four years to realise and appreciate this. It would only be fair to add that there were many who never, in the entire course of their education at school, learnt to realise this fundamental point, the first cause of the whole holiday: there were many who went on, until the day of their last farewell, using whole holidays as a means of unencumbered bliss, as the means whereby to have and drink up every pint of beer allowed by Sixth Form

regulations.

You began your whole holiday with a 'long lie', or lengthier sleep than usual, after which, in rapid succession, came breakfast and High Mass. This would finish at about ten o'clock, and you were then free to do as you liked until six in the evening, or, in the summer term, until seven or thereabouts. If you were lucky, there might be a film in the evening, or some other form of entertainment, followed by a smoke for the members of the Sixth form. If you knew how, you could make a whole holiday a practically unforgettable event in your ~~own~~ school career; this did not often happen, however, either because of the weather, or because of incom--petent foresight and planning. As for Bruno, about half his holidays were spent wastefully, soon to be forgotten in the course of time, and the other half retained a permament place in his later reminiscences. One might also argue that certain whole holidays, for instance Exhibition time, which came up at the end of the first month of each summer term, presented ~~one~~ you with little opportunity either for making a red-letter day or a washout of a holiday.

INTERLUDE

Desert Sun - 1955 -

Angelic might, hard silver sphere
Who fresh from grime and clean and clear,
Still cold, and crisp as snow, and white,
Speeds darkness far from mortal sight.

The zenith reached, it flings fierce acrid flame
Loud, hissing, gritty, dry, that none can name;
Fiercest furnace' titanic crust,
It pounds and crushes flesh to dust.

From the Parcae's hands fell this golden ball,
Drowsy, no-coloured mountain of the deep,
Close-red, off-orange, almost purple pall
Gentle wrought to lull all withered souls
To salutary sleep.

WHOLE HOLIDAYS

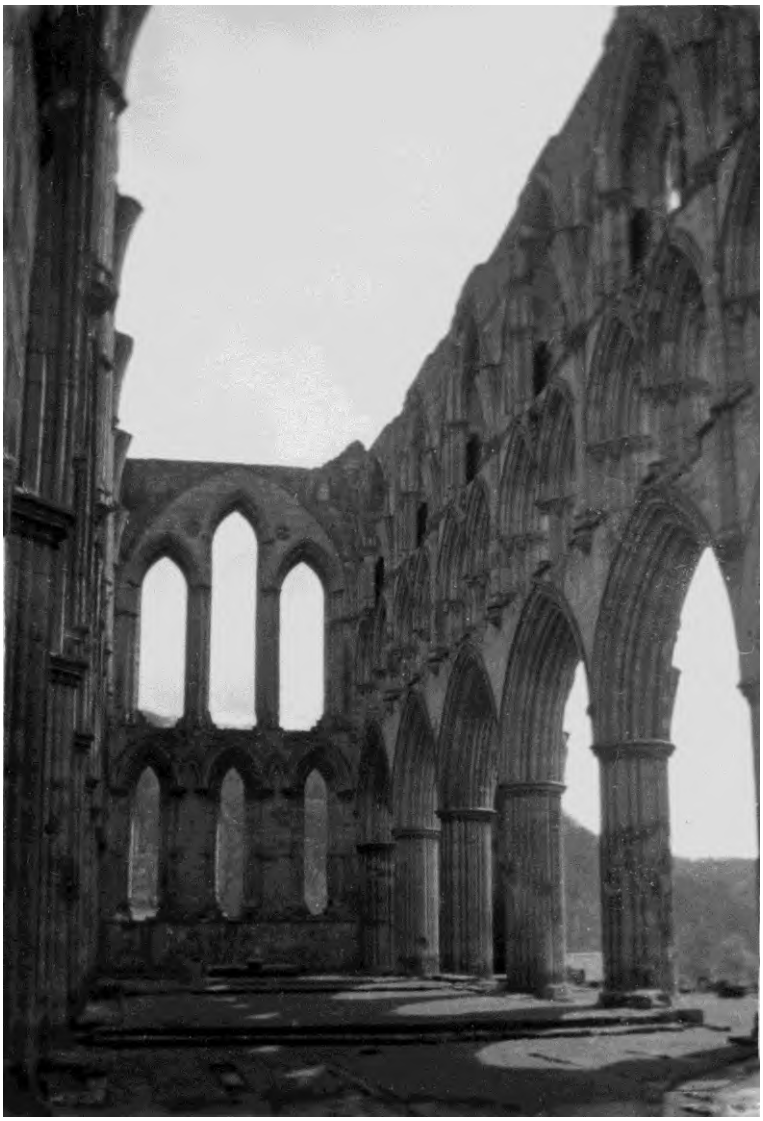
It is not, perhaps, surprising, that those holidays that Bruno enjoyed most were holidays spent in a serious way, with ~~an~~ the ultimate aim of learning something as yet scarcely known to him. These occured in the summer term of his last year at school, and were inspired by a vigorous speech on his housemaster's part. At one of the usual Friday-night prayer 'jaws', the housemaster ventured to speak upon a subject little associated with him: he began to lecture on the value of England's heritage, on the value of the many ruins and interesting buildings that more or less surrounded the school on every side, ~~that~~ covering most of the North Riding. He seemed to speak with genuine conviction, with the love of a poet - which he most certainly never was - for Nature, for things old and sentimental. We should learn more about our country; more about that part of England we might never see again; at first he spoke of the beauty of these monuments, and then, as always happened, there came the moral. We could not call ourselves cultured, civilised or curious if we ignored the relics of our Catholic ancestors .... and so on. But Bruno was in no way deterred by the moral: he had been struck by the poetry, by his own, at times wild, imagination: he remembered pictures he had seen of these buildings, and, of a sudden, he longed to see them for himself, with his own eyes. The housemaster had won his point as far as he was concerned, but he did not mind; Bruno decided, more or less on the spot, that he would devote the term that lay before him to the visiting of these glorious remains, these ruined palaces and monasteries.

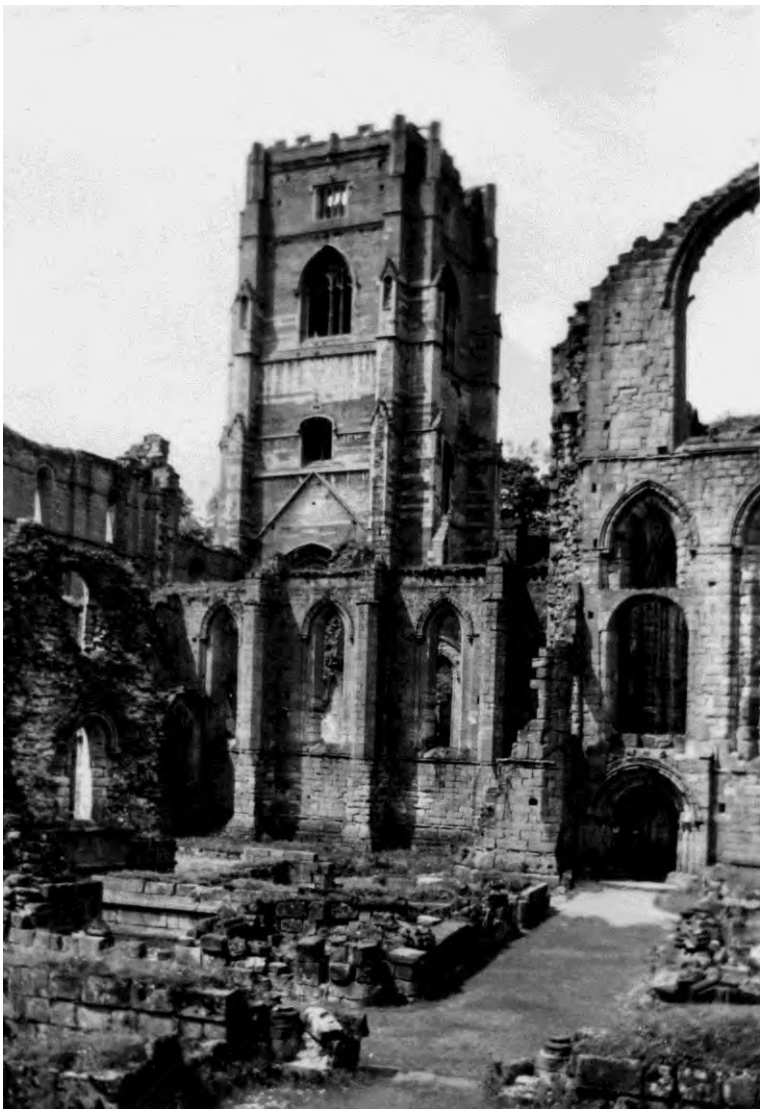
The first place Bruno visited was Rivaux Abbey, on the banks of the River Rye. It was one of those few occasions when there was no High Mass before the holiday, and a time, therefore, when the day was even longer than usual. Being in a not entirely unsociable mood he elected to go there with a friend, ~~H.~~ Peter, from St. Aidan's, one of his fellow-citizens from Oxford with whom he always travelled up at the start of the school term and went home at the end. It was a fine day, though at first it seemed that it might rain. Armed with a lunch-packet and windcheater, they set out to-gether, across the moors instead of keeping to the road: it was a more interesting experiment finding an unknown place by the use of a map, and by following rivers rather than paths and car-ridden roads.

