Random Recollections
of an Idle Old Man

Gavin Turnbull, Viscount Simonds
of Dunsholt.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS OF AN IDLE OLD MAN

An old man - Yes. For I write these lines in the month in which I become 82 years old. An idle man - Yes. For after long laborious years I have come to an end of my proper job and two somewhat severe illnesses have limited my capacity to embark on new ones. Random recollections - Random certainly, for here will be found neither sequence nor order. Recollections - More doubtful. For I have kept no diary and have been a ruthless destroyer of papers. Nor have I that astonishing photographic memory of events which distinguishes some of my contemporaries. If, therefore, I call these lines recollections, be it noted that I do not vouch their accuracy. But at least I shall not consciously distort memory to my own advantage nor shall I set down ought in malice.

Why, then, do I write at all? Not in order to avoid idleness nor to escape the charge of idleness. I enjoy being idle and will defend myself against the charge. The reason is just this, that my wife (who has been my wife for nearly 52 years) and many friends urge me to the task saying that, if not to my contemporaries, at least to those who come after me fifty or a hundred years hence the events of my life may be interesting. It is at any rate true that the last 80 years have seen such social changes and the next 50 years are likely to see such further changes that a story beginning in 1881 may in the year 2020 seem as strange to those who read it as do the chronicles of the Paston family to readers of today. I am moved too by another consideration. In my old age my curiosity has been awakened about my own family and I regret that I did not question members of it about their early lives nor did they leave any record. A grandfather who was at Rugby under Arnold, a great-uncle who was in College at Eton in the 1830's, a father who was in New York as a young man during the American Civil War, a mother who, in the year of the Mutiny, was born in

India where her father was stationed. From all these sources a self-centred youth failed to learn much that might have been of abiding interest. I am moved to make such amends as I may by my own random recollections and reflections

I was born on 28th November, 1881, and was named Gavin Turnbull after my maternal grandfather Surgeon-General Gavin Ainslie Turnbull, a shadowy figure to me, who died, as did my maternal grandmother, long before I was born. He was, I believe, the last male survivor of a family of Turnbull which had for many generations owned property on the Border but dissipated it before his birth. The name of Gavin was not uncommon in some Scotch families - it had been given, as I was told, from father to son in my grandfather's family for many generations - but in England, at any rate in southern England, it was so unusual 80 years ago, that when I went to Winchester and the name had to be Latinised for the purpose of the School Record or Long Roll, as it was called, no precedent could be found in all the 500 years of the school's history. It was decided to call me Gabinius - a wrong decision, as I think, for neither Aulus Gabinius, the great tribune of the people, nor any other Gabinius had any connection with Roman Britain. The affinity was rather with the Celtic or Gaelic Gawain. Today the name is common enough. I am proud to share it with, amongst others, my friend Sir Gavin de Beer.

My birthplace was a house called "The Point" in the Bath Road, Reading: a strange name, it may be thought, and the reason for it was strange enough, for it was named after a house on Long Island in the State of New York where my father was brought up. This leads to some more ancient history. The family of Simonds had from time out of mind lived undistinguished and uneventful lives in Berkshire with branches straying into Hampshire, yeoman farmers, millers, brewers and eventually bankers as brewers so often became. One of them, my great-grandfather, who was so far advanced in worldly standing that he sent his eldest son, my grand-

father, to Rugby and two other sons to Eton, appears to have come a financial crash. Of this one consequence was that his eldest son emigrated to the United States in the hope of making his fortune there. He made no fortune but a competence which enabled him to marry a wife and bring up a large family one of whom was my father. The lady whom he married was Sophie de Luze, whose family came from the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, where they still flourish. The name may call to mind an excellent red wine and an amateur tennis champion. Thus in my veins there flows the blood of southern France, of England and the Scottish Border.

