FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

BY

MARY TREVELYAN
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Every day since 1931 Miss Trevelyan has watched a constant and varied procession of young men and women coming in and out through the swing doors of the university student club of which she is the warden. They come to London from twenty different countries—boys and girls straight from home, excited, frightened, alone, sometimes desperately homesick. After some years of study they return, to the Far East, to many countries in the Empire, to every country in Europe, and they take with them the impressions that remain, good and bad, of their stay in England.

Here is material for a very unusual book, and Miss Trevelyan tells her story with great skill.

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From the Ends of the Earth
News from Home
FROM
THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

by
MARY TREVELYAN

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Introduction

'Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day!
And yesterday things went on just as usual.'
—Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

Every year since the Great War hundreds of young men and women from many lands have poured into this country in search of knowledge. London, the greatest cosmopolitan city in the world, has always been the Mecca of overseas students; London has received them, though not always with that friendly welcome which would make them feel at home. The importance of such a vast migration of the youth of the world to our capital city cannot be overestimated.

Every year hundreds of students have left England for their own homes, carrying with them the experiences they have had, good and ill, of a great Western democracy. They go back to every country in Europe—and what influence have their impressions of England had upon the present war? They go, some enthusiastic, some bitter and disillusioned, to every country in the Empire—and their return home is not without its effect upon our Colonial problems—they go to the Far East and to America.

In these years between two wars, 1918—1939, two things have been happening at the same time—on the one hand the nations of the world have grown more and more suspicious of each other, building up barriers of mistrust and fear, while on the other hand the young people of the same countries have been broadening their outlook by their travels far and
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wide and deepening their friendship with the youth of their own generation in many countries in the world. The actions of many of the older generation have led to World War. Is it too optimistic to hope that the great student migrations of the last twenty years may be a real factor in the rebuilding of the world after the war on a saner basis of trust and tolerance between one nation and another?

Are students so important? They talk a lot of nonsense, they think they know everything. They are easily swayed, unreliable creatures, full of enthusiasm, full of contempt for the old-fashioned views of their elders. The student perhaps overestimates his own importance while he is a student, for that period of his life is a time of testing, of trial and error, of training and formation of character. Immediately he ceases to be a student and takes his place in the world of men and affairs he is important.

Here are great opportunities and great responsibilities. In London the seed can be sown. There are many clever and unscrupulous people who realize this and know that in each student generation there is for their purposes much potentially useful material, for loneliness, bitterness and fear are weapons which, in the hands of such people, can be used with deplorable effect. But it is also possible to sow the seed of real friendship, tolerance and understanding and much else that is good among the products of a free and democratic country. It is possible to send back to many lands young people with happy memories of England, people who look forward to acting as interpreters between their countries and ours. These people can make a real contribution to the peace of the world.

This, without apology, is a book about students. I have lived among them, worked and played with them. I know many of their weaknesses and much of their strength; I have been honoured by their friendship and I have received much
Introduction

hospitality from them when they have returned to their own lands. I have seen them distracted with fear for the safety of their parents and families, with fears for their own future, and I have seen them take blow after blow with amazing courage and fortitude. Now I see them in a country at war, some of them with brothers fighting for the enemy.

In a world where young people have a right to be free, students have been caught in a political and economic trap and they do not know, many of them, where to turn. An old Beggar’s Song from Ceylon describes something of their despair:

The time of the world is broken, brothers,
The tune of the world is false,
There is no star in the night
And the people have not lit their lamps.
How can I light my lamp when the light of the world is broken?

This is the New Age. These students will be the people who, for all our discussions on post-war reconstruction, will have the making of the New World Order. If they are sometimes afraid, they are never without hope, never without courage. Many of the young people of the occupied countries may now have to make a protracted stay in England and they are naturally doing all they can to build up again a national spirit as they look towards a post-war world when they will be able to return to their own homes. Can they be helped to think internationally as well as nationally? Can they be given a vision of a New Age, as Rabindranath Tagore, that great Indian poet, has seen it?

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Introduction

Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the
dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening
thought and action—
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Our task must be to try to give the students of this generation a light, in a world in which it has become hard to see the stars.
CHAPTER I

1932. A War Memorial

‘One can’t hear oneself speak—and they don’t seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them.’

—Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

The House as I first saw it in 1932 presented a remarkably variegated picture, for any student of any race from any university in the world could become a member. The club was housed in one of the last remaining big Georgian houses in Russell Square. From the entrance hall an immense staircase curled itself gracefully round four floors. In alcoves on the stairs stood two black marble ladies, over a hundred years old, each holding erect empty sockets which had once been filled with candles to light little Georgian children on their way to bed in their dark nurseries at the top of the house. On the first floor a great room stretched from the front to the back of the house, a balcony, reached through french windows, looked onto the gardens of Russell Square; huge mirrors reached from floor to ceiling, while white marble Adam fireplaces, painted ceilings and door handles reminded the new age of the boudoirs of long ago. The basement kitchens and servants’ rooms had been turned into a students’ refectory, games rooms, and a chapel. The billiard room had become the radio room, the ‘smoking room’ an office. Perhaps the old house shuddered at this transformation scene, but I like to think that it was glad to give the last
1932. *A War Memorial*

twenty years of its life to young people from all over the world—the young who, with no sobering parental influence near them, lived in these stately rooms, tramped up and down the beautiful staircase, smoked incessantly, talked incessantly, made friends, laughed, played, were happy and unhappy, and left at last for far-off countries.

Student Movement House, or ‘the House’ as it is called by its intimates, was no ordinary club, though it was properly supplied with all the ‘amenities’ one would expect to find in a student club.

Its beginning was unusual, for it was born in the Great War, in the autumn of 1917, and its purpose in coming into the world at all was to be a memorial to British students who had died for their country. A curious kind of memorial? Perhaps, but surely a better one than some of those erected in this country after 1918, for it was a memorial which was living, a memorial which had a debt to pay to those who had died. What kind of a world should we have when the war was over? Could it not be the kind of world where people of different countries could make real friends with each other, could learn something of tolerance and understanding, could come together in spite of, even because of, their differences? Young people were less prejudiced than their elders, more natural and more kindly—perhaps they could point the way, given the opportunity, to the better world that many hoped for and for which many had died.

It is not for me to write of the first years, though I have heard many stories of the beginning of the House. On Armistice Day 1918 one of the founders of the club sent a telegram saying: ‘Peace has begun, in your hands lies the fulfilling of it.’ Soon afterwards German students, so lately our enemies, came to the club and actually made friends with English students. Japanese and Koreans could be seen taking part in the same discussions and games, Mohammedan and
The Silence Room: France, ex-Germany, England, Czechoslovakia
A corner of the clubroom at tea-time
1932. A War Memorial

Hindu students were eating together in the same restaurant. I envy those pioneers as they watched the 'impossible' becoming possible, and I know that when I came to the House the real fruits of their work could be seen, for friendship among students of many countries, at least within our walls, no longer excited comment, but it was taken as a matter of course. By 1932 a strong tradition of international friendship had grown up in the House and even a real sense of community, a unity in diversity. In fact, a daring experiment had come off, though it now remained to be seen how this tradition would stand the strain of living in a world which was to turn once again into a frenzy of mistrust, suspicion, cruelty and hatred.

These years, since 1932, have been the most exciting in the history of the House, not even excepting those early years after the Great War. Every move on the great chessboard of Europe and Asia has had its repercussion on the lives of young men and women who have come in and out of the House. I have seen in the House comedy and tragedy, courage and fear, hope and despair. I have seen, in these years, how the more or less normal life of students was first disturbed by 'a cloud no bigger than a man's hand'—when Germany left the League in 1933; how the clouds gathered with the coming of the first refugees from Nazi oppression, later in the same year; how the first real clash came with the recall of the Abyssinians and the Italians to their own homes, to fight each other; and how—through years of swift-moving drama—hatred, suspicion, lying and deception culminated in the outbreak of war on 3rd September 1939.

The main clubroom at tea-time or on an evening after a lecture or concert was probably the most spectacular sight in the club. The room, which was very large, was invariably crowded with people from many different countries, often talking in their own languages. At one table might be found
1932. *A War Memorial*

a young prince from the Gold Coast, a student of economics, with him a Nigerian law student and a little blind man from an African tribe called Xosa, who had come to study Braille so that he might return and teach it to the many people in his tribe who suffer from blindness. In a quiet corner there might be a group of earnest Germans discussing philosophy or the latest Mahler Symphony, or a party of Scandinavian boys and girls planning the next National Evening to be held in the House. Some people stood out more prominently than others—I remember an Arab artist, working at the Slade School. He had a shock of hair falling over his forehead and spent much of his spare time instructing his friends in the latest form of Yo-Yo. There were many Indians, from the Tamil-speaking people of the South to the men of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier, some of them bearded Sikhs with decorative turbans. A group of medical students were generally to be found talking shop, perhaps conducting an amateur post-mortem on a case they had seen during the day. A Persian played endless games of shove ha’penny with a tall Lithuanian, their board perched on the corner of the grand piano. Some people were immersed in papers and magazines, either because they genuinely wished to read or, sometimes, because a newspaper makes a good barrage for a shy new member.

Down in the basement Games Room there was usually a large number of enthusiasts, laughing, talking, and smoking, while they waited their turn to play. Perhaps a Chinese, playing with effortless skill and grace, would have as his opponent a tall Abyssinian with a magnificent head, a joy to any sculptor. The Refectory, especially in the evenings, would be full of steam and noise, with waitresses running up and down, trying to understand the orders given in broken English. In a smaller room upstairs an English member might be found trying to teach his language to
fellow members of various nationalities. In the Silence Room men and women would be buried deep in text-books, often struggling to concentrate while a medical student was busy ‘telling his bones’ from a skeleton which he kept in his locker.

All day long, from eleven a.m. to eleven p.m. the swing doors of the entrance hall were in constant use. Students came in and out, signing their names in the hall register, running upstairs for a late cup of tea, taking their visitors on a tour of inspection, fetching books from their lockers, inquiring about bus or underground routes, or the whereabouts of theatres and cinemas. Every day new students came to inquire about the club, sometimes hardly able to speak any English, every week members made a round of good-byes and went away, often to far-off countries.

Out of a total membership of a thousand, about a third were British, and they were never in a conspicuous majority. They had many other clubs in the University which they could join, from some of which foreign students were still debarred. But those who did frequent the club were worth their weight in gold and found themselves amply repaid for any effort they had to make to cure their first shyness and embarrassment at finding themselves in a club with so many foreigners. A British student member of the House found no special privileges, the House belonged to him in the same way as it belonged to students of any other country.

The coloured students, of whom there were many, seemed to be very much at home in the House. They knew that here they need have no fear of the doors being closed to them, here they would be treated as ordinary members of society and would be accepted on exactly the same terms as anyone else.

The Warden’s staff, in peace-time, consists of two men and two women, university graduates. They are usually
1932. A War Memorial

British, but we have had Dutch, Canadian, American, New Zealand, and even a Chinese on the staff in our day.

It is not a very easy job and some find it unnerving at first. A very new, very young, very English club secretary, only down from Oxford a few weeks, was taken into the club-room on his first day, to be introduced to assorted members. He was immediately tackled by an African, much larger than himself. 'Are you shy?' asked the African, with quite unintentional ferocity. 'Yes,' said the boy without hesitation, 'do I look it?' and from that moment he was completely accepted by members of the House. The staff are required to do every sort of thing, from leading discussion groups or chairing meetings to taking their turn in the porter's box, or, as some of them would say, training to be a competent Carter Paterson handy man about the house. They are also required to memorize as far as possible, the names of members and to attach these names to the right faces. Names here are indeed a nightmare both to remember and to pronounce: Asekuleratne, Schultze-Gaevernitz, Wickremesinghe, for instance, or the three confusing gentlemen from Burma, China, and Java, called Tun, Tin, and Tan respectively.

In the Staff Office I found constant activity. Where is the list of people who have not paid their subscriptions? Has anyone made out the agenda for Club Committee? The lecturer for to-night has influenza and cannot come. A new member to-day can only talk Turkish and smile—can anyone draw a picture of an omnibus, so that we can show him how to get back to his lodgings? A knock on the door and the porter comes in to report that a Russian member in a terrible temper has locked himself into the East Room (against all the rules) and is playing Beethoven on the piano so loudly that nobody can make him stop and unlock the door.

But this is to be a book about students, and the staff who have served these students in their different ways so splen-
1932. A War Memorial

didly are seldom mentioned, though the part they play throughout the story is no small one. They have all had their own experiences and could each write his or her own story. To them many overseas students have owed their first real friendships with English men and women, and in return, sub-wardens and club secretaries find that they have friends all over the world.

Membership of the House is by no means open to everyone. Every newcomer is asked to fill in an application form with details as to his name, nationality, college, and study. This form is brought to the club committee and, if passed, he is then invited to a New Members’ Party. This party gives him a chance to meet a few people and starts him on his way towards finding his own niche in the House.

As to the club committee, I have often wished that I could bring visitors to a meeting of this miniature League of Nations. This year the chairman was an Englishman, with a strong business sense, who allowed no foolish and irrelevant chatter. Here were representatives of India, Germany, Sweden, Russia, China, Switzerland, and England—twelve of them, elected by their fellow members to represent their interests. They have a formal agenda and the law students are always vigilant on points of order. They admit new members who seem to be genuine students, they put back dubious cases for further inquiry, they appoint sub-committees for the library, games, and for ‘assisting’ the house-keeper in the Refectory. At the end of the meeting they consider suggestions signed by members in a book kept in the clubroom for the purpose, answering them with appropriate sympathy, diplomatic compromise or suitable severity. They take their duties very seriously and the warden and staff, though often consulted, are, quite properly, ex-officio members, with no vote. It is a good committee, and when it has, now and again, to deal with difficult and delicate
1932. A War Memorial

problems, it does so with considerable tact and discretion. I wish I could draw a better word-picture of that extraordinarily vivid and alive community in the House as I saw it in 1932, but the written word seems to make the picture lose its colour, though it is as clear in my mind to-day as it was on the first day on which I walked into the club. To anyone interested in human beings this particular assortment could not fail to be fascinating. At first, of course, they were polite and a little distant, they talked of their colleges, their study, of how long they had been in England, and so on. As I gradually got to know them better a chance word dropped here and there would give me an utterly unexpected clue to the person with whom I was talking. It was then that I realized that many of them were afraid of something, and I wondered what it was they feared. There were a great many answers: loneliness, home-sickness, poverty, fear of the future, were among the most common. The coloured man or girl had their own particular fear, of the daily insults and slights from white people, or of walking into some hotel or restaurant and being turned out again. Underneath their good manners and charm many of these African, West Indian, and Indian students had been deeply hurt. Later, I was to see the same look in the eyes and hear the same chance remark from the refugees from Nazi oppression. It is not good to hurt the young, for they are strangely defenceless and if there is nobody at hand who can help to heal the wound by understanding friendship it will be kept open, at least in memory, for many years. Many people in the House were hiding something, whether they were coloured or white, a fact which often accounted for extravagant and aggressive behaviour on the surface. It was a brave, if pathetic, defence and I sometimes felt as if I ought to apologize when the illumination of that chance remark made me see something that was not meant for my eyes.
1932. A War Memorial

Though all the men, and many of the girls were always ready to talk politics, with a strong tinge of pink in their views, very few seemed to have any interest in religion. Many of the British members and some Continentals, also Africans, Indians, and Chinese who had been brought up in Mission Schools, were Christian, but at the daily prayers which were held in the small chapel (made out of an old wine cellar) there were seldom more than one or two people. The Student Christian Movement started and were proprietors of the House, but they, in their wisdom, decided that they would not ask for any religious qualification for membership, and have always insisted that there should be no proselytizing in the club. I am sure the students appreciated this. Most of the more discerning realized that behind the House there were people who, because of their personal convictions, could look at students as individuals without any political, racial or religious bias, and I believe that this fact has been the real reason for the sense of security which young people of many races have felt within the walls of the House.

I suppose that no community has ever had less in common as a basis on which to build a common life, but these students seemed to have a real sense of community; partly due, no doubt, to the natural enjoyment of young people in being together, partly to the 'homelessness' of many of them, and not least to the grand tradition which had been built up in the generations which had preceded them.

So, on New Year's Eve 1932, the citizens of the future wished each other a Happy New Year. Big Ben tolled the hour of midnight, and out through the front door, down the broad steps into Russell Square, poured a crowd of students, laughing and talking and ready, as only the young can be, for whatever the new year might bring them. To-morrow they will be back again and 1933 will have started on its way
1932. A War Memorial

—a way which was to be the beginning of a new fear in the hearts of many European students, forcing some of them to start the great trek of the exile, to strange lands and grim adventures.
CHAPTER 2

1933. Individual Stories

'It's a huge game of chess that's being played—all over the world
There ought to be some men moving about somewhere—and so there
are!'

—Through the Looking Glass, Lewis Carroll

This book is based on a daily diary of the House, started
when I became Warden, early in 1933. Much of it is
too indiscreet to be published without fear of libel, and it
was one of the first of my possessions to be evacuated to a
place of safety at the beginning of the air raids on London.
Most of the entries are short, mere notes, but they bring to
my mind an immediate picture of the person or episode
described.

Very early in the year I began to hear individual stories
and to try my hand at sorting out a variety of tangles. Very
soon I realized how the political game of chess was affecting
the lives of men and women in the House. As far as possible,
the Warden's Office was not merely a place where recalcitrant
members were 'put on the carpet' but somewhere where they
could come for a quiet talk and even ask for advice. One of
the first entries reads as follows:

'A White Russian came to discuss his approaching
marriage. He has a startling history, having been twice
condemned to death before he was eighteen, but escaping
just in time. Son of a Russian nobleman, he saw, at the age
of fourteen, his uncle shot in front of his eyes, escaped with

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1933. Individual Stories

the help of the British Government, and, after many adventures, managed to get to England. He is, at least, safe in this country and hopes to be naturalized shortly. He is going to marry a very nice English girl.

Here were some strange moves, even for a human pawn! It was an extraordinary story and I wondered if he would ever be able to settle down after such adventures. I attended his marriage, in a Greek Orthodox Church, and watched his progress with great interest. He did find it very difficult to settle to anything, but was compelled to do so by economic necessity, and was much helped by his very sensible wife. These White Russians are delightful people, but they have not got the temperament for a gangster world. They have no natural 'push' and are difficult people to help.

One morning in the spring the police called. He was a very young policeman, red-headed and rather worried. I think it must have been his first job and he came to make inquiries about an Indian member. I told him that the gentleman in question was a student at the London School of Economics, that he had recently returned from India, where he had been visiting his parents and that, as far as I knew, he was an industrious young man. This seemed to be no help at all, so I asked if the police were following him. ‘Yes,’ replied the policeman gloomily, ‘I waited outside his room all this morning, then he came out and’ (this very impressively) ‘bought The Times and The Daily Worker, then he came to this club.’ It seemed to me that such actions showed a desire to acquire a balanced judgement, so I did my best to soothe the policeman, and sent him away. Soviet Russia was then the bug-bear of the Home Office, and most Indians on arriving or leaving England had their luggage searched for communist literature, and their passports closely inspected for any evidence that they had visited a country which has, undoubtedly, a tremendous attraction for them.
1933. Individual Stories

Many Indians were, at this time, bitterly anti-British, partly because of the political situation in their own country, partly the colour discrimination they found in England, and partly this police surveillance, not always done with discretion, which merely aggravated an already unhappy situation.

Certainly one of the major political problems in the House this year was Russia, with its magnetic attraction for all politically-minded students. If it was the coloured students in particular who followed the Five Year Plan with such interest, it was largely because they felt that Russia was being fair to individuals, that everyone had their chance, and their attitude was a considerable reflection on their experiences in the Mother Country. Here is an entry in May, describing one of our lectures, on an occasion when Russia happened to be the topic:

'A speaker from the Society for the Promotion of Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia drew a large audience, and painted a most glowing picture of the Five Year Plan. I had invited N., a White Russian, to come, and he asked the speaker some pertinent questions, whereat the gentleman lost his temper and shouted, losing thereby a good deal of the sympathy he had previously gained from his audience. But Russia is undoubtedly the Utopia of many of the students here.'

One or two Soviet Russians joined the House this year, but they seemed to avoid meeting the White Russians, perhaps by mutual consent, at any rate we made no attempt to bring them together, for international friendship at first sight is not always possible. As far as I could see, there was no trouble between them, and they made their own friends quite easily.

The biggest internal problem with which we had to deal was that of gambling. Card playing had always been allowed
at the House, but the rule that cards were not to be played for money was much abused, often at the expense of the very green newcomers. My first efforts to control this situation are recorded:

'Three kinds of bridge are played, according to those in the know—‘cash’, ‘credit’, and ‘vegetarian’. Only the first need, I suppose, be taken seriously. They play all day and I understand that there are some professors of ‘footwork’ among the older players. To-night, after consultation with the staff, I went into the East Room where some twenty gentlemen of various nationalities were playing. I told them that there was a club rule, which perhaps they had not observed, that cards were not to be played for money, and added that I proposed to see that this rule was kept. I said that I did not suppose that anyone would be so foolish as to let me catch him, but that, if I got any evidence, members who had been detected would be suspended from the House for three months. As I walked out, in as stately a manner as possible, through a haze of tobacco smoke, I left a dead silence behind me.'

A later entry tells the rest of the story:

'Lord Irwin broadcast an appeal for the House. The students were anxious to hear it, so the wireless was put in the clubroom and switched on in the middle of a lecture from Anthony Asquith on Films. He bore the interruption most patiently. I returned from Broadcasting House thinking what a very fine place the House was—to be greeted with the shattering news that three of our gamblers had been caught! The evening was spent in interviewing the miscreants who, with one exception, took their sentence of banishment most philosophically. I hope this is the first step in the direction of stopping this menace altogether.'

It was not, however, until 1936 that we succeeded in stopping gambling altogether and that only by the drastic
1933. Individual Stories

measure of forbidding any card playing in the club. This was a very unpopular move, but it seemed the only way of protecting new members, some of whom used to lose large sums in their first weeks at the House.

Even in 1933 there were 'mixtures' in the House who didn't mix very well. For some unknown reason Indians and Africans, though with much in common in many ways, seldom made friends with each other. Japanese and Chinese often found it really difficult to meet each other, for obvious reasons. The Chinese, of course, sided with the Koreans, but both have always taken care to avoid any open animosity towards Japanese members. Some of the more public-spirited even went so far as to try and make friends, but I have never seen this really successful until much later, after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, when a Chinese and two Japanese became inseparable friends.

Here is an account of a gallant effort on the part of a Chinese member of the club committee:

'There are very few Japanese in the House, but those that do come at all come often and seem to be considerable characters. K. is a large young man, very assertive. He tells everyone that he is going to be Prime Minister of Japan and talks very loud and fast. The other day Chen Toh came to me, as a member of committee doing his duty, I suppose, and said: "This fellow K. is terrible! But" (rather pompously) "this is an international club, and I shall make friends with him." I urged caution, but to-day they had tea together, sitting on the platform in full view of everybody. To our great amusement they both talked all the time for two hours. Chen has just come to me again. "I have seen this fellow K.," he remarked triumphantly. "Well, we have talked much, and I find we do not agree about anything at all, but we are very good friends now!"

There is the real spirit of the House in action! Shortly
1933. Individual Stories

after this K.'s father arrived in England, and we noticed a change in the future Prime Minister of Japan. All the stuffing went out of him, and rumour had it that he was sent to bed at ten p.m. nightly, with a glass of hot milk. Certainly he wasn't the man we used to know, and he was taken home by his father, within a few weeks, never to be heard of again.

Some people call this the Heinz Club, for we certainly have our fifty-seven varieties all right, as for instance, this entry:

'A Frenchman, a Turk, a Russian Jew and an American joined the House to-day. Let us hope that the American will stay, though I thought he looked askance at our coloured friends.'

One of the penalties of taking 'all sorts' is that we lose some people whom we would like to have. Most Americans and South Africans have such a strong colour prejudice from their childhood that it is not surprising that we get so few here; however, those that do come, stay.

But it is now autumn and other moves are being made on the chessboard. At the end of September came a new member from Germany:

'H.K., our young "Nazi", as he calls himself, is the son of a farmer (ex-Potsdam Guards) in Schleswig-Holstein. He is very young, very fair, very German and a fanatical nationalist. He refuses to meet other Germans in the House "in case they are Jew".'

And a few weeks later, though nothing to do with our 'Nazi':

'It appears we have a spy in the club. He is mainly interested, I think, in making trouble for German girls who refuse his advances and is said to be writing reports of them and sending these reports out to Germany. Though why the German authorities should be interested I cannot think. Anyway, the House feels so strongly that a special club
committee to-night decided to ask him for his resignation, rightly, I am sure. I don’t think he will ask any questions.’

This was before the real persecution of the Jews in Germany had started, and we had little idea of what was ahead for many of our friends. The next move came soon afterwards, in the middle of October. One Saturday evening we had a concert from the Templar Male Voice Choir, one of our most popular events. There were crowds to hear them and everyone expected a most successful evening. Mr. Dixon, the leader of the Choir, has a genius for making his concerts ‘go’ and even succeeds in persuading an audience of many nationalities to sing some of the choruses themselves. This evening everything went flat. What was wrong? Here were the students, more of them then ever, apparently out to enjoy themselves, but in spite of Mr. Dixon’s efforts, there was no ‘come-back’, and only half-hearted applause. It wasn’t the fault of the singers, nor of Mr. Dixon. That evening the papers gave us the news that Germany had left the League. The students were uneasy, they were whispering, even in the concert, their minds were elsewhere. I often look back to that night as the real beginning of the troubles of our European members. Of course, the feeling of uneasiness soon wore off, at least outwardly, and though at times we wondered what was really going on in Germany, the speed with which the House moves absorbed us in other problems.

Three further extracts from the 1933 diary give some idea of the variety of other complications which kept cropping up:

‘Miss G., an Australian, attempted to kill herself two nights ago—a love affair gone wrong I’m afraid. This morning an unknown person, on the telephone, asked me to go and see her in a mental home. I did not say that I had already done so, but asked the unknown to come and see me which, most unwillingly, she agreed to do. The doctors think that
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someone is smuggling in drugs to Miss G., and I thought this might be the culprit. She came to-day after lunch, a horsey lady in tweeds and very nervous. I managed to extract from her the information that she kept a club of which Miss G. was a member. After some further pressure on my part she told me that it was a nudist club! She was not, I think, the drug smuggler, but was genuinely concerned for Miss G.'s welfare. The fact that, in her curious profession, she was sailing rather near the wrong side of the Law probably made her nervous.

'This morning I paid another visit to Miss G. in her mental home. She is much better and the police have agreed not to prosecute, but who is to be responsible for her I cannot think, as she has no relations in this country. She was sitting in the lounge with the other patients and appeared perfectly normal. While we were talking one of the women, sitting alone, suddenly laughed, a queer, high-pitched laugh. Miss G. turned to me and said: "You see, I daren't laugh in this place or they will think me really mad, like her." But I think she will be allowed to leave this week, and stay in the country.'

The second extract deals with quite another part of the world:

'P.G., a student from Panama, came rushing into my office late this evening and asked me to arrange for his immediate deportation. He seemed very much agitated and said: "You see, my father is very angry with me as I have not passed my examinations and he will not send me any money and I want to go home." I said that I had no practice in deportations and had he tried any other line? "Yes, I have tried the Home Office and they said yes, they will deport me, but I must commit a crime first, so I have come to you." Being no more expert in crime than in deportations I told him I would look into the matter, and sent him home.'