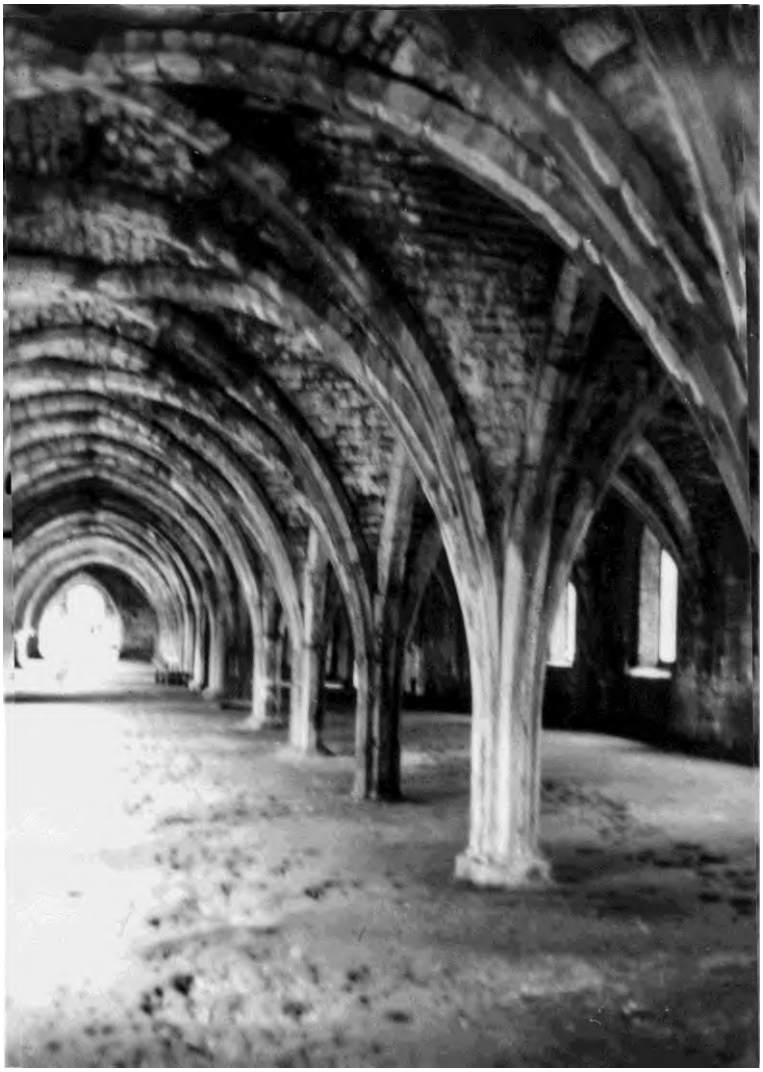
They reached Rivaux at about two o'clock ~~in the afternoon~~, and spent about one hour examining it. The sun was fitful, and Bruno ~~wanted~~ tried to take some photographs of the Abbey as a test of his use of a camera: they came out well. The Abbey was an inspiring mass of partly crumbled, partly restored ruin, all dark-grey in colour, the blue clear patch of sky for ever moving through the cracks of broken walls.

The atmosphere was romantic, melancholy, moving and somewhat weird: birds sang at ease on the bare broken walls, moss grew wildly in the cracked contours of the stone--work, briars lived a perilous existence at the edges of the neatly trimmed lawns that filled the once inhabited monastery. That the state should devote such energy towards preserving what it had destroyed, and left in a condition of half-completed decay, struck him as hideous though well-intentioned. He imagined with poetic delight the responses of the coweled figures chanting in the early dawn: he imagined he could still hear the bell tolling the mid-day Angelus, that he could still see the Abbot saying Mass at the high-altar, now barely a foot high, cracked and covered in damp, green moss. The simple and elegant curves of the architecture were fascinat--ing, hypnotic and pure: they were a symbol of the austere and devoted lives of the Abbey's long dead inhabitants, English gothic at its best, at its most charming and dignified. Perhaps the most impressive part was the well preserved nave, still intact except for the roof, over a distance of some twenty or thirty yards; it rose in three tiers, unbroken, united, and it was here that the simple curves of the carved stonework were most striking, challengingly pure, chaste and innocent. Birds were singing everywhere: this delighted him, yet at the same time augmented his feeling of sorrow: that birds should so unwittingly sing over the scene of a tragedy was a shame, and added to the bitterness that occasionally welled up within him as he cast his mind back as well as he could to that fatal evening, when the Abbot had announced to the assembled monks that the Abbey was to be disolved and their order seperated. He felt sure that he would never forget his visit to this Abbey, barely four miles from his school, which it had taken him four years to visit and then to appreciate - within a few minutes of his arrival.

Rivaux was the first of the great Abbeys that he visited, and although it was later to be overshadowed by another and greater one, it made a lasting impression for its novel effect on a mind unacquainted with such wonders, with such saintly purity of decoration and design. Not only was it wonderful from close to, from within the nave itself, from the lawns that surrounded it, but also when seen from about a mile away, when seen from the other side of the River Rye, whence, following wild heathery paths, he had arrived with his friend Peter. This could not be said of that other Abbey, Byland, which gave one quite another impression when seen from any distance. Byland, though exciting when viewed from within, looked altogether too gloomy and dejected from any distance, too crippled and maimed: but Rivaux gave an impression, for most of its length and height, of still being intact: the sun still blazed fiercely on whole stretches of wall, cast shadows of gigantic proportions







over the smooth, green floor of grass.

They returned as they had come, across country, through the heather, over the moors, over ditches and through plantations of firs and exuberantly growing vegetation: they were back well in time for supper, just as the sun was beginning to set in fierce summer splendour, to the sound of bat on ball and the gentle murmur of people gossiping on the bounds below his room. It was an ideal holiday; nearly nothing had been spent, and he had the satisfaction of having walked some twelve or thirteen miles on a good summer day: it was an invigorating sport, monastery-hunting !

The next place to be visited was the famous Fountains Abbey, reputed to be the best-preserved Abbey in the British Isles, as well as one of the most extensive: nor was it in state hands, but belonged to a private family. This reassured him very much, full as ever of his dreams of an eventual return of the ruined abbeys to their mother church: those now in state hands struck him as standing little hope, but those in private hands still stood a good chance of survival and return, even at a cost.

He travelled there by bus, via Ripon, where he spent about an hour visiting the Cathedral. From Ripon he caught a bus to the Abbey, about three miles out of the town, set in a splendid scenery of private parks, ornate gardens and well-cared for woodland. The Abbey stood at the side of a small river, and this river actually ran underneath part of the buildings. Again it was a fine day: the sun blazed mercilessly on the well-kept ruins - what a paradox ! - and all was silence, not even a bird there to break in upon it. The atmosphere was even more majestic than at Rivaux: the lone Tower, last addition to the Abbey, rose majestically, defiantly into the sky. It was a mere shell, a skeleton of rose-coloured, in parts grey, stone--work: the roof was broken, the landings had long since collapsed, but the walls stood firm, simple in design, powerful. This Tower dominated the entire Abbey: it could be seen from on all sides, from within the roofless nave, through the windows of the ancient monastic dormitories, the entire length of the valley. Next in striking magnificence, a simple but crushing splendour, came the dream chapel of the Nine Altars. One vast window shed light into the whole of this chapel: the window had no glass, not even any stone-work to span it: but along its borders there was a strong suggestion of a glorious past, brought back to mind by small and jagged pieces of interrupted stone tracery. The most splendid example of the now humiliating melancholy and bareness of once richly ornate stonework could be seen

in the form of two vast pillars ~~rising~~ that arose in the centre of the chapel of the Nine Altars, ~~rising~~ soaring from the ground to dizzy heights above. They were extravagantly slender columns, for, as elsewhere in the ruined abbey, the accompanying decoration of fluted pillarets that used once to gird the central columns around as they rose majestical--ly upwards, had now been broken away, leaving the central pillar by itself, naked and humble. This had the effect of unreal frailty, and one felt that such bare and crippled columns were liable at any moment to come down in a hideous crashing of crumbled stones. This chapel was a splendid sight, maybe thanks largely to this dreadful mutilation, a mutilation that had increased the power and simplicity of the previous fabric. The nave was not as splendid as he had expected; it was a trifle squat, with sturdy pillars along the aisles resembling the vast piers of Durham Cathedral; nevertheless this only came as a disappointment because he had recently seen Rivaux Abbey, where the nave was the central feature of interest and beauty, more elegant and finished. The other great surprise came in the guise of the monastic dormitory, where the vaulting remained completely intact: little, bare and glassless windows let the sun pierce sharply through into the gloom, for an uninterrupted distance of some twenty or thirty yards. The dormitory was cool: the walls were dank, and you could hear the little stream as it sang slowly past beneath the uneven flooring. Bruno imagined the monks of the Middle Ages as they shivered throughout the length of the night on the cold, hard floor, dressed as they probably were in habits of a coarse texture, removed only once or twice in the course of the winter, if that: baths were then regarded as an unnecessary luxury. The main things that struck Bruno when he saw Fountains for the first time were the Tower, the chapel of the Nine Altars, and the perfectly preserved dormitory. Besides these particular parts of the Abbey, he was no little impressed by the dominant atmosphere, an atmosphere of peace, sacred peace, a peace left behind by the monks when they were disbanded, peace that would in all likelihood remain there for many centuries to come. There was an air of mystery, an air of loss and bewilderment, as though the monks had had to leave in a hurry, as though something crucially important had been left unfulfilled in these last moments of haste and fear. Meanwhile the sun shone clearly down upon the ruins: the pure blue sky beat heavily in a veil of heat upon the drying lichens, and no bird sang.

Bruno spent several hours walking round the Abbey, continuously returning to the same spot, for ever peering up at the Tower, forsaken giant of despair, as it loomed prophetically over its brother skeletons. The grass was green, inviting: the flowing water refreshing, invigorating: only the monks' chanting was ~~lacking~~ not to be heard. It had been a splendid abbey in its time, and by time and man it had been desecrated.

INTERLUDE

Night Scene.

Towards the end of his career at A.College, the maids, previously either Irish or Yorkshire girls, were rapidly exchanged for Italians. The Irish maids were bad enough - they were skilled in the art of impertinence - and so were the Yorkshire wenches; the Italians provided a source of striking amusement, overpowering when they had but recently arrived, and as yet knew no English, and which even later provided fun for everyone, ~~even desperate~~ housemasters.

At this time, Bruno had a room of his own facing over the rear of the school buildings, and it was in this direction that the maids hung out. Although not too often visible to the naked eye, they were for ever noticeable to anyone with even an average sense of hearing. When they could be seen, they were amusing enough, but their actions were at least understandable to the normal onlooker. They would run down passages at fantastic speeds: they spent the whole day singing away, where--ever they might be - even in Church they created an unholy row with their constant chatter. When on duty in the refectories they would run about with dishes on their heads, their arms, their shoulders; when they broke dishes, which was rarely, they broke dozens at a time. They were for ever flinging savage Italian phrases at the boys in return for orders to fetch this or that, as was their duty, or else in making common love to anyone in sight; they were far from being shy creatures, and quite a few, in a simple sort of way, were attractive ... probably all the more so thanks to their inability to speak English. So much for the day-time; night-time was one vast enigma to everyone, certainly to all the boys.

There would be utter silence: only the crows with an occasional sally of song.

Then, suddenly, from darkest night: "Help ! Help !" and an enormous string of Italian words in one indistinguishable torrent; there would follow shrieks as emitted by several people, all wildly excited, and a deal of whistling.

Some village boys could then be heard shouting to one another behind the Abbey: a motorcycle would start up, there would be a terrible choking of engines for some five minutes, a roar as it left. There would follow some more whistling, and then silence.