My father, as I have said, was born and brought up in New York. He came as a young man to England to the care of his uncle Henry Adolphus Simonds, who was then a partner in the firm of brewers H. & G. Simonds of Reading, and, having no children, treated his nephew as his son. I shall have much to say of this uncle, my great-uncle, to whose benevolence we owed so much. My father at once entered the brewery and worked there for the remainder of his life. From his uncle's house he married my mother, Mary Elizabeth Turnbull, who had long been an orphan and they made their home at "The Point" which I have already mentioned. There five children were born to them: my elder brother, who was given the sonorous name Frederick Adolphus - how such a name found it way into the family I know not - then myself, next my sister Louise born in 1883 and then two more brothers, John de Luze, born in 1884, and Henry Duncan, born in 1887. The name Duncan given to my youngest brother was a hark-back to a sailor ancestor of my mother: it was appropriate that in due course he joined the Royal Navy.

We were, I suppose, a typical middle-class family. The house was a comparatively large one on the outskirts of a growing city bounded on one side by a branch of the Great Western Railway and on the other by the reservoir of the city waterworks. Though my parents' means were modest, we had five indoor servants and two gardeners for a large garden.

I daresay their combined wages were little more than those of the lady who now "obliges" us in our London flat for a number of hours five days in the week. The garden is vivid in my memory. A garden in or near a city is likely to be a paradise for birds and our garden was no exception. Finches and tits and warblers in their season abounded. In one year we had a pair of lesser redpolls but I think they did not nest with us. I acquired a love of birds and a little knowledge of them which has been an abiding pleasure. Fifty years later I recognised 37 different species in a day's fishing on the Itchen.

My recollection of early school days is strangely ~~alive~~ Lim. With my elder brother I went as a day boy first to a small school kept by an old lady whose name comes to me out of the past as Jinnie Mathews, then to a well-known preparatory school "Park House" which was about half-a-mile from my home. It was kept by a Mr. Bartholomew and I do not think that it was a very good school. A harsher view of it is given by a boy who was there with me, though some years my senior, Rayner Goddard, later Lord Chief Justice of England. I have a clear memory of him as a remarkable sprinter: even as a small boy he had the large bottom and short legs which so often are a feature of sprinters. A few years later he got his Blue at Oxford. I was, I suppose, somewhat precocious, for at an early age I was near the top of the school, and my parents, upon the advice of Arthur Johnson, a family friend, a well-known don at Oxford, sent me to Summerfields at Oxford, perhaps the best-known preparatory school of the day, certainly the school which obtained an outstanding number of scholarships at Eton. I was sent there with a view to getting a scholarship not at Eton but at Winchester. That in due course I did in the year 1894. My elder brother, who had remained at Park House, sat for a scholarship in the same year. Well I remember my mother taking the two of us to Winchester to lodgings in the City Road and our daily progress to the College for the examination. My

brother, though he was in many ways abler than I, was unsuccessful but was ungrudging in his pleasure at my success - characteristically generous as he ever was to me throughout his life.

And so in September 1894 I went into College at Winchester. First on the roll of scholars for that year was Robert Dundas who remained my most intimate friend until his untimely death. I was second, and third was A. L. Irvine who is, I think, the only survivor besides myself of that roll. He has written a little book of memories of Winchester College in the 1890's, which recalled to my mind much that I had forgotten. I do not find it easy to write of Winchester: so much it has meant to me, for six years a scholar, the father of two sons who were there for six years also, for nearly 30 years a Fellow and for 5 years Warden of the College. One debt I must acknowledge with a humble heart and that is to Monty Rendall who came to College as Second Master in my last year. Of him the late Master of the Temple, Budge Firth, has written in terms that I cannot rival.

Life in College in the 1890's was austere. Summer and winter early school began at 7 o'clock. It was the duty of the junior boy in each Chamber to rise at 6.15 and at intervals of 5 minutes call the other boys. There was no hot water laid on nor in the hard winter of 1894-95 was there any cold water. That was the year of the great frost which lasted from January to nearly the end of March. All the pipes were frozen except that which led to a tap in Chamber Court (as the Quadrangle was called) and it was my duty as junior to go across the open court at 6.15 or as soon thereafter as I could put any clothes on and take cans of water to my Chamber, a work, I am sure, of total supererogation, for washing in cold water in that season was not favoured by my seniors. School, as I say, began at 7 o'clock. It lasted for three-quarters of an hour: then came chapel, then breakfast, which without supplement from home would have been wholly inadequate, then school again at 9.15. And the cold always was

intense. In the great Hall where we fed there was no heating except from one large open stove which was called Simon and Jude from the fact that it was brought into action on the saints day of those two saints. And in the downstairs chambers where we spent our days there were no coal fires but great open fireplaces in which a number of large fagots were from time to time burned. When one fagot was burnt out and its ashes gave no heat we had to wait until the time came for the next of our small ration of fagots to be used. Yet my prevailing memory is of happy days and I doubt whether the boys of today are more happy or more healthy.