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Our first Nazi

Playing Chess: Abyssinia, India, France, Russia
In Russell Square Gardens: Korea, ex-Germany, Arabia and friend
After considerable research which involved a visit to the Panama Consulate and several further talks with the boy, I discovered the real story behind this very unexpected S.O.S. The boy’s grandfather had been a considerable benefactor to the State of Panama, and the State, as a token of gratitude, decided to send the grandson to England to be educated. He came here, at the age of fourteen, with his mother, and was sent to a public school. His mother died within the year and the boy was left entirely on his own. He ran away from school to visit an aunt in Paris (on a forged passport), was brought back, but ran away again and settled in London. Here he entered for matriculation fifteen times, but never sat for the examination. After some years he failed to send any reports of his progress home so, not unnaturally, the State officials became suspicious and ceased to send his allowance. He is now only seventeen and recently got into trouble with the police. He told me that he had made friends with a Count, who suggested to him that Lady D. had a very fine diamond which she was unlikely to require for her own use. Acting on this interesting information the boy and his Count then proceeded to find a ‘criminal’. ‘He was a very good criminal,’ said the boy, when telling me the story. ‘He had been seven years in Sing Sing!’ Then, however, things began to go wrong and the young man found himself taking a meal alone with the very good criminal in Soho, the Count having failed to put in an appearance, and they were both caught by the police. He came to me because the police had thoroughly frightened him, though, when I got into contact with them, I found them, privately, very much amused. He was finally repatriated, after the State of Panama had spent a very large sum of money on him for which there was little but definite harm to the boy to show as a reward.

It is not always easy to detect the genuine student, what-
ever may be written upon an application form. Here is a
comment on the arrival of one of our more dubious members;
it will be seen how unsuspicuous I was at the time:
‘To-night I was on duty alone and a student came in who
wished to join the club. He filled in his form and wrote
British as his nationality. I expressed surprise as he had a
distinctly foreign accent. He told me that he was British all
right, but that his father was a business man in Munich and
he had lived there all his life. This was the first time he had
been in England. I took him upstairs and urged the students
to teach him his own language.’
And, some weeks later:
‘This afternoon two rather new members came to my
office with woe-begone faces. It appears they had lent F.B.,
the English boy from Munich, thirty pounds and he had
returned them a dud cheque. I felt so cross with them for
being so stupid as to lend a comparative stranger so large a
sum of money that I could not be very sympathetic. I shall
call in the police, but do not suppose that they can do
anything.’
The end of the story came some months later. The police
called on me with photographs of F.B., sent them by the
Viennese police for identification. They told me that he had
been caught after a series of petty thefts all over the Con-
tinent. I asked them to send me a report of the case when he
was tried, which they did. I read, to my great surprise, that
the trial had been held in a country town in England and
further, that the only person to give evidence in the prisoner’s
favour was the Vicar of a small country parish nearby. This
gentleman said that Frank had always been such a good boy
until he left the village a year ago. In other words, when he
came to the club he had not only never been in Germany,
but he had never left his Norfolk village home! I must say
he was a splendid actor, for he never lost his little accent. He
became, of course, a guest of His Majesty for some months. Lastly Christmas, and a further hint of the trouble and misery that was to come. We were doing the decorations in the clubroom and erecting a huge Christmas tree. When we had it in place I asked one of the students to hold it up for me while I went to fetch some rope with which to secure it. He was a Jew from Germany, and one of our first refugees. When I came back and relieved him of his task he said, very quietly, so that nobody else could hear, "You should write a label and put it up, saying This Christmas Tree was held up by a Jew.'
CHAPTER 3

1934. Beginnings of Exile

‘Who are you?’ said the Caterpillar. Alice replied, ‘I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have changed several times since then.’

—Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

In a small suburban house in Germany a father and mother sat over the fire with anxious faces. Presently their young son and daughter came in, flinging their textbooks on the table. ‘Well, how was it to-day?’ the parents asked. ‘It’s no good, Father, we can’t go on. They say that soon we shall not be allowed to go to the University at all and to-day some of them have chalked the most horrible things about the Jews all over the walls of the lecture rooms. There is nothing that we can do—and we are afraid.’ After the young people had gone to bed their parents looked at each other in silence. At last the father said, ‘So, it is the end. They had better go to safety. I may lose my business any day. This morning there were Nazi police inspecting us again and they were not gentle.’ ‘But,’ said the mother, ‘Hans, he will not get his degree, and my little Gerta, she is too young to go away from home.’ However, the next day they had steeled their hearts, permits were obtained after long and patient waiting in queues and soon came the station and ‘Auf wiedersehn’. The train steamed noisily out of the station, the waving children were lost to view, and the parents walked slowly back to the quiet little house. The
family was broken up, perhaps never to be reunited. Such scenes which meant tragedy for many humble and quiet folk, must have been enacted in thousands of homes in Germany early in 1934.

So Hans and Gerta, a little thrilled at the adventure, arrived in England, were shepherded by a committee into lodgings in London and often found their way to the House. We gave them an application form and asked them to write their name and country. 'But we have no country,' they said, and they wrote in their careful English, 'No Nationality'. Perhaps they will be lucky, these two, and will both get opportunities for continuing their studies, but it is more than likely that Gerta will find herself in domestic service in an English home, while Hans is trying to learn enough English to start again at the beginning and take his matriculation. They get little news of their parents, for it is not safe to write much, it is not wise to receive many letters with an English address. People are kind, and the Refugee Committee provide just enough to live on, but Hans and Gerta are terribly homesick and miss, above all things, the ready interest in the day to day adventures which only home can give.

The long procession of these young exiles was sad enough, but it was the older people who faced an even greater tragedy. Men and women in important posts, busy doctors, specialists, lawyers, famous musicians, were driven away from everything they had built up in their lives, starting again in an utterly strange country. We had to turn away many of these, for we could only take students or post-graduates of not more than five years' standing, but they came often as visitors, and it was difficult not to be haunted by their stories and overwhelmed by their incredible humility and courage.

Following closely on the arrival of the refugees came other troubles:
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'A curious periodical has come out this week with some stinging remarks on Student Movement House, which is described as a "Nazi cell". This is unfortunate (besides being untrue) and has caused much distress among our Jewish members. It seems there is nothing we can do about it, though I have written to the Editor to protest.'

'A young German musician came into my office this afternoon and, without a word, walked straight to the window and looked down into the street. "Yes," he said, "he is still there, he has had no lunch and he will have to go hungry for a long time." Apparently he was being followed, I suppose, by the police. He was not quite so calm as he would have me believe. He is puzzled, for he is not a Jew, and is here on perfectly innocuous business, conducting some concerts.'

'H.E., a German schoolboy, non-Jewish, came in about 10.30 p.m., shaking with fright and saying he couldn't go home alone. He declared he had been followed by two men all the week, and that last night one of them had produced a pistol from his pocket! He had been so scared, so he said, that he had run all the way home. He suspects Jewish refugees—an interesting reversal of rôles! After telephoning the police at Willesden to keep an eye on him I found someone to take him home. I doubt if we shall hear anything more of it, for it's probably just "nerves" from which all our German members are suffering, Jews and Aryans alike.'

'The refugee students can just manage to get along here until they become ill, but there is no financial margin for illness, and often nobody to look after them. To-day we had word that G. was ill, so I went round to his lodgings and discovered him on the sixth floor of a very dirty house in the slums of Bloomsbury. His room was so small that it was entirely filled by a bed and a hanging cupboard. He was wrapped in two very dirty blankets and nobody had been

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near him for two days. I took his temperature and found it was 103, so, since the hospitals were all full with a 'flu epidemic, we took him to the House and put up a bed for him in my office. His landlady, a slipshod woman, was entirely unconcerned, except to see that she was paid her weekly rent of six shillings.'

'Our invalid is much better and enjoying himself enormously. He loves having his temperature taken and keeps calling out, "Where is the Warden? She has not taken my fever!"

A student membership of the House cost twenty-six shillings a year only, but it was a large sum to many of our members. Refugee students were not taken entirely free, they were asked to pay what they felt they could afford, even if it was only a few shillings—our policy being to give them a club which really belonged to them, a place where they would not have to be treated as 'charity'.

But students of other nationalities could not lead altogether placid lives just because we had this great new problem of refugees to deal with. Two stories of the early part of this year are worth recording:

'R. K. S. Reight, an Indian, killed himself driving his racing car in Hampstead last night. We had constantly warned him against driving so fast, and this was all his own fault apparently. I got the news about ten o'clock this morning, and, an hour later, received a cable from his sisters, with whom I had never had any correspondence, asking for news of his health. As far as we could make out the cable had been sent a few minutes before he died. Reight was a nice boy, young and good looking. He did no work, for he had been quite unused to working without supervision and, being well-off, had bought this racing car, which was his chief hobby. I hope that one day the Government of India will only permit Indian students to study abroad if they have
already obtained a degree at home and come to England 
with a definite plan for further study which they must 
complete.’

In the next chapter I shall try to deal more fully with the 
Indian student in England, so I will leave this story without 
any further comment at the moment.

The Abyssinian students were immensely popular in the 
House. They were cheerful young men, excellent players of 
table tennis and with an unfortunate passion for the ‘dogs’, 
a passion which was shared, by the way, by young men of 
many other countries. They were very open about their con-
stant visits to the White City, and the club followed their 
fluctuating fortunes with the greatest interest. We had about 
half a dozen in the House and two of them had a particularly 
interesting story.

‘A long talk this evening with Ben and Jo Martin, two 
of the sons of the Abyssinian Minister in London. They have 
a fascinating family history. In 1867, General Napier’s 
Expeditionary Force reached Addis Ababa, where King 
Theodore had been busy imprisoning and burning Euro-
peans. The siege was raised at last by killing all the King’s 
Bodyguard. Arriving at the Palace, General Napier found 
the King dead and the only creature still alive in the Palace 
a small baby of three years old. Colonel Martin, one of 
General Napier’s staff, took the baby back to England, 
adopted it and called it by his name. The boy qualified as 
a doctor and went to India on Government service. King 
Menelik, then on the throne of Abyssinia, developed appen-
dicitis and refused to be “cut up” by a white man, so the 
British Government, as an act of courtesy, sent Martin to 
him. Martin saved the King’s life and stayed at the Court to 
look after him. Later King Menelik went out of his mind 
and died, and his son, also mad, exiled Martin, who left 
the country speedily and married the King’s fiancée. Martin
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was then sent to Burma, where he remained until King Haile Selassie recalled him to be Governor of a Province. He is now Minister in London. The two boys, Ben and Jo, have received all their education in England and are looked after by Miss Martin, who became their guardian on the death of her brother. They are now engineering students and are learning, from the other Abyssinians in the House, to speak their own language."

These boys were to return to Abyssinia on the outbreak of war in the autumn of 1935, and lost their lives in the reprisals for the attempted murder of Graziani.

Another Abyssinian student, Amanti, became ill early this year and was discovered to have tuberculosis. He was sent to the Brompton Hospital where he remained for some months. I used to go and see him once a week if possible, for his fellow countrymen, though they did not mean to neglect him, found it difficult to remember to visit the hospital very often. After a time he showed definite signs of improvement and his specialist told me that, if he continued to progress at this rate, there would be a real chance of getting him home soon.

' A visit to Amanti yesterday afternoon. He seemed much better and was up and dressed, though looking thinner than ever. The doctors were pleased with him and he was very cheerful and full of talk. He described to me, a little wistfully perhaps, the beauties of the mountain country in Abyssinia, where he comes from. I didn't dare raise his hopes by telling him what the specialist had said, but I went away feeling much more cheerful about him. Last night I woke up at one a.m., wondering what on earth I should do if Amanti died, for it is difficult to get a Copt buried in London. I went to sleep again, thinking I need not worry, for he was getting so much better. About nine o'clock I had a telephone message from the Brompton, telling me he had died in the
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night. I went at once to the hospital and, while waiting for
the Abyssinian students to turn up, I asked the Registrar
what time he had died—and was told it was exactly at one
a.m. The Abyssinian students are very much upset, for they
had not expected him to die and had not been to see him
very lately. After much discussion it seems that the Orthodox
Church will give him a funeral service.*

Still, we cannot get away from Germany, where the clouds
are gathering with alarming rapidity. The wireless, such a
little time ago an exciting and delightful toy, was now
becoming a grim necessity.

'30th June. Everyone concentrated on the wireless-room
all day. Very bad news from Germany. Much shooting and,
apparently, rumours of the start of a second revolution.'

'1st July. More news through to-day. Röhm and several
other leaders shot, and many, as yet unfounded, rumours.
The German members are very frightened and very anxious
about their families.

'2nd July. News has come through of Fritz Beck's death
in mysterious circumstances. He was a splendid and gallant
man, a great Christian leader and a good friend to many of
us here.'

And later:

'K. just back from Germany, where he was taking a
holiday during the June shootings. He talks much of the
restlessness and fear among the German people and of the
hush that surrounds Hitler. He has evidently been much
shaken by his visit.'

'Hilde H., such a nice and able girl, came and talked to
me for two hours on the situation in Germany. She has come
over for a conference of scientists. Spies everywhere, she
says, and everyone in deadly fear of concentration camps.
She is Aryan, but is thankful to be out of Germany for a time
and living in a country where there is still some freedom.'
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‘F.G., a distinguished lawyer from Leipzig, came to tea with me. He is only thirty but has already risen to great heights in his profession. One evening, as he was working in his office, his clerk brought him in the evening paper which gave a list of some twenty people, including himself, who were to be debarred from practising. He was given twenty-four hours to leave the country. His nerves are all in pieces and I noticed that every time anyone passed in the passage outside my office he would look round nervously. With any luck he will be able to get to America where he may have a reasonable chance of starting again.’

So far this chapter must give the impression that 1934 was full of unrelieved tragedy in the House, but we never lost altogether the funny side. Here is a description of a strange interview which took place in my office early in the year:

‘A perfectly fantastic talk this evening with a gentleman whose application for membership had been turned down by the committee on the perfectly intelligible grounds that he was not, and never had been, a university student. He is half Russian and half Irish and is apparently under the impression that the Warden, personally, is solely responsible for his rejection. He burst into my office, with a cap pulled well over his eyes, in the best gangster style, and clad in a very dirty mackintosh, with one pocket bulging in a rather ominous way. I suggest that he should remove the cap and mackintosh and sit down, upon which he threw these garments on the floor, first extracting from his pocket a large football of papers, torn from an exercise book. I asked what these were and he replied that he had so much to say to me that he had written it down in case he should forget any of the important points. Luckily the pages were numbered so we sat on the floor together and sorted them out, not without some difficulty. When we returned to our chairs he started to read
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and I found, to my interest, that every page was devoted to the most personal abuse of the Warden of Student Movement House. His writing was practically illegible, even to himself, and at intervals I had to help him decipher some words, often going back a bit to get the context. The whole proceeding took well over an hour and at the end he left, quite contentedly, as a man who has done his duty. I do not think I shall ever see him again.

And a delightful interlude:

'A very fat little Spaniard presented himself to me this morning. He was attired in "city" clothes, bowler hat, striped trousers, black tail coat, and wore a gold watch chain stretched across his ample front. "I am de C," he remarked, clicking his heels and bowing, "I am solicitor from Berlin, I would join your club." I murmured that this was a club for students, but he swept my remark aside and continued, "I wish that you will give me a lady to teach me the English—I have wife and son in Berlin—I have not the English and it is necessary for my business that I have the English. This lady, she will be always with me, she will walk with me, she will play the tennis with me, she will take the tea with me in Hyde Park, all day she will be with me." Then, with great emphasis, "But I must have the lady and not the gentleman, for the lady, she has the great Passions, the gentleman, he has not the passions." In a cold voice I inquired if the great passions were really necessary in learning English, but he replied with even greater firmness, "Absolutely!" At last I discovered that he was trying to say the word PATIENCE!

Every year before Easter, we held a club conference, when some hundred students would go to the country for a week-end of serious political discussion, walks and games and dancing. This year's conference was excellent in every way, with good and stimulating speakers, an interested and intelligent audience and a great variety of nationalities repre-
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sented. In the evenings we held international sing-songs. At one of these, a Japanese performed. He had come to me earlier and said, with some firmness, 'I have flute—I play—yes?' I replied with equal firmness that we had too many performers and would he postpone his appearance until a later occasion. But his lack of English prevented him from understanding a word I said so, since I could think of no way, except physical violence, of removing him from the programme, we had to include him. He was a small man, with a long brown face and a long brown flute. When his turn came he faced his audience gravely, holding his flute out for our inspection. 'This very rare instrument,' he remarked. 'Five holes front, one back,' He then announced that he would play 'a yearning love song', which slightly upset the gravity of the audience. He was, in fact, a very good player, but he looked very funny, as his instrument needed an immense amount of 'wind' and the necessary lung power was produced by the most extraordinary facial contortions. I was much relieved when the performance came to an end, as the students were showing alarming signs of repressed hysteria, and they let off their emotions by tremendous applause. Then, to my despair, he stood up again and announced that he would sing 'Japanese songs—two'. I shall never know if he had observed the restlessness of the audience during his flute playing, but at any rate, whether it was a Japanese custom or merely self-protection, he then turned his back to the audience, facing the wall, but, before he started to sing, remarked to me with the most engaging smile, 'Excuse back-side!' After that it became hopeless to control even my own laughter.

Before this year ends I must say a word about laughter. The popular fallacy that a 'foreigner' has no sense of humour has constantly been disproved in the House and many delicate international situations have been smoothed over by
laughter in the right place. The secret, undoubtedly, is laughter with, rather than laughter at a person, for it is only too easy to cause hurt by laughter in the wrong way. We have had our failures and here is one of them, which happened in the autumn of this year.

'Last night a big Freshers' Social at which I left the entertainment to R.H.B. without vetting it beforehand. Many members and guests came. One item on the programme was a ventriloquist turn, in the form of question and answer, as follows: 'What is your country?' 'Estonia.' 'What is your university?' 'Tartu.' 'What do you study?' 'Cosmetics.' Delighted laughter followed this sally, but I wondered, a little uneasily, if this would cause offence to our members from that country. Sure enough, R.H.B. came to me in some distress after the club had closed and said that three Estonian girls had left in tears. I wrote to them at once, by the midnight post, a letter which explained, rather laboriously, the English sense of humour and laughter with one's friends, etc. It was not very good, but the hour was late and I hoped for the best. This morning, however, there has been a most surprising sequel. A gentleman from the Estonian Consulate called on me, at the request of his Consul, saying that members of his country had been insulted and he would be obliged if I would give him the names of all the Estonian members of the House, so that he might remove them at once. I tried my best to explain to him that it had only been a joke and not intended as an insult in any way, but it was no good, so I set him down at my desk with a clean piece of blotting paper and a nice pen, and, from our files, read out the names and addresses of our Estonian members. While I was dictating, however, I discussed each girl with him (we seem to have no men from Estonia just now), her studies, her family, her prospects for the future, until he either forgot what he had come for, or decided that
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we really looked after his students quite well and they had better stay here. At any rate, we parted the best of friends and I suspect that the Estonians will not leave us. But it goes to show how careful we must be not to laugh unless we are quite sure it will give no offence to anyone.'

However, the last day of 1934 shows one of our successes. 

31st December. The New Year’s Eve entertainment was a notable achievement and I wished that some of our senior friends could have seen it. Dr. Rao, of India, gazed into a home-made crystal, in the form of a Belisha Beacon, and foretold the future of some of the more prominent members of the House. The scenes were acted by the members concerned. First came America where, on a darkened stage, we saw H.J., a medical student, as Public Enemy No. 1, apparently burgling a house. Next, Miss G. from Switzerland, winning the World Scooter Championship, to the cheers of a well-trained crowd. P., a nice plump Italian, in a borrowed top hat, then appeared as the Duce, laying the foundation stone of a dam to drain the whole of the Mediterranean. (Even the Italians are nervous these days and P. came to me just before he went on the stage and said, rather apprehensively, "It will not bring discredit on the Duce? No?") B.B., a very tall Australian, then electrified the audience as the first man to throw the boomerang across the Tasman Sea to New Zealand and did, in fact, throw a real boomerang into the artists’ room where, mercifully, someone caught it. Finally, Sang Man Kim, our smallest and most popular Korean, appeared with six of the largest men in the House as Dictator of China, Japan, Korea, and Manchukuo, reviewing his troops. It really was a triumph! A Danish girl and the club cat appeared jointly as 1935, while Big Ben struck twelve and we all wished each other A Better New Year.'

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CHAPTER 4

1935. East comes West

‘If I’d been the whiting,’ said Alice, ‘I’d have said to the porpoise, keep back please, we don’t want you with us.’

—Through the Looking Glass, Lewis Carroll

A student from the East once said, ‘Why do you talk of black and white people? We are not black, we are several shades of brown and you, most certainly, are not white, you are several shades of pink.’ A black man, a nigger, a dago—words still in use in England, are terms which convey a world of contempt and scorn, worse even than calling a man a ‘foreigner’.

Do we want coloured people to come to England or do we really wish we could say, ‘Keep back please, we don’t want you with us?’ We are proud of our Empire, of our Colonies. We pride ourselves on bringing civilization to ‘backward’ people. We have brought them roads and railways, we have given them military and police protection, we have taught them the elements of law and order and justice, we have given them education. Yes, but what kind of a reception do we give to the ‘sons and daughters of the Empire’ when they visit the Mother Country?

Early this year an Indian student came to see me about his studies and I was surprised to hear him say that he was going back to India in a few days’ time. On my asking him how long he had been in England he replied, ‘A very long time,
A group of young India
A Group of Parsees

Chinese dancer

Yilma Deressa
(Abyssinia)
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it must be nearly two weeks now.' He was very young, just nineteen, and had made no application for admission to the University, he thought he could just walk in. Nobody had met him, for nobody knew that he was coming and he was desperately lonely and frightened. He did go home, for we did not know him well enough to persuade him to stay and give us another chance.

In 1935 there were about two thousand Indian students, men and women, in the British Isles, and a large number of Africans and West Indians. Many of these were studying in London. I wonder how many people have any idea of the kind of experience these young coloured men and women have had and are still having in our country? True, the fault is not entirely on one side, but much of it does lie with us English people, due in part to our shyness, in part to our ignorance and in part to our lack of imagination.

The story begins, of course, at home, and it is a story which is common in hundreds of homes within our Empire. An Indian family, shall we say, decide to send their son to England for study. He has already shown great promise at college and they hope he will now obtain a good British degree and return to an important post in India. Often the father talks to his son before he leaves and warns him of the perils of the West. He is to keep off drink, the 'dogs' and women, and in order to guard against the danger of his bringing home an English wife, he is often married a few weeks before he takes his departure. The Indian boy goes off with high hopes. He may get his first shock on the ship. Some of the English passengers go out of their way to avoid him, or are even deliberately offensive. This year an Indian student, who was used to the English and their ways told me with a laugh that, on the P. & O. on which he travelled after a holiday in India, he had picked up a small English boy who was in danger of being hurt by deck quoits and
placed him further away from the game in safety. The English mother came screaming down the deck, ‘My child is being touched by a black man, put him down at once!’ thus drawing the attention of many of the passengers to the episode. The student arrives in England, which he finds cheerless, cold and grey and all the time he misses the sun and blue skies of his home. If he comes to London and wishes to use it, there is an admirable Indian Hostel, where he can stay until he feels inclined to launch out on his own. In college he is, at first, more or less ostracized. If he is good at games and has an opportunity of demonstrating his ability in this direction, he will probably make friends quite quickly, but if he is not an athlete it will be much more difficult.

The African or West Indian student has an even worse time, for he is darker skinned than many Indians and suffers more, probably, from the colour bar. English people in buses or trains will get up and move to other seats if a coloured person sits next to them; very often a coloured man searching for lodgings will find the door is slammed in his face. There are hotels, dance halls, and restaurants who will refuse him admittance. And why? Just because he has been born under a tropical sun? What is there that is disgraceful in having a coloured skin? Imagine the feelings of a young African, never before away from home, but educated in an English Mission School. He has been baptised and confirmed and been taught that England is a great Christian country. He has sung patriotic songs and waved the Union Jack on Empire Day—and then he comes to the capital city of the Empire. Is it any wonder that he looks puzzled and bewildered, like a child that has been smacked by a grown-up without being aware of what he has done wrong? At first he feels dimly that the thing is unfair and then, as he learns the kind of treatment he has to expect, he becomes deeply, irretrievably hurt. Very often he becomes bitter to the depths of his soul. When he
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goes home again, some years older and more hardened to life, will he describe in glowing colours a great, free democratic Mother Country to which he is proud to belong?

This is not, of course, the whole picture, but it is an aspect which I have stressed deliberately for, although I am sure that we do not mean to be unfriendly and unkind and I know that many so-called ‘slights’ are entirely unintentional, we do cause much suffering to many of our coloured friends.

What can be said on our side of the picture? First, I think, that the whole business of the migration of coloured students to our universities is still badly organized at both ends. There are many organizations and associations ready and eager to welcome these students to England, but only too often no advance information is sent as to when and where they are arriving and it is therefore impossible to meet them, and ‘settle them in’ during their first difficult days. Indian students, for instance, are supposed to make application for admission to universities through India House, but very often parents send their boys on their own initiative, without even being sure they will be able to obtain a place in a college. In the older universities there is a quota for students from every country, and students cannot be admitted to any college unless plans have been made beforehand, so the problem largely solves itself. Both in Oxford and in Cambridge, most coloured students are very happy and enjoy a normal social life in college, but in a large modern, non-residential university like London it is far more difficult, for the lodging problem alone is great for everybody and it is not only the coloured man who is lonely. Indian women are well looked after, their plans are arranged carefully and they are usually sent to residential colleges. Fortunately, too, there is always a proportion of coloured students who benefit very greatly by their stay in England and some who, in spite of distressing experiences of colour discrimination, are able to see further
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ahead and give great help to their countries and to England when they return home.

On our side of the picture there is also to be said that migration from East to West means a big mental adjustment, one which is no fault of ours, but one for which we make little or no allowance. The world of the West moves much faster than the East, social and moral standards are different, the climate is profoundly depressing, and even the complete change of food is upsetting. I know also that coloured boys and girls behave no better, often, than white students, but they are, again through no fault of theirs, much more conspicuous. When they fall beneath our social standard it is said that *all* Indians, or Africans, or West Indians, are like that. So, in addition to the rest of their problems, they carry a considerable burden of responsibility for the good name of their country.

As to mixed marriages, this is probably a nightmare, shared by Indian parents and English hosts. Yet it is only natural that, if Indian parents send their sons to mixed colleges for men and women in England, and British Universities welcome this influx of coloured students, these boys and girls will fall in love with each other and will sometimes marry. The distress in an Indian home is no less than the distress in an English home when such an episode occurs. Some of these marriages turn out very happily, but I doubt if there is much happiness yet for the children of such marriages. The Anglo-Indian grows up with a perpetual mental conflict of divided loyalties and up till now has no recognized place in ‘society’ in either country.

These few pages have only touched the fringe of a very great and important problem. In a later chapter, describing my visit to Indian students at home, in 1937, I have tried to show something of the psychological and economic difficulties which they have to meet when they return to the East
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after some years in England. Had it not been for the war I had hoped to visit Africa and the West Indies in 1940, but that visit must now be postponed until happier days, and I cannot therefore speak with any first-hand knowledge of these students when they have returned home. I have no doubt, however, that many of the problems which Indian students have to try to solve are much the same for the other coloured students of our Empire. Much will depend in the future on the wise and understanding approach to the whole problem of the migration of students from Africa and the East, both by our authorities and by the authorities of the other countries concerned. I have tried now to put a few questions into the minds of people who have not, perhaps, considered the matter at all seriously before, and to urge that, in spite of our shyness, our lack of imagination, our carelessness, we should never again let coloured visitors to England get the impression that we are saying to them, ‘Keep away, please, we don’t want you with us.’ A word of kindness and understanding at the right moment may have very far-reaching effects, not only on the individual but, through him, on the happy relationship between ourselves and the great countries from which these people come.

Here are some Indian episodes which occur in my diary for 1935, which illustrate some of the points I have raised in this chapter:

‘Three Indians to-day in a great state of indignation. They obtained rooms in a hotel nearby, and were welcomed by the proprietor and shown round, finally arranging to take possession to-morrow. On walking to the front door the proprietor asked them what country they came from, and on being told that their homes were in India, he turned them out and refused them the rooms. They have, of course, nothing in writing, and there is nothing that can be done except a formal protest.’