Silence would continue for a few minutes, and then there would be an impassioned outburst of hysterical laughing: then silence yet again. The sound of an approa--ching motorcycle could ~~again~~ be heard, then a rush as it passed the school, then silence as it disappeared into the distance. Then women would start shrieking once more, some ~~unsuitable~~ wild-sounding Italian words might be discernible; then unbroken quiet.

WHOLE HOLIDAYS

One of the most interesting holidays of the year was called 'Goremire'. This had its origin in the days when the A.College buildings were as yet nowhere near complete, in days when, according to legend, the school had a thorough spring-cleaning once a year. This spring-cleaning used to take place in the summer term, when the days were long and, it was to be hoped, dry; it took place on the same day, approximately, every year. On this day everyone, both monks and boys, had to leave the buildings in the hands of the servants, who were supposed to start scrub--bing as soon as everyone had departed for the day. Thus the monks, the lay-masters and the boys were obliged to spend the greater part of their self-imposed holiday outside: but they were only human, and as the hours crept by their stomachs would begin to ache. ~~Thus~~ So it came about that one of the obligations of this holiday was that everyone, certainly all the boys, should attend luncheon outside, on Sutton Bank to be precise. Luncheon was served by the housemasters and the heads of the houses there at one o'clock; no-one was allowed to be absent on any pretext - except perhaps mortal disease. There would be tea later on, at about four-thirty, but this was an optional encounter, and there was no obligation on anyone to attend: Bruno never once turned up for this, as he was usually miles away by then. To make the event more fun and more tiring - probably it began out of mere safeguard against undesirable deaths - no-one was allowed to go to Sutton Bank on any engine-driven object of conveyance. Bicycles were allowed, and so were horses: once some people turned up on a steam-roller, as such equipment did not seem to come precisely enough under the highly-specialised ban. Once lunch was over, you were free to use any means whatever of propulsion for returning to the school, or in any way completing the holiday as ~~one~~ you liked. The holiday only really started, as far as many were concerned, once lunch was over, when they could at last escape to the fartherest limits of England: ~~one~~ you only had to be back at school by nine in the evening, so there was still plenty of time for travelling in the afternoon. Goremire was an exhausting affair, as it must be remembered that Sutton Bank was about eight miles from the school, which is no mean distance for a walker, even an inexperienced cyclist, given bad weather conditions or an ailing physique.

Bruno's first Goremire was a partial washout. It was then 1953, Coronation year, and Goremire took place at about the same time as the Coronation: no-one can ever forget the dismal climatic conditions then prevalent ! At school it poured for a whole week and more. Owing to the peculiar conditions influencing school calendars in that year, most of the term's holidays took place within that one week. First

there was the annual Exhibition and prize-giving, lasting a couple of days, to be followed by another religiously-based holiday, after which came Goremire. As the Coronation was then taking place, and as there was what amounted to a whole week's holidays, many of the boys either went home for a welcome half-term rest, or else made for the ~~sight~~ sights of the Coronation, in London. It rained everywhere, so those in London at that time can have a good idea as to what it was like in Yorkshire ~~at the same time~~. As for Goremire, it was washed out both by the rain and the short--age of people then at the school. A handful of heroic monks made it a point to go to Sutton Bank, even if it was merely ~~so as~~ to keep up a tradition : they were well and truly drenched in the process. The remainder were served up with a cold, typical Goremire lunch, in the Big Passage, or the lower school hall: apparently the maids were on leave for the time being, so no warm food could be had. It was Bruno's first Goemire, and it did not impress him very much.

His second Goremire was better. By now he had graduated high enough in the school to be allowed the use of a bike for the first time in his ~~school~~ career: here he made use of this privilege, and set out at any early hour for Helmsley, where he had arranged to borrow ~~one of the master's~~ Mac's push-bike. It was a fair machine, a trifle stiff at first, and in need of some oil: but it worked, which is what mattered, and ~~thus~~ so meant that he would not have to walk the fatal eight miles - he was a very lazy boy, who loved as much comfort as possible. From Helmsley, he bypassed the school, and made straight for Sutton Bank, wearied by a splendid head-on gale. He eventually arrived, and then made use of yet another privilege to which he thought himself entitled - though in fact he was not. He stopped for a refreshing, pint size, glass of double-potent cider at the Hambledon Hotel, only a minute or so's walk from the top of Sutton Bank. After lunch with the others, consisting of cold meat and ham, followed by some more meat and a few potatoes, he made for Helmsley by another route, passing this time close by Rivaux Abbey, which in his haste he did not pause to see. He retained, however, a powerful first impression of it: an imprint on his mind of towering walls, blazing white beneath a resplendent sun, of distant gothic windows, tier upon tier, as though the Abbey was still intact. It was this impression ~~that later~~ that stimulated him to return and visit the Abbey at close range, to his far greater pleasure. On this day he went straight past the Abbey, which stood out so bravely from the green hills that encompassed it, and continued along the small country road, a mile away, that wound tortuously towards Helmsley. Once he arrived there, he sat down with a sigh of thanksgiving in a chair at the café called plainly 'Allenby' on the outside: this was a place he frequented quite

regularly, contrary to school regulations. Now he made a light tea of it, with only a few slices of toast to weigh him down, after which he set out for Kirby-moorside, ~~a nearby village, only some~~ five miles away. It took most of the rest of the afternoon to get there and then return to Helmsley, where he handed ~~returned~~ the bicycle back to its lawful owner and walked wearily home. Altogether he had cycled some twenty-five miles and walked another four, which for him, at that stage in his hesitant school career, meant a good deal more than was good for him. It was his first proper Goremire, and he enjoyed it, although he went rather ~~further than was good for him.~~ too far.

His third Goremire passed off almost identically, except that by now he had his own bike, and was slightly more accustomed to cycling long distances over steep hills and canyons. As usual he attended lunch on Sutton Bank, then made for Helm--sley, thence for Kirbymoorside, and thence went over to the school lakes via the village of Gilling. He really enjoyed the day, having the wind with him for what seemed to be the whole way: it was ~~a~~ fine ~~day~~, almost cloudless, warm and delight--ful. This was to be the last time that Bruno ever cycled to Goremire or Sutton Bank, as on the following year, seeking novelty for a change, he decided to walk all the way there and back to the school afterwards.

His fourth and last trip to Sutton Bank, on the occasion of Goremire, again took place on a ~~fairly~~ good day. In fact it started much better than it ended, for as the day drew on it looked more and more as though it would start raining. He went to Sutton Bank with ~~H.~~ Peter, ~~a friend~~, and decided beforehand to walk both there and back again together, if possible visiting some other place of interest after lunch. They went there via Byland Abbey, where they left the main road and followed a some--what smaller one. On the right was a deep valley, and after a while you could discern Appleby's Observatory, a lone tower, rearing a vast square head out of a thin wood, itself set on a distant ridge. He wanted to pay it a closer look, but friend ~~H.~~ Peter suggested ~~that~~ there might not be enough time, and that it would be more fun seeing it on the way back, should they return that ~~same~~ way. They plodded along the same route for another half-hour, and then stopped at a small wayside tavern for the regulation half-pint. It was a diminutive pub, and from the adjacent scenery one might have thought oneself lost somewhere in the wilds of Wales or Scotland: to add to the depressing effect of the wrong type of beer - the man at the pub had not heard of any other kind but some local brew - the sun had remained obscure for ~~some time~~ quite a while, and there was ~~quite~~ a fair chance of rain. They drank. Then, refreshed but even more listless than before, they resumed their course and followed another lonely country road for a few miles, then branched off up a precipitous path onto the moors


In
Loving Memory Of
OLIVE,
BELOVED WIFE OF
HENRY PERCIVAL HARDCASTLE,
DIED JULY 7TH 1935,
AGED 28 YEARS.

above. Never had Bruno made his way up so steep a path - for it could scarcely now be termed a road - covered as it was with a treacherous coating of dry cinders and loose pebbles. At every step, clouds of dense black dust arose in their wake, and it was oppresively hot: but he was determined to make a day of it, and if possible enjoy Goremire to the full: he was pretty sure that this was going to be his last ~~Goremire.~~ The path must have climbed crazily for almost a mile, and it took the best part of half an hour to reach what appeared to be more level terrain. Here they bumped into an other of the many groups of fellow walkers all making for the s ame place, and ~~H.~~ Peter encountered his younger brother, still only in the Junior House. One of the reasons that had in the first place prompted Bruno and his friend to choose the paths that they took to Sutton Bank was that too many other people, mainly new boys or those still in their first two years, would be taking the same road. Bruno had noticed in the previous ~~two~~ years how vast were the hordes of loud-mouthed youngsters that all followed the herd along the main road to Sutton Bank; he felt very disinclined to go on foot with them. Having chatted for a short while with his brother, ~~H.~~ Peter gave the word and they continued on their way, alone. Soon, as it was evident from nearby noises that the main-road must lie close in front, they left the path they ~~were~~ had until now industriously ~~following~~ followed, and went for the remainder of the way to Sutton Bank on foot, across country. There is no view to compare with that from the top of Sutton Bank, especially on a clear day. Sutton Bank, where the annual British Isles Gliding contests are held, is about the highest point in the North Riding. On a clear day ~~one~~ you can see, so it is said, over a dis--tance of almost twenty miles; but on this Goremire it was hazy, which proved a great disappointment, for Bruno very much wanted to make use of his camera - this being probably his last Goremire ~~holiday~~, and his last visit to Sutton Bank. When one reaches Sutton Bank from the rear, the fantastic view lies straight before one, below one, on three sides. Straight in front lies the town of Thirsk, and further away there is Ripon: Thirsk is about three miles from Sutton Bank, and the foot of the steep bank is graced by another mystery, the Bottomless Lake - thus was it called at school. Its very title provides all the necessary information as to why it is in any way mysterious: from the top of Sutton Bank it can be seen quite clearly, flat and unruffled, protected on all sides by a high rampart or circle of low-lying hills. There is hardly ever a soul to be seen there: there seems to brood an atmosphere of silence and terror over it: the water is said to be very, very cold - at all times. Sutton Bank in all its majesty - and for the sake of the bank and not the view to be had from on top of it - is best seen from the right: there you

are confronted ~~by~~ with the Devil's Leap in silhouette, a magnificent sight, unnatural ~~one would think~~, terrifying, concave, dangerous. From on top of the bank, walking ever forwards, one would in no way suspect a drop: unless previously warned, there is but a bare, straggling strand of rusty wire to prevent ~~one's~~ you from falling vertically many hundred of feet below, onto a minute, winding white country-road, as it seems from above. It is in this part of the world, in the depths of winter and in the months of January and February, that the worst snow-drifts occur; this road, that winds a tortuous, seven - in - one path for itself down the side of the bank, zig-zagging in crazy loops, can be one of the most treacherous roads in England; many have been the terrible accidents here, many the brutal deaths. A wind, a strong one, is here a terrifying experience: so high is the ground, that a trifling breeze becomes a howling gale, and aided by the fierce contours of the land would seem capable of sweeping anyone or anything to ruin below. Arriving on the top of the bank, ~~one~~ you can reach the usual camping place where the Goremire lunch is served by scrambling warily down a steep, heather-grown rib of the hill: this Bruno and ~~H~~ Peter at once did, as lunch was due to be served soon. During lunch the atmosphere was cheered by the arrival of late-comers, sliding ever more rapidly down the bank from above, with heather, sticks and stones wildly flying about in the already hot air. Besides this periodic type of disturbance, a glider flew in tantalisingly dangerous-looking loops over the resting school, a performance it kept up for at least fifteen minutes, to the amazement of all.