Here I must allow myself a random reflection. It is often urged against Wykehamists that they are of a recognisable type which is not always described in complimentary terms. This seems to me plain nonsense - I would test it by looking at some of my own Roll, the scholars of 1894. First was Robert Dundas whom I have already mentioned. Following in his father's footsteps he had become before he died one of the leading ~~scholars~~ solicitors in Edinburgh, a man of affairs widely respected, a lover of books. I came next and I cannot pretend to say to what type, if any, I conformed. Then there was A. L. Irvine, a schoolmaster first at Bradfield, then at Charterhouse and a very good schoolmaster too. Next was Conor O'Brien who earned fame equally by circumnavigating the globe in a small boat and by his ardent support of Sinn Fein. I recall too Edward Pease who was one of the first of the young Englishmen to be sent out to administer the Sudan. He was perhaps unusual in that he sent me a translation in Greek hexameters of part of Shelley's Adonais. Then there was Joseph Clay who joined the Indian Civil Service and had a successful career in India, Robins who became Dean of Salisbury after service in the Church in England and Khartoum, and Geoffrey Smith, athlete, poet, scientist, of whom Professor Ray Lankester said that his death in the battle of the Somme was perhaps the greatest individual loss that England suffered in the war, so far had he travelled in a line of biological research in which it would be difficult to follow him. Others I could

name but I have said enough about our Roll to show the diversity of talent and occupation of scholars of my generation. Ab uno disce omnes.

I return to my life at Winchester. I did not keep the place at which I started but sank to seventh in the School when I left. I did not get a scholarship to New College but an Exhibition only. That was, I think, all I deserved. At games I was more successful, being Captain of College VI and in the Finals of the School Fives Competition: at cricket I was unorthodox and though I made many runs was not thought worthy of a place in the first or second XI. It was a full life - and I took my part in the School Debating Society and the Shakespeare Reading Society and other diversions. If I try to look back to those days, I am impressed by the serenity of our lives. The South African war had begun before I left School but it did not touch us nearly. The shadow which for nearly 50 years has overhung every young life had not begun to appear. We had our troubles, our fears and disappointments, but war and the image of war were not among them.

In my fourth year at school I was joined by my brother John de Luze who got the first scholarship in 1897. He came as a pure classic but being seized with the desire to join the army he turned to mathematics and science and in due course got into Woolwich and passed into the Royal Artillery. After a spell in the Garrison Artillery followed by an appointment as A.D.C. to the G.O.C. Hong Kong he went to France in 1915 with an Indian Mountain Battery. Perhaps nothing showed more clearly the straits to which British arms were reduced than the dispatch of this unit to the front. It did its gallant best but was wholly unsuited to trench warfare. When it returned to India, my brother stayed on in a staff appointment and was killed by a heavy shell behind the lines in 1917. He had been awarded the D.S.O. and would perhaps have reached high rank in the army.

While I was thus pursuing my career at Winchester, my elder brother went as an oppidan to Eton and thereby secured

one notable advantage over me. For the great frost of 1894-1895 was preceded by December floods. The river Thames overflowed its banks, Eton was flooded, and the school was sent home a week or more before the Christmas holidays were due to begin. I do not grudge this, the only advantage, which an Etonian is likely to have over a Wykehamist. After five years at Eton my brother went to Magdalen College Oxford but, after spending a year there, went to South Africa as a subaltern in the volunteer battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. His unit was not engaged in any major battle but was for the most part employed in the monotonous duty of guarding lines of communication against the attack of Boer commandos. In the course of this duty his small detachment was surprised by the enemy and he was taken prisoner but within a short time released upon the approach of larger British forces. Upon his return to England he went up to Magdalen again but found university life uncongenial and unrewarding after army service and with my father's willing assent went down and joined the family brewery. Of that more hereafter.