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'H.I., from Madras, in a state of misery and fury, as two English girls with whom he has been very friendly, visiting their home and so on, have written to him to say he must not come again as they have developed "colour consciousness". How I wish I knew who they were.'

'H., a senior student, doing medical research, has been had up by the police for "soliciting" in Tottenham Court Road last night. There is not, we are convinced, a word of truth in the story, for he had arranged to meet a friend, but it was a dark night, and he is very short-sighted. His solicitor tells me privately that he thinks a conviction a certainty, knowing the magistrate's prejudice against coloured men. It is a real tragedy and will go against him badly.'

A considerable number of our Indian students have spent some time in gaols in India for taking part in political demonstrations.

'We have been puzzled for some time about S., a very nervy young Indian. To-day I discovered that he has been four years in prison in India for taking part in some demonstrations and that, while in prison, he studied for, and took his B.A. degree. He had only a small exercise yard in the prison, and this was surrounded by barbed wire and vigilant sentries, day and night, so I suppose it is no wonder that he is nervy.'

'A Hindu came in to-night, sat down and said, "Now I want to know from you all about God." This boy, like S., has been in prison in India. His father, a great friend of Gandhi, gave him a Bible which he had received as a present from the Mahatma, and this Bible he had read through three times while he was in captivity. I did my best, but was shamefully inadequate.'

Coloured students have always played a large and valuable part in the life of the House. They use the club in considerable numbers for, as I have said earlier, they know that the
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doors will never be closed against them. The fact that they are always so much in evidence has prevented some other students from joining the club, and we have sometimes wondered if we ought to establish a nationality quota for every country, but we have never done so, for we feel that to refuse a coloured student admission to the House would be a betrayal of the ideals for which we stand.

But now we must turn again to other countries, for in this year we had no less than sixty-five nationalities represented in our membership. Here are a few typical episodes in the life of the House during 1935.

‘This evening I had a Japanese supper with a Korean. I asked him about his family, to distract his mind and his attention from my clumsy efforts to catch raw fish on my chopsticks. He answered very promptly, with a beaming smile, “I seven brothers, three sisters, one conceiving, one fiancée. Morning breakfast like farmyard.” A graphic brevity which could hardly be bettered. He goes into high shrill giggles whenever we ask if he has heard from his fiancée, of whom he is immensely proud. On returning from supper I had to break up an argument in the clubroom on communism, which had ceased to be friendly. The “performers” were Germany, Russia, India, and Italy, with a large crowd barracking at intervals.’

‘To-night a Japanese Evening, a most exciting affair. The performers, about twenty-four of them, who arrived hours before the show started, gave a thrilling display of ju-jitsu and fencing. The Japanese ladies in the front rows spent the evening with their handkerchiefs in front of their faces, for the dust of ages flew about. The most popular turn was the throwing of various victims into the air and down again without doing them any harm. Volunteers were asked for among the audience and two brave men offered themselves, among cheers. They declared they enjoyed the experience.’
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These National Evenings were a great feature of the term’s programme, and immensely popular with the students, who came in crowds to see them. They were not always easy to organize and we reckoned them the most exhausting evenings of the year for the staff. Singers and dancers were apt to be extremely temperamental and when they became excited, as they invariably did on these occasions, they would pour forth a stream of talk in their own language which baffled us completely. The performers by no means always agreed with each other, for the programme, organized by enthusiastic students, sometimes contained three or four ‘stars’ who each considered themselves the Number One performer of the evening and feelings were apt to run high, but little of this was noticeable from the audience. The programmes were supposed to last for not much more than an hour, but it was seldom that they began less than half an hour late and nearly always lasted for at least two hours. I remember a Russian Evening for which the first performers arrived at six p.m., though the performance was not due to begin for two hours, and long after midnight some Russians were discovered wandering about at the top of the House, saying that they had lost their colleagues and were sorry to break up the party but thought they had better go home. But they were grand shows and many of us will long remember dancers from Spain, from China, from Poland, from Scandinavia, Zulu Fire-eaters, Japanese wrestlers, Chinese shadow-boxers, French conjurers, Russian Choirs, Indian orchestras, English folk dancers—playing to a picturesque audience with many people in national costumes. On the whole the standard of these performances was very good, and a London audience would have paid highly to attend many of the shows we were able to put on in the House.

Germany was never far from our thoughts. The stream of
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refugees had slackened a little, but these newcomers were by no means settled in, and there was much to do concerning them. They themselves were constantly anxious about the fate of their parents in Germany.

'Hilde H. returned again from Germany to-day. She has had the dreadful experience of being in a concentration camp for ten days. She was given clothes made of sacking, mildewed bread to eat, and half an hour's exercise only each day, at six-thirty a.m. The rest of the day she was alone in her cell and in constant danger from the attentions of the warders. Her father, in the Reichswehr, got her out. It seems that her gardener overheard a conversation she had had with a friend one evening by the simple means of listening at the door, and, being a S.S. man, reported her.'

'A most sinister meeting on Germany this evening, the speaker having just returned from that country. He talked of the serious cleavage between the Party and the State, of the depersonalizing (dreadful word) of the German people and, above all, of the growing domination of Hitler.'

'Heinrich Simon, Editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* for three years, came to play to us. He is a Jew and had therefore been turned out of Germany, where he had been a man of great influence. Fortunately he has a passion for Bach and plays delightfully.'

'A typical example to-day of an additional complication to student life. The German refugee girls are trying to marry Indians, in order to obtain British passports. One has just paid fifty pounds for her "husband", but he disappeared immediately on leaving the Registry Office and has not been seen since. She cannot complete her passport without him.'

Such marriages became quite popular among German Jewesses as a new way of escape. More a business proposition than anything else, the girls selected their victims, either personally or through an intermediary, and offered
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them cash down for some marriage lines which would give them British nationality. Usually, once the ceremony was over, there was an arrangement whereby the bride and groom would not meet again but that, after a suitable interval, one would sue the other for desertion. It was impossible to stop these affairs, for they were generally carried through with the greatest secrecy and when discovered it was too late to do anything. The girls could not be blamed altogether, for their position was desperate and their future as 'enemy aliens' was a terrifying prospect of loneliness and poverty.

Here is the second instalment of the story of the girl whose 'husband' disappeared too soon.

'Most surprisingly, the missing “husband” turned up this afternoon, four months after his marriage. He first made sure that his “wife” was not in the House and then he told me his side of the story. It was true that he had agreed to marry the lady for fifty pounds, as he was very hard up, but, on presenting the cheque she had given him he found it to be a dud. Knowing that she could not complete the passport formalities without information which only he could give her, he ran away and went to sea as an engineer. A very stupid man, but I suppose he will pay for his stupidity by adopting permanently the rôle of the Flying Dutchman.'

The autumn of 1935 saw the first real break in the life of the House since it was started. War broke out between Italy and Abyssinia and our students from both these countries had to return home in the middle of their studies, to fight each other. Here are the notes I wrote at the time of their departure:

'The Italians left to-day, recalled to their country to fight and seen off from our doorstep by the Abyssinians, their old friends and now to be their enemies. The Abyssinians clapped them on the back and offered them introductions to their families in Addis Ababa, "in case they got there first".'
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And, some weeks later:

'The Abyssinians left last night, very sadly, and with little enthusiasm for the job in front of them. I wonder if we shall see any of them again.'

We have seen and heard nothing of the Italians again. As to the Abyssinians, Ben and Jo Martin were murdered, and three other most delightful young men were, so we heard, sent to a penal island off the coast of Italy, when the war was over. Only one came back, and his story will be told in a later chapter.

But still the House went on, and here is an account of a most successful entertainment given on the occasion of the Eighteenth Birthday Party of the House on 23rd November.

'An Encaenia most solemnly conducted by a Korean Vice-Chancellor was a great success. The Vice-Chancellor was supported by six Heads of Colleges (Persia, China, Sweden, Africa, and Malay), and one Lady Head (Switzerland), all clad in caps and gowns borrowed from the young ladies of Westfield College. The Public Orator and the Proctors took their duties most seriously, the Vice-Chancellor conferred Honorary Degrees on our distinguished visitors and closed the proceedings with a short speech in Korean. Afterwards he told me that he had said, "Korea is not free, she is dominated by Japan. One day we shall be free, and I must go home soon to see to it."'

A last picture of 1935—it is Christmas Day and there is a thick yellow fog. The club opened just before two p.m., so that members might hear the King's speech. About forty people came in, all men, and I counted twenty different countries. We sat round the fire in the big East Room, in semi-darkness, while latecomers crept in at the back of the room. The King's voice was weaker than usual, but his speech was most moving and, while I listened, I watched the students as they sat in the foggy room, their faces partly in
the shadow and partly lit up by the fire-light. Russia, China, Malay, Iceland, Greece, Italy, India, Mauritius, Sweden, Turkey—and many others, listening to a simple and good man speaking, though we couldn’t know it, for the last time to his people. What a contrast to some of the speeches from Germany to which we have had to listen lately! The National Anthem followed and a tall young Arab sprang to his feet, followed by the others. Then the lights went up and we turned again to our Christmas feasting—but with that voice of kindliness and humanity still ringing in our ears, giving to some of these young men, so far from their own countries, an unusual sense of homeliness and happiness, as their Christmas present from the King.
CHAPTER 5

1936. War and Peace

'Really anyone would take us
(Anyone that did not know us)
For the most unpleasant people!'
—Phantasmagoria, Lewis Carroll

It is the evening of the twentieth of January. Once again students are listening, silently, to the wireless, once again they come from many countries. Some are the same young men who, little more than three weeks ago, listened to King George V as he spoke his last message to his people. To-night we hear another voice, a voice which, every quarter of an hour, announces very gravely, 'The King's life is moving peacefully towards its close.' People come in and out of the room, quietly, but a little restlessly. Soon after eleven p.m. some go home, knowing that the end must come soon. Shortly after midnight, away in the distance, the Abbey bell tolls 'Nine Tailors, for the passing of a man'. So the children of the New Age see the passing of the old era.

Reading the newspapers is no longer a peaceful breakfast-time occupation. Every day comes news which will affect the lives of individuals of one country or another. Students seem to be caught increasingly in the most complicated traps, political and economic, which prevent them from moving in any direction. A refugee, for instance, may not be employed in this country unless he has first obtained a permit to work—but he cannot get a permit to work unless he has an offer
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of employment and he cannot get an offer of employment unless he has a permit to work—so what is the answer? Every day new restrictions are made, of necessity, no doubt, for aliens in this country, every day the shadow in Europe comes nearer to the lives of many more Jews who will shortly be forced to join the long procession of exiles. We still have Aryan students from Germany in the House, but nowadays, when a German student makes an application to join the club we have to say to him, 'You must remember that this House belongs to all students, of every race.' Sometimes both Aryans and Jews have changed their minds about their applications on hearing this, and have gone away again.

In March the club conference met again.

'The club conference finished to-day. Over a hundred students this year, to discuss "War or Peace?" In his opening speech our chairman told us that we were fortunate to be able to come and take part freely in a conference with such a title, and that in a few years' time it might be impossible for many of us to do so. The students laughed at this—but on Saturday night a long-distance call came for Miss B. (a mild little German girl, who knitted throughout the lectures) from the Nazi Headquarters in Düsseldorf, asking her what she was doing at such a conference. She had told nobody that she was coming, and had not even written to her parents, so we were somewhat shaken. A further bit of news, on Sunday, that the Germans had entered the Rhineland, made everyone take the discussions with unwonted seriousness.'

It was not, by the way, only European students who suffered from 'nerves'. Here are two examples, one tragedy and one comedy, from Egypt and India, both strange to the phlegmatic temperament of the English.

'A real tragedy. One of our Egyptian members has been arrested for attempted suicide and attempted manslaughter.
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He was working for his finals, a brilliant student, and had been very depressed lately. It seems that he had a severe attack of insomnia and a "doctor" in the flat below his had told him to eat as little as possible and to drink neat whisky! He arranged a party of his friends one night, including his "girl". While waiting for the guests to come, the girl tried to prevent him drinking, so he broke the bottle, attacked her and drank a large quantity of Lysol himself. Neither was badly hurt and the girl is now said to be recovering. I went to see him in Brixton prison to-day. He looks very tired and very unhappy, but seems perfectly normal. Perhaps he has had one of these "brain storms" which are not uncommon among overworked students.

'To-day the Egyptian was tried at the Old Bailey, before Mr. Justice Talbot, who was most kind and sympathetic and really seemed to take an interest in him. He, poor boy, looks very lost. He misses the sun, he hates the company he has to keep, he has no Arabic papers to read, and his family may only write to him in English, a language they do not speak. He is trying to do some work, though he finds it very difficult, and he is taking an interest in his garden. I talked to him in a big room, with a warder sitting at the further end, so we were neither interrupted nor overheard. He is, of course, fearfully worried about his future and indeed I wonder if we shall ever be able to get him out.'

I paid a monthly visit to Broadmoor throughout the summer and S. used to give me tea and present me with a large bouquet of flowers from his garden. I think he really appreciated these visits and, after a time, used to talk much more freely, but it was hard to say good-bye to him each time, for however kind the warders are, it's a terrible place to live in. Fortunately, however, one of the Prison Commissioners' is a good friend to Student Movement House.

'To-day A.P., Prison Commissioner, came to speak on
Deck passengers, s.s. *Tilawa*

Maung Tin

Loading cargo, Rangoon
he had better go to Hollywood. He saw my point and said he would return in five days' time and "tell me more".

'X returned, apparently quite unrepentant, though he indicated that he might not be murdering anyone in the immediate future. With that I had to be content, and I suspect that we shall hear no more of the matter. It must be the hot weather.'

Anonymous letters were a most common form of mental instability, shared by many countries, but particularly favoured by the English. Monday has generally been the day on which I have received these epistles, I imagine because the writers have more leisure on Sundays than on other days in the week!

'To-day I have received a most personal specimen of anonymous letter, referring to the "spirit of sedition" abroad in the House. As well as the more usual run of letters "telling" on various members of the House, I have lately had a new form of letter and postcard, posted from various parts of the country, addressed to "The Red Warden" and containing much abuse of Chamberlain and praise of Hitler. These will add considerably to an already interesting collection.'

Besides being a General Information Bureau for students, the House seems to have widened its clientele lately and the staff have been hard put to it to answer some of the questions we have been asked by complete strangers.

'Some of the requests we get from outside the club are really extraordinary. To-day a lady called and asked the member of staff on duty if we would provide her with a half-caste girl, aged three, whom she wished to adopt and would take with her to the mission field. We shocked her dreadfully by saying that we had none in stock at the moment! But really!'

'The club secretary was rewarded to-day for his insatiable

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curiosity. A lady rang up and asked if we could send her a refugee girl to look after her as she had met with an accident and, her nerves being all to pieces, she needed constant attention. H., characteristically, attempted to find out the nature of the accident. After much pressure she finally told him that she had been walking along the street and had been bitten by a United Dairies horse! I am thankful to say that H. was too busy controlling his laughter to insist on any more details."

The middle of July saw the start of the Spanish Revolution and the disappearance of our Spanish students from London. We heard nothing of them until Christmas when a postcard was received from one of our oldest Spanish members from Madrid, with no address, saying, ‘Please consider me still a member.’

The Arab students have hardly been mentioned at all yet, though they were, up till this year, prominent members of the House. Never very many of them at a time, they tended to be rather exclusive, though prepared to be generally friendly at any time on the request of the staff! They invariably lived at Notting Hill and some of them owned a huge yellow car, which they drove in turns, with somewhat dangerous fervour. The older Arabs were particularly delightful and cultured people. Several were scholars who had obtained posts at the School of Oriental Studies or who had come to England to do research work at the British Museum. We had a splendid succession of members of the Husseini family, from Jerusalem, most of whom have been members of the club committee in their day. By 1936 most of this family had returned to Jerusalem and the other Arabs, who had always been a conspicuously cheerful part of club life, were noticeable by their absence. One day a very large young Arab came to see me. He had just arrived in London and brought me letters of greeting from some of his family.
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These letters all said that they hoped that their cousin would join the House and be as happy there as they had been themselves. I read the letters and then looked at this young man and asked, 'And will you join the club?' To this he replied, 'No, I think I will not join Student Movement House, for I have been warned that there are many Jews here.' I agreed that this was true, so true that if he came with me now to the clubroom it was probable that many of the students there would be Jews, and I then inquired if he had ever met a Jew. 'No, indeed,' he said, in a voice of slightly shocked surprise. It seemed the moment to suggest to him that many Jews were really charming people, with an intellectual standard that was possibly much higher than his or mine, and if he would care to try the House, say for a month, he might at least have the unusual experience of knowing something about Jews at first hand. Rather to my surprise he agreed that this might be interesting, so I signed him up and did not expect to see him again. A month later he was still with us and I found him alone one day, and asked how he was getting on. A large smile spread over his face and he said, 'Do you know, it is most extraordinary, all my friends are now Jews!' Still sceptical, I thought this new excitement would soon wear off but, six months later, in the summer of 1937, he returned to Palestine for his holiday and, while in Jerusalem, invited a Jewish friend of his from the House to take a meal with him in a public restaurant—a very brave thing to do, especially for one who came, as he did, from a well-known Arab family. It was most encouraging to know that there was real evidence that the influence of the House was spreading further than Russell Square. He told me himself, 'I do not see that it makes sense to talk of international friendship in the House and to cut one's friends when things become more difficult.'

The relationship between a large, rather unruly club for
students of any university with the University authorities of the city in which this club happens to be situated are not necessarily cordial, and it cannot be denied that there have been times in the past when the University of London has looked upon Student Movement House with a somewhat chilling and disapproving eye. Since 1932 we have had a real friend in Sir Edwin Deller, the Principal of the University. Perhaps our friendship with him really started when he discovered that we cooked rather good tripe in our restaurant—anyway he used to come in several times a term and have a friendly tripe lunch! Thanks to him, our relationship with the University steadily improved, and this year we received official recognition from the Court and Senate. Sir Edwin was killed by an accident in the new University buildings, of which he was so proud, shortly before the end of the year. One of his last acts on the day before his accident was to put in hand the first grant of money from the University to Student Movement House. He was a friend we could ill afford to lose, and we shall remember him with great gratitude.

By the end of 1936 I had nearly completed five years at the House. During this time many students from many countries had passed through our doors, coming and going to all parts of the world. Correspondence with those who had gone home was a huge task, but one which became increasingly interesting. From these letters I began to see that it was not easy for students to return to the East after some years in the West, that the psychological adjustments necessary for such a return to ‘the old ways’ were great, and that many of our students passed through a period of profound unhappiness when they had left England. In India the economic problems were acute and it often happened that the more highly qualified a student might be when he returned to India, the less chance he had of obtaining a really good post.
I arrived at another conclusion, that it was important that those who worked with overseas students should, if possible, know something at first-hand of the countries from which they came. Some of our staff had considerable knowledge of many of the European countries, now and again we had a specialist on Africa, and I knew something of India, but so far, none of us knew anything of the Far East. There is nothing more cheering to an overseas student when he first arrives in a strange country than to find someone who knows his home town, and I had found an immense advantage in having travelled to India, in my relationships with Indian students in London. Here is an example this year.

‘K., a difficult boy, speaking to nobody, and such an unhappy person, has become “changed” overnight! I asked him yesterday where he came from in India, and he replied in rather a surly voice, “From the Madras Presidency”. I pressed him further and obtained a grudging admission that his home was a small place three hundred miles west of Madras. Again I persisted, and at last discovered that he meant Coimbatore, a place in which I had stayed for a month. He was quite delighted, and we discovered several mutual friends. To-day he is more cheerful and I think we shall now be able to get him to make friends in the House.’

A very serious crisis, by the way, was threatening the House in the near future, for the lease of 32 Russell Square was coming to an end and the University had informed us that we could not renew it as they needed the land on which to build their Great Hall. I have tried (successfully so far) not to mention our perpetual money problem, but it is hardly necessary to say that it has always been acute. Now we were faced with the prospect of raising a very large sum of money from a public that was not particularly interested in ‘foreigners’ in order to move, and indeed, to save, the House. The Student Christian Movement asked me to be respon-
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possible for doing this, but since the last five years had not been all holiday, though I accepted their invitation, I also stipulated that I should have a break for the better part of 1937.

So I found myself, in the summer of 1936, looking forward to a world tour. I planned to do three things. First, to revisit India and make a particular study of questions relating to the return of Indian students to their own homes after a period of study in England. I had here quite a unique opportunity, for many Indians whom I had known well in the House had now returned home and I should be able to visit them, as well as interviewing Indian and British educational authorities. Secondly, I hoped to go to China and Japan, not only to visit students whom I knew, but also to try to get some impression of their background, family and educational, and so to be of more help to them when I came back to the House. Lastly, I proposed to go to America, and there study international student work in their three great International Houses, with a view to picking up tips for our new house in London. I did not, of course, realize how lucky I was to be able to do this journey, for even a year later the difficulties of such travel would have been much greater. As it was, the Sino-Japanese conflict broke out a few weeks after I had sailed across the Pacific to America, and I was probably one of the last travellers to see Peiping still in Chinese hands.

Here are three final entries in my diary for 1936:

‘21st November. The Nineteenth Birthday Party and a farewell entertainment for the Warden called, I regret to say, “Chain-Smoking round the World”. If my adventures on my travels are anything like those depicted on the stage I shall certainly not come back alive. Various countries undertook to show me the kind of reception I might have on arriving on their shores, and the Chinese Bandit scene was far too realistic.’

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‘27th November. We are very fortunate in finding an Acting-Warden who is already well known to the House. Miss Witz came to-night to a Warden’s Farewell Dance, which drew a record crowd. I wonder if this is a compliment or a celebration by the Mice of the imminent departure of the Cat!’

‘1st December. Left Victoria at 11 a.m.—for Ceylon.’
CHAPTER 6

1937. Journey Round the World: The East

‘What’s the good of Mercator’s North Poles and Equators, Tropics, Zones and Meridian Lines?’
So the Bellman would cry, and the crew would reply, ‘They are merely conventional signs!’
—The Hunting of the Snark, Lewis Carroll

The evening before I set off on my travels a cynical friend remarked, ‘I don’t know why you are going round the world, human beings are much the same all the world over, you might just as well stay at home.’ I didn’t agree then and I agreed still less when I returned from my tour.

The first essential for such a journey as I had ahead of me was to travel alone—in order to have a chance of getting to know all sorts and kinds of people, and to be able to change plans at any moment without causing one’s travelling companions any inconvenience. I had neither enough money nor enough time to go far off the beaten track, but I tried to make up for any lack of originality by meeting as great a variety of people as possible.

Travellers’ tales can be very tedious to the reader, but it is not possible to avoid altogether references to personal adventures on this tour round the world. They are included partly in order to give as complete a picture as possible of the countries from which the Eastern and Far Eastern students come, and partly because they were often delightful interludes of comic relief in a journey which had as its main
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purpose some serious study on the problems arising out of
the migration of these students to the West.

With a quantity of luggage and some charming but em-
barrassing parting presents, too large to fit into already over-
full cases, I left Victoria on the morning of 1st December
1936, waving to a crowd of students who had come to see
me off. 'No more students for some time,' I thought cheer-
fully, and sat down in the train with a little sigh of relief—to
observe, exactly opposite me, a young Sikh, one of the shyest
members of the House, who, it seemed, was travelling to
India on the same boat as myself! Crossing the Channel, I
met three other House members, one an Englishman going
out to Spain to join an Ambulance Unit. In Paris I was met
by half-a-dozen French students, by arrangement this time.
We had an excellent supper but talked for so long that I
nearly missed my train to Marseilles, and left my dressing-
case, containing my only possessions of any value, behind
on the station! With great good fortune I managed to retrieve
it the next day at the port, an hour before my boat sailed.

There is nothing like the pleasure of the first twenty-four
hours of a voyage, with its sudden freedom from all respon-
sibility. There is no need to hurry any more, the telephone has
stopped ringing, there is no post to catch, there are no news-
papers to read, and the delight of receiving a large budget
of farewell letters is greatly enhanced by the knowledge that
it will be impossible to answer them for some time. This
freedom doesn't last, of course, for especially on a small ship,
the demands of social life on board become ever greater as
the voyage goes on.

The *Hakusan Maru* was very small, very clean, and very
comfortable, provided one was of average height only, for
the berths had been built for the Japanese. My stewardess
was a tiny Japanese girl, who hardly understood a word I
said to her, but giggled amiably. The Captain and his officers
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were friendly in their leisure moments, and extremely important when on duty. Since I had an introduction to him from Viscount Kano, a distinguished Japanese member of the House, the Captain gave a cocktail party in my honour one evening. Four English people besides myself, the Captain and the First Officer, packed ourselves into a tiny cabin and drank many rather potent drinks, so potent indeed that, by the end of the party, the Captain was addressing me as ‘Madame Très Bien!’ During the voyage we heard the first news of the abdication of Edward VIII. My six British companions and I, in a shipload of Japanese and German passengers, clung together, and felt as if the whole British Empire was crumbling. After two radio bulletins the machine broke down, so we had no further news until we landed in Ceylon. When I asked my English friends in Colombo to tell me the news, they replied, ‘Alas, Australia has won!’

In three and a half months I travelled from south to north in Ceylon, from Madras to Bombay and on to Karachi. After a brief holiday I went by air to Delhi, on to Lahore, Peshawar (and up the Khyber Pass), and finally to Calcutta. Throughout these travels I was welcomed and entertained most delightfully by many Indian students, and received with the greatest courtesy by Government and University officials, both Indian and British. I took with me a letter of commission from some distinguished people, who had particular reason to be interested in the coming of Indian students to England, and through that letter and other introductions I was able to meet nearly all the important people in India concerned with this problem. On returning home I wrote and presented a report, a summary of which will be found at the end of this book. Some of this report has, since the war, become irrelevant for the time being, for many Indian students have returned to their own country since September 1939, and hardly any have come to England since that date;
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but the great problems involved in this particular migration must be taken up again as soon as the war is over. Perhaps the political situation in India after the war may change the whole problem—for fewer Indians may need to come to the West for study, for higher education may then be much further advanced in their own country. Possibly anti-British feelings will be strong enough to influence parents in the direction of keeping their children at home, or, for the same reason, the Indian degree may have a far higher economic value than the British degree. I called my report ‘The England Returned Man’, the name often applied by their fellow countrymen to those who have returned from England, and by no means intended always as a compliment. I hope, at any rate, that the work I was able to do will prove to be useful when the time comes to make a further study of this problem, for the English must take their share of responsibility in such a migration, even though it be on a far smaller scale in the future. We may again have the opportunity to do much which may make or mar Indo-British relationships.

Two notable changes struck me since my last visit to India in 1931; the coming of the motor-bus, which linked even the remotest village to a more urban life, and the great progress of Indian films. Little buses so crowded with villagers that many were clinging to the steps or sitting on the roof, were a common sight on the most unfrequented roads, and I have no doubt that the results of such an innovation will change the political face of India out of all knowledge. As to the cinemas, instead of exclusively Western films, it was now possible to see many excellent Indian pictures, with good acting, colour, and lighting, and only rather too slow a sense of movement which one could criticize.

During my previous visit, Mahatma Gandhi was making his first ‘salt marches’ to the sea. In 1937 the talk was all of
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Congress, of Nehru, of Subhas Bose. Some of the older people, parents and others, seemed apprehensive about their leaders, wondering where they were being led, and looking back with some regret to the days when Gandhi was supreme in India. In the younger people, however, I noticed a new confidence about the future and I felt that their anti-British sentiments were less destructive than of old but were rather a symptom of their attempts to plan for the future of India on really constructive lines.