The general layout of the picknicking ground was simple enough. There was a small plateau, or shelf, into the side of the bank: here everyone met. In the centre were long, springy trestle tables, on which large basins of cold meat and cutlery lay. Behind these tables, facing the bank, stood some of the senior officials of the school, monks and boys, who did the serving ~~out~~. Behind them, lying on the grass, were the lay-masters and as many monks as decided to turn up for the occasion: they were supplied with mats and carpets whereupon to sit, and the whole section of this miniature plateau was littered with bottles of what looked like burgundy - or good looking, rich red wine. The masters made ~~good~~ abundant use of the wine - or whatever this alcoholic decoration was - and after the meal ~~was over~~ they would lie there smoking cigars. The boys had to sit on the other side of the tables, on the bank and the bare, often muddy, grass. For them there was, needless to say, no wine, but orange--ade did not pass unobserved: nor was there as yet any smoking. What this spot must have looked like when there was a thunderstorm it is dificult to imagine - and yet, seeing that the institution of Goremire was an old one, there must surely have

been many an occasion when the tribal gathering was graced by more than even a mere shower. Maybe it was a good thing that the boys too were not provided with mats and carpets; for many, Goremire seemed to present an opportunity for throwing any scraps of unwanted food - and they were many - at undesirable friends, or indeed at anyone sitting in a suitable position below ~~them on the bank~~. To add to an op--pressive atmosphere, an overcast sky, breaths of hot air from the valley below, there were the inevitable clouds of buzzing summer flies, crawling over hands and knees, falling into the orangeade, swarming over as yet uneaten potatoes and quivering lumps of greasy fat. The noise was tremendous: how can a whole school, staff included, amounting to some five hundred and fifty people, expect to keep quiet ? Whenever the headmaster had an announcement to make - for it was he who summoned people ~~up~~ to be served in order of study - he was obliged to ring a bell, which was sometimes inaudible.

When lunch had been greedily devoured, Bruno and Peter made off along the main road to the school, not the one they had followed on the way there. They were pretty full, and walked along at a leisurely amble: the whole afternoon still lay before them. After a while Peter began to groan - inwardly - but it did not take long to observe that he was not in the best of spirits: maybe the lunch was to blame, and, to add to that, his leg was uncomfortable. So it was agreed that they would return to the school, which they did. They must have arrived at about half-past three in the afternoon, maybe a little later: they took leave of one another, and made for their distinct houses, Peter to St. Aidan's and Bruno to St. Oswald's.

But Bruno's Goremire was by no means yet finished. At 7 o'clock he had been invited to dinner with the French master at the small village of Coxwold, some five miles away. The trouble lay in getting there, and, more so, in returning after--wards, for everyone had to be back in College by nine in the evening, for prayers. But Bruno had hopes, although he had no bicycle ~~as yet~~: he knew that people would be coming back in an ever increasing stream quite soon, many of them mounted on their sturdy steeds, which they would probably no longer need that day. So he waited by the refectory block, where the cycle shed was, and accosted boys as they swung off their saddles. Eventually he was lucky, very lucky. Having made all the neces--sary arrangements, he changed into somewhat more respectable clothes, and then made for ye tiny village of Coxwold. It was dusk - or nearly so - and the road was littered with returning crowds of half-inebriated comrades, young and old, some on foot, others on bikes, yet others astride some mangy horses hired for the event.

After a pleasant ride, passing by Byland Abbey once again, half-rose in the slow evening twilight, he reached Coxwold, with time in hand. There were to be two fellow-guests, both of them from the same house, St. Oswald's, both of them about the same age as Bruno and 'of the same year' as it is said at A. College. They had already arrived, and as soon as they were all ready, dinner began. It was a ver--itable banquet. The French master was well versed in the art of eating well, and Bruno and his friends profitted to the full from his skill and almost lavish gen--erosity. There was soup to start with, followed hard ~~on~~ by two good-sized fowl, with the necessary accoutrements of cauliflower, roast potatoes and the like; what made just that difference between this meal and any other, was the delicious pres--ence of white wine, partaken of by the master, friend Bobby and Bruno: ~~the other boy~~ Robert felt more inclined to orangeade, being not yet addicted to alcohol. The meal was taken in a small, timbered, and thus old-fashioned room in a private - or half-private - house of Coxwold. It was the first time that Bruno had had dinner out since he had been at A.College, and he enjoyed it to the full: it was certainly a fitting symbol of that master's benevolent attitude to his past pupils, for he no longer taught any of the three boys present at this banquet, and two of them he had not taken for over four years, when they had still been in the Junior House. As far as Bruno was concerned, this sumptuous meal was ~~as~~ a dream: he felt, not exactly out of place, but certainly surprised by the iddylic scene, least expected experience of public school life with its all too many trials and disappointments.

At half-past eight, or soon after, they arose to go, bade the master, their host, goodnight, and cycled a frienzied journey back to school. They arrived just as the bell began to toll - it never chimed or merely rang - and dashed into the house common-room for prayers. This had been Bruno's last Goremire, and he would never forget it: he had enjoyed it far more than he had ever expected. Now he felt tired physically, but it was a good sign: he would sleep like a log until the next school-day began. To add to his state of mental pleasure, it was always nice to know that no-one had been run over in the course of the day, and that everyone had survived what had at times in the past turned out to be an ordeal. He was only sorry that friend Peter, with whom ~~in the first place~~ he had gone to Goremire, had had to return to the school at an early hour in the afternoon, physically indisposed: he might well have gone with him and visited some ancient church or as yet undisco--vered Yorkshire village, which would have completed the afternoon' walk in a more satisfactory way than merely by hanging about at school until dinner was served at Coxwold.

INTERLUDE

Refectory conversation.

The scene is set in the St. Oswald's House refectory at seven-thirty-five in the evening: supper has just begun ~~in the historic year 1956~~. It is about half way through the term, and some people are in a bad temper. The conversation here ~~imagined~~ would be coming from the top-table, lower-half; this table seats about fifteen people, which includes the Housemaster and the monitors, and about five or six non-monitors, varying from term to term. It is the Christmas term.

Bruno: "Well, you see what's happened now; all your fault too !"

Peter: "What's all this ?"

~~Michael~~ Mike: "Hullo ? What's this ?" - "You were saying....?"

Bruno: "It's all your darned fault, the whole lot of you, you Conservative maniacs."

Ivan: "Pass the salt, tea and butter please". (To his neighbour, Bruno)

~~Michael~~ Mike: "Who are Conservative maniacs? - I hope you weren't referring to me ?"

Henry: "Oh leave him alone, he's just a bloody Socialist !"

Ivan: "I did ask you about five minutes ago to pass the butter, tea and salt please".

Bruno: "Sorry". (he passes the three required articles). (To Henry and Michael and Peter)...." and I'll have you know I'm no more a Socialist maniac than you or the Man in the Moon".

~~Michael~~ Mike: "Hey, what's this about the Man in the Moon ? I didn't quite get."

Bruno: "We'll have no more petrol soon, and then what'll you do with all your super--cadillacs and bentleys and rolls-royces ?"

Ivan: "Bread and knife please, there isn't one here."

Peter: "And why wont we have any petrol may I ask ?" ...." you .... Socialist ?"

Henry: "He's just being a .... Socialist: he wants his head putting right, darned Socialist..... I don't know what you think you're even doing in this place...."

Bruno: "And even if I were a darned Socialist as you call them, what's wrong with being a Socialist?"

Ivan: " Are you quite crazy ? I really think you are, and I did ask for the bread and bread-knife about half-an-hour ago...."

Bruno: "Sorry". (He passes the sugar-bowl) ....."As I was saying, what's wrong with being a Socialist, although I'm not one"?"

Henry: "Bloody Socialists, they're trying their best to ruin the country !" ... "and they're just a pack of dirty liars and Communists !"

Bruno: "They're just as much human as Conservatives, and they're not an infernal lot of profiteering millionaires .... nor are they any more Communists than you".

Ivan: "Are you O.K. ? I asked for the bread, not the sugar, and that was about an hour ago ?"

Bruno: "Oh, I am sorry." (Passes the bread, bread-knife, bread-board, pepper, milk and everything else down his end of the table)

Mike
~~Michael~~: "You're not in the least little bit sorry, you liar"

Bruno: "Oh well, I apologise then".

Mike
~~Michael~~: "That's better, and I'll have you know we don't need any of that filthy Egyptian oil, we can get just as much as we want from America!"

Bruno: "Ah, but it'll cost twice as much".

Mike
~~Michael~~: "Why should it cost twice as much ?"

Henry: "Confounded Socialist, get out !".

Bruno: "Shut up, you, and mind your own business.... always poking your head into.."

Mike
~~Michael~~: "Oh shut up will you, the pair of you, and stop trying to change the subject, Bruno, as usual !"

Bruno: "I'm not trying to change the subject any more than you; transport rates will make it unbuyable, unshippable, and generally we'll be in a worse mess than ever !... all because of that fat-head Eden and his darned immoral ideas on declaring war with Egypt!"

Peter: "And what's immoral in declaring war with Egypt ?"

Mike
~~Michael~~: "In any case, Bruno, you've got all your facts wrong, because he never declared war....."

Bruno: "Ha ! Ha!, funny aren't you ? And what the devil's the difference between bombing airfields and killing people - only Egyptians too, mind you, not Israelis, - and declaring war ? ... states of infernal conflict, my hat !"

Henry: "Oh leave him alone or he'll go wild, bloody Socialist !"

Bruno: "I'm not a bloody Socialist, you cheeky darned (words fail him) ..Irish crook, you drunkard, you I.R.A. murderer, that's what you are and pipe down !"

Ivan: "Mustard please".

Bruno: "Coming, hold on a moment " -(passes the onions)

Mike
~~Michael~~: "I wish you'd stop so ingeniously trying to change the subject, and please remember I'm Irish too: I asked why is the petrol going to cost more from America than from Egypt ?"

Bruno: "Because it's further away I suppose; no, because there's a much higher standard of living in America than in this miserable land and Egypt too and any--where else either".

Housemaster: "Hello ? what's the matter down here; is Henry letting himself be carried away ?"

WHOLE HOLIDAYS

The other important organised holiday of the year, that also took place in the summer term, was called the ~~annual~~ Exhibition. It too had a long tradition, and perhaps a more widly known one: it would correspond in part to other schools' idea of the half-term break.

Exhibition was usually a weekend affair, lasting from Friday afternoon until the Monday morning. All parents were encouraged to attend, or certainly as many as possible. Some parents might of course not even be in England at the time, so pay--ing their dear sons a visit was not exactly practical, and they restrained from so doing. Bruno's parents, as were many other parents, were at work at the time and could not in good conscience leave their work unattended for so long an interval in so important a period of the year. For such parent's children the Exhibition as--sumed a very different aspect from that accompanying more fortunate boys whose parents 'were up'.

The idea of Exhibition was a practical one: that the boys should, if possible, see their parents for a while, and especially that the masters and monks have an opportunity for waylaying unsatisfactory boys' parents. Poor parents sometimes ! Thus the masters would have a chance, for a change, of criticising not only their trusted pupils but their less known guardians as well. There was, of course, the happier side of the affair for happier parents, who made use of the holiday provided for feeding their sons back to normal, for flaunting their fine dresses through the school before the evening performances of the 'Play', and for generally trying to create a fine impression with their swaggering gait and their ~~noisy~~ purring super-luxury rolls-royces. Thus in the evening the whole school swarmed with rustling black dresses, blood-red skirts, swishing robes and the heavy reek of expensive cigars.

It has been said that Exhibition time gave the boys little opportunity for showing their prowess in different streets of life: it certainly let their parents make a sound exhibition of themselves. As for the boys, they were entrusted with the organising of scientific shows, art-exhibitions, book-exhibitions, writing-exhib--itions and so on, even going as far as a highly-specialised gymnastic performance, in which no-one was allowed to take part.

It used to be the custom that nearly every parent arrived; it was rumoured that there had been a time when it was a common experience seeing mothers, desperate, creased, nearing nervous-breakdown point, trying to wash their babies in the boys' wash-basins: that there had been a time when there was hardly any breathing room, when parents were in a constant state of suspended animation. It could no longer

be said that such was the case, nor can it be denied that there was far from being any shortage of parents ... and especially much-coveted younger sisters, of whom more was to be seen every year. Parents, besides taking their sons out to dinner and sumptuous repasts, and besides attending one of the two performances of the 'Play', were asked and expected to attend a speech by the Abbot, prize-giving, and a few other after-event socials (which meant drinking coffee in the Big Passage at late hours). The Abbot's speech commented on the past year, events of parti--cular interest (but not on the raising of the fees), and on events that it was to be hoped would soon be taking place. One of these was the building of a New Church, as the second stage of the already one-third-completed New Church: the project of completing the New Church had hung in the air for some thirty or more years, and by now the boys laughed at the very thought of anyone's ever getting round to tackling the problem. Every year the Abbot expressed hopes that in the following year the parents would return for the annual Exhibition and find the old church on the ground, dismantled, with a New Church in its place; this soon turned into a mock castles in the air affair, and only when Bruno was near leaving the school, at the middle point of his fifth year, was there a sign of impending change. Of course, all blame for delay was shifted on to the incompetent Government, on the rise in post-war prices, and so on ad infinitum.

Finally, one last attraction of Exhibition time lay in the teas provided for the parents. The first tea, on the Saturday afternoon, was served in the Inner Houses Refectories. The tables were loaded with trays and dishes of delicious-looking cakes as had never before been seen by the boys: these were mainly for the use of parents. Many parents went away at the end of the Exhibition convinced that the perpetual rise in the school fees was ~~due to~~ because the boys ~~being~~ were overfed with unnecessary luxuries: such was the naiveness of the good parents, thinking that the tea they were given was the boys' everyday afternoon snack. The boys, or those ~~as~~ remained indoors for lack of personal parents to remove them, were asked in advance to take charge of the distribution of cakes, and this they can be said to have done extre--emely well. In great haste, boys would seize heavily-piled dishes, walk deter--minedly round with them until there was but a cake or two left, and then unobtrus--ively disappear with their booty. Sometimes the less charitably -disposed would select beforehand the cakes that appealed to them most, would hastily gulp them down, and then, innocent-faced, would slowly tread around on people's toes in well-meant anxiety for their guests' comfort. The second tea was slightly more fun, as it took place on the Sunday afternoon - when it was invariably blazing hot - in the

grounds of the Preparatory School, which lay opposite the main school and across the valley, about a mile and a half distant. Everyone was expected - presumably it was taken for granted - to have a car of his own; most people did, but the rest of the parents either had to walk there or else hitch-hike. The boys either cycled there or walked - unless their parents were there to help them across in their splendid cars. Again, it was up to the boys to serve the parents, and as a rule the event proved a cheerful one; everyone was gay, parents laughed and jostled cheek by jowl with senior masters and distant relatives; much tea was spilt, many cakes trodden underfoot, and yet more were eaten with unfeigned delight.

Bruno's first Exhibition was a dull one: he was thoroughly bored, though the cakes were good. It was Coronation year, and it rained: most of the boys were away, and parents were not there in abundance; few meals were served, and for the most part the boys were told to get out as much as possible, and to this ends they were provided with lunch-packets; it rained while they were out, and all were soaked by the end of the first day. Bruno managed to rake up enough money and permission to go to York for the afternoon of the first day, where it succeeded in raining fit to drown the Devil. For the remainder of the week's holiday which they had been allotted, he mouched around the countryside getting ever wetter; it was a very dismal Exhibition. Only one thing relieved it, and that did not last very long. This was a dinner which the authorities had the kindness to realise the boys might appreciate, having eaten next to nothing for a week. It was given in the Inner Houses refectories, and for the occasion the dividing partitions were drawn aside so that all might banquet together: there was wine - for the monks - and cider or orange for the remainder. The food was surprisingly good, and the atmosphere for a while more cheerful than it had been for seven days. This was to be one of the best dinners Bruno ever experienced in school life. Bruno spent most of the week's holiday in a trance, wishing his parents had come up or that he could have gone home for a while; he was thoroughly home-sick and fed-up, the prospect of another eight or nine weeks term proving unbearable. So much for his first Exhibition ! As was the case with his first Goremire, it was a washout to the core, thanks to the weather and bad organisation on everyone's part.

The second Exhibition, in 1954, was a better one and more of a success: at least it could be said that the weather was more favourable. This time - and the one and only time in his career at school - he had obtained a prize: it was for Spanish, a subject he had only embarked upon at the beginning of that school year, but which he had enjoyed from the start. So he was eligible to enter the Theatre for the

annual prize-giving ceremony, officiated over by the Abbot in person, assisted by the headmaster. It went ~~alright~~ well; Bruno entered the theatre through the right door at the right time, passed into the centre to receive his prize, genuflected somewhat stiffly, kissed the Abbot's hand, received a prize of a Spanish Anthology for his pains, and beetled off. Then there were the speeches. The main item of interest for him lay in the Exhibition Camp, which he had decided to attend.

This took place every year, and was for the benefit of boys without parents up for the Exhibition; it was ~~meant~~ intended to give them something to do, provide them with some out-of-doors relaxation, and take their mind off absent parents. Bruno had not attended the Camp ~~on~~ in the previous year, luckily, as it had, ~~been~~ like all other things, been completely washed out. This year he had, however, decided to go. It was enjoyable, and the weather, except for one brief tropical-type thunderstorm, was fair to all. Bruno had his first experience of sleeping under canvas - only for two nights it is true - and of the coldness of night sleep, which was quite astound--ing. The meals were enjoyable, though far from overabundant, and there was sailing at all hours of the day, concluded by a last bathe at ten-thirty in the evening 'in scout fashion' or in the nude. This, as a matter of interest, was one of the bathes he enjoyed most in his school life; the water was warm and soft, and it was comfortably cold out; over the surface of the water hung a dense veil of white mist, about three of four foot high, over which you could see as clearly as though there were no mist within a hundred miles. High over the whole scene - about ten foot up - hung a storm lantern, which cast an encouraging glow for some six or seven yards, for otherwise it was pitch black. From the school ball-place, three miles away (the camp was by the edge of the school lakes, three miles from the school)came the martial music of the school band, conducted by a military-faced Irishboy , well over six foot tall, a friendly fellow and a sound leader of men. The school band always gave a display during the Exhibition time, and it usually took place in the evening when the Play had ended; the lower bounds were floodlit for the occasion, and beneath the pale yellow beams the band strode back--wards and forwards playing some of the few good tunes ~~which they~~ it knew best. To return to the lakes, when the bathe had been declared a success, everyone was served with hot cocoa, a rare luxury, and then made for bed with a parting bolt from the monk in charge that no-one should forget to clean his teeth. Thus the first Exhibition Camp went well, and Bruno actually enjoyed the Exhibition holiday for a change.

His third Exhibition fell flat again, owing to physical indisposition, compelling

him to stay at the school throughout. He managed to visit York on the Saturday afternoon, but otherwise there was little of interest that happened to him, except for his successful handing round of cakes to ravenous parents on the occasion of the Inner House Refectories tea. He had no prizes to collect, and as yet work gave him but the minimum pleasure.

The fourth and last Exhibition went ~~well~~ beautifully. He joined the Camp over at the lakes for the second time, and despite rather unco-operative weather conditions, all went well. Being by now a fairly senior person, Bruno was put in charge of the domestic situation, and it was his duty, amongst others, to arrange the preparing of meals, washing up, fire-tending and so on: this most certainly kept him very busy. Here he learnt the savoury art of frying eggs without always breaking them, he learnt how to look after quantity - even at the expense of quality - as regards catering, and gained a first-hand account of the difficulties involved in washing-up vast piles of cutlery and plates as fast as possible. He was constantly on the run chopping fire-wood, organising gangs to aid in domestic work and generally telling people to be a little more co-operative. This was no easy task, as people's first desire was to go sailing and swimming, and it was hard to make them realise that meals had to be made by their own members at certain times of day. It only began to rain as the lorry, laden with camping equipment, arrived back at the school at the end of the Exhibition: and then it rained for a whole week.