On 21st December we arrived at Colombo, on a very hot morning. From a long way off I observed a huge electric sign saying ‘CEYLON FOR GOOD Tea’, an innovation since my last visit. But Ceylon did not seem to have changed much, and it was delightful to enjoy once more the magnificent scenery of the Island. Over Christmas I stayed with the Bishop of Colombo, an old friend, and was able to see several members of the House. My first caller on the morning after I had arrived was a young lawyer and we sat on the veranda for a long talk. Both at Cambridge and in London he had done well academically and would have done better if half his mind had not been on politics and most of the other half on long philosophical discussions with his English friends in college. He had lived his four years to the full; he had loved the beauty of Cambridge and the freedom of his life there; he had lost his heart to a Scandinavian girl, but had refused to marry her ‘for her own sake’. He had changed very little outwardly, but after some talk I noticed that the old ‘fire’ had gone out of him. Yes, he had married a girl whom his father had chosen; he was fairly successful as a barrister and likely to be more so; he had given up politics—‘It’s no good to talk that kind of stuff here.’ As he was leaving, however, I caught a glimpse of the real person I used to know. He said, ‘Never shall I regret those years spent in England. I think I was alive for the only time in my life, but all this has
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killed me, this marriage of mine is meaningless. Justice here means bribery and corruption, and if I am to live I must go the same way as the others. There are Cambridge men here but, except professionally, they will not speak to me and I know now what real loneliness means.’ I expect he will forget and will no doubt send his sons, in their turn, to England, but it seems probable that, for his ultimate happiness, it would have been better if he had never left Ceylon.

Two days after Christmas I was invited to the home of another member of the club, a Christian, who had been at Oxford and Cuddesdon and was now a curate at Kandy. We had an enormous lunch with his parents and innumerable brothers and sisters, some of whom I knew already, and then drove seventy miles up country to Kandy. I stayed for a few days and was shown all the sights of this very beautiful place, the famous Temple of the Tooth, the Botanic Gardens at Peradeniya, with a wonderful display of bougainvillæa, and, a hundred miles beyond Kandy, the buried cities at Annaradhapura. Our drives took us mostly through jungle, meeting elephants in the road (which made our Baby Austin look silly!), monkeys, jackals, wonderful birds, parakeets and golden orioles. On my last evening in Kandy we drove round the town in the most glorious sunset, and passed the English Club. My host told me, with a smile, that although many members of that Club belong to his Church and listen to his sermons he cannot even be invited as a visitor to cross its threshold.

On 2nd January, on a very noisy and smelly little steamer called the Irwin, I crossed from Ceylon to India and travelled in an ‘express’ train, which stopped at every station, to Madras. My visit here gave me opportunities of seeing several kinds of life in India. I stayed in Brodie Castle, a most splendid house on the banks of the Adyar river, with very white walls covered with scarlet bougainvillæa. My hosts,
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Sir Charles and Lady Souter, lived in great style, but astonished me by the number of Indian friends they had. They were good enough to arrange several parties for me at which the guests were almost entirely Indian, and I was given complete freedom to see any and all of my Indian friends during my stay with them. On my first evening I attended a Government House Ball, an extremely English affair; on my second day I spent most of my time visiting the Mohammedan College with the Principal, Captain Abdul Hamid. With the Souters I attended an Indian reception in honour of Sir Jagdish Prasad, member of the Viceroy’s Council; later I had a long talk with the Governor who was divided in his anxiety to tell me something of the political situation in South India and his desire to hear the latest news from home. On another day I went with Captain Hamid to visit the All-India Khadi and Swadeshi Exhibition, held as propaganda for the Congress Party in view of the forthcoming elections. This was a tremendous show, rather like a fair, with long alleys of little shops selling All-India industries. There were great crowds, everyone shouting, all the mothers and babies out and Gandhi caps everywhere. We pushed our way into a large tent where there was a programme of music and dancing. I was introduced to two elderly gentlemen, great authorities on Indian music, who guaranteed to tell me where we had got to in the programme, but unfortunately, they failed to agree among themselves. Two little dancing girls from Tangore were the chief attraction; they were not more than fifteen or sixteen, dressed in bright green trousers, beautiful gold saris, with many bangles, nose ornaments, etc., and their long pigtails were woven with flower garlands. When the show was over I met two of the women political leaders of India, Mrs. Swaminathan (whose son was at the House), and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Vice-President of the All-India Women’s Conference. As we were talking several
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of the leading Theosophists joined us, including Krishna Murti, proclaimed the Messiah by Mrs. Annie Besant. It was a remarkable and most interesting party. I saw no other English person during the whole afternoon and evening and made my hosts laugh when, on my return, I described my adventures. It was really surprising and most encouraging, however, to find that, in spite of being the guest of a senior British official, I could meet so many Indians without causing my hosts any embarrassment. It would certainly not have been possible when I stayed in India eight years ago, except in missionary circles. Even now the behaviour of some English people towards Indians is quite deplorable. In the local paper in Madras I noticed an invitation to the public to pay visits to one of our battleships. 'The Captain and Officers of H.M.S. ——.' it read, 'will welcome European visitors on Tuesday and Thursday, other classes of persons on Friday,' and this with a Congress Ministry in Madras!

It is difficult to describe three months' travel in such an absorbing country as India, in the space of one chapter, and much which was of great interest must necessarily be omitted in this account. Wherever I went I was taken to see schools and colleges, acquired the art of backing out of the more odorous laboratories quickly in the heat of the day, and enjoyed most the opportunities of talking with and to the students. After a brief visit to Poona, where I saw the Servants of India Society with its magnificent International Library and had talks with the parents of several Club members, I went on to Bombay. Here, staying at Wilson College, where so many of our Indian students are educated, I saw many old members and the parents of several students still in England. Several Parsee families entertained me most hospitably, each day I had visits from students, and one afternoon took lunch at Government House. Lord Brabourne, the Governor, was almost unique among Governors in th
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number of Indian friends he had in Bombay. He was very popular, being a perfectly genuine, sincere and natural person, and his tragic death, shortly after he became Governor of Calcutta, was a loss that was felt deeply by many Indians. Most of the students were struggling with the problem of unemployment; those who had returned to India with many degrees finding it just as difficult to obtain good posts as those who had scraped a B.A. Some asked my advice about returning to England for further study, though I think that was mostly an ‘escape’ from their present difficulties. One or two of the more fortunate were established on the staffs of various colleges and schools.

After ten days’ holiday in Karachi I embarked on my first flight, to Delhi. I did not realize that you cannot, as when travelling by train, just take a ticket, step into the plane, and fly off, but that there are many formalities to be completed, not the least important that of weighing yourself and your luggage. An A.D.C., who was kindly arranging matters for me, kept sending me little memos he received from the airport at Karachi, most of which started rather ominously, ‘If Miss Trevelyan and her luggage do not weigh more than . . . ’ until I felt I ought to live on oranges for several days. The Imperial Airways plane was very late, delayed, so we were told, by ‘meeting head winds at Basra’, but it came at last. Since I arrived at the airport in a Government House car and was seen off by the Governor’s wife, I was received with some ceremony, ushered into a most comfortable seat, like a dentist’s chair, and we sailed off into the air at five-thirty p.m. I ought, I am sure, to have celebrated my first flight by being extremely excited or violently sick, but instead I went sound asleep, for I had danced late the night before and the motion of the plane, on a lovely, still Indian evening, was extremely soothing. The next thing I knew was that I was being woken by an official (who seemed shocked at my appar-
ent lack of interest) with a special invitation from the pilot to pay him a visit in the cockpit. I accepted with alacrity, but found it very difficult to reach him, since I had to crawl through a narrow passage, where luggage was stacked, on all fours. Once there it was marvellous, though the noise was absolutely deafening and no conversation was possible between the pilot and myself. Night had fallen, but the moon was shining brightly, lighting up the fluffy white clouds over which we were flying. Below us lay the great desert of Rajputana, miles and miles of it, with curious rock formations standing out clearly now and again in the moonlight. Only an occasional flicker from lights in a remote village broke the monotony of that vast and seemingly limitless stretch of barren land. I stood fascinated as we roared along, until the pilot, steering his plane with one hand, scribbled on a piece of paper which he handed to me, 'Please go back to your seat now. We shall soon be landing at Jodhpur and you will overweight us!' It was midnight when we descended on Jodhpur in a series of fascinating spirals, and I took some dinner with the pilots in the restaurant of the airport. Soon we were off again and arrived at Delhi at two-thirty a.m., with a fine view, as we descended, of a moonlit Old Delhi and its grand Vice-regal neighbour. Here I slept at the airport until the more respectable hour of seven-thirty a.m., when I was fetched in my hosts’ car.

On my first visit to India I had stayed for some time in Delhi and it was most interesting to see, after six years, how the new buildings were beginning to grow into their surroundings, though they still looked a little incongruous beside the picturesque Old Delhi. Here again, staying with a distinguished British General, I was able to invite all my Indian friends to the house without apology to my hosts. I saw all kinds of people, lunched and talked with the Viceroy, attended an Investiture at Viceroy’s House, was invited to
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delightful lunches with members of the Viceroy’s Council, visited hospitals, colleges and missions.

An Indian Minister invited me to tea at his house and afterwards took me to see his young wife, in strict purdah, with her three-weeks-old baby, the centre of admiration to all her female relatives. One of the club members whom I saw in Delhi was typical of many. He had had a brilliant career as a mathematician in England, returned from London four years ago and obtained a Research Fellowship at an Indian university on the strength of his qualifications. The Fellowship, given for one year, had been renewed for a further two years—a difficult compliment, for as it brought him to the age of twenty-eight he was then too old to enter the teaching profession (the educational service recruiting only from the bottom), and the result is that for a year he has been entirely out of work.

Of all the students from England whom I saw, the lawyers fared the worst and on my next visit, to Lahore, I began to hear something of their troubles. Here I stayed with some old friends, Dr. S. K. Datta and his wife. Dr. Datta, one of the best-known Indian Christians, is Principal of Forman Christian College, and through him I met all the leading educationalists and government officials in Lahore, besides several members of the club. Nearly all the latter had studied law in England and were now nominally practising at the High Court in Lahore. One morning one of the young men took me to see the Law Courts, and I realized for the first time what a tremendous readjustment has to be made by the Indian barrister who has trained and qualified in his profession at the Inns of Court in London. The courts in which my guide himself worked daily were very small, airless and rather squalid. Outside each door were crowds of Indians sitting about, many of them witnesses, waiting like vultures, to see who would pay them most for taking which
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side in the argument. The main building was good, but only used for important occasions, while my impression of the rest was of a depressing disorder and corruption. Every young barrister whom I met was unhappy and all asked my advice as to other possible professions. In Lahore I had a long and illuminating talk with the father of a student still in London. He was a dear old gentleman and much worried about his boy. 'He is my only son,' he said, 'and I have never been in England; I do not know what he is doing, he writes so little, and perhaps he is leading a life of which I should not approve.' He was obviously so very proud of his boy and longing for his return home, yet I knew how difficult the young man himself would find that return after four years in England and, quite possibly, another year in America. I did my best to paint a happy, and true, picture of the life of an Indian student in London, and I think the old man went away comforted. Another day an I.C.S. man, stationed near Lahore, came to see me. He, in striking contrast to the lawyers, was busy and well contented with his profession, and indeed, the same can be said of all the Indian I.C.S. men whom I met.

From Lahore I travelled further north, resisting a strong desire to revisit Kashmir, and stayed a week in Peshawar. There I spent nearly all my week sightseeing, in the fascinating walled city itself and up the Khyber Pass. One day I attended a very English affair, the Hunter Trials. Walking along with some English friends to this event, we were passed by a large car driven in clouds of dust at high speed and full of Indians. Suddenly one of them sprang up and shouted my name, to the great surprise and amusement of my friends. The car did not stop, perhaps my English entourage was too much for the occupants, and since I did not know the young man's address I was unable to see him later.
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From Peshawar I returned to Delhi for a few days, and then flew back to Karachi for a further fortnight of holiday. On this flight we reached Jodhpur at ten o’clock at night and did not leave again until three-thirty the next morning. Dr. Ted Hayward, official doctor to the State, gave me dinner in his house and then drove me through the bazaar of this little desert town, most fascinating at night, to the State hospital. Here we went on his rounds through the darkened wards and it was a pleasure to see, in the children’s ward, the delighted smiles from these brown babies when their doctor talked to them. We had earlier visited a college a few miles out of Jodhpur where the sons of Maharajas are educated. Here we went into the dormitories and played games with the boys, entirely upsetting the stern matron and her rules of ‘lights out and no talking’.

Owing to a severe sunstroke in Karachi I had to cut down my programme and, to save the discomfort of a journey by train across the Sind desert so late in the year, took to the air again and flew right across India. It was a wonderful flight, ending with a fine view of the Bengal jungle thousands of feet below us. My diary records:

‘Started five a.m., breakfast at Delhi eight a.m., lemonade at Cawnpore eleven a.m., lunch at Allahabad twelve-thirty p.m. (100 in the shade) and arrived at Calcutta five-thirty p.m.—a journey which would have taken more than two days by train.’

There have always been more Bengalis at the House than students from any other part of India and I had a very busy ten days in Calcutta seeing many old friends. I had only told one student I was coming and he met me at the airport in a car which he had recently bought for ten rupees. This remarkable contraption constantly broke down, but it was the greatest blessing to me, and thanks to its kind owner I was saved many hot and tiring journeys. The owner of the
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car was one of three brothers, all of whom had been to England and become members of the House. One was still there, a medical, the other two, who had both studied for the Bar, were in Calcutta, trying, like many others, to practise at the High Court. Early in my stay I was taken one morning to the High Court, and there, while walking down the corridors of this vast building, we met one after another, old members of the club, each more astonished than the last at seeing me. Having collected eight or nine barristers we proceeded to the Bar Library so that I might see for myself the room from which so many despairing letters had been written to me by briefless young men. In the days that followed we had many parties, in their homes and in restaurants and much exchange of gossip about the good old days in London. Of all the students whom I saw in Calcutta, only two seemed to be on the road to success at the Bar. One, a rich young Brahmin, had not only money but also influence, having married the daughter of a well-known barrister. He owns a large car and his own house, and with his good backing and hard work is looked on as one of the coming young men. The other, the youngest of the three brothers, obtained his hockey ‘blue’ at Cambridge and a third class both in History and at the Bar. The President of a hockey association in Calcutta happens, also, to be an influential barrister, so this young man goes on Saturday afternoons to play hockey and ‘hit a few briefs between the goal posts’. For the rest, there did not seem to be very much hope; most of my friends had been back in India for three or four years, but few of them were earning anything approaching a living wage.

Indeed, my impressions that remained after three and a half months in India were that the story of ‘The England Returned Man’ is not a very happy one. Many of the students whom I saw were restless and unhappy, for the physical and psychological adjustments they had had to make had
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been too great at an impressionable age, and it would be years before they could settle down again contentedly at home.

On Good Friday, 26th March, I left Calcutta on a small cargo ship, bound for Burma, Malay, and China. Several of the students came to see me off. My last view of them, as I stood on deck waving, was of a group of six young men, and, at some distance from them the rich young Brahmin, raising his hat at stated intervals. It is not only colour prejudice which is the problem of India in the future; that very problem makes, perhaps, for unity; there is also the communal question, and that India alone can solve.

On my way to China I paid a brief visit to Burma. I shall never forget the sight of Rangoon in sunset as we sailed up the Irrawaddy, with the great golden pagodas shining and glowing in the last rays of the sun. I was met by Maung Tin, the Government Analyst, who had returned home a year ago. He brought his wife, a beautiful smiling Burmese girl, his two children and a very smart Ford car. The cargo boat on which I was travelling elected to stay two nights in Rangoon mainly for the purpose of collecting some three thousand 'deck passengers', innumerable sheep and goats, fourteen murderers to be shipped to Hong Kong, a Pathan guard for the murderers, and another guard to keep off the pirates on the seas!

It is tempting to embark on a description of my adventures in Rangoon, where I saw several Burmese and Indian members of the club, but this is not a travel book and I shall content myself with an extract from my diary which recounts an evening spent with Maung Tin.

'1st April. Burma is celebrating its first day of independence from India, and the streets of Rangoon are crowded with excited Burmese and Indian processions, watched over vaguely by police. In an incredibly sticky heat, Maung Tin and I set off from my boat at four p.m. First we drove to the lakes, set in a beautiful park. There were flowering trees
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everywhere, temple trees with powerful scent, purple bougainvillæas, laburnum lining every path. We looked across the water at the famous Shwe Dagon Pagoda, with its magnificent dome. It being a holiday, all the lovely Burmese ladies were out in their best dresses, very brightly coloured skirts and bodices and ornamental combs in their hair. They looked so happy, in striking contrast to an Indian crowd. Many Buddhist priests were strolling through the park, with saffron robes and close-cropped heads. We walked for some time and then, as the sun was setting, we drove up to the great pagoda, its dome covered in gold leaf and the whole temple standing on a great rock. The pagoda is approached from the north, south, east, and west by immense flights of hundreds of steps, covered by painted roofs. We left our shoes in the car and made our pilgrimage to the top. The steps were lined with little stalls where sellers offer sweet-scented temple flowers, joss sticks, and carved Buddhas. It was very dirty and very hot. At the top the pagoda was surrounded by a wide marble pavement, with many small shrines like little caves, dimly lit. Maung Tin took me into the inner shrine standing in the middle of the great pavement, where, when my eyes became accustomed to the dim light, I observed an enormous Buddha, covered in gold leaf. "So much gold leaf is put on by the rich every year that the face is now quite shapeless," whispered Tin apologetically. A priest was squatting on the floor, chanting prayers to the Buddha in a low monotone, men and women, with their foreheads to the ground, were joining in and a little girl was carrying tiny bouquets of temple flowers to each worshipper. Many candles lit up the gold roof and the gold face, while the perfume and smoke of the ever-burning joss sticks added to the mist and mystery of the scene. Tin, with a murmured word to me, knelt behind the priest and prostrated himself before the Buddha for some minutes. As we left the shrine,
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picking our way out between the worshippers on to the marble platform again, we found the sun had set. Tiny lights were lit all over the pagoda, a slight breeze stirred the temple bells to soft music, the sky was a crimson glow and below us the lights of Rangoon shone brightly. We strolled up and down, cooling ourselves in the breeze and talking quietly. Tin explained that when he prostrated himself before the Buddha he was not worshipping an image but he was reminding himself of the teachings of Buddha and making public demonstration of the fact that he was true to them. He then added: "We Buddhists say that when two friends meet, as we have to-night, in this temple, we shall meet again in a future life and that we have already met in a previous existence. You and I have worshipped at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, I think we shall not meet again in this life, but in another life we shall meet again." As we made our way down the steps again, through the crowds of pilgrims, beggars and pi-dogs, we were both a little moved.

When we reached the car and had put on our shoes again we drove into the country to visit Dr. Hla Baw, another member of the House, and Head of the Burmese Police. He entertained us to a sticky green drink and cigarettes and then showed me the C.I.D. Museum, his pride and joy. The electric light was not working, so the tour took place by the light of torches, and some of the relics, such as the ropes which had been used to hang the last three murderers in Burma, became even more startlingly ghoulish when illu-minated so fitfully.

About ten p.m. we all three motored back to Rangoon, where we had supper in Chinatown. The restaurant looked, as we entered, like a large stable, a huge, dirty and dark room, with a raftered roof and some Chinese playing cards by the light of an oil lamp. A long ladder took us up through a trap door into the restaurant proper. Here was a long
passage with uncarpeted wooden floor, and, on each side rows of wooden ‘horse boxes’—actually small compartments with wooden swing doors which, in length, reached neither the floor nor the ceiling. We were shown into one of these horse boxes by a large blowsy Burmese woman, chewing peanuts and spitting out the shells, here and there, as we walked behind her. The furniture of the room was simple. It contained one large round table, marble-topped, which filled almost the whole space. In the corner was a large spittoon towards which many people had obviously made most inaccurate shots during the day. Overhead was a punka pulled up and down by an unseen hand. As we ate a most delightful meal of shark’s fins, bird’s nest soup, etc., we were entertained by a young Chinese girl, one being provided to each room, as I was told by my hosts. She, too, was chewing and spitting without cessation, while fixing me with an unwavering stare. After a time I found this a little unnerving, so I winked at her, at which she burst out laughing and thereafter I became the comic turn. The neighbouring horse boxes were extremely noisy and most of the occupants were undoubtedly drunk. At intervals the Burmese proprietor came in and gave us the latest bulletins of restaurant life. During one of her visits the noise outside increased to a sudden uproar and she departed faster than I thought it possible for her to move. Later she returned to tell us, so Maung Tin informed me, that a party of drunken Indians had been protesting with great vigour against the independence of Burma—she was breathless but triumphant and had evidently quelled the riot single-handed, for the noise had decreased appreciably. Near midnight our meal finished and we were given small rough towels, wrung out of a bucket of hot water, with which to wipe our faces and hands, after which ceremony we descended the ladder again to a chorus of most friendly farewells.

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Maung Tin then insisted that I must see a real Burmese film. It seemed to me a little late, but I was told that the show would only just have started and would certainly go on until two a.m., so off we went to seats in the 'dress circle' of a huge cinema crowded with Burmese. The 'stalls' had no seats, so the audience squatted, closely packed, on the sandy floor. Maung Tin gave me a rapid synopsis of the story, which was obviously familiar to him. There was a handsome Prince and a beautiful Princess as hero and heroine, while the villain was a wicked Magician who rode through the skies on a broomstick. The Magician had captured the Princess and taken her to his castle, but having got her there he wished to go out on his broomstick again, so, with his magic wand, he waved a few passes over her and removed her 'spirit'. This, a long silver thread, he wound round his finger and then thoughtfully placed it in a large cabinet, which he locked securely, putting the key in his pocket. The audience was much excited, cheering the Princess and hissing the Magician. All, of course, ended well and, before we left, the Prince had obtained possession of the key and the magic wand and had returned her spirit to the Princess. The clothes were lovely old traditional Burmese costumes and the acting, scenery, and lighting were good.

About two a.m. we strolled back towards the boat, with a wonderful golden moon lighting up the now silent streets. We were tempted to go back to the Lakes, but I refused, as I knew that Tin had to conduct post-mortems all the next day. On the gangway we bade each other farewell with more than usual solemnity and emotion.

I did not see Maung Tin again, as we left early in the morning. When I returned to England I heard the news, from another Burmese, that he had died very suddenly of heart failure. I hope that his words will come true and that we shall meet again in another world.
CHAPTER 7

1937. Further East

‘Curiouser and Curiouser,’ said Alice.
—Through the Looking Glass, Lewis Carroll

The S.S. Tilawa could not be described as an Ocean Greyhound. She was a small, slow cargo boat and, in addition to her load of ‘deck passengers’, sheep, goats, and murderers, obligingly accommodated some fourteen first class passengers. Such a small number of companions obviously had its drawbacks and had it not been for three or four really congenial people the voyage might have been very trying. But, as in all the boats on which I travelled, big and small, I was extraordinarily lucky in my companions and some of us managed to find considerable amusement in our strange little company.

We paid a brief call of one day at Penang, the only place where I failed to get into touch with any members of the House, but I was most admirably entertained by Mr. Dick of the P. & O., to whom I had been given an introduction.

At eight o’clock in the morning on 8th April, we sailed into Singapore. Long before we reached our wharf I had picked out Chen G. Toh, who had come to meet me and since he also spotted me from a considerable distance, we spent an embarrassing quarter of an hour waving, at first enthusiastically and then spasmodically, until the boat arrived. Chen had been one of the most active members of
the House for three years, had served on all the committees, and was deservedly popular with his fellow members. Two generations ago his family had come to settle in Johore from China. Chen himself was working with the best-known firm of solicitors in Singapore. My English companions on the boat were beginning to get used to the fact that, at the various ports at which we called, I made a habit of disappearing into the ‘wilds’ with ‘natives’. Chen did much to assure them that some ‘natives’ were really quite civilized, for he displayed all his social charm and entertained them delightfully.

I found that a considerable programme had been mapped out for me which would more than occupy my two days in Singapore. Chen himself had to go to work all the morning but had brought his car, which he placed at my disposal and commanded me to meet him at his office at twelve forty-five. On arriving there I was, to my amusement, introduced to everyone in the office, from the boss himself to the youngest Chinese office boy, after which ceremony we repaired to the Adelphi Hotel and took lunch with the whole firm. Chen, who had arranged a most elaborate menu, was a completely self-effacing host, only concerned that everyone should enjoy themselves. It seemed remarkable that, at the invitation of a very junior Chinese, all these distinguished and busy men should come to lunch to meet an entirely unknown English woman, and it was no little tribute to our young host.

After tea, when the sun was, at last, a little less violent, my host drove me out to Johore Bahru, some twenty-five miles inland and the capital of Johore State. Our drive, in a magnificent racing car, took us through jungle, swamps, rubber and coconut plantations, fields of pineapples growing like potatoes, through villages and past many wayside temples. We paid a short visit to the Johore State Zoo and to the great Mohammedan Mosque which stands on a high hill
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overlooking the Strait. Chen’s ancestral home was reached after dark, a large house with a central living-room from which many small rooms opened out. Three very large portraits of Chen’s deceased Father, Mother, and Brother, were hung on the walls above a shelf on which were burning joss sticks and temple flowers—the first sign of ancestor worship that I had seen. After meeting some of the family and being given cooling drinks we drove back to Singapore in the sunset, Chen talking all the way on his ethical standards and the difficulties which face a young, rich and eligible bachelor in Singapore.

Our destination in Singapore was a huge amusement park called the Great World. There we threaded our way through dense crowds to the restaurant where, in a large private room, rather like the horse boxes in Rangoon, we found the dinner party assembled. There were fourteen guests in all, of whom, apart from our host, I only knew Robert Tan, a nice boy who had been in London for two years. Chen and I took our stand, rather like a wedding reception, at the end of the room and the guests came up to be introduced. After several Chinese and their wives had passed, a man came up with two ladies. Chen remarked, ‘Mr. G., Mrs. G., Mrs. G.,’ and, as I was shaking hands with them, hissed in my ear, ‘one wife, one concubine’. Chen, as host, sat in the lowest place, while I was given the seat of honour at the head of the table, with Robert Tan beside me. Robert was extremely thoughtful and urged me not to eat too much at the beginning of the meal, which advice surprised me, until I realized that we were faced with no less than fourteen courses. The menu was as follows: Shark’s Fins, Bird’s Nests, Duck’s skins, Stuffed Pigeon, Turtle soup, Crab and Liver, Asparagus and Chicken, Prawn Balls, Pomfret, Fried Rice, Bean curd soup and mushroom, Loquats, Fresh Fish, Dried Fish. We drank sherry throughout the meal and Chinese tea at the end and
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only by following Robert Tan’s advice at every course, did I survive at all. About ten p.m. we adjourned to the cabaret, passing on our way two Chinese theatres inside the park, like Wembley, and both open so that passers-by could stand and watch the acting. There were innumerable stalls, gambling games, enormous family parties strolling up and down, flowers everywhere and coloured lights. The Cabaret was packed with people, two very noisy jazz bands, playing non-stop, while the most ravishing little dancing partners, Chinese, Burmese, and Siamese, sat round the dance floor waiting to be hired. One of our party had none too strong a head and found the constant sherry drinking at dinner too much for him, so, since some of the ladies of our party seemed a little frightened of him, Chen, Robert and I managed to persuade him to leave, put him into his car and ordered his chauffeur to drive him home and put him to bed. We danced until midnight, when the park closed, and after many farewells we pushed our way through cars and rickshaws and drove back to the boat.

The next morning Chen took me to call on the Robert Tans, where we were delightfully entertained, shown a magnificent display of orchids and a treasured portrait of Robert’s great-grandfather, the first Chinese settler in Singapore. Robert himself has become a millionaire lately, at the age of twenty-three, owing to the death of his father, the owner of the Great World Amusement Park, who left this great fortune to his son. Both Robert and Chen made the most of their time in England and now seem to have fitted in again easily and naturally into their home surroundings. They both work hard, in spite of being well endowed with this world’s goods and their future looks promising. They came to see me off and very nearly had to come to China as they only just got down the gangway in time before the boat started. Chen looked as tired as I felt, but the visit
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had been supremely successful and I think he was proud and content as he waved me good-bye.