Bruno always remained rather nettled that his parents had not managed to visit him once at Exhibition time during his four and a half year stay at the school. It was at Exhibition-time that the school was, in fact, most fit to be inspected; it was then that the school used a little imagination in the entertaining of its guests, that the school was in a true holiday spirit and decorated to its greatest advan--tage. On the other hand, it must be admited that Exhibition-time was no typical example of the school in everyday life: no work at all was ever done at this stage of the summer term, and so the parents who only saw the school and its industrious inhabitants at this time of year, usually left with quite the wrong ideas as to ~~the~~ its true nature and character ~~of the school~~. Parents usually went away with vague notions that in reality this college was a traditionalist Benedictine holiday -- centre, where the boys attended plays every night, where magnificent and sumptuous meals were for ever waiting to be eaten, where the pupils specialised in the pursuit of culture, refined indolence, love of every form of abstract and material beauty, and above all, search ~~for~~ of the perfect form of educative pleasure without pain.

INTERLUDE

C o o l W a t e r - 1956

Raining ! Raining ! Calm the night,
Drop by drop sink out of sight;
Feed the warm and pregnant soil,
Cool her lips and ease her toil.

Rain-drops glisten
In the sky.
Flowers listen,
Who knows why ?

Sparkle fountain in the sun !
Frolic, gambol, have thy fun !
Spatter drops of silver blood,
Drench the green grass in thy flood !
Fill the air with scented mist,
Kiss the sunshine and be kissed !

Rain-drops glisten
In the sky.
Flowers listen,
Who knows why ?

Crystal water
In the moonlight,
In thee gleams the dark unknown.
Resplendent mirror of delight,
Deceive the darkness of the night
With beauty all thine own.

Rain-drops glisten
In the sky.
Flowers listen,
Who knows why ?

Cool Water (Cont.)

What the ocean ? What the sea ?
What the blue wave flowing free,
Does not love thee, Virgin Queen,
Purest pleasure of my dream ?

Rain-drops glisten
In the sky.
Flowers listen,
Who knows why ?

Thy home is not the fountain,
The sea or silent spring:
Nor rain-drop in the mountain,
Nor other mortal thing.

Return, O mystic water
To the blue eyes of the dying,
To a mother's only daughter
Who soon must cease her crying.

Live there, cool water, live
Love, sorrow and forgive.

While the silver rain-drop glistens
For a moment in the sky,
And the withered flower listens .....
For the child shall surely die.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The beginning of the end was heralded in by many very uncompromising circum--stances. They were not unexpected by Bruno, but they were certainly the last things to be expected by his companions, and such had been Bruno's notoriety, that his companions definitely knew a great deal ~~too much~~ about ~~Bruno~~ him.

It was the Christmas term 1956, and Bruno intended sitting for a scholarship to Oxford University at the end of that term. Events began to move when, right at the start ~~of the term~~, Bruno was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the school Corps. Everyone was aghast. That such a calamity should fall on the school at such a stage in its historical course ! To add to the general feeling of myst--ified panic, Bruno decided that he would live up to his promotion. Bruno began to be what the others, in undignified silence, called 'bloody-minded'; in other words, he began to be strict when acting as Sergeant in the school corps. He yelled fully at all offenders, he stamped outrageously heavily on even would- be-slackers. He called out people's names without stop, and himself acted as though he belonged to the Grenadier Guards, and was ~~parading on~~ on duty at a Royal ~~Occasion~~ Parade. He kept his kit immaculate throughout the term, even at great cost to himself and his time. He did all his duties to the letter and the inch; he shouted and pres--erved the best traditions in kneee-lifting and shoe-stamping. He began to be more heartily unpopular than ever - but he left the parade-ground with an inner feeling of deep satisfaction.

Towards the end of the term he was honoured yet further; he was appointed a house-monitor - to everyone's amazement. This time not too many people were in--dignant, and indeed, Bruno was congratulated by more than one friend when the powerful news began to spread. Again he made himself more hated than ever; he once more decided to live up to his new station in life, and make the most of it in the correct sense of the word. He kept, and made sure that others kept, every rule imaginable: often, indeed, he puzzled others by inventing rules, which he did whenever he thought appropriate. For instance, when some members of the third table acted too badly, too tiresomly for words, he made them remain in silence for the remainder of that meal, even for the rest of the day - instead of giving them lines. Once he almost put the whole table in silence, but refrained from doing so lest his fellow-moniors suspect he was trying to show off; for the same reason he refrained from sending members of the third table right out of the refectory, an action he would have really loved to do. Bruno clamped down, as fairly as he could, with the same rules as had been applied to him in his days as a non-monitor.

But it was not his appointment to the rank of Sergeant, not even his appointment as a house-monitor, that mattered most as far as he was concerned. Perhaps these surprises - as far as others were concerned they were certainly surprises - were overshadowed by something else, something that could not be expected to settle on one's shoulders fairly automatically with the run of time. Bruno was working for a scholarship to Oxford University; he badly wanted to be successful; he very much wanted to be a free man, without constant worries hovering round his head both during the term and the holidays, year in, year out. If unsuccessful, he was quite determined to go on trying, perhaps for another whole year - for ~~his age~~ he was yet young, and ~~he~~ had time if he needed it. He knew - or guessed - how horrible it must be to have to try again and again, so he was determined to make his first shot his best shot, and go all out in the course of this term. He knew he would have nothing to regret if he really worked, and he had a certain amount of hope - for Bruno's motto was 'ever to hope'.

So he worked, for the first time since he had come to A.College. He really got down to his work, and really enjoyed working, practically non-stop. During the few classes he had to attend in the course of the week - some nine or ten classes at the most - he lent all his ears to the masters' words of wisdom. And when it came to doing preps, he applied himself more than ever, working at his desk in his room until all hours. He deliberately put away his table-lamps at the beginning of the term, as they always provided him with rather over-much distraction. He sold his armchairs at exorbitant prices - for armchairs breed laziness, so he thought. He kept his small, clean, white-walled room as free from ornaments as possible: he hung up the same pictures as usual, not putting them all up, however - for in his opinion, cluttered walls and cluttered rooms breed cluttered minds. He kept the room scrupulously tidy, and as this was his first term with a room to himself, the task was made considerably easier. Every time he came in after a class, he at once, automatically, put away his books, his papers, his files, his pens, each in its proper place. He at all times kept his desk clear, and the decks, as it were, ready for action. He even ceased cleaning his Corps kit during work hours, and got up extra early so as to do it, or obtained an extension until late in the night, under the pretext of work, so as to give his boots the much needed polish and lend his brasses that look that makes Prime Ministers blink and rub their eyes with pain.

Bruno became quite revolutionary. Previously he had always welcomed visitors - other friends from the gallery - at all hours. Now he either chased them out with strong words of abuse, or simply, and thus rudely, ignored their presence, and went

on happily banging away at his typewriter, thus drowning all possibilities of conversation. This he only did when he was working - which meant during work--hours, on Sunday mornings and sometimes on Sunday evenings, and occasionally in the course of the week after supper, from eight to nine in the evening. After a game of rugger, or after Corps, he wrote letters or entertained, and then only, as on the occasional Wednesday night, did he converse with friend or foe. For the first time in his Sixth form career he made use of the Sixth form privilege that allowed you to get up for the five to seven Mass, and then work afterwards until breakfast at five past eight. Of course, he never actually worked at that time: he got up early so as to shave, or clean his Corps kit, or write letters, which he would otherwise have had to do during work-hours. Nevertheless, this early rise meant much time saved for the remainder of the day, and a day quite free from chores ~~for a change~~. On the other hand, early rise and late to bed meant that he was not quite as much up to scratch as usual as regards work, and by evening time he was feeling drowsy. Twice, shameful to say, he was so drowsy at this time of day that he coldly and deliberately got up from his desk, drew his curtains, and having put out his one and only light, slept solidly for as much as two hours. But this he only did twice in the course of the term. Otherwise it would have meant a fortnight's early rises wasted in the course of one evening, and normally there was too much work ~~to be done~~ to be able to afford even the slightest slacking. And even on those two occasions, when he did take an extra nap, it was not before he had made the most exacting of examinations of ~~his~~ conscience, working out in great detail whether it paid higher dividends to work on when too tired to gain much pro--fit ~~from it~~, or to snatch a forbidden sleep that might make all that difference to his essays when he woke up afterwards, slightly fresher and less harrassed for a change.

So the term fled rapidly by. He worked even for part of the two whole-holidays allowed, and regularly on Sundays and Wednesdays. His marks did not need much improvement: they needed ~~more~~ consistency rather than a rapid swing up the scale. He always had high marks for the first three weeks of a term - when he was still fresh and had ~~still~~ a few sensible and slightly original bees in his brain. As the term advanced, he lost freshness, and in an effort to remain original his vague theories often verged, for lack of imagination, on the absurd. This term he made it his task to remain at more or less the same level throughout the term - certainly with respect to his literature and general essays. The only way of improving his marks on language work was constant application, and of this he was well aware. Yet

what he loved most of all was the literature of a language, be it French or Spanish. For the first three weeks of the term, even the first half as a whole, his Spanish literature marks were at the alpha minus stage: then they swerved violently to the alpha-beta - which was not so good - level, where they stayed for another three or more weeks. Towards the end of term, rapidly approaching Scholarship time, he made a final determined effort, and returned to the alpha-minuses, even in Spanish prose - his weakest point. His General Paper work was not quite as fascinatingly interesting. He was taken for this twice a week by Mr.B., a jovial, at times rather cynical man, of vast dimensions and incredible learning. The subjects he set were never really fascinating - verging towards politics, economics, and general social conditions for most of the time. Only once was there an art question of the sort Bruno liked, and on that essay he reaped a meagre alpha-double-minus. For the other essays, treating of science, progress, development and so on he always left with the inevitable Beta-minus or, even, gamma-plus. Mr. B absolutely detes--ted Bruno's style, which he described as pompous, full of unecessary verbiage, foliage, undergrowth and so on, with far too many adjectives and rhetorical, or baroque, devices. It was mainly with Bruno's style that he concerned himself, and Bruno often suspected that his essays were marked at a low level because of the contempt in which his master held ~~his~~ their style. French proses hovered uncomfortably round the beta-plus-query-something grade. Bruno did French language with Mr.C, a French man by origin, and studying with him there was the famous Freddy, himself French, and a bright young thing from the year below, called B.C. Freddy, being French, had little difficulty in beating Bruno in every single French prose he did for Mr.C, though this was not necessarily the case as regards essays. The trouble was that Mr.C, seeing Freddy's excellent marks beside Bruno's, compared their two respective outputs, and graded Bruno perhaps lower than he deserved - because his, Bruno's, marks showed up unfavourably against those of an inhabitant of the land of the Cock. Thus Bruno never felt very encouraged as regards his French language work - which he found abominably treacherous.

When he had finished sitting for a scholarship to Oxford, Bruno was agreeably amused on comparing the grading given his different papers during the course of the term and that given for his scholarship. In the course of school work, his Spanish literature had always overtopped all other marks - and this was one of his main reasons for taking Spanish as his main subject, not French, despite his rather unsafe marks in Spanish language - which he had managed to stabilise somewhat in the preceeding term. Thus it was to be expected that in his scholarship papers

in Spanish literature he would have done well: in fact he only reached about an average mark, something like beta-double-plus. In Spanish Language he was not to be disappointed - being given beta-double-plus for unseen, essay and roughly the same for prose. Thus in his main language he only reached a beta-double-plus level, not really exciting; in view of the memories of beta-minuses for his general paper work in the term, and for dubious beta-plus-query-something marks in French language, it would appear that Bruno was not going to stand much of a chance in his scholarship examinations. In fact, the scholarship marks in the General paper and the French were, as far as Bruno was concerned, incredible. It certainly seemed to point at some queer marking system at A.College in those two subjects: for the General paper he approached alpha standard, and in the French paper he had something like an alpha-beta. So much for school marks ! Added to that there was an alphaish viva-voce, for which, at school, no doubt, he would have been awarded a gamma-query-plus.

For his scholarship term Bruno was allowed, within reason, to arrange his work more or less as he thought best. So for the first three-quarters of the term he concentrated on his Spanish literature, a subject he loved and of which there was far too much to do. Every week he handed in an essay on Lope de Vega, or Calderón, or San Juan and the mystics, on Darío and the '98 Generation for one master, and then an essay on the Spanish novel for another master. Thus he would do about two essays every ten days, each of them between four and ten typed pages in length. He would spend most of the week digging up material, and on the Saturday evening he would start on the actual essay. As for the essays on the novel, this entailed spending some seven or eight hours, perhaps more, at his desk, just reading a Spanish novel - which he always read in the Spanish, so as to improve his language at the same time. His favourite author was Pereda, and then came Galdós, then Valera. When not busy finding material for his literature essays, he would hasten to complete a mound of French proses, Spanish proses and unseens, and even Latin unseens. He had to do some four latin unseens a week, in the eventuality of his not winning a scholarship in the December group, when Latin was not needed, and then having to do latin papers in the following February and March groups. Latin unseens were a definite bore - especially pieces of Livy and Caesar, though Cicero was a quick.

Towards the end of term he altered his routine drastically - with his masters' sorry consent. He packed up Latin unseens altogether - with his master's leave - and stopped his General Paper Essays. He even ceased doing new Spanish Literature

essays, which worried 'Mac ~~Mr. McP.~~ no little. It was about three weeks before the time when the Scholarships were due to begin when Bruno wrought this frightful change in his weekly horarium. This change was not intended as relaxation as far as Bruno was concerned, though it may well have been in this light that his masters saw it. For the first of the three remaining weeks Bruno only read French books. It took quite a time to read Flaubert's 'Madame Bovary', which was the first French book Bruno took off his shelf, and then came 'Le Livre de mon Ami', by Anatole France; in the second week he read nothing but Spanish books, including Galdós' 'Marianela'. Bruno skipped hastily through a couple of tomes on Spanish Romanticism, by friend Peers of Liverpool, and then began his revision.

Revision, he had guessed long in advance, was going to pose a frightful amount of problems. As it was, he began revising just over ten days before going up to Oxford. He started with the Romantic Spanish drama, on which he wrote brief notes, summarised from previous essays and books he had read since; under the authors whose works he had read there was Rivas, with his great 'Don Alvaro' - the Romantic play that gave Bruno by far the greatest kick of them all: there was Larra's 'Macías', a trifle sordid and larmoyante, and not even original, and then Gutierrez's 'El Trovador', which also proved a success as far as Bruno was concerned. After Romantic Drama, Bruno switched rapidly back to the Golden Age poets, Góngora, Luis de León - Bruno's 'bad poet', as his essays on Luis were inevitably heretical -, and San Juan de la Cruz, perhaps his favourite poet of the Golden Age. Again, he repeated the same technique of writing brief synopses of past essays, and to that he added the extra help of rereading their separate poems, those that had fascinated him most and were the most worthy of consideration. When he had got so far he saw that he was already in a jam: there were only about two days left - so he threw precaution and leisure to the wind - and hastened faster than ever. He wrote the shortest of short summaries - sometimes only a memorised rewrite of the list of dramatis personae and their relationships, - on plays of Lope de Vega and his successor, Calderón. This took ~~just about~~ one and a half days - and time was just about up. He saw that to reread even his ten page typed essays on the novels of Pereda and Galdós was out of the question - so he glanced through them and merely picked out the names of the characters once more, and trusted to luck that he would remember the plots.

These three weeks flashed by like a whirlwind, almost unnoticed. Bruno had most certainly worked in the course of the term, so it was not a matter of doing what he had failed to do previously. The fact that he had done a soundish amount of toil

meant there ~~was~~ were a soundish hundred or more pages of literature notes to be revised, and innumerable poems and essays to be read through for a last time. In the end Bruno was fairly satisfied - though there had not been time enough in which to reread his 'Don Quijote' or other 'Novelas Ejemplares' of Cervantes, a big gap in his literary potentialities. Nor had there been time in which to read again all the more modern Spanish poetry he so loved - including Lorca and Jiménez. Ever since he had heard that Juan Ramón Jiménez had been awarded the Nobel Prize, Bruno had had a bee in his bonnet that there would be a question on him in the literature papers. Indeed there was - but Bruno had never found the time in the course of that term even to write one essay on him. He had not bothered about Lorca, as he almost knew there would be a question on him - being such a popular poet, - and as he guessed, or rather deduced, that everyone would do that essay if given the chance . Bruno's greatest hopes lay in doing essays others would not think of doing: not in doing Lope, but Calderón: not in doing some easier poet like Machado - although he loved Machado's poetry - but Bécquer or Góngora.

The candidates for the scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge were given the Saturday before going up, as a whole-holiday. Bruno decided to take this offer, and made at once for York. He decided to take the proferred holiday as he very much dreaded being stale for his exams - and he sought originality at all costs, a gift he only had as a rule at the beginning of a term. He spent the afternoon in York, eating well, and returned to school in the evening, just in time for tea. Although he did not do much in York, it meant a day away from his books, which were left completely out of range for a few hours. On the Sunday he loitered, writing much awaited letters to his scattered friends, and on the Monday morning he was off.

He left with the others from the school post-office. A private coach had been hired for the occasion by the headmaster, who was there to see everyone off - and wish them the best of luck. Everything was done on time, and no-one missed the train from York. Bruno was somehow separated from the others when boarding the train, and consequently sat alone, surrounded by Grammar School ~~products~~ people. They spent their entire time revising - a hobby Bruno ~~gave~~ had given up on Friday evening. At lunch-time Bruno decided that his morale was sinking rather too quickly - at the sight of the boarding hordes of fellow-rivals at each progressive station further South ~~was reached~~, so he had lunch, with three friends from school. Maybe it was this lunch that saved the day, for afterwards he felt as cheerful and confident as ever, merely grinning inwardly as more candidates ~~continued~~ entering ed the train. At three-thirty ~~they train~~ arrived at Oxford - poor city to be inundated completely by Bruno's accompanying masses of swirling, blank-eyed competitors.

INTERLUDE

End of Term.

There is a knock at Bruno's door.

Bruno: (sleepily) "Oh, ... come in...."

Peter: "Hello. Say, what are you doing ?" He looks round Bruno's disorderly room. "Started packing yet ?"

Bruno: After a few moments silence "No, not really: just sort of getting things ship shape: bit of a mess, isn't it ? Eh ?"

Peter: "You haven't seen my room yet ! No comparison !"

Bruno: "Oh all right, I know mine's not quite up to scratch .... but it's not always this bad ...."

Peter: "Fool ! I meant my room's in a darned sight worse state than this could ever be ...."

Bruno: "Well let's change the subject - I'm always getting everything wrong. Say, How many more days - I mean hours ? Left ?"

Peter does not get a chance to reply, as there is a knock at the door, and, before even Bruno can say 'come in', in walks Ben.

Ben: "Good afternoon Gentlemen: say, does anyone here want to buy a next-to-new pincushion, two carpets and a tin of dark tan ?"

Bruno: "Say, who said you could come in ? Knock ! - before you enter, please, and I don't really want a pincushion, not at any price, nor dark tan 'cause my shoes sort of happen to be black .... you see !"

Peter: (To Ben) "See you later, you can go now ...."

Bruno: (To Ben) "As a matter of fact you can go, but don't stand any nonsence from this thing " and he points at Peter .

Ben: "Don't you worry " speaking to Bruno " I know how to look after him !" Exits.

Peter: "As we were trying to say, before we were so rudely interrupted by his Excellency's unwarranted entrance ...."

There is another knock at the door, and in walks David, before anyone can say come in or get out.

David: "Hello you chaps ! S'nice to see you ... now I'm here on business, so don't anyone try to waste my time ..."

Bruno: "Now who's wasting my time ?...."

David: "Hold your tongue, you little guttersnipe, you little, you...." words fail him, and David gets the giggles. He starts laughing, but Bruno fixes him with his usual penetrating look.

Bruno: "Can I help you?" rather sarcastically pronounced.

David: "Well, as I was trying to say, before someone began wasting my time, some little ..."

Bruno: "I said, 'can I help you ?'".

David: "Most certainly; now, I have in my room, quite close at hand, treated at all times with the greatest of care - and you know how careful I am, don't you ?... a really immaculate carpet ...."

Bruno: "Sorry, I've already been asked that one once: what else ?"

David: "I wish you'de have the decency to let a chap finish what he's saying once in a while !"