I spent a month in China. How fortunate I was to be able to do this I did not realize until afterwards, for the Sino-Japanese war broke out only a few weeks after I had left.

Comparatively few Chinese and Japanese students go to England for their studies, America being far more accessible, but we have always had a dozen or so Chinese members at the House at a time, with rather fewer Japanese and Koreans. I did not therefore meet many members of the House in China, but I visited colleges, schools, and universities and was able to get some idea of the way in which the average Chinese is educated before he leaves his own country.

China was a completely new country to me. In India, Burma, and the Straits Settlement I had travelled on more or less familiar ground, but except for Hong Kong, I found that I could no longer expect any preferential treatment through being English, but rather the reverse, and I began to accustom myself to standing in queues for ‘foreigners’.

Even so, it was not until, in Canton, I observed a large statue in a Public Garden which was not Queen Victoria, but Sun Yat Sen, that I realized that I was indeed a foreigner in a country which owed no allegiance to Great Britain. With the exception of the Missions and the English business firms, the remains of British influence in China are few though, in some cases, regrettable, such as a notice still posted outside a Public Park, Chinese and Dogs Not Admitted.

Like the Burmese, the Chinese are a cheerful people with a delightful and spontaneous sense of humour; they must find it difficult to make enemies, for their natural charm and instinctive desire to smooth over any little difficulties is very disarming. I had been told that, should I get into any difficulty with a Chinese official, I should try to make him laugh and all would, probably, be well. This I proved several
times to be true. It must also be said, however, that business dealings with the Chinese must try the patience of a saint. In my efforts, quite abortive, to travel by train inland from Canton to Peiping, I had to interview many travel officials, all of whom seemed quite incapable of giving any definite information (due partly, of course, to the Chinese railway system). They were quite maddening, but invariably charming. They will often cover up a grim determination to get their own way by an interminable flow of talk and, after a very short time in the country, I gave up any attempt to discover what they were really thinking by what they were saying.

The feeling of tension in the country was very great during that month of April 1937 and as soon as I had an opportunity of talking with Chinese students I found that their thoughts were all directed towards the coming war, when it would start and how they would take their part. That it would start they obviously considered inevitable and the Japanese were doing their best to make them feel so. While I was in Shanghai a Chinese child dropped a banana skin, from the upper window of a house, on to the head of a Japanese sailor passing in the street. This, in the Japanese press, was magnified into an incident of incredible gravity. A large part of the Japanese Navy was in evidence in Shanghai harbour and up the river at Canton; one had the uneasy feeling that the Japanese were constantly on the watch, a ceaseless vigil over the, apparently, carefree Chinese. The Chinese, however, were by no means inactive and one of my first impressions of the country was that all the children were in uniform, as Scouts, or what it might be. There were also constant troop movements and I well remember a beautiful evening in Peiping when a peaceful meditation in the garden of a Temple was rudely shattered by a large party of soldiers arriving to drill.
Chen G. Toh at home

Chen G. Toh
(Chinese from Malay)

Johore Bahru
Mrs. Kano and daughters

Korean guides

Korean Students (Kim, second from left)
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If the feeling of tension was noticeable, there was also a very vivid impression of a great and ancient civilization awakening from sleep. This was the first country I had seen where the young people were hopeful. Through the influence of Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek the whole country was united as never before and the 'Sian' episode, when the communists had held Chiang Kai Shek prisoner and later released him, had only served to strengthen that unity. Coming from a weary Western civilization and from a disillusioned India this feeling of unity was tremendously inspiring and makes the tragedy of the Sino-Japanese war the greater. An old country beginning to grow anew, China must now turn aside for some years to withstand the Japanese aggression. But perhaps the growth of this vitality, this beginning of unity, will be strengthened and continue to grow even through the exhaustion of these war years.

On 14th April our cargo ship arrived in Hong Kong, one of the most beautiful harbours in the world, in torrential rain.

The Tilawa was unable to get into her wharf at Kowloon, so we dithered about for hours in the harbour, watching a vast number of fishing smacks, motor-boats, Chinese junks with great coloured sails, cruising around us, some of them trying quite helplessly to get near us. Some amusement was caused by an extraordinarily frail-looking little motor-boat, called the George Bing, which pursued an even more erratic course than most. It made one gigantic effort in our direction and, as it drew near, three heads emerged from the awning and the owners shouted my name. After much to-do the boat managed to get tied to two police launches and some English members of the House climbed aboard our boat, soaked to the skin. They insisted on my collecting all my luggage and following them into the George Bing which, with great difficulty and to the enormous edification of my fellow passengers, I managed to do. We reached shore safely
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after a very rough passage and thus avoided, so we heard later, the worst harbour accident for many years. A ferry was sunk with, fortunately, no loss of life, but considerable loss of property. The next day the sun shone brilliantly and the harbour looked as though nothing had ever disturbed its peace.

Throughout a week in Hong Kong I was given unlimited opportunity of inspecting every kind of educational establishment, from the University to the Vernacular Schools. In the University the work of the Chinese women was immensely impressive and, in some ways, they seem to have progressed far more quickly than the men. As in India, I was asked many questions by students about England and the possibilities of studying there, though I’ve no doubt that most of my questioners will end by going to America. American methods of education are the most generally adopted in China, though the British Missions are responsible for a number of schools and colleges and there are many British people on the staffs of American educational establishments. I visited one vernacular school on the mainland where I was taken round by the Chinese headmistress and, at her request, spoke to the whole school, none of whom could speak a word of English, while she acted as interpreter. On another occasion I met the Chinese staffs of the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., all of whom spoke in excellent English and we had a most interesting evening discussing problems concerning students, problems which seemed to be very similar in the West and Far East.

But Hong Kong is not China. It is a friendly, fascinating place with a very large English business community, who ‘keep themselves to themselves’, Government circles, the University, the Missions, the British Army and Navy and a large Chinese population whose position seems to be rather anomalous. There were no Chinese members of the House in Hong Kong at the time, so, as I was anxious to see some-
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thing of the real China, I left Hong Kong after a week, for Canton.

A long and very hot journey through hilly and wooded country, in a carriage crowded with Chinese, all talking incessantly, brought me to Canton and, at the station, to a scene of such indescribable confusion as I shall never forget. The platforms were literally swarming with people, all shouting, pushing and jostling each other. As I drove with my host through the streets towards the river the taxi driver never ceased blowing his horn, to which the crowd paid not the slightest attention and it seemed a marvel that we did not mow down pedestrians right and left. The river population of Canton was amazing, line upon line of ‘house boats’, packed together like the worst slums of Bethnal Green, but gaily painted and decorated with many banners. Sampans, barges, tugs, motor-boats plied up and down the river busily, with an occasional junk making its lazy and dignified way between them. As we set off ourselves in a ferry, family parties from the house boats waved in the friendliest fashion.

I stayed for ten days in Canton, at a Chinese Theological College. I had meant, at the most, to stay three days and then go inland to Peiping, but there was only one train, on a single track, which passed through Canton now and again, and when it did so, it was always full. The one or two first class carriages were permanently delegated to troops and the third class carriages, which held ninety apiece, were always overcrowded. Though it was disappointing to miss an exciting few days of travel and to have no opportunity for using some ‘useful phrases for various occasions’ which I had been given by a Chinese scholar, it was, in fact, no bad plan to stay rather longer in Canton and to be able to visit the great Sun Yat Sen University, entirely Chinese and the American University of Lingnam, on the staff of which were two members of the House. While crossing the river one
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day, on a visit to Lingnam, an English friend pointed out a Chinese gentleman sitting on the other side of the ferry boat, to whom he wished to introduce me. We went up to him and my friend told him my name and explained, rather vaguely, that I was the Warden of an international club in London. Dr. Wong replied, ‘Do you, by any chance, mean Student Movement House? I was a member of the House in its first years and a member of the club committee and for many years I have given your name to the Chinese who go to study in London.’ After that we had several long talks. I was shown the Medical School, of which he was Dean, and, over some excellent Chinese meals, was able to give him news of several of his old friends from different countries, whom he had not seen for many years. The students of the College where I stayed were, of course, primarily concerned with their task, as Christians, when the war came. The standard of education of these boys who were to go into the Chinese Church was very low, and my host and others on the staff of the College were mainly concerned in efforts to raise this standard and broaden the outlook of these students, in order to fit them for the responsibilities they would soon shoulder.

Owing to insuperable difficulties in inland travel I then changed my plans and returned to Hong Kong by night, on a river steamer, boarded a Cunard Liner and went up the coast to Shanghai. On my last evening in Canton I walked with my host and hostess up a hill, where we sat in a small cemetery with graves covered with devices for keeping away evil spirits, and looked over a great expanse of waterways, rice fields, villages, lit up by a glorious sunset. It was a peaceful scene and we could not then be disturbed by the knowledge of all the suffering that was to come to the Cantonese so soon, through the Japanese occupation of their country. Then a last crossing of the river on the little ferry
boat, as night was falling, a rickshaw pushing through the ever crowded streets and, with much shouting and noise, the river steamer drew us away, while the twinkling lights of this fascinating city faded away into the distance.

The first week in May, spent in Shanghai, was much occupied in strenuous and finally successful efforts to obtain a seat in a plane for Peiping. I was constantly entertained by old members of the House and by the Chinese stiffs of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. Another of the oldest members of the House, Mr. J. J. Poon, was one of a supper party at which I talked about the House to-day, and he told stories of it twenty years ago. With some Chinese students I made a tour of the shattered and bombed Chapei, the war area, still policed by the Japanese. It was a scene of great desolation, for practically no attempt had been made to repair the bombed buildings and I noticed a placard, still posted on a large gateway, ‘This gate is not bullet-proof’. Shanghai University was shown me by the Dean of Women, a grand old lady with most progressive ideas, who, after our tour, invited me to her house, where we enjoyed a most delicious meal of tea and noodles. The students also took me to the new Civic centre, some miles out of Shanghai, which was a fine example of modern Chinese architecture but is now, alas, destroyed by the Japanese.

Early one cold and windy morning I set off in a very small plane to fly to Peiping. The machine appeared to be tied together with string and only the force of the wind kept the door at my side closed. Besides the two American pilots, the only other occupant of the plane was a very tall Englishman and, since we were both English, we addressed no word to each other before embarking in our precarious craft. Once off in the air, speech became impossible, and indeed we were given cotton wool to put in our ears. After a time the struggles of the Englishman to find somewhere to put his
very long legs were so funny that I drew up a chart of suggested positions and handed it to him and at our first stop, Haichow, we made friends. At Tsingtao, our next stopping place, the wind had become much stronger and much warmer, and at Tientsin we found a hot summer’s day. Here two little Japanese gentlemen joined us, waved away by some charming Japanese ladies in kimonos and clogs. I was alarmed, for our passage was very bumpy and I had been told that all Japanese were airsick when flying. Immediately we set off they secured paper bags and I feared the worst, but all was well, and they both went to sleep for the rest of the journey. We landed in the early evening, fifteen miles from Peiping and were driven in the Aviation Company’s bus into that amazing city. After the first shock of surprise at the brilliant colouring of the gateways into the city I began to take in all the splendour that lay before me. With the exception of one day, all my time in Peiping was given to sightseeing and I would gladly have stayed very much longer in that wonderful place. A rickshaw boy, who called himself George, attached himself to me and became my constant companion and guide. He was a handsome boy, beautifully made and a magnificent runner. Every day he would call for me after breakfast; if I was late he would come and tap at the door of my room, and we would go off visiting the Temple of Heaven, the Lama Temple, The Temple Fair, The Forbidden City, or pay calls in the little shops of the famous Jade Street, where I had introductions to several gentlemen. George did not much approve of these expeditions for he considered that I should make no purchases without his consent and approval, so he would stand at the back of the little shops, holding my purse in an aggressive manner, while I sipped tea with my Chinese friends and discussed jade. Sometimes a particular friend, Mr. Chow, dressed always in a beautiful blue embroidered dress, topped
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up with a Homburg hat, would take me to call on other people, and we would ride side by side in our rickshaws conversing amiably. Some of these rides were somewhat marred by George, who considered himself the best and fastest rickshaw boy in all Peiping and would keep trying to show off, with the result that Mr. Chow and I were only within shouting distance. If I remonstrated with George he would pretend that he couldn’t understand.

One day I deserted my possessive George, to his great annoyance, and motored outside the city to visit Yenching, a famous University. Since it was the vacation and the staff and students were mostly away, I went the usual tour of some very fine buildings and then went further on to see some of the old Buddhist Temples in the Western Hills, surely some of the most peaceful places one could find in this hurrying, noisy world. The Temple of the Sleeping Buddha and the Temple of the Floating Clouds were both built in the hills and surrounded by gardens and blossoming trees. Priests were at prayer in the shrines, or strolling about reading their books, the Temple bells chimed softly in the little breeze and everywhere was a sense of peace and restfulness. On the return journey I saw the Summer Palace of the Empress and from it a most magnificent view of Peiping, with the old gateways into the city standing up like great giants in the distance.

The picture which, out of many, I shall always remember was an evening spent at the Altar of Heaven, a great white marble platform standing a few hundred yards away from the Temple of Heaven, in a lovely setting of flowering trees. Here, up till the time of the revolution, the Emperor of China would come, once a year, and spend the night alone at the Altar, in silence—the most perfect man making sacrifice for the sins of his people. It was very quiet the evening I spent there, the noise and dust of Peiping were lost in the
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distance, the great blue dome of the Temple of Heaven
gleamed in the sunset, and away in the trees was a party of
small Chinese boys, playing at soldiers. Here was the very
old and the very young China and it was moving to think
of the stirring of a new vitality, growing out of the age-old
civilization of this great country.

Although the station was only a few yards from my hotel,
the faithful George insisted on my taking a last rickshaw
ride. We proceeded at a funereal pace and in dead silence.
As I said good-bye to him I noticed a suspicious moisture
about his eyes. He solemnly presented me with his visiting
card, rather dirty, but printed on one side in English and
the other in Chinese, as he proudly pointed out, and he vowed
he would never forget me. I must keep that card in case I
ever go to Peiping again. George was a nice boy—and I
suspect that, in a few days, he was charming the heart of
yet another foreign lady visitor.

Sailing away from Shanghai in a Japanese ship I tried to
adjust my mind to the next few weeks, which I was to spend
in Japan. At such a time it was impossible to have entirely
friendly feelings towards that country and I was almost
tempted to cut out the visit and go straight on to America.
However, the sheer beauty of the journey through the Inland
Sea did much to remove the temptation, at any rate from a
sightseeing point of view. Although throughout my very
short stay in Japan I was oppressed by a feeling of mistrust
and suspicion everywhere, I could not fail to be charmed by
the country and by the courtesy and hospitality of my
Japanese friends.

After visits to Nagasaki, Kyoto, and Osaka, and a day or
two in Kobe exploring the wonderful Temples, I went on to
Tokyo, arriving in that city after dark. It was a curious
experience to look from the train into the lighted windows
of houses in the suburbs and to see small rooms, with rush
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mats and hardly any furniture except a low table, and little Japanese ladies squatting on the floor. My actual arrival in Tokyo was one of the most complicated affairs in which I have ever been involved. During the six-hour train journey from Kobe I made friends with two Japanese gentlemen. One was elderly and spoke only a few words of English, but he pressed into my hand a tract on the 'Bushido' sect, written by himself, which he begged me to present to Sir Reginald Johnstone on my return to England. The other, a much younger man, had spent a year in England and was determined to air his English and to tell me all his experiences. As we drew into Tokyo I took the precaution of parting with both my friends as finally as possible, for I was expecting Sang Man Kim, Korean member of the House, to meet me and I did not suppose that the mixture of Japanese and Korean would be very good. We bowed, exchanged visiting cards, shook hands and bowed again—not so easy in a swaying express train. When we reached the station I looked out of the window to see, not my Korean friend, but a Japanese friend from the Foreign Office and his Persian wife. I greeted them warmly, while looking a little anxiously for Kim. There was then a slight stir in the crowd on the platform and a small party of Japanese ladies, led by an American, advanced towards me. They turned out to be the Headquarters staff of the Japanese Y.W.C.A., again not too good a mixture with the Foreign Office. The ladies could talk no English, but giggled shyly as their American leader introduced them to me. While I was trying to bring together these two rather incompatible parties there was a far greater stir at the other end of the station and the crowds parted to make way for a procession of twelve extremely solemn Korean students, in the uniform of the Imperial University of Tokyo. They marched in single file, headed by my little friend Kim and ended by a small Korean
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girl in a black velvet dress, bearing an enormous bouquet with an address of welcome inscribed on a wide blue ribbon. At this very dramatic moment I felt a nudge behind me and there were my two ‘boy friends’ of the train, bringing their wives to be introduced. Luckily, the American lady had a sense of humour. I caught her eye, in despair, and she suddenly burst out laughing, so I knew that I had found an ally. With her help I pulled myself together and introduced speechless Koreans to giggling Japanese girls, soothed the Foreign Office and replied suitably to Kim’s perpetual chant of ‘Welcome from the Korean students in Japan’. At last the Foreign Office and the gentlemen from the train faded away tactfully and, after a poorish cup of tea with the Japanese and Korean students in the station restaurant, I left in a taxi for my hotel. This turned out to be a very English affair and the proprietor greeted me with shocked surprise as I arrived, at midnight, with an escort of three Korean boys who had refused to leave me until I reached my destination safely. At one a.m. a visiting card was pushed under my door, announcing another Japanese friend, but fortunately not calling in person, so I was at last able to collapse, quite exhausted, into bed.

Four of the Korean students appointed themselves my official guides to Tokyo. Although I had a great many people to see, both Japanese and English, it was seldom that I was allowed to go out alone and after a time my friends became used to my ‘foreign’ escort. Sang Man Kim, one of the most popular Koreans we have ever had in the House, is very small, with a large head, a quite irresistible charm and naivety, and a remarkable gift for friendship. He is very odd looking, with long hair, horn spectacles and a perpetual smile. With him and his friends I visited all the places of interest in Tokyo, took Japanese meals seated cross-legged on cushions, saw the famous Fujiyama from the roof of a
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huge department store and attended the Japanese theatre and cinema.

On my first day in Tokyo we worked very hard, seeing temples, palaces and the University from eleven a.m. to five p.m., after which I insisted on a break of two hours at the hotel. But by seven p.m. the boys were back again and, at Kim’s invitation, we partook of a Suki-yaki dinner. This form of food is very famous, very costly, and unbelievably nasty. It consists mostly of raw fish and uncooked vegetables. It was served in a minute room by a tiny little Japanese waitress in old-fashioned trousers, with considerable and complicated ceremony. It took a very long time to eat and I got severe cramp in my crosslegged position. I admired the little blue plate on which some of the food was served, so our small waitress, kneeling on the floor and bowing with her forehead touching the rush matting, presented it to me, having first inscribed her name and the name of the restaurant on the back. About nine p.m. we left and strolled down the famous Ginsa, the great shopping centre of Tokyo. Kim was in terrific form all day. ‘I am in holiday mood,’ he observed, slapping his chest and, when discussing politics, ‘Ah, do not think me jingo!’ I am afraid he got into some trouble with his father, when he returned from England, for spending too much money in London. ‘But after all,’ says Kim, ‘I did not do like many Kims, I did not live a corrupt life.’ We ended our evening at the cinema where we first saw a Japanese film which was good and then a special show of welcome to the Japanese aviators who had just flown from England to Japan, bringing with them pictures of the Coronation. The cinema held three thousand people but, for this occasion, must have squeezed in at least a thousand more, really most dangerous. The *pièce de résistance* consisted of a very modern jazz band and a series of short and very patriotic items, the players dressed in Japanese and
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British flags and, as a finale, some very ornate Japanese dancing and a song from the whole company praising the great achievement. We all shouted with enthusiasm. Then came some pictures of the flight, which were excellent; the Coronation pictures were much less good, but very absorbing. There was only one other English person, as far as I could see, in the whole cinema, a man sitting a few seats away from us. I thought of saying to him, ‘Dr. Livingstone, I presume?’ but it crossed my mind he might be American. However, when the British National Anthem was played I stood up and he, after a moment’s hesitation, followed my example. I expect he felt as I did, incredibly isolated in a sea of Japanese faces, and very British.

The next afternoon I deserted my Korean guides and drove out to Omori, between Tokyo and Yokohama, to take tea with Mrs. Kano, the eighty-year-old mother of Viscount Kano, Honorary Member of the House. The Kano ancestral home is a charming Japanese house in the country. On arrival I took off my shoes at the door and was given felt slippers to wear. I bowed low to the old lady and her daughters and sat on a cushion beside her, drinking tea out of fragile little cups. I felt very large and awkward surrounded by my graceful hostesses wearing the most lovely kimonos. Mrs. Kano could speak no English but, assisted by one of her daughters who acted as interpreter, we made great friends. She showed me the family photograph album and, with much delighted laughter, presented me with a photo of herself, on which she inscribed her name in flowing Japanese characters. As I took my leave I became almost giddy with so much bowing and smiling.

Later the same evening the Koreans turned up again, Kim bearing an embarrassingly large Korean cushion, embroidered for me by his fiancée, as a present. We then drove out again, beyond the Kano home, to a Korean dinner party.
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given for me by Kim’s cousin and his wife. In a very small room, in a very small house, low tables had been arranged in an ‘L’ and we sat again on cushions, I in a place of honour on a special cushion. Our hostess could not eat with us, but served the food, which was very plentiful. There were twelve young men, most of whom could speak no English. After supper, still seated on our cushions, we discussed politics. I told them about Chinese and Indian students and they told me about Korean students in Japan. Each spoke in turn, while Kim translated. Our host closed the doors, saying to me, apologetically, ‘It is not good to speak freely, except in secret.’ Korean students may have no Korean club or society in the University and political meetings may only be held in Japanese. No Korean student is ever allowed to sit on student committees and they have to endure much discrimination in every way, but they are forced to put up with it as the Japanese are making it impossible for them to be educated in their own country. There are only sixteen middle schools in the whole of Korea and one small university. One young man kept repeating the same words, with great earnestness, and I asked Kim what he was saying. ‘He says, often, that he does so wish that you and he could speak the same language, so that he could make you understand how difficult our life is under these conditions.’ I drove back to Tokyo in a taxi, with several of the students, about eleven p.m. Since it was a lovely moonlight night I suggested that we should turn off the light inside the taxi and observe the beauties of the countryside, but was told that if we did so we should be stopped by the police. No taxi or car which contains men and women passengers may drive without the inside light on!

On my last day in Tokyo I had a Japanese lunch with the Japanese and American staffs of the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. They asked me many questions about the Chinese
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and were genuinely surprised when I said that all their talk was of the coming war. In Japan the press is very carefully controlled and even these more senior Japanese men and women apparently knew very little of the feeling in China. One of these Christian leaders tries to get Chinese papers, but has to have them sent to an address in the country where he collects them. A British Foreign Office official whom I knew told me, that same afternoon, that he considered the latest ‘incidents’ to have been entirely manufactured by the Japanese.

In complete contrast to China I had the impression, during these few days I spent in Japan, that there was much activity below the surface; there was certainly much suspicion and police surveillance was considerable, while, above all, there was a determination to bring about the war. All the Japanese officials I met were extremely courteous and studiously avoided any serious discussion of politics, while the British officials were, without exception, anxious and apprehensive.

My happiest recollections of Japan will be of the charm of the ladies and the great beauty of their island. In the missions, and I visited several in Kobe, as well as in Tokyo, it seemed that the future of the Japanese Christian Church was likely to be very difficult. Most of the Mission Schools, whether for boys or girls, were in the charge of a Japanese headmaster, and the British or American staffs had by no means the real control. Emperor worship, sometimes thinly, sometimes cleverly disguised by patriotic nationalism, was becoming a serious rival to Christianity and the children must have been in a fine state of confusion when they became old enough to think for themselves. The Japanese girl is progressing as fast as her Chinese contemporary. It was quite staggering to see the performances of the girls in the theatre of the Takarazuka, the Amusement Park in

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Osaka. Men and girls are not allowed to act together, so each produce their own plays, classical and modern. At Osaka I saw an extremely modern musical comedy, when all the ‘men’ were girls, mostly in very Western dress clothes. In Tokyo I saw the men actors in classical drama, where the ‘heroine’ was a well-known man on the turf.

I was seen off at Yokohama by four Korean boys and two Japanese girls, who made the best of friends. As the boat started we threw coloured paper streamers to each other, Kim shouting himself hoarse with appropriate farewells and, in his excitement, nearly falling into the water. When they became mere dots on the horizon I turned away and began to accustom myself to a very large American liner, full of rich Americans—my first taste of the New World.
CHAPTER 8

1937. The New World

"What do you know about this business?" the King said to Alice.
"Nothing," said Alice.
"Nothing whatever?" persisted the King.
"Nothing whatever," said Alice.
"That's very important," said the King, turning to the Jury.
—Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll

I arrived in America as ignorant of that great country and its people as any British citizen could be. Coming from the slow-moving East, where I had been so happy for the last few months, I had little desire to know more of the New World, with its speed and noise. But there are few English travellers who can fail to be won over immediately by the welcome invariably received from Americans, by the tremendous interest they show in our doings and by their quite untiring efforts to entertain us.

Americans coming to England are often puzzled and a little chilled at their reception. We conclude, perhaps, that because they speak the same language as ourselves, though in a somewhat decorative form, Americans must be so much like ourselves that they need no special attention and we suppose that they must be entirely familiar, by instinct, with British people and British ways of thinking. It is not unnatural, therefore, that Americans of this generation know as little of us as we do of them—had it been otherwise the course of international politics in this century might have
A member from the Lebanon
been greatly changed. To say that we are the losers by our lack of interest would be an understatement, for we can have, for the asking, the whole wealth of the generosity of American friendliness and goodwill.

The New World certainly showed up to great advantage as we sailed, on a perfect June morning, through the Golden Gate docking into San Francisco Harbour. We took a very long time docking, as formalities were endless, especially for ‘aliens’ like myself, but about two p.m. we were allowed off the boat. The first of many adventures happened the moment I reached the dock, for I observed my luggage being removed wholesale and at great speed, by a very large porter. I asked him what he was doing and he replied in a fine Cockney, ‘That’s all right Miss, I’m just taking it along to the Customs.’ I exclaimed at his English accent, at which he informed me that he came from London and added, rather fiercely, ‘I sees your name on the luggage, so I thought I’d ’ave you.’ It seemed to me that he adopted the gangster methods of America pretty quickly, until he vouchsafed an explanation. ‘You see Miss, it’s like this,’ he said, ‘My wife, she’s just ’ad a kid and she’s insisted on calling it Trevelyan. I says to ’er, why on earth Trevelyan, and she says well I once read a nice book by a gentleman of that name, so Trevelyan ’e is and I thought I’d ’ave you.’ I was uncertain whether a warm handshake or a large tip was indicated, so I gave him both, to be on the safe side. When I had recovered from this astonishing episode I found two kind ladies had arrived to meet me and, after an hour at the customs, I was whisked away by them in a large Ford V8, driven at high speed on the ‘wrong’ side of the road, with a radio on the dashboard giving us the latest news of an eclipse. Indeed I had arrived in civilization!

My main purpose in visiting America was to make a study of the great International Houses for students which had
been built by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, and in this chapter I shall try to put down some of the results of my investigations. I hope this will not be dull; it was, in fact, extremely interesting to learn about the American methods of work for international friendship among students and compare them with our slower and less spectacular methods in London.

Americans can lay claim to a far more adventurous spirit than we can show, although they only began their work some years after the start of Student Movement House, and their houses are on a far bigger and grander scale than anything we have attempted so far. Perhaps because they were, seventeen years ago, essentially onlookers, Americans saw most of the game and had a clearer vision than had the harassed peoples of Europe of the pressing need of a spirit of understanding and tolerance among young people of different countries. Their student problems were in many ways different and in some ways less acute than ours in England. They had far fewer foreign students and, in 1937, their own students were comparatively free of the fear of imminent war. They did not, therefore, have to work under the same pressure as we did, and were able to see their work at a longer range.

America had Rockefeller—and through his generosity three magnificent International Houses were built in New York, Chicago, and Berkeley, California. The Berkeley House stands high up on the hills, commanding a very fine view of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. It is close to the University buildings and is indeed officially part of the University, though it admits students of other universities. The Chicago House stands in the centre of the University campus in pleasant academic calm, surrounded by trees and grass and quiet streets, in delightful contrast to the noise and confusion of Michigan Avenue, some seven miles away. Sailing away from New York, down the Hudson River, the
International House of New York, on Riverside Drive, can be seen towering upwards, from many miles away, in brave competition with the famous skyline further down the river. The Directors of all these Houses most kindly asked me to stay as their guest, they gave me complete freedom to ask questions of anyone and everyone, staff and students alike, and I was able to pick up much useful information for the improvement of our work in London.

The aim of the American International House is ‘to provide for students from all parts of the world a house where they will feel they are welcome and where every effort is made to serve their interests’. They offer to students from other lands ‘an introduction to American ways of thinking and living; for American students an opportunity for acquaintance with cultures other than their own’. The New York House was completed in 1924, eight years after the Student Movement House was opened, and the success of this experiment led to the building of the International House in Berkeley in 1930, and to the erection of the Chicago House two years later. No one could deny to those who first saw the need of these international student centres the greatness of their dream, a dream which, through the far-seeing wisdom and generosity of Mr. Rockefeller, came true. There is much good work being done in all these houses and many students from all over the world will look back on their stay in them with great gratitude for the opportunities and privileges they enjoyed.

The outstanding difference between the American International Houses and Student Movement House is that each of their houses is residential and has accommodation for five hundred to six hundred students. Although each house has some non-residential members, the main idea is that, through living under the same roof, students can get to know each other better than they could if living in scattered
lodgings and hostels. Every house is luxuriously equipped, no expense has been spared; the lounges, auditorium, gymnasium and the imposing exterior of the buildings would put to shame most of our first class London hotels. All houses have post offices, barbers' shops, a laundry, and a bazaar. The resident student can pay anything from four to twelve dollars a week and is under a certain obligation to spend so much money in the cafeteria each week. Every night of the week there is some kind of entertainment, dancing, cinema, lectures, whatever it may be. At each of the houses there is a large and well-paid staff, and the three Directors are all men of experience. The student, it seems, has everything that he or she can desire for the easy learning of International Friendship.

In all these houses I was received with great friendliness and I enjoyed my visits so much that it was a real effort to consider seriously how far these experiments were achieving their aim. However, when I had recovered a little from the overwhelming magnificence with which I was surrounded, I began to look further. The first outstanding difficulty was that these 'palaces' had no endowment. This meant that the price of rooms must be kept fairly high. 'We should be in heavy debt unless we ran our houses as extremely business-like hotels, and we must make them pay.' Often the cost of rooms was too high for the impoverished foreign student and therefore the houses were patronized by a majority of fairly well-to-do American students who were content to find a cheap 'hotel', without looking into the real aim and object of the house to which they belonged. The small number of foreign students was indeed in remarkable contrast to Student Movement House. In Berkeley and Chicago the foreign students numbered twenty per cent and fifteen per cent respectively, and of these the larger number were English and Canadian. In New York thirty per cent was a
high average for foreign membership. An additional reason for this was, of course, the comparatively few foreign students who come, at least to Chicago, to study, though a great many of them were debarred for financial reasons.

Bearing in mind the aim of providing ‘for students from all parts of the world a house where they will feel they are welcome’, there are certain criticisms of the practical working of these experiments. Even provided that a foreign student can afford the residential facilities offered, it struck me that the houses were possibly too large. Is it not difficult for students, among such large numbers, to get to know each other at all? Very big parties are held periodically but the staff can hardly be expected to cope with introductions all round, nor can they get to know all the students personally. A student might be as lonely in one of these houses as in a large hotel or as in lodgings by himself. The shy man or woman could possibly hide for weeks, unknown and unnoticed by anyone. I inquired from a former Director of one of these houses what happens, with such large numbers, if a member of the house is awkward and difficult and does not instinctively ‘take’ to international living. His reply was that the student would have to go, if he didn’t fit in. On the principle, I suggested, that if he cannot learn to live in the Inland Sea, he must be thrown back into the Pacific Ocean. A great deal must depend on the reception clerk in the hall in making a student feel at home on arrival, and in some of these houses, used though I was to institutions, I wondered if I wasn’t a nuisance and ought not to expect anyone to attend to me.

The houses are beautifully furnished, perhaps almost too luxurious. There is, of course, the argument that you must give people the highest standards of beauty to live in, so that they may learn to appreciate only the best, but it may be hard for the poorer students when they leave to go back to their far less luxurious homes, or to their poorly paid jobs.
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and cheap lodgings. There is the danger too that luxury may attract the wrong type of student, as already mentioned, who likes his comfortable hotel and has no interest or concern in the aims of the house in which he is living. Also, it is undoubtedly a temptation to some to stay for too long in the houses, where everything is ‘found’ for them, and does not necessarily fit them to stand on their own feet in a less friendly world.

Perhaps the aim of these houses is too vague: to ‘provide a house... make every effort to serve the students’ interests... provide for an interchange of culture...’ It is not enough to give students tea-dances and socials and whist drives. Foreign students, at least, have hard things to face in their lives, hard things to learn and understand. True international friendship does not gloss over difficulties and differences, but makes opportunities for discussion together, with some people in the group perhaps who have wider experience of the world and of individuals. Interchange of cultures—yes—much of this can and is being done subconsciously and even consciously by the few already enlightened students. But the majority of British students (and certainly American students, who are younger in many ways when they go up to college) cannot be expected to have the mature minds which are necessary to absorb and appreciate the possibilities of real interchange of cultures without some guidance. With such very large numbers under one roof it is impossible for a handful of staff to cope with the education of the individual who, undirected, may get as much harm as good through living in such a community. Certainly it is not so difficult as it would be in London, where the number of foreign students is so much greater. But even so, there is enough dynamic material under one roof to satisfy anyone, and dynamite, unless constantly directed towards its proper objective, can be a great danger. As to programme—it
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seemed to me that the Education Secretary in all these houses had an almost overwhelming task. Lectures and discussion groups had their place in the weekly fixtures, but were very much in the minority and, again owing to large numbers, there seemed little possibility of any constructive thinking being done by more than the very few. No doubt the ideal would be to increase greatly the Educational Staff and to make a big drive towards the international education of the young Americans who will always fill these houses. It might even be possible to get young white Americans to meet and understand the young American negro—there is a great opportunity here for the younger generation.

I should like to add a further comment. Part of the ‘purposeless’ feeling in the International Houses in America comes, I think, from the fact that International Friendship is not enough as an aim. There must be an underlying ideal, of ‘peace on earth, goodwill among men’. This, in my opinion, will never be felt or accomplished unless the staff of these houses are united themselves by an ideal which is something more than a vague sentiment—an earnest desire to see mankind fulfil God’s purpose in the world as it is to-day.

Apart from the three great Rockefeller Houses I only saw one other International Club, in Chicago. This was a small, non-residential club, of a few hundred, mainly foreign students, run by an elderly American lady. I was told of this club by the Director of the International House in Chicago. He was particularly anxious that I should see it for, he said, ‘In many ways it is doing far better work with individuals than we shall ever be able to do, owing to its smaller numbers.’

On my way to New York from Chicago I went for a weekend to Toronto to see the famous Hart House. This is a large non-residential University Club, standing in the middle
of the University of Toronto. Two extracts from the hand-
book of Hart House will give the best picture of its aims and
ideals:

'The prayer of the Founders is that Hart House . . . may
serve, in the generations to come, the highest interests of this
University by drawing into a common fellowship the mem-
bers of the several colleges and faculties, and by gathering
into a true society the teacher and the student, the graduate
and the undergraduate . . . and that in time of peace its halls
may be dedicated to the task of arming youth with strength,
suppleness of limb, clarity of mind and depth of under-
standing, and with a spirit of true religion and high endeavour.'

'Hart House, which is for the use of men only, is far more
than a students' club. In its wider interpretation it seeks to
provide for all the activities of the undergraduate life which
lie outside the lecture room. It is for members of Hart
House to work for the realization of the ideals expressed in
the prayer of the Founders, and thus to hand down to suc-
ceeding generations a tradition worthy of the House and of
the University.'

Although there are many important differences between
Hart House and the student centres in America and in
England—e.g. that it is for the use of men only, and that
foreign students are only incidentally members, no particular
effort being made towards international friendship, there is
a great deal of value in its methods. Hart House has suc-
cceeded in winning the allegiance of hundreds of men in
every student generation in Toronto, without taking away
from their allegiance to their own colleges. Their varied
experience in their colleges helps them to contribute more
to the life of the House. The House has a more clearly de-
fined purpose than is obvious in the International Houses in
America and this fact gives it a far greater feeling of unity.
Further, the atmosphere of unity and purpose are not arti-
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...ficial, nor expounded only in the Founders' prayer. It is dependent on its membership to work for the realization of its ideals and a large share of the running of the House is undertaken by its undergraduate members. Every male undergraduate of the University is a member of Hart House, towards the upkeep of which he pays an annual fee of ten dollars. It has, therefore, an assured income, taken, certainly compulsorily, from all members of the University, but there are few who do not willingly become active members during their time as undergraduates, and often remain members when they are graduates.

The House is well built and has many good rooms. It is very masculine and rather untidy, but it feels alive and used.

Hart House would serve as a very good model of what a residential international student centre might be in a University. A House which students would look on as their own, in which they would have a large share of the running, but a House in which they are able to keep and be proud of, their national loyalties, which contribute to, rather than detract from, the life of the community.

In the six weeks which I spent in America I did, of course, an immense amount of sightseeing. Hollywood, the Grand Canyon, the Rockies, the Niagara Falls, an immense number of colleges, a hospital, the Rockefeller Centre, Museums, Picture Galleries—and was entertained unceasingly by the kindest friends, old and new.

Apart from my 'professional' interest in International Houses there was one particular problem about which I was anxious to learn, that of the American Negro. Most fortunately I secured an introduction to Elmer Carter, editor of *Opportunity*, the Negro magazine, and a well-known Negro leader. He and his wife most kindly invited me to visit them in Harlem. I spent a very delightful day with them. We sat
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the whole of a very hot afternoon in Mr. Carter’s flat, and
were joined by a young Negro doctor. I asked many questions
and was answered most courteously and frankly by my host,
a man of great wisdom and balance. In his view the Negro is
American, he has lost all his distinctive African culture and
he therefore does not want segregation, but wants to be
accepted as any other American citizen. The happy-go-lucky
humour, so famous, is partly the Negro’s defence against life
and partly the White American’s defence against his treat-
ment of the Negro. Rich white Americans are spending
much money on the endowment of Negro colleges, but do
not give the graduates of these colleges the employment they
would give to white graduates. Mixed marriages usually
result in the white partner becoming ‘negro’. They are diffi-
cult socially, but not so difficult psychologically, as mixed
marriages in India. The poverty of the Negro is his great
weakness. Mr. Carter summed up his remarks by saying,
‘I see no solution to our problem but I do see a real hope, for
in the South, where things are worst for the Negro, the young
whites are becoming curious.’ He was emphatic that a vague
enthusiasm for the Negro cause was no help, they wanted
recognition and the rights of the American citizen.

About six p.m., when the day was cooling, we all went
out and strolled through the streets of Harlem. Mr. Carter
was greeted everywhere and I was introduced to many of his
friends. Among others I met Bill Robinson, the famous tap-
dancer, who was busy arranging a party for 250 children
from the streets of Harlem, at which the programme was to
be ice-cream and tap-dancing. We took supper at the Old
Colony Restaurant where I found myself in the interesting
position of being a slight embarrassment to my hosts, being
the only white person present, and we got much stared at.
I thought of the many coloured students whom I had enter-
tained in restaurants in London, when they, doubtless,
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shared my feelings! We had a wonderful meal of Southern fried chicken and mint juleps, then went out into the street again, where I had the pleasure of seeing Father Devine’s No. 1 angel driving a Ford car! We ended the evening with a visit to the Savoy, a very famous Harlem dance hall. There I was introduced to Jack Buchanan, the manager, who took me to his office and showed me his scrap-book, kept for many years, of famous people who had come to the Savoy. Then for some hours we just sat and watched the people dancing, to the hottest jazz. Never have I seen more spontaneous enjoyment, or heard more intricate rhythms, and I found it difficult to tear myself away at midnight.

The next day my old friend, Warren, a Negro parson, turned up to see me and we had a very long talk. Warren is very tall and good looking, with a most engaging smile, and it was grand to see him again. For four years one of the most popular secretaries the S.C.M. in England has ever had, Warren had many English friends, and it was a hard thing for him to go back to America where he would have to face, once again, all the discrimination and insults which are the lot of the Negro. We talked all the morning, at first of England and his English friends, and later of his own experiences since he had returned to America. At first he pretended that everything was all right, but then confessed that it had been even worse than he had anticipated. Colour discrimination in America is extremely illogical in one respect—Negro people are not allowed in many restaurants, dance halls, even churches, and they have to travel on special cars on the train or tramway. On the other hand, an African or West Indian is allowed to come and go as he pleases. Some of my African friends have told me how they have been requested to leave restaurants and, when the manager discovers that they are not American, are begged to return. After Warren had been home a few months he suddenly felt that he could not bear
this discrimination any longer. He was travelling by train to
speak at a meeting, took a ticket in the ordinary way, but
took a seat, not in the 'Jim Crow' car, as it is called, but in
an ordinary 'white' compartment. After a time a porter came
along, looked at him and said, 'Where do you come from,
Sonny?' 'From America,' said Warren. The young porter
looked perplexed and fetched the ticket collector. The same
question and answer produced the same bewilderment. 'But
surely,' said the ticket collector, 'you come from Africa, you
are joking.' 'No,' says Warren, 'I come from America.'
Finally the ticket collector realized he was speaking the
truth and at the next stop took him out of the train and had
him taken to the police station. He was let out on bail that
evening and set about finding a solicitor to defend him, for
there is no law which compels a coloured man to ride on a
Jim Crow car. Two days before the case was to be heard
the magistrate dismissed it! Warren, however, in spite of
his own bitter experiences, was full of hope for the future.
A church in Philadelphia had just formed the first white and
coloured Church Council, and Warren had been invited to
be the chairman.

While I was in New York I made the International House
my headquarters, and through the kindness of John Mott,
the Director, had continual opportunity to make friends with
staff and students, attend dances and other functions and, in
fact, get an idea as to how the whole machinery worked. Both
there and in every other student centre which I visited, the
students were anxious to hear about their fellow European
students, but I was struck with the fact that their interest was
academic and objective. They were so safe, these young
Americans, and it seemed almost unkind to disturb their
security by telling them of the kind of troubles other students
had to face. The only fear they seemed to have, though that
was real enough, was the fear of unemployment. America
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had by no means recovered from the slump of 1932, and the problem of employment in the student world was great.

On Wednesday, 14th July, I left America and sailed for home. An English ship made me feel, once again, the tremendous friendliness of Americans, and I looked back with great gratitude to a very happy six weeks.
CHAPTER 9

1938. Return to Bloomsbury

Then peering round with curious eyes
He muttered ‘Goodness gracious’
And so went on to criticize—
‘Your room’s an inconvenient size,
It’s neither snug nor spacious.’
—Phantasmagoria, Lewis Carroll

I returned to Russell Square for the autumn term of 1937. I had dreamed dreams during my travels of the great new International House which we would set up in London, my dreams being influenced by my time in America. However, as soon as I settled in once again to the familiar ‘picnic’ atmosphere of the House, with its entire lack of grandeur and its haphazard organization, I realized that although we had no luxury we certainly had character. The House had no residential accommodation, as in the American Houses, but London students cannot stand rules and regulations, they are used to the independence of their lodgings and I doubted if they would welcome or support a hostel. We now have more than one thousand members, of whom rather more than half that number live in London and another third (from Oxford, Cambridge and other country universities) come to London for the vacations. Only about one third of our members are British and the rest come from more than sixty countries. Conditions are obviously different in New York from those in London, and we have many special fac-
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tors to take into account. I soon came to the conclusion that
the freedom of a large non-residential club was likely to be
of more use to a greater number of students than would be
a large residential hostel. Perhaps my feeling that we had
‘character’ (not to be confused with ‘reputation’!) came from
the fact that most of the odder elements in the House would
not only scorn a hostel which had even the minimum of
regulations, but might even have to be refused accommoda-
tion—for there would have to be some rules of deportment!
As it was, the House took, daily, the rough with the smooth,
the odder characters not only lending variety to the club, but
shaking the rather sedate members out of their slight prim-
ness, while some of the responsible students could often
exert quite unconscious influence on their more unrestrained
companions.

At the beginning of 1938 we started to think seriously
about the future of the House. We had little more than a
year in which to find new quarters (our lease expired in
April 1939) and we reckoned that a minimum sum of
£50,000 must be raised to make this possible. We knew
nothing about money raising but we came to the unanimous
decision that our Appeal should be run by ourselves without
any professional assistance, and we laid our plans accordingly.
We started with a grand scheme, but the discovery that no
suitable building plot could be obtained in Bloomsbury
under a ground rent of £2,000 p.a. rather shook us, and we
had to give up any idea of building a new house. The next
idea we had was to find another large Georgian house of
beauty and character, which would not only give the students
a club they could appreciate and be proud of, but would also
be a means of preserving one more of the rapidly disappear-
ing examples of the best of English architecture. But here
too we failed, for all our search, as the only houses suitable
and large enough had very large premiums and very short
leases which, owing to other building schemes, would not be renewed. As a last resort we decided to buy the freehold of 103 Gower Street, a very tall, thin house about one hundred years old, with a large studio built out behind it, all ready for conversion into the main clubroom. Our idea was to squeeze the club into this small house, about half the size we hoped for, as a temporary expedient and, having done so, to start the search again for larger and better premises. The only other alternative was to close the House for a year or two, an alternative that was discarded wholesale by the members, and, as events have proved, had we closed down it would not have been possible to reopen until after the war. Having reached this decision and made up our minds to accept the second best for the moment, we decided on a 'lightning campaign' as most likely to be successful, and planned to open our Appeal Office in the House at the beginning of September 1938.

Though the first six months of this year were filled, for some of us, with innumerable committees on 'ways and means', the students knew little of this and their problems were no less acute than they had ever been. Some of the problems were indeed so complex that it seemed almost impossible to unravel them.

'A student from the Baltic States asked, this afternoon, to see me on private business. He seemed very nervous and embarrassed and assured me that when I heard what he wished to tell me I should roar with laughter. After some persuasion he burst out with, "As a matter of fact I have been condemned to death!" I reacted in exactly the way he prophesied and we both rocked with laughter for some time. It seems that a notice has appeared in the Gazette of his country to the effect that this young man has been condemned to death for (a) military desertion and (b) causing trouble with a Friendly Power, supposed to be Germany. He
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tells me that his father, an Immigration Officer, has refused to pass some thousands of medically unfit emigrants as fit for another country and since he has an international passport the Government is unable to put any further pressure on him. The son has, unfortunately, no employment, his passport expires to-day and he has visited Germany, but only for a few days on holiday. All rather tricky.’

‘Our condemned man is now, officially, dead—according to his Gazette. We are fascinated to observe him eating hearty meals daily in the restaurant. The only proof he has that he exists at all is a permit to stay in this country for three months! But an influential person has promised to take up the matter, and I hope he will find some solution.’

A solution was found later, though, to be honest, I cannot remember what it was. Anyway, the young man is still in London, now happily employed and has sufficient documentary evidence to convince the British authorities, at least, that he is alive.

One learns never to be surprised at anything in this club, as the following episode will show:

‘The other evening, rather busy in my office, I had a strange interruption. A knock at the door and a young Moslem said, “May I come in?” “Certainly,” I replied, and finished my conversation with one of the staff. When I looked round I found the boy sitting by the fire and taking off his shoes. I asked, mildly, what he was doing and he said, “Well, the club is very noisy to-night and there is no place in which I can be quiet, so I thought I would come here to say my prayers. Please go on with your work, I shall not make any disturbance.” I obeyed his instructions and he then, quite naturally, took his woolly scarf off his neck, laid it on the floor, and said his prayers upon it, prostrating himself at intervals. He then put his shoes on again, said good night and departed. He has come again to-night for the fifth night
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in succession, exactly at six p.m., but I gather this is the last occasion for the present, as he has been celebrating some special festival. I shall quite miss him, though the last few nights I have taken care to clear my office of visitors shortly before the hour of his arrival.’

Japan was now coming into the picture. We still had a few Japanese members in the House and they were on fairly friendly terms with the Chinese, though only, I think, because of the initiative of the latter. An interesting episode occurred early in the year in the visit of an old member from Japan.

‘A Japanese clergyman to tea, an old member whom I had not seen since 1933. He was noticeably on the defensive, and though he agreed to my suggestion that he was in England on holiday, he seemed anxious to change the subject. Eventually he admitted that he was here on behalf of the Japanese Foreign Office for the purpose of propaganda. I contented myself with remarking that in these days it must be difficult to be both a Christian priest and a nationalist. As he left he said, sadly, “I suppose it is hard for you to understand what it is to have divided loyalties.”’

On 13th March Hitler marched into Austria.

‘Hitler is in Austria—and the House is in a ferment. Our nice Austrians are quite distraught. A Czech student, on my inquiry as to his plans for study, replied, “I don’t think it is any good to make plans. Soon I shall be a refugee and you will have to help me with different problems.”’

So we come to the September Crisis, the most difficult period I have ever known in the House, not excepting the outbreak of war a year later. Continual nervous strain among large numbers of young people is not easy to handle, and the wireless only made matters worse. From eleven a.m. to eleven p.m. announcers of every nationality poured a stream of words into our ears, only interrupted by fearsome oscilla-
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tions as the machine was switched over to yet another part of the world. Newspaper boys were in and out of the House all day, increasing uneasiness by shouting fictitious 'special' news. The weather was almost continuously thundery and every day seemed a worse nightmare than the last as we patrolled the club rooms, talked, played ping-pong, organized games, and watched unceasingly for the now well-known signs of 'nerves'. The Indian and African students were the greatest help. They had less to lose, indeed I have no doubt that some thought they might have a great deal to gain if Britain were 'beaten to her knees', but whatever their private opinions, they were untiringly at the service of their fellow members less fortunate than themselves, and there were not a few who had cause to be grateful for being unostentatiously helped through some very bad days.

The nine o'clock news was the most critical time, and the staff on duty made a point of being about then. It was a curious sight: a large room, crowded with men and women, sitting in chairs, on the floor, on the piano, silently waiting for the next blow. A vivid memory is the indignant horror of the Czechs when they were unable to get Prague on the wireless. Many of them came from rich homes, and were spending some months in England 'learning the language', and they only realized very slowly that they were being completely cut off from their own homes, and might never see their families again. The scanty news that did come through by letters was very much delayed and was nearly always of a distressing character.

On the last day of August we had opened our Appeal Office and, in little over three weeks, we had closed it again. The following entries from my diary for September will, perhaps, give the best picture of those nightmare weeks:

'17th September. It is getting very difficult to work on the Appeal. After a few hours' work we listened to the news,
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with students from Germany, France, Latvia, Italy, Poland, England, Czechoslovakia, Holland, India, Canada, and Africa. Henlein, the Sudeten leader, has run to Germany with 20,000 of his followers. There is a big split in the Sudeten Party. The French Cabinet comes to London to-morrow to consult with our Cabinet.

18th September. A day of suspense and no news. In the evening a very large New Members’ Party, about eighty of them, including six Czechs, all stranded and penniless, and too late, I fear, to go home. The Press is saying that Chamberlain has ‘sold the pass’ to Hitler.

20th September. Czechoslovakia appeals to Russia, who says No—poor Czechs. Chamberlain is to go and see Hitler again this week. We tried to work but very unsuccessfully. Most people were glued to the wireless, trying to get news in any and every language.

23rd September. The late news told us of the resignation of the Czech Government and the appointment of a new military Government. All the staff on all day, just talking with people and trying to keep them calm. They are thoroughly frightened and the hot, thundery weather makes it worse.

24th September. Chamberlain talked with Hitler until two a.m. and has now left for England. War seems inevitable. Two students arrived, escaped from Prague, with bad stories of the gloom of that city. We spent much of the day discussing bomb-proof shelters and First Aid. At nine p.m. a large party of students listened to the news in dead silence. The British Government ‘has not taken the responsibility of advising the Czech Government against mobilization’.

27th September. Quite illogically we feel more cheerful, but we have closed down the Appeal Office and sent our helpers away. If war comes it will mean the end of the House for this generation, at any rate. Reserves are being called up,
tube stations are being closed, parks being dug up and the L.C.C. evacuating hundreds of school children. Our medical students are in a panic, for the hospitals are clearing their patients out to make room for Casualty Clearing stations. In the House we are practically cut off from the outside world as it is impossible to make telephone calls, the operator doesn’t answer, and all our senior friends are only too busy on their own affairs. For the evening news everyone comes in and sits silent and apathetic. To-night we tried amusing them between the seven p.m. and the nine p.m. news, but as we played games upstairs everyone had their eyes on their watches. At one point a French boy, trying to be helpful, said he would mesmerize an Austrian boy. He insisted on all the lights being put out before he started his operations. We sat in darkness, listening to his whisperings to his victim—‘Vous concentrez? Oui? Bien sûr?’ when suddenly an aeroplane roared past over the roofs, so we put the lights on again quickly and tried a sing-song. It would be easier if some of these people had their own homes to go back to at night. Home-sickness adds to their misery enormously.

28th September. All last night we were kept awake by newsboys shouting ‘late edition’, and men, lit by flares, digging up Russell Square Gardens. To-day, the traffic in London is terrible, hundreds trying to get out in a panic—and it is pouring with rain. By six p.m. a Reprieve! Chamberlain has persuaded Hitler, Mussolini, and Daladier to meet him in Munich to-morrow, and Hitler has agreed to postpone mobilization for twenty-four hours. A wonderful sense of relief.

29th September. Nobody dares to be optimistic, and even the staff are jumpy now. The news at night told us that the conference was still meeting, and added immense instructions about the further evacuation of school children. At ten-thirty p.m. we organized a party of strong men to go
round the House and inspect all our precautions and learn how to work them. We finished at eleven-thirty with ginger ale all round.

30th September. Agreement reached at one-thirty a.m. Hitler gets practically all he wants and the Czechs get nothing, except that they are saved, for the moment, from annihilation. Universal cheers for Chamberlain, though most of our Continentals don’t trust Hitler a yard, and are very gloomy.’

In fact, when the news of the Munich agreement came through the students were completely numb and speechless. There were no rejoicings in the House and only gradually did we recover our vitality.

On that Friday afternoon I sat in my office, quite exhausted, like everyone else, wondering if it was any use starting our Appeal again and if, in a world which is the antithesis of all we believe in here, it was worth while trying to save the House. Did the students really care about the place? Did they understand at all what was its underlying purpose? My gloomy meditations were interrupted by the telephone, on which the porter said, ‘A gentleman from Ethiopia to see you,’ the first time I had heard that for three years. S., an attaché at the Court of the Emperor Haile Selassie, in Bath, came into my office. He had been a member of the House in 1932-33 and left to join the Foreign Office in Addis Ababa. He was very shy and sat on the extreme edge of my sofa, looking at the floor, in complete silence, for some minutes. At last he said, ‘I think that students make many mistakes.’ I agreed that this was so, but asked him to elaborate. ‘Well,’ he went on, in a quiet voice, ‘they should never dream dreams.’ I remarked mildly that, if the students of the world did not dream dreams the world would never move on. ‘No,’ he said suddenly, ‘you see it is no use, for their dreams can never come true.’ I asked him
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then what had happened to him since I had last seen him and he went on, 'I have dreamed my dreams, but now everything is ended. My two brothers were killed in the war and also my mother. My wife and family disappeared in the war, last week my father died in this country, as a result of the war, and now only I am left. All the members of the House from Abyssinia have disappeared and Ben and Jo Martin have been murdered; our Emperor has had to escape to England.' He was silent for some time and then added, 'I expect you will wonder why I have come back to see you. It was because I wished to know if the House was still here and I see that it is the only thing in my life which has remained. Please, may we go to see if the rooms I remember are still the same?' We took a tour round the House, where he not only saw the same rooms but met some old friends who remembered him, and he went away much comforted. It is hardly necessary to add that this conversation was the one thing necessary to spur me on to a renewed attempt to save the House, however difficult that might be.