Peter: "....looks as though you've got too much to say ...."

David: "Hold your tongue, ... Junior ! It's a truly magnificent piece of work, this carpet, you know, brought back all the way from the Malayan jungles in about the year eighteenhundred and eighty ...."

Bruno: "In which case I don't frankly think I'll be needing it !"

David: ".... and besides this absolute bargain of a foot-warmer - going at the fantastic price of thirty shillings, just think, only thirty shillings, and all the lives it cost to kill the brute, and all the way it had to be brought back from Indo-China ...."

Bruno: "Thought you said Malaya, and it's ancient by now anyway ... say. what else have you got ?"

David: "As I was about to say, ... there's that too-comfortable-for-words armchair, the one Aunt Florie gave me when I entered the Sixth form, you know the one I mean, with the rubber-backed stripping along the sides and the big blue cushions in the middle - of course you'll have to pay a reasonable price, about a pound."

Peter: "Call that a reasonable price - just at the end of term when a chap's broke ! You're a bloody thief, yes, that's what you are ! Now get out, I said get out, didn't you hear .... or are you a deaf thief ? Now get out ....."

David: "Now look here, Junior, if I have one more word out of you, you'll be for the high-jump my man, d'you here ? I was adressing your noble partner."

Bruno: "Did you say you were selling that at five bob ? You know, at a reasonable price....."

David: "Come on, I know you're rolling in gold - you collect it - how about ten bob ?..... Oh come on, a fellow's got to live you know ?"

Bruno: "You've said it ! A fellow's got to live ...."and he turns to his books.

David: "Oh come on man: haven't you got a heart; seven and six is all I ask for"

Bruno: "That's better; now you're beginning to talk sense !"

TRIAL, VICTORY, AND THE END.

As Bruno was a native of Oxford, he had sensed their impending arrival there long before they actually reached Oxford: consequently he was one of the first off the train. Common sense told him that the buses would all be full, that his case was heavyish, and that the college of his destination was not too near at hand - so he ordered a taxi. Into this, five of his heavy friends piled as well, before they made for a tour of the University centre. They all alighted in front of Jesus College, for convenience, paid a fare of one and nine each, and made for the college at which they had been warned they would be staying.

Bruno had invited Bobby for tea, so once Bobby had left his case at Lincoln, they made off together for Pembroke, where Bruno supposed he would be staying. He was informed on arrival there that the College was full, they regretted, and that he was to be put up at Exeter. Already somewhat disillusioned, Bruno made off with Bobby back towards Exeter, the college next to Lincoln, where they had gone in the first place. There he found his room, clean, smallish, and extremely cold, at what seemedto be umpteen floors up; he left his case there, and with Bobby he made for dulce domum, in North Oxford.

Here he was greeted by his mother, and all together they had tea. Oddly enough, Bruno had little appetite, which worried his unknowing mother, while Bobby ate at a slightly under-normal rate too . Bruno was ruminating all the time as to how his papers were going to turn out ... and as to what the result of all this fuss was to be. Towards six-thirty Bobby and Bruno rose and left, for Bobby had to attend dinner in College at seven, ~~where~~ though Bruno's was to be at seven-thirty only. They walked into town, Bruno pointing out some of the more familiar landmarks on the way in, to his unsuspecting friend. There was St.Anthony's, and then the Radcliffe - opening into St.Giles, of which Bruno both thought and spoke very highly. It was as fine a road as you could hope to meet in the British Isles, and it was through this that the Government at one stage hoped to build its deadly by-pass. St.Giles is a very holy rout, with half a dozen religious organisations housed along one side only; starting with St. Aloysius, the first Catholic church to be built in Oxford after the Reformation, moving on to the Christian Science reading rooms, then St.Benet's Hall, - the house of study where Bruno's monkly masters learnt their stuff before teadhing at A.College -, then the Quaker's rather small-looking rooms, followed by Pusey House and the Catholic Black Friars: all these houses and churches being held in a space about three hundred yards long, with St. John's across the road, and trees lining the broad and airy way. It is a noble

view, by night or in the daytime.

Later that evening, Bruno had his preliminary interview at Pembroke, which went quite well, though not as well as Bruno had actually hoped. He was rather nettled by one of the questions suddenly popped at him, which ~~said~~ asked, more or less, 'is Spain dead ?' Bruno could not, in truth, make as much out of this as he should have been able to. He just managed to answer another, easy question, in time. This time he was asked what book, or books, he had read on Spain as a country: for a few moments he could not recollect having ever read a single one - until he suddenly remembered, to the examiners' amazement, that he had read George Borrow's 'The Bible in Spain' at the end of the summer term. It was by reading that book, and at the same time Belloc's 'Path to Rome', that he had been able to give an account of his own, carefully balanced between Borrow's cold indifference and Belloc's overpowering intimacy, of his journey to Spain a few weeks later. Besides those two questions, both of them inconveniently unexpected, he was asked when he would be coming up, whether he wanted an entrance, and when he would do his military service, if indeed he had to do it. To the question of whether or not he wanted an Entrance, Bruno felt dangerously inclined to reply in the affirmative - so much had he been over--awed by the hordes of fellow-competitors, many of them already with State-Scholar--ships, ~~and~~ approaching nineteen years ~~old~~ of age. He thought rapidly for half a minute, to his examiners' consternation, and then answered daringly that he did not want an Entrance, but would go on trying for a Scholarship until he was unable to do so any longer. The examiners were slightly amused.

On the following morning he had his first paper. He had gone to bed at about a quarter to twelve at night, and had not slept because of the ice coldness of his room. This, he thought, should be his best paper: it was Spanish Literature. Initit he had to answer the first question, and do another three essays - quite a lot for three hours. The first required a study of the poem given, with an analysis of main points of interest, style, theme and so on. Bruno suspected that he had read the poem given at some stage, but he simply could not remember where: he thought it must be either by Lorca or Antonio Machado: in fact it was by Lorca, as he discovered in the Christmas holidays. Of the three essays, two were gifts - one being on Góngora, the other on San Juan - while the third was a bit stickier. Bruno's main difficulty during this paper was lack of time, coupled ~~by~~ with an inability to write - as he had typed every single thing, preps and letters, for the length of the term. This quite infuriated him, feeling his pen uselessly slithering along the paper, creating an unreadable slur at times. As his exams went on, he gradually

remembered how to write, and when on his last paper, he had little difficulty at all in writing legibly.

Bruno enjoyed his stay at Oxford as a prospective scholar. He enjoyed his papers, none of which left him hot or cold. He soon thought that he had covered the ground he needed, and that his success or failure no longer depended on him so much as on his rivals. As the papers followed one another, he gradually acquired a feeling of satisfaction at not having made a mess of any one paper, as he had always, previously, been prone to do. Even the General Paper was not too much of a mess - he thought - and the French Paper, which he found abominably hard, also left him satisfied when he had completed it. Little by little he filled with confidence, and his one and only doubt lay in his rivals' attainments - which, for all he knew, might be far above or below his own.

Every afternoon, having finished his second and last paper of the day, he went home with a friend for tea; on the first day it had been Bobby, on the second and third days it was the head of his school, once accompanied by a younger friend of his own, an Irishman, trying for Jesus too. After tea, Bruno always walked back into town, had dinner, and then began relaxing. He spent many an hour with a newly-made friend, also a candidate, who was a scientist. He was head of his school, a keen rugger-player, and a delightful pianist: he was excellent company, and they got on very well for the three days of their acquaintanceship. Later in the night, about a quarter of an hour before the college gates were due to shut, Bruno once more emerged into the cold and silent streets, and made for the nearest café. Twice he was accompanied ~~at this time of the day~~ by Ingrid, a devoted German friend whom he had met a year ago. Ingrid was staying in Oxford for a year before returning to Germany: she was here to learn English, and already spoke it to perfection. She was the first blonde Bruno could even tolerate the sight of - and he adored her: her face so suited her hair, and her ways were admirably, indeed comfortably, mature and sensible. She was wonderful , at all times expressing her certain conviction that Bruno would be succesful, and thus giving him immeasurable moral support - much-needed. Bruno went for a walk with her, and they had coffee together, every night, before Bruno had to retreat behind the ~~wooden~~ Colleges' wooden doors.

Bruno eventually reached the beginning of the end: he was given a much hoped-for second interview, which went absolutely beautifully, having been oiled by an unexpected interview on the previous night with the Dean of Wadham, the College of his second choice. The Dean of Wadham had spoken with him, alone, for some fifteen minutes or more, on art, drama, music, and Spanish, French and English sixteenth

century drama and stage devices. Bruno had felt slightly embarrassed throughout the interview - of which he had received little notification in advance -, but whether it went well or badly, it certainly gave Bruno confidence for his second interview at the College of his first choice, Pembroke. In this second interview at Pembroke College, Bruno felt delightfully at home. The questions were not tricky, but, rather, theoretical. Bruno felt that it was more of a discussion than an interview. For most of the time he was being questioned on an essay he had written in his General Paper - whether beauty lies in the eye of the beholder - and for most of the interview he was frantically attempting to reach some conclu--sion. This he managed to do almost at the last moment - deciding that beauty was latent in all things, and that it was up to the beholder to co-operate and seek it for himself. This conclusion, which Bruno had never so much as dreamt of before, probably came as a natural end to the general run of the discussion, in which impressions, the ability of the mind and a man's general characcter and education, had all followed one another in a fairly logical order. It was both happily, and with a feeling of immense relief, that Bruno came out of the room at the end and returned to Exeter.

Things then moved. He packed his belongings, paid his bills, and went home for the night. On the following morning he caught a train back to school, where he was to spend the last three or four days of term, and finally arrived there at about six-thirty in the evening, quite tired. He had decided to return to school after his exams in order to do his packing, which otherwise he would have had to do before going up to Oxford in the first place - and that would have meant valuable time lost from revision. He only hoped that he was, after all, going to win an award; otherwise the extra train-fares would have been money down the drain. He had a busy time on his return to school, going through his papers with his masters, and repeating, almost word for word, all that had passed in the course of his three interviews, especially the third and last of them. His verdict was good: he expressed his confidence that he had done good papers, but that his success or his failure depended very much on the type of competition with which he no doubt had had to contend.

On the Tuesday morning he left school with the others, as yet none the wiser as to his results. On Thursday morning, the 20th of December, the good news came through. As faras he was concerned, he was a free man, happy beyond measure, without a worry for several years, brimming with delight. And so Bruno's four years and a term came to an end: he entered the school with an award, and left with an award: he had not let anyone down - and was himself in Paradise.