On the following morning 1st October, I opened The Times idly—to see headlines everywhere, 'Thankofferings for Peace', and I suddenly realized that now, if ever, was the time to save the House. Now, if ever, the British Public might realize that we were talking sense; now, if ever, they would be ready to put money into international friendship. And so they did, for the Appeal caught on in a way that exceeded my wildest expectations. We rushed into publicity, we bullied, we badgered, we erected a huge 'thermometer' in the hall of the House and we watched the 'mercury' rising—£5,000, £10,000, £13,000. It was very exciting—but we had a long way to go and from the first we had realized that unless we secured one really large gift we had no hope of complete success.

Ever since 1932 we had had behind us a small group of
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influential supporters, headed by Lord Halifax, Mr. Owen Hugh Smith, and Mr. Carron Scrimgeour. Every year these three and about nine others used to meet for a Student Movement House dinner, after which I gave a report of the House, and through their interest in our work we were able to extend the circle of people who believed in international friendship among students, and believed in giving students opportunities such as the House afforded for making a community life together, from whatever country they might come.

‘26th October. In spite of the international situation and the nightmares of September we succeeded in bringing off the Annual Student Movement House Dinner, this time, in honour of the Appeal, on a bigger scale than usual. Held in Mr. Owen Smith's house, Lord Athlone, as Chancellor of the University of London, was the principal guest, and there were twenty-four other guests, representing a wide range of interests. Lord Halifax spoke first, followed later by Lord Athlone and the Warden. We did not ask for any money, but I suspect that this dinner will have been very productive all the same.’

Still we were a very long way off our mark and we had little more than six months to go before we had to leave Russell Square for ever. At last came good news, which altered the whole situation.

‘28th October. Rather depressed after a difficult day, I walked down to the hall to ask a Chinese student, who was acting as porter at the moment, if there were any letters for me. “Only a dull-looking typewritten envelope,” he replied. I said that, though it was probably only a bill I would take it upstairs with me. I opened it idly, to discover that it was a letter from Lord Nuffield, saying that he would give us £25,000 if we could raise a similar sum! With great self-control I have refrained from telling anyone except our Chairman of the Appeal Committee, Mr. Owen Smith.’

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The Appeal Committee decided to keep the news secret and 'release' it at the Twenty-first Birthday Party of the House, which was to take place at the end of November. The promise meant that, in all probability, the House was saved, for with such an incentive we ought to be able to raise the remaining £12,000 by April.

'26th November. Twenty-one years ago, on the same day of the week and month, Archbishop Davidson dedicated the House to the use of students from any University in the world, in memory of British students who had given their lives in the Great War. To-night the present Archbishop of Canterbury came and addressed another generation of students, successors of many who had owned this House in the past twenty-one years. There was a tremendous crowd and even the great staircase seemed to tremble at the weight it was asked to carry. The Press got wind of the Nuffield news and came like vultures, harrying everyone with questions. The news was received with tremendous cheers and was a great surprise to most, though to a few the secret had leaked out. Many of the students wore their national costumes and photographers were busy. The Birthday Gift, small sums contributed by the members themselves, amounted to £100 to go to the Appeal—a sum which meant real sacrifice on the part of many contributors. What with a service, speeches, dramatic performances and the meeting of many old friends, the proceedings lasted until well after midnight. As they left, two hundred and fifty students signed a letter to Lord Nuffield, thanking him for his most generous action in saving the House.'

For nearly a week we kept up our feastings, with special concerts, a reception for our Honorary Members and a dance. The last entry records:

'Paul Robeson came to sing, as a twenty-first birthday present to the House. By the time he arrived the clubroom
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was so full that we found difficulty in getting him in. All the chairs were used and there was not an inch of floor to be seen. After singing songs from many countries, including China and Russia, he ended with “Water Boy” and “Old Man River”. When we thanked him, to roars of applause, he waited until the noise had subsided and then said, “I come to sing to you to-night, not only as a musician, but because I care deeply for the oppressed peoples of the world, for my people and (looking round on the coloured and refugee students) for your people.”

Finally, our last Christmas in Russell Square and our last Christmas without a black-out.

‘24th December. A very snowy and seasonable Christmas Eve. A candle-light tea, with lighted Christmas tree, a huge fire and Father Christmas with presents for everyone. Outside, on the front door steps we had a big tree, lit by electric candles, and candles were lit in every window in the House, The light of international friendship!’
CHAPTER IO

1939. Finances and Fears

For England expects—I forbear to proceed:
'Tis a maxim tremendous, but trite;
And you'd best be unpacking the things that you need
To rig yourselves out for the fight.

—Hunting of the Snark, Lewis Carroll

But silence falls with fading day
And there's an end to mirth and play—
Ah well-a-day!

—Four Riddles, Lewis Carroll

The first three months of this year in the House were a period of determined struggle to reach that £25,000. Lord Nuffield's promise shone like a star on the distant horizon. Lord Baldwin's broadcast appeal for us on a Sunday night in January secured £1,500 in response: the Rhodes Trust and the Pilgrim Trust contributed generously, while City Companies and the Banks did their share. By now nearly all private donations had ceased, for the public were becoming more and more uneasy about the future and 'thank-offerings for peace' were a thing of the past. At last, at the end of March, the Regius Professor of History at Cambridge came to our rescue most gallantly and gave us the missing £1,000. So with a margin of a few weeks, we had achieved our object, we had raised £50,000 in just over six months. It was a very exciting chapter in our history and I hope it has not been too dull on paper—but now there shall be no

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more talk of money, for the House has been saved, and it has before it new and grave responsibilities which none of us foresaw.

A month before we left Russell Square there occurred a sad story of a young West Indian undergraduate from Oxford, yet another example of the tragedies that sometimes happen when students are sent abroad at a very early age. This boy had come to England before he was eighteen, having never been away from his home before. He came alone and was nominally under the care of the Crown Agents for the Colonies, but they could hardly be expected to exercise strict supervision over individual students.

'B., the very young West Indian now at Oxford, where he was doing very well, turned up unexpectedly before lunch to see me. He looked very ill and something seemed to be very badly wrong. He paced up and down my office talking rather wildly until I discovered that he had had nothing to eat since yesterday. The restaurant being closed by then, I sent him round to the African Hostel to get some food and telephoned to them that I was worried about him.

'About 8 p.m. I went upstairs to my office to fetch a paper and found the light on and the door open, and I was greeted by a crash of broken glass. I found poor B. standing in a wrecked room, for he had broken everything in sight, torn down the curtains and smashed every picture. I managed to get P.K.B., a very wise Indian, to come and help, and we put him on the sofa where, after some time, he went off to sleep. I had to send for the police and they came and took him off to hospital. A case of schizophrenia, I'm afraid, but I found it hard to forget the look of reproach in his eyes as the police took him away. The other students were much alarmed.

'I was allowed to-day to see B. in hospital, where he has been for a fortnight. He has pneumonia and is very ill. I
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think he knew me for a moment, but most of the time he just held my hand very tightly and I could hear him whisper, "Lord Jesus hold my hand," over and over again. At ten p.m. I had a message that he had died.

'B.'s funeral this morning, attended by many of his West Indian and African friends and a party from the House. Poor boy—but I hope he could see his funeral procession, for he would have been very much impressed.'

Some more cheerful episodes of the last few weeks in our old House are also recorded:

'An International Dance Evening. Dancers from Poland, Spain, China, and Africa. The latter were Zulus, who thrilled an enormous audience by doing a fire-eating dance, with flaming torches and weird cries. A most alarming spectacle.

'Sixteen Javanese student dancers came to lunch, each wearing a fez. Most delightful young men. We made speeches of welcome to them over the roast mutton, which were replied to, most gracefully, by the son of the Sultan of Solo.'

'The Dramatic Group performed their last play in this House—a great success, even though the variety of foreign accents among a supposed huntin’, shootin’, and fishin’ party were most remarkable.'

On 2nd April, after many farewell parties, we left Russell Square. As we walked down the steps from the front door for the last time, six gentlemen with picks over their shoulders walked up the steps—and within a week our beautiful staircase had gone, our painted ceilings and door handles were a heap of rubble, and we had moved in to the tall thin house in Gower Street. Though for obvious reasons we couldn’t take the staircase, we were allowed by the University to remove any fixtures that we could put into our new house and, when we had installed an Adam’s fire—
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place, some of the great mirrors, and a Hepplewhite book case we began to feel that the House had not really dis appeared. Had it not been for the rapid deterioration of the international situation the students might have been dis contented at their cramped temporary quarters, but as it was they were thankful to find that their home had not gone and we had some most hilarious House Warming parties.

Shortly after we had settled in to these new quarters I had an unexpected strange visitor.

'Twice during our Appeal a German, M., had sent ten shillings. He was a stranger to me and wrote from the country. I supposed him to be an elderly refugee and thought it very good of him to spare a little money for the House. Having asked him, when I thanked him for his gift, to lunch with me if he was ever in London, I had a note from him saying he would like to come to-day, as he was leaving England this week—emigrating to America, I supposed. When he arrived I was surprised to find a young man, not more than twenty-two, immaculately dressed. During lunch it dawned on me that my guest was not Jewish at all, but 'Aryan'! Later, in my office, I asked him to explain why, since it appeared that he was not Jewish, did he take the trouble to contribute to a student club where there were many Jewish members. He told me that he was indeed an Aryan, a member of the Nazi Party and, until recently an S.S. man! It appears that early this year he was standing in a Berlin Street with other S.S. men, watching a Jewish store being burnt down and he exclaimed, out loud, "I am ashamed of my countrymen!" His father, much alarmed at this incident, hustled him off to England, where he has been studying, privately, international law! He is entirely disillusioned about Hitler and the other German leaders. We talked the whole afternoon and he told me that he was leaving again for Germany to-morrow. As he got up to go he said, "I am
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...glad to have seen the House, for here you are talking sense and I am glad to have been able to help a little. Now I must go home, for I cannot desert my country, whatever I think of her leaders. But I cannot remain silent and so I think you will never hear from me again, for I suppose I shall very soon be in a concentration camp.”

The Czech refugees, after Hitler’s entry into Prague, had joined the usual procession of exiles and, since they had succeeded thousands of Germans and Austrians, the difficulties of providing for them were very great, for the public had grown tired of parting with its money so often in the same cause. Committees struggled valiantly and we did our best in the House to arrange some kind of future for the students who came our way.

During June, July and the early part of August there was a curious and rather sinister lull in international alarms. It seemed that the Master Minds in the great game of chess in Europe were taking a deep breath before they made their next and most devastating moves. We were disturbed periodically by Hitler’s speeches, but we carried on our lives fairly normally during the intervals and towards the end of August I left London for a holiday in the North. Everyone knows the rest of the story, the sudden blow of the pact between Germany and Russia and the rapid increase in *tempo* from that moment, from *allegro* to *molto agitato* and finally *pressissimo*, as we whirled on to 3rd September. The entries in my diary for this period relate experiences shared by everyone in this country, and are only of interest if it be remembered that practically all our students were completely cut off from their homes, the coloured students and Europeans alike, while the latter were in a state of constant terror, imagining the fate of their homes and of their families.

*25th August.* After three days’ holiday I drove down from the north to London in a cloudburst, reaching the House at
ten-thirty p.m. There I found many of the students waiting to see me. The morale of the majority seems very high, much better than last September."

"27th August. Depression and nervousness grow and we live from news to news. This morning we got a large party of girls to make black-out curtains—in many different styles, but it keeps them occupied. People sit about and irritate each other. We buy sandbags at enormous price, and parties of men students fill them in the street."

"31st August. News gets worse and "one who knows" tells me that Chamberlain has just had word that Hitler means to attack Poland today, having given out that he had presented terms to Poland, who has not received them."

"1st September. Well, he's done it and has already bombed eight towns. The Polish students are frantic with anxiety and misery, and it so happens that all our Poles come from the towns that are being worst bombed."

"2nd September. A perfectly heavenly day, and in sheer desperation I took five students to swim at Finchley, one Dutch, two Chinese, one German, and one Pole! We felt a trifle nervous that war would be declared before we got dressed! At night a terrific and fearful black-out in the club. Having no blinds to our glass roof in the main clubroom we sit under yellow lights shrouded in black shades and everyone turns green. And the B.B.C. announcers go on and on, poor fellows, repeating the same things, interspersed with bad gramophone records. A tremendous thunderstorm in the night."

"3rd September. Some students came running in before eleven to say that war was just going to be declared. Ten people, in a large empty clubroom, listened to Chamberlain, were brought scurrying to the basement for an air raid warning, and finally emerged, rather shakily, for some lunch in Soho! We had a Chinese with us, who was a bit scared, though he
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had been in hundreds of raids in China. At two p.m. a large crowd came in, when the club opened. They were quiet, subdued, anxious and yet in a way relieved that the tension was at an end. Before the House closed that night every member present signed a paper which read as follows:

‘On Sunday morning, 3rd September 1939, Great Britain declared war on Germany. Once again in its history Student Movement House finds itself existing, as enduring proof of international friendship, in a world full of cruelty and hatred. The peoples of the world do not wish to fight, not even the people of Germany. We remember especially the German members of Student Movement House, many of whom will be thinking of us to-day, and of the times they spent in the club.

‘This is a memorable day in history. Will all those who are present in the House to-day sign their names and their countries on this sheet of paper, which will be preserved in the House records.’

The following were the signatures:

R. C. Vevaina (India)  
M. Sharif (India)  
S. B. Karani (India)  
F. Wirth (Poland)  
Tan Ek Khoo (China)  
J. C. M. Paton (British)  
A. C. Ray (India)  
Szarvas Ilus (Hungary)  
V. N. Prasad (India)  
B. L. Rao (India)  
S. Sen (India)  
R. S. Dhondy (India)  
L. H. Athlé (India)  
I. Gimpel (Poland)  
T. N. Hor (India)  
M. I. M. Khan (India)  
D. P. Nandy (India)  
J. Gimpel (Poland)  
Y. L. Chang (China)  
S. Chang (China)  
S. K. Kalgutgar (India)  
M. A. Ali (India)  
M. H. Beg (India)  
G. Koenigsberger (Germany)  
V. M. Bhatt (India)  
F. Hanford (British)  
S. K. Thadani (India)  
L. Freud (Czechoslovakia)  
I. McCulloch (British)  
N. N. Bhandari (India)  
B. Sahai (India)  
L. C. Varma (India)  
M. H. Rahman (India)  
E. W. Mathu (Kenya)  
H. M. Wadia (India)  
M. I. Merchant (India)
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S. Mullick (India)         R. C. Dutta (India)
E. Stadlen (Austria)       H. Das (India)
O. Bayer (Czechoslovakia)  A. Schiessel (Austria)
H. B. Mondal (India)       K. Hursthouse (New Zealand)
W. D. L. Greer (Ireland)   H. Colville-Stewart (British)
F. J. Einaugler (Poland)   C. J. Ollard (British)
C. Wait (British)          C. Lakshmanan (India)
U. S. Navani (India)       J. Batra (India)
S. Zoha (India)            I. Langhoff (Germany)
M. Kearsey (British)       T. Dymentman (Poland)
T. Feenstra (Holland)      Z. Bootwala (India)
A. F. Fakhouri (Lebanon)   C. Mackintosh (British)
E. Egbona (Africa)         M. J. Jadeja (India)
J. Carter (British Guiana) P. Weigl (Czechoslovakia)
R. Zahler (Poland)         S. Rajaratnam (Malay)
Feher Pirospa (Hungary)

'4th September. So now we are really at war. News to-day of the fighting in Poland and the sinking of the Athenia. All cinemas and theatres closed, the students are quite unable to study, most of the Colleges are still closed in any case, and they have nothing to do.'

'6th September. We have had to close the restaurant temporarily, but have started a nightly Snack Bar in the one room we can light properly. We all crowd in, eat, play shove ha'penny and chess unendingly and listen to the daily horrors from Poland. Students from every country try to get their own news on the much-tried wireless, indeed, every time a newcomer arrives in the room the machine is made to speak a different language. Three of our refugees have been interned on suspicion, and their agitated relations beg me to get them out again.'

'4th October. Every German and Austrian is to be examined by a Tribunal. I hold an "unofficial" tribunal in my office daily, rehearsing victims and, most days, attending real tribunals to testify that these students are "genuine refugees from Nazi oppression". The students are all very
1939. *Finances and Fears*

nervous but most of the tribunals seem rather casual. We see no hope at present of extricating those in internment and the conditions in the camps sound deplorable.'

'13th October. Some Palestinian Jews who left for home recently reappeared to-day, having travelled on the Orient Express and been turned back at the Rumanian frontier. They are all quite penniless and nobody, so far, will take any responsibility for them.'

By the late autumn we recovered some normality and began to adjust ourselves to living under war conditions. Many of our British members went into the Forces, our staff also went early and had to be replaced by others who, for one reason and another, were not likely to be called up immediately. We celebrated our Birthday Party in November as usual, and were encouraged at the large number of old members who came to cheer us on. Amusing episodes were still not entirely lacking and the following story is a good illustration of the great differences in upbringing and traditions between peoples of different countries. It is also yet another example of the complications resulting from an imperfect knowledge of the English language and idiom.

'Three Spanish emigrés, Count X, aged nineteen, and his two younger sisters, were much in the House. They were all popular, the young ladies particularly so, for they were handsome, flashing young Spaniards, each with her own following. At a club committee it was noticed that the elder Miss X had failed to pay her subscription for a very long time. The ladies of the committee were in favour of "posting" her, while the gentlemen were unanimously of the opinion that she should be given another chance. Since the gentlemen outnumbered the ladies on the committee, the Club Secretary was asked to communicate with Miss X and urge her once again to settle her account. He did so, half
1939. Finances and Fears

frivolously, saying in his letter that the committee wished “to spare her the ignominy of being posted”. The next evening Miss X came to the House and asked to see the Secretary. He came downstairs amiably—and was considerably disconcerted when Miss X threw some money at his feet, slapped him smartly on the cheek and stamped out of the club, saying furiously that she had been “insoolted”! Somewhat shaken by this treatment, the Secretary had a worse shock to come the next morning in the shape of a letter from Count X which read as follows:

‘Dear Sir,

‘In this very moment I learn of your disgusting behaviour towards my sister. It is a great pity that I did not read that letter before to-day, for it would have been a great pleasure for me to have answered it in a much rougher way than my sister did. I should never have imagined that such an impolite letter could ever have been written by a normal man to a lady. I demand therefore a contiguous explanation from you and S.M.H.’s committee. If you fail to do so and there is a bit of a gentleman left in your person I will be glad to receive your seconds.

‘X.

‘We tried to cheer the shattered Secretary by telling him that he had, at least, established a record, for never, in the annals of the House, had a member of the staff been challenged by one of the students to a duel! When perhaps the joke had gone far enough, we thought we had better ring up the X family, and we discovered that neither Miss X nor her brother had any idea of the meaning of the word “ignominy”, so they looked it up in the dictionary, where they found the definition to be, “dishonour: infamous conduct”! All ended peacefully eventually, as Count X was anxious to perform in a Table Tennis Tournament which was being organized by the Secretary, so he came in the same evening,
1939. *Finances and Fears*

ather sheepishly, and shook hands! The most cordial relationship was then once again established.’

Our first war-time Christmas was, in spite of the circumstances, a happy occasion.

‘24th December. A delightful Christmas Eve Tea, still by candle-light, though not, this year, with candles in every window! Many songs, from many countries, including a ‘rendering’ by a visiting Chief from Africa of “If I were a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest”. In reply to a speech of welcome he said, “I am quite very much pleased to be here!”’

‘25th December. Sixty-two students for dinner, and I had the pleasure of having a Chinese on my right and a Japanese on my left. At the end of dinner we gave them a special welcome and they stood up and shook hands with each other and cheered. They are, really, great friends.’

‘31st December. A very large New Year’s Eve Party, with halades, a cinema and dance for entertainment. As we shook hands after midnight and repeated “A Happy New Year”, could not help wondering what chance the House had of surviving through 1940, and indeed, what would happen to all these homeless young people in England, a country on whom they had relied so much and so unquestionably, now that she herself was at war.’

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CHAPTER II

1940. A Year of War

It was such a thunderstorm, you can’t think, and part of the roof came off, and ever so much thunder got in—and went rolling round the room in great lumps—and knocking over the tables and things—till I was so frightened I couldn’t remember my own name!

—Through the Looking Glass, Lewis Carroll

Early in 1940 came Christmas cards from members of the House all over the world, cards posted some months previously, nearly all with some message: ‘Is the House all right?’ ‘What is happening to you all?’ ‘Do send me some news.’ Scandinavian, Dutch, Indian students wrote of joining the reserves; the Chinese, with their greater experience of modern warfare, wrote anxiously of air raids. We still managed to exchange correspondence, subject to censorship, with most of these writers and kept particularly close contact with our French members and Allies. But over Germany hung a great silence and we had no means of getting into touch with our members in that country, who would, we knew, be most anxious to have news of us, and to know that the House still looked upon them as members. In the spring, therefore, I paid a visit to Geneva, where I spent a fortnight in investigating ways of getting into touch with German students and with German, Austrian, and Polish families of our members in England.

Meantime, for the first four months of the year the House was able to function fairly normally. Programmes of concerts
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and lectures went on and the students formed an excellent War Aims Group which was particularly interesting, since the members of the group came from so many countries which were nearly concerned with the way in which the tide of war would turn. Gaps in our ranks became visible as the British, Czech and Polish students joined the forces of their respective countries and new members were greatly reduced in number. But by May everything was to change again and the thunder clouds were rolling ominously. Holland, Norway, and Denmark, the next victims of Germany's greed, collapsed with alarming rapidity and we did our best to cope with the young men and women of those countries, in their turn refugees. Then came the capitulation of Belgium, the fall of France and the epic of Dunkirk.

'17th June. Last night Peter Stadlen, well-known Austrian pianist and one of our most distinguished members, gave a piano recital. It was a very hot night, but the restlessness of the day seemed to have disappeared and there was a very large audience of all sorts and kinds of people, many not in the least musical I should have thought. Peter played a Schubert programme, extremely well. The students listened to every note, and though it was clear the atmosphere was tense we were all extraordinarily moved. Peter said afterwards that he had never played to such a wonderful audience. It was, indeed, the calm before the storm, for to-day we hear that France has laid down her arms, and goodness knows what will happen now.'

Within a few weeks Peter and his brother were both interned and, very shortly afterwards, sent to Australia.

For the next few months we were all absorbed in the sudden access of every kind of nightmare for our refugee members. A curfew was established for all aliens, who had to be in their houses by midnight—an unusual, but not harmful, experience for many of them! Then came the order
1940. A Year of War

for wholesale internment of all German and Austrian males in the country. This fresh blow was taken by the students with unfailing courage and cheerfulness, though in many cases it meant, once again, the scattering of little families so recently united, the loss of employment so recently gained and the inevitable injustices and hardships to individuals of such a large scale operation. Someone suggested presenting a Challenge Cup to the German or Austrian member of the House who remained longest out of internment! At the end of June we had a Pre-Internment Dance at which every potential internee was greeted, as he entered the room, with shouts of 'still here?' By the end of July about fifty of our members had gone, and most of them, even the students in the middle of their studies, on scholarships provided for them by the British public, had been shipped off without warning and with only the clothes they stood up in, to Canada or Australia. Probably invasion panic made wholesale internment necessary, though the way in which it was done caused infinite distress to many of our firmest friends, whose one thought had been how they could help Britain to defeat Germany. To-day (1941) the British Government is doing its best to improve the situation, though it is too late to save it altogether. Many have been released once more and others are likely to follow shortly, but we can no longer count on the wholehearted support of many who have suffered greatly at the hands of the one country they had learned to trust.

As the Defence Emergency measures grew in number and complexity it became increasingly difficult to help foreign students, and they never needed help more. One of the most puzzling cases we had concerned a Czech. At the height of the internment drive this man though a Friendly, and not an Enemy Alien, was taken by the police nominally for internment, actually to prison. There he remained under ordinary prison regulations until the end of November, in spite of
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unceasing efforts by many people to extract him. He was kept in his cell, during the first month of his imprisonment, for twenty-two hours a day and was allowed one visit a week, usually of ten to fifteen minutes' duration, behind prison bars. Why he was there at all was a complete mystery and for many weeks we could get no answer from anyone to whom we applied for information. It proved comparatively easy to discover that he had been taken on a deportation order, but the reason, which one would suppose to be serious, was not to be told to anyone. At last, after knocking at every official door, and securing the assistance of a Member of Parliament, word came through that he might be released 'if suitable employment could be found for him'. It transpired that he was, as I had always supposed, a perfectly innocent person who had been the victim of muddle, misunderstanding and incompetence of various organizations, and he was released at the end of November. He walked into my office on the day of his release and said, 'You have given me back my life.' Had he not been a young man of singular courage, however, his life would have been broken irretrievably. As it is, he will never altogether forget experiences which have broken many men for the rest of their lives.

The last four months of 1940 were, for us and for every other Londoner, like a perpetual bad dream. The nightly air raids on London from 11th September until the middle of November, tried the strongest nerves. For the first time in its history, we had to give up keeping the House open until ten-thirty p.m. and took to closing down half an hour before black-out, for the shrapnel was too heavy to allow students to return to their lodgings in safety and our air raid shelter was far too small for our numbers. The Indian Students' Union, our friends and opposite neighbours, received a direct hit on the night of 23rd September, one student being killed and several others injured. The House suffered much
damage as a result of this and other nearby bombs and we were windowless, doorless, ceiling-less, gas-less, and even water-less for long periods. Now and again pathetic bedraggled parties of students would arrive at the House at five-thirty a.m., after the All Clear had gone, with such belongings as they could salvage from the wreck of their lodgings. Some managed to get away to safer parts, but mostly they were unable to do this because they could not afford it, nor was it easy for them to find anywhere to go. Most of the London Colleges were evacuated, but few of their foreign students could go too. Oriental students tried to get home; some reached their homes safely, but some were torpedoed and returned to these shores, others were drowned. Many Indian students joined the R.A.F. or the Army, many Africans were to be found in the A.R.P. services, some continued to study and even to take examinations. We succeeded in patching up our damage, only to receive some more attention from the enemy! Should we have to close down altogether? After much anxious discussion on committees and much agitated concern on the part of members who needed the House desperately, as their only refuge, it was decided not to close, but to carry on as normally as possible for as long as possible. By the middle of October our programme had started once again, only a few weeks late. Lectures, discussion groups, tea-dances, table tennis tournaments, knitting parties making formidable garments for Indian troops, all started gradually, the students began to get their second wind and a hint of something approaching normality began to creep in. Though the daylight raids continued we paid little attention to them and, after a time, ceased to use the student shelter at all. Only when black-out time approached did we show signs of uneasiness as we wondered what the next twelve hours would bring. Even the Birthday Party was held again, on an afternoon in November. A
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hundred and fifty people were present, a grand entertain-
ment was produced and the lists of our members serving
with the Forces and those still in internment were read out.

One last picture of the House in 1940 and then my story
must end. Every year, for the last four years, the students
performed a Nativity Play. A most unorthodox cast, of
Christians and non-Christians, played to a very large audi-
ence, the majority of whom were not Christian themselves.
This year it was a particularly moving occasion and was
surely one of the most remarkable presentations of the
Christmas story given in this saddest Christmas since Christ
was born. The actors came from seven different countries. The
old English words (taken from the Coventry and Wakefield
Nativity Plays) were difficult for some of them to memorize,
but each took their part with simplicity and reverence which
made an immediate appeal to the student audience even
more varied in nationality than the actors.

First comes a little scene of the Annunciation. 'Mary'
comes from New Zealand and would have been home this
Christmas if it had been possible to get a ship. 'Gabriel' has
spent the whole of the previous night on duty at an Ambu-
lance Station.

They are followed by a cheerful trio of shepherds on a
hillside. The first shepherd, old and full of aches and pains,
is Scotch and a qualified doctor; the second, an English
student of Architecture; the boy, an African medical student
from Sierra Leone, his dark colour in striking contrast to his
fellows. As they are sitting eating their supper they hear the
singing of the 'Gloria in Excelsis,' they see the bright light
and they hear the message of the Angel Gabriel—'There
you will find the Child so true, asleep in a manger of low
degree, but come to set the world all free.' So they hurry
away to Bethlehem, their way lit by a lantern held high by
the African boy, as they set off in the dark and mist.
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Next the Kings, following a star. The first King comes from Rumania, and is trying, under almost impossible circumstances, to get his B.A. degree. The second is English and a theological student, the third is from India and moves with all the grace of the Oriental. They find their way to the Court of King Herod. He, too, is an Indian and his fanatical outburst of ‘I Herod am! King in all Judea and Israel and the mightiest conqueror that ever walked on ground’ has an all too familiar ring, which brings us back for a moment to the dreadful realities of to-day. His courtiers, who come trembling to tell him of the Child who is to be King, come from Malaya and from the country we now know as ‘ex-Germany’. Indeed one of these courtiers has only recently been released from internment; perhaps he smiled a little as Herod said to him, ‘Did I not warn in every port that no ships arrive, nor alien strangers through my realm pass, but that they should for a tribute pay marks five? And he that will the contrary upon a gallows hanged shall be!’ As Herod greets the Kings and speaks fair words to them we know how the scene will end. The Kings depart and Herod takes the centre of the stage:

Now these three Kings have gone on their way,
Untwisedly and unwittingly have they wrought,
When they come again they shall die that same day,
And thus these vile wretches to death shall be brought.
Such is my liking!

The stage is darkened, a sudden quiet falls, and the Watchman, swinging his lantern, sings as he goes on his rounds:

Twelve is the Clock!
God keep our land from fire and brand,
From fire and brand and hostile hand,
Twelve is the clock!

and we have come once more to Bethlehem.

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In the Stable Mary sits with her Child in her arms and sings, ‘I lull my child, wondrously sweet, and in my arms I do it keep, so that it shall not cry.’ Joseph, who stands behind her looking down at the Child, is on leave from the Fleet Air Arm and, truth to tell, wears his uniform beneath his eastern robes. He repeats, softly, ‘His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.’ Outside the stable the shepherds can be heard consulting with each other as to who should go in first. The old man is pushed forward by his fellows and kneels trembling before Mary and the Child—’A bird have I brought to thy bairn.’ The second shepherd brings his hat—’And now for one thing art Thou well sped.’ The African boy kneels down shyly and pulls his mittens off his hands—’Other treasures have I none to present Thee with.’

As the shepherds stay gazing at the Mother and Child, the Kings arrive in a stately procession and present their richer gifts: a cup of gold, a cup full of incense and, with a hint of sadness that is to come, ‘Myrrh for mortality, in tokening that Thou shalt mankind restore to life, by Thy death upon a tree.’ Mary looks round on the poor shepherds, on the magnificent Kings, on the students from the East and from the countries of stricken Europe:

By the guiding of the Godhead hither are you sent,
The provision of my sweet Son your ways home redress
And ghostly reward you for your present.

So we left Bethlehem, and the students went out into the cold unfriendly world again. In the audience could be seen some uniforms, a German refugee in the Pioneer Corps, a Frenchman in the army of Free France, a Czech lieutenant, an Indian in the R.A.F. The truce of Christmas would soon be over, the nights of terror must be endured again, the days must be spent in fighting and in studying whenever possible.
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All over the world, in Germany, Japan, China, Africa, India, Italy, are young men and women who have taken part in this play in former years, and some of them at least will have remembered the Watchman’s cry, ‘God keep our land from hostile hand and fire and brand,’ and the message of Gabriel, ‘The Child that is born to set men free!’

My story has come to an end, but not so the House. To-day it is reduced in numbers to about two-thirds of its peace-time membership, but its old members, people who still look back to the old house in Russell Square with its winding staircase, are spread to the farthest corners of the world. It is not too fanciful to suppose that some of our finest German members now visit England frequently at night, but there are good grounds for the belief that they look on their present task at least from a point of view which is different from that of most of their fellows, and with a hearty dislike of a grim necessity.

As I write these last words, in the summer of 1941, Germany and Russia have been at war for a few weeks and the students hail our Latvian members as ‘friendly enemies’. In the last six months we have been much bombed, and more of our students have been killed by enemy action, but the House still carries on and ‘shadow premises’ have been arranged in case of need.

When the noise of war at last dies away we shall not immediately have peace, but shall find ourselves in the backwash of hatred and mistrust between nation and nation. Somehow the House must endure through the war. If it can survive it will be able to make a real and important contribution to the peace of the post-war world by handing on to the students of the next generation a great and living tradition of international friendship; a tradition which has been built up in the lives of young men and women the world
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over, through two wars and nearly a quarter of a century. Based on trust instead of suspicion, on tolerance and understanding instead of fear, the House presents a living picture of some remaining sanity in a world which has gone mad, a living memorial to those young British students who fought so gallantly twenty years ago in the 'war to end war', a picture in miniature of the saner world for the hope of which they gave their lives.

London
July, 1941
APPENDIX

EXTRACTS FROM A REPORT PUBLISHED
IN SEPTEMBER 1938
CALLED

The England Returned Man

Some years ago, in 1930, I visited India for the first time, as a completely ignorant traveller. After nearly a year spent in that country, journeying from Ceylon to Kashmir, I returned home with new interests and my mind full of questions. I had, for the first time, the opportunity of making friends with many Indians, and had learned much from conversations with Indians and British who were working for the welfare of India.

In 1932 I took up work at the Student Movement House, and shortly after became Warden of that Club. I accepted the work mainly because of my interest in Indian students and the fact that they largely outnumbered any other nationality, except British students, in the membership of the Club.

For four years, therefore, I have watched with particular interest the progress of these men, and have come into close touch with many of them. The fact that I had been to many
of their home towns and even knew some of their relatives, made quick contacts easy; and out of the 150-200 Indian students who pass through the Club every year I have known a large number well enough to keep up regular correspondence with them on their return to India.

When an opportunity for further travel presented itself in 1937, I planned to return to India for a short visit. In my own mind I had answered some of the questions I had asked myself in 1930; but I was anxious to see again for myself, and particularly to talk with my friends who had returned to their own homes after a period of their lives had been spent in London.

Two questions of major importance were set out in a letter of commission which I took with me to India.

Bishopthorpe,
York.
10th November 1936.

Dear Miss Trevelyan,

We have heard with great interest of your forthcoming visit to India. In view of the special experience which you have had at Student Movement House we should be most grateful if you would carry out an investigation on the following lines:

a. Into the conditions governing the selection of young Indians sent to England for the purpose of obtaining British degrees.

b. Into the means of persuading both educational authorities and parents in India of the importance of such vital questions as age, academic qualifications, a reasonable financial allowance, etc., when sending their sons to British Universities. This work can only be done in India, and the problem is of increasing urgency in this country.

If you can carry through this programme and report to
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us upon the results of your investigations we shall be most grateful. All of us have special reasons for being personally interested in these questions.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)   William Ebor
Halifax
Thomas H. Holland
A. D. Lindsay
William Paton

This letter opened many official doors and persuaded many distinguished and busy men to spare me, with every courtesy, much of their time and interest. These questions of a selection of men going abroad to study and of the means of impressing upon educational authorities and parents the importance of ensuring that the men selected are fitted in various respects to be so chosen, could only be investigated through official channels. I have endeavoured to set down the answers to these questions, as the outcome of many conversations in different University centres, though I fear that I can contribute little which is not already well known.

A further question, however, was of greater interest to me personally, as a direct result of my observation of Indians in London, namely, the psychological aspect of the whole problem—whether this violent uprooting of young men, often at a very impressionable age, from their familiar oriental surroundings, and transplanting them into the hurrying West—with the consequent difficulty of the return from the New to the Old on their going home, can really make for happiness in the individuals concerned, and therefore the ultimate good of their country. The average age of the Indian student when he first comes to London is probably twenty-one to twenty-four. An increasing number of older men are now coming, however, for post-graduate work, and
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	here is always a minority of students between the ages of eighteen and twenty. The youngest boys are often the sons of rich parents. I had been seriously concerned at seeing many students arrive in London, friendless and uneasy in very strange surroundings, but out—like all young men—for adventure, finding often standards of behaviour in the new world which they could copy and hold on to, with no question in their minds as to such standards not necessarily being of the best. I had talked with men just about to leave London, often disillusioned and cynical, and I had read many letters from them when they had returned to India which disturbed me greatly. I felt that I had an opportunity, which I could not neglect, of studying the problem of the 'England Returned Man' through the individual—through men I had known well in England whom I should now be able to meet again in their own homes in India, and hear at first-hand how this uprooting had affected their lives.¹

Many people, far abler and more experienced than myself, have studied the problem from the official angle—governmental, educational, etc. All those people are well aware of the grave difficulties which surround such a problem as this—one which is inevitably bound up with the present political situation in India. Both India and England can be greatly benefited by the best type of Indian student, who comes abroad for a period of study with a serious academic objective

¹ I should add that, since I have little first-hand knowledge of Indian women students in England, I made no attempt while in India to investigate their problems. While they are in England they are much more closely, perhaps too closely, guarded and it would certainly be of great benefit to the men if they were able to mix together more freely. Further, my remarks refer mainly to Indian students in London, though I have touched on Oxford and Cambridge. I have little personal knowledge of conditions in the Scottish and provincial Universities.
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and with a real desire to know and understand something of the country which, politically, he often feels to be oppressing him so much. But untold harm can be and is being done by allowing numbers of men to come to England who, for whatever reason, are unlikely to profit by their study or their stay, and who return embittered and unhappy to India.

The results of such study as I have been able to make during three and a half months spent in India this year (1937) are set out as briefly as possible. In many respects this report is amateur, and experts will pick many holes in it. My first-hand knowledge is only of the students who come to England, and I shall try to give a picture of what this adventure means to them.

Conditions Governing Selection of Young Indians sent to England for the Purpose of Obtaining British Degrees

Every year the number of Indian applicants for admission to British Universities is increasing; every year a larger number of such students are successful in this application. In Oxford and Cambridge there is a strict quota for Indian students; a candidate usually makes his application through his home University to India House, who, in turn, communicate with the Advisors to Indian students in those Universities.

I.C.S. candidates will have no place in this report. Generally speaking they do well abroad, mainly because they comprise the only category of Indian students who have a secure appointment waiting for them in India. They are mostly the best type of man, and those whom I saw in India were all content.

In the University of London, which is my main concern in this report, there is no quota for Indian students. The
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latest figures 1935–6 (High Commissioner's Report, April 1937) are given as 900–1,000, out of a total of 1,556 registered Indian students in the British Isles. In the year 1933–4, the total number was just under 1,400. These figures do not include a number of men who came to London on their own initiative, often without adequate funds and sometimes non-matriculated; nor, of course, those who, sometimes through no fault of their own, are penniless and destitute—having spent years in London without obtaining a degree of any kind. Such figures speak for themselves. It is now my purpose to comment on the selection in India of candidates for foreign universities.

There are two ways in which Indian Authorities select men who go abroad for study:

1. Government and State Scholarships

Up to about ten years ago the men who profited most by foreign study were those who had gained Government or State scholarships. These scholarships have now been greatly reduced in number, partly for lack of money, but mainly because it is impossible to find adequate employment for the scholars on their return to India.

2. Student Advisory Committees

These committees, to be found in all the large University centres, were originally formed for the purpose of advising I.C.S. candidates, but they have now enlarged their scope considerably, and are used by a large number of students. Their efficiency depends mainly on the initiative of the

1 When I refer, and I shall do several times, to the High Commissioner's Report, I mean the Report on the work of the Education Department—published by the Office of High Commissioner for India, India House.

2 For the sake of clarity I shall refer to these committees as Student Advisory Committees, though they have different names in different places: e.g. University Information Bureaux, Students’ Information Bureaux, etc.
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Secretary of each committee, who is still something of a 'voice crying in the wilderness'. In many Provinces, however, where only one or two men are likely to apply for admission to a foreign university each year, there is no committee, and candidates have to make their applications personally. The practical difficulties of these committees are considerable:

i. There is, as yet, no compulsion with regard to their use as the proper channel of application, and it is impossible to make every man in every university apply for admission through his advisory committee.

ii. Often entirely unsuitable candidates will apply—men who would be unlikely to achieve any academic success in India or abroad. The committee cannot refuse to let such a candidate make application, and often such men prevail on their parents to send them abroad, with or without gaining admission to a foreign university before they sail from India.

iii. Candidates often apply too late for admission—or insist on leaving India before knowing if their application has been successful.

iv. It is sometimes not possible to obtain admission (particularly to Oxford or Cambridge) for a candidate until his home university results are known; when these are published it is often too late to obtain admission, and the candidates have to wait for a further year—or, again, go on their own initiative.

In spite of these difficulties, the committees are doing an important work and are undoubtedly having an effect on the quality of men sent abroad. I was much impressed by the talks I had with the Secretaries (all Indian) of committees in four important universities, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, and Calcutta. These officials have a real appreciation of the importance of their work; they have all been to England and
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know something of the conditions between the East and the West. In three of these universities the post of Secretary to these committees is additional to other full-time University appointments. The amount of work which is done by these men must mean considerable sacrifice of their leisure time and is further proof of their conviction of the importance of such work.

The Means of Persuading both Educational Authorities and Parents in India of the Importance of such Vital Questions as Age, Academic Qualifications, a Reasonable Financial Allowance, etc., when Sending Their Sons to British Universities

As will be seen from the foregoing remarks on the work being done by Student Advisory Committees attached to Indian universities, educational authorities do realize to some extent the importance of selection of Indian students who are sent to British universities. But these committees, good as they are, cannot, on their own admission, come into contact with all the men who find their way abroad every year. Although I should agree with the statement in the High Commissioner’s Report that ‘while the number of students . . . has increased, the improvement in their general standard of ability and attainment has undoubtedly been maintained’, it is still undeniably true that the number of ill-qualified Indian students in England, unsuited academically, financially, or from the point of view of age, is still very large, and though statistics are not available, is probably not decreasing.

The situation is sufficiently serious both in its effect on the lives of individuals and on Indo-British relationships. I had talks with Governmental and Educational Authorities, Indian and British, on the subject. Taking into account the present political situation in India (and the fact that
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during the three months I spent in India election fever was high in the country) I have come to the following conclusions.

Indian Opinion

Indian experts are fully aware of the difficulties and potential dangers of the whole situation, but they have no constructive policy whatever. That is partly due, as I have suggested, to political unrest (and perhaps to the insecurity of their own positions), but mainly to a deep-rooted dislike of taking any action which could be construed as British discrimination.

For this last reason, with no exception, every Indian authority was completely against any form of academic restriction by the British universities. Though some admitted that such restrictions would undoubtedly limit the number of unsuitable men who now gain admission to the universities, it was their unanimous opinion that the object of such restrictions would certainly be misconstrued and that they were out of the question. One distinguished gentleman, more candid than most, declared that in spite of being aware of what was wrong, no Indian member of Government would take upon himself the odium of reformer.

Nobody with whom I talked could deny that unemployment in India was an increasingly serious factor in the situation.

Opinions as to the employment value in India of a British degree vary between two diametrically opposed views—both held by Indians. The first is that such a qualification is entirely valueless, preference in appointments being given to candidates with Indian degrees; the second is that, though every speaker regretted having to say so, the British degree was still a valuable asset to a good appointment in India. One member of the Government looked to the day when the Congress would be strong enough to promote such anti-British feeling, that no self-respecting Indian would even
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want to go to England. It is worth while adding some interesting comments and constructive views expressed to me by Indian Authorities:

i. Our policy should be to encourage students to go abroad only in order to study subjects which cannot properly be studied in India. An increasing number of students go abroad for special advanced work and not for ordinary degrees.

It is short-sighted to stop sending men, who are really promising, to study abroad, just because of the difficulty of getting employment afterwards. Men coming back to India with specialized qualifications, e.g., agricultural, chemistry, or medical degrees, ought to be used by the public.

If the Universities refrain from sending men like these abroad because of the lethargy of the Government, then, when public opinion at last realizes that such specialists are needed for the service of the public, they will have to be imported at high expense.

ii. (a) Three classes of men go abroad for study:

1. The son of the well-to-do man who goes to England with a real objective and returns, well qualified, but finds difficulty in getting a job.

2. The son of the richer man, who goes to England to have a good time—his father has influence—and he returns to a job he does not necessarily deserve.

3. The son of the poor man, who may do well or ill, but is very unlikely to get a job at all.

(b) The number of students going abroad through these bureaux has risen ten per cent in the last three years. Post-graduate students are much fewer in number than those taking ordinary degrees, and much more successful.

The best professions from the point of view of employment are specialized: veterinary, horticulture, textiles, agriculture, broadcasting, films, etc.

Teachers either go abroad to take the Teachers' Diploma
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before they have any knowledge of the local conditions of the place where they will be teaching, or start as teachers in India, and then cannot raise the money to go abroad and get the Diploma—both qualifications are necessary for success.

There is much less employment of electrical engineers (trained abroad) than formerly, as they return with good qualifications, but no experience. It is important that they should be able to obtain some practical experience abroad before they return to India.

iii. The whole legal system of India is rotten to the core, and will not last another generation.

British Opinion

All British Educational Authorities whom I saw were, of course, interested and concerned. They are making efforts to improve matters, and are fully aware of the necessity for caution and delicacy in their approach to Indian Authorities on the subject. Outside the educational world it would not, I think, be unfair to say that the problem appeared to some to be a 'new' one; others have little interest and were inclined to leave matters entirely to India House.

There is little point in enlarging on the views of the British Educational Authorities, which are well known, and the opinion of their Indian colleagues is probably more important in this particular setting.

Parents

Parents are hopeless; they will never learn, even by the experience of others. Hundreds of fathers and mothers must bitterly regret the day that they sent their sons to England; but hundreds more follow their example—spend far more than they can afford, often, and get little if any reward on their sons' return home. The only parents who will think twice about sending their sons abroad are those who have
been abroad themselves in their youth. Even they forget the
difficulties, and more important, ignore the changes since
they were young.

Four years is a long time to be away from home—away
from your own people, your own country—at any time of
life. It is particularly a long time to be away when you have
left home at twenty or twenty-one, and return a grown man.
Yet this is the average period spent by young Indians in
studying abroad. Medical students often stay as long as
seven or eight years; students taking Bar Exams, or an Arts
Degree perhaps only three.

If the Indian arrives in England with his dreams already
partially shattered, with what a mixture of feelings and emo-
tions must he see again the Gateway of India. It is hard to
remember the old days and the old ways; his family will be
excited at seeing him again; his brothers and sisters will
perhaps not recognize him; his friends will be envious of
him and his British degree. Soon he will get a good job—
perhaps he will marry, but there must be none of that non-
sense about ‘arranged’ marriages—he has learned better in
the West. So his thoughts may wander; and yet as the Gate-
way draws nearer, he draws his breath quickly and a faint
feeling of apprehension comes over him. Will things really
be different? Or will it just be a return to the old ways, the
old restrictions and orthodox ways? No—he is a man now—
and he knows better than his father.

Of the many ‘England-Returned’ men whom I saw this
year in India, I picked out twenty whom I knew well
in England. With all of these I had long talks; some of them
took me to their homes, others brought their wives or their
parents to meet me. They were as representative as such a
small group could be, geographically, and as regards their
professions, and they presented a fair picture of what is in
store for the Indian returning home from abroad.
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At the very most I should say that I met five men who have fallen on their feet economically, not, of course, counting the men who have gone into the I.C.S. They, provided they have given up all idea of politics, are comparatively happy and successful. Serious and widespread unemployment is, therefore, the first fact which these young men must grasp on their return home, and many of them, and their parents, must regret the amount of time and money spent on obtaining British degrees.

Alongside this unemployment is the continual difficulty of adjustment on their return—a problem as difficult and bewildering for the parents as for the sons. They have grown away from the family, and their ideas and interests, so varied in the West, mean nothing to the parents except an annoying tendency to refuse the orthodox customs and life of the home. They are restless and uneasy, and, as is the fate of all travellers, once the interest of their return has died down, they are expected to be like everyone else again. Several fathers have said to me: ‘We were anxious enough about the boy when he was away, but now he is home we can do nothing with him—he is a stranger to us and we to him.’ Some men have said to me: ‘It is impossible living at home—they do not understand, there is no freedom. I have no money and cannot go away. I must get back to England and get a job there—I do not belong here.’

Many men on coming home are greeted from the first with suspicion and even antagonism by their friends. The term ‘England returned’ is not an enviable title, but often expresses the envy and scorn of those who have not been able to leave India and who fear competition. They are accused of ‘knowing everything’ and of pro-British sympathies; there is little of the conquering hero left after a few months at home.

Foreign travel and the attainment of a foreign degree are
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not always benefits, and the sooner India realizes this the better it will be for her young men and for the future happiness of Indo-British relationships.

Should Indians come abroad at all to study? This question might be asked by some who are aware of the present situation. In my opinion the answer should be 'yes' if they have a serious objective—e.g., a special course of study which cannot be pursued in India, advanced post-graduate work, or the I.C.S. But the answer should be 'no' in the case of the average man who merely comes to England in order to gain an ordinary British degree in the hopes of getting a job in India. The odds are too great against the chances of such a man's experiences in the West making for his ultimate happiness and well-being on his return to the East.

Indo-British Co-operation and the Future

Taking it for granted, as I think we should, that Indian men will continue (probably in increasing numbers for the next few years) to come to England for study, what can we do to ensure their time abroad being more profitable to themselves and a more useful training for their return to India?

It is extraordinarily difficult to be constructive in view of the present political unrest in India and the fact that it is a transition period among those in control of politics and of education in that country.

i. The first and most obvious step to be taken is the strengthening of the existing Student Advisory Committees. This could be done usefully in two ways:

1. By increased publicity on the part of Government and University Authorities, and by supplying these committees with more advice as to details of equipment needed for foreign study, e.g. financial allowances.

2. Kinds of accommodation, etc., recommended periodically from the English end.
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Further, these committees should be strengthened at intervals by the co-option of Indians who have themselves returned from studying in England within the last ten years.

In places where only a few students are likely to go abroad every year, there should be some committee through which they, too, can make application to receive advice.1

Ideally a Central Advisory Committee should be set up, under the Government of India, which would send out information regularly to local committees and receive regular reports from them as to the number of men going abroad from different places. This Committee would keep in close touch with India House and the Advisors to Indian students in Oxford and Cambridge and other universities in the British Isles.

ii. In spite of the strong opposition in India to any kind of academic restriction, a really important step would be taken if the Government of India would follow the example of China, and allow no students to leave their country for the purpose of studying abroad unless they can show on their passports that they have already graduated in their university and have enough money to pay their way.

iii. Unless some such regulation as that suggested above comes into force, there can be no way of ensuring that every man, including those who do not make their application through Advisory Committees, has sufficient money for his study and his living, and it is also important that arrangements should be made for this money to be sent to him regularly. Students often get into great difficulties owing to the irregularity with which their money is sent.

iv. There should be far greater co-operation in England between India House and the numerous bodies of people

1 Two new Advisory Committees have been recently set up by the Governments of Orissa and Sind, and doubtless more will follow
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who wish to help and befriend Indian students. If this co-operation could be extended also between India and England to a greater extent, much more might be done to make the men feel happier and give them a better start. For instance, through personal connections in India, the Student Movement House now gets many letters about individual students before they arrive, and with some knowledge of these individuals it is far easier to help them when they come, besides providing an invaluable personal link. The initiative, however, must come from India, in establishing closer links with English Associations, otherwise there is constant overlapping and often the well-meaning English person, with too little knowledge, tends to hinder rather than help.

v. Finally, I have always felt it a pity that Indian students, who so largely outnumber any other nationality among overseas students in the University of London, should not have some central place for meeting, for bringing their friends to visit; a place to be proud of—because it is Indian—and I wish very much that some scheme could be found whereby India House could be freed from the suspicion which surrounds it. If the High Commissioner himself, or some other distinguished Indian, could be 'at home' every week to Indian students and their friends, it would be a great help. The men would have an opportunity of showing off some of the art treasures which are on display in India House, and could also make it possible for their friends to meet distinguished Indians from time to time. India has so much to give to the West; and it might make a profound psychological difference to many of these men if they could have a chance of demonstrating this fact and of losing some of their inferiority in the genuine pride of being an Indian. If a regular programme of Indian speakers and performers were planned ahead, it would prove, I believe, a great attraction,
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and it might then be possible for the officials of India House to get to know these men on a friendly and social basis, and thus win their confidence enough to be the natural people to whom they would go in their troubles and perplexities.

Conclusions

A young Englishman, in business in Calcutta, was heard describing a difficult interview he had had with a Bengali client; he finished his story by saying ‘and I saw him go off, swaggering down the street as if the place belonged to him’.

The task of British and Indian statesmen is, in these days, heavy and exacting enough; every day their work is hampered by such small incidents as the above. We ourselves are much to blame for the unhappiness of Indians in England and in India.

I am very much aware of the inadequacy of this report, due in part to my small knowledge of India and in part to pressure of work on returning to a club which tries to help, in addition to Indians, students from nearly sixty other countries. I hope that if I have done nothing else, I have been able to throw a little light on this big problem as it affects the individual student.
GIRLS GROWING UP

by

PEARL JEPHCOTT

'Miss Jephcott's method is to draw liberally from written statements by girls she has known in clubs and from snatches of their conversation. It sounds a bold venture, but in practice is brilliantly successful and the reader puts this book down in the firm conviction that he has been privileged to see into the minds of others... She touches the girls' life at every point and indeed astounds one by her intimate understanding.'—Fortnightly Review.

'Anyone, whether social worker, legislator, or ordinary voter who cares for the shaping of contemporary youth should absorb the record of experiences which this book offers.'—Truth.

'Will be of interest and value to all concerned with young people. Experienced personnel and welfare workers will find much with which they will heartily agree... should be read by all employers of young people of both sexes.'—Industrial Welfare.

IN THE SERVICE OF YOUTH

by

DR. JOSEPHINE MACALISTER BREW

Education Secretary to the National Association of Girls' Clubs

The title of this book is taken from the Government pamphlet on youth organizations, a subject which is much exercising the minds of thinking people at this time. Though the book will be of special value to those already working in this field (there is a bibliography for serious students) it is more than a mere handbook to club work. Dr. Brew has a great deal to say about the way in which young people to-day spend their lives; much of this is the result of patient and skilled listening and observation, and it is all deeply interesting, whether one is a club worker or just an ordinary reader. She has herself mixed freely with young people in dance halls and public-houses no less than in club rooms and church halls; and has had an unique opportunity of studying their interests and their leisure activity from every point of view. In the club-worker's own field no aspect is ignored, from questions of finance and premises to those of religion and psychology. All who are interested in this vital subject will welcome Dr. Brew's sane and intelligent survey of the problems involved in modern conditions.

Interested readers should also read Girls Growing Up by Pearl Jephcott, which is in many ways complementary to this volume.