My youngest brother, Henry Duncan, as I have already said, joined the Royal Navy. In those days the first step was a period of training in the old Britannia. Thither he went and, passing out in due course, was posted to one ship after another whose names I forget, until at the outbreak of the 1914 war he was lieutenant in H.M.S. Formidable. This ship was sunk in the Channel on New Year's Eve 1914 by an enemy torpedo. My brother was the senior officer of the remnant of officers and crew who were saved and had the melancholy task of reporting the event to the Admiralty. I do not know what was in his report but have a vivid recollection of what he and others said of the order which had sent a cruiser squadron into the Channel unescorted by destroyers when enemy submarines were known to be lurking there. There followed a spell in one of those dressed-up tramps whose aim it was by their innocent appearance to lure enemy submarines to their destruction - an adventure very suitable to his histrionic abilities. Then he was commissioned to the "Warspite" on her first commission and in her took part

in the battle of Jutland. It will be recalled how something went wrong with her steering gear and she did an unwilling half-circle under fire from a large part of the German fleet. However she staggered home under her own steam. My brother was uninjured but for long afterwards a chunk of steel severed by an enemy shell from the gun turret which he commanded was kept by him as a memento of a near miss. When the war was over he resigned his commission and joined the brewery where his chief duty was the organisation and supervision of transport. I suppose that in these days it would be regarded as a deplorable piece of nepotism that lucrative employment should be found in a family business for one who had no previous training. Nor could I deny that in many family businesses there may have been abuse, and that in the case of H. & G. Simonds the appointment of a chairman who had been a sculptor of indifferent merit - his statue of Queen Victoria stands before the town hall in Reading to this day - and was better known as an ardent devotee of the sport of hawking, and the appointment of a director who had been a professional violinist were open to criticism. But in the case of my brother Henry no such criticism could be fairly made. His experience as a naval officer in administration and his knowledge of men made him a valuable member of the board.

My thoughts have run too far ahead and I must hark back. It is perhaps typical of the life led by an upper- or middle-class boy of my generation that thoughts of his youth should turn to his school rather than to his family life. After all, more than two-thirds of the year was spent at school and it was there that he had to face the realities of life unprotected by parental care and there that he first learned, in however dim a light, the meaning of good and evil. I was fortunate in my parents who were indulgent and kind. Too often I was impatient at what I thought was their lack of understanding - a lesson that I forgot when I myself was a parent. Our family life was somewhat unusual in that, as I have said, our means were narrow - my father was thankful when first I and then my

brother got scholarships at Winchester. But my great-uncle, to whom I have referred, was well-to-do. Already when I was born he had moved from the neighbourhood of Reading to a large house called Barton Court near Kintbury. The earliest recollection of my childhood is of its lawn sloping down to the river Kennet and of large trout flopping in the water. Then when I was six or seven years old he moved to a larger house called Red Rice near Andover in Hampshire. Here we spent our Christmas holidays and some part of our other holidays and here we enjoyed, if that is the right word, the lives of children of wealthy parents. At an early age we learned to shoot and ride and were not overawed by the presence of a butler and footman. My great-uncle was a remarkable character. After leaving Eton, where he spent nearly ten years in college, he was destined for King's College Cambridge, but it was just then that the family fortunes broke. It seems that he was cast upon the world and I have no knowledge what his next movements were. But soon he married the childless widow of a partner in the brewery and thenceforward lived a life of affluence. That for some time he took a part in the direction of the business I must suppose. He was chairman of the Brewers' Society for three years and I recollect that he sometimes went to Reading for board meetings when the business was converted into a limited company. But by and large I would say that for the last fifty years of his life he devoted himself with single-hearted energy to fishing and shooting. He was one of the first Englishmen to go salmon fishing in Norway - in the 1850's it must have been, and there were few years after that that he did not make a pilgrimage to Norwegian waters. When he was 82 years old, he fell into the river Orkla and, as the fish were moving, he took off all his clothes, put them out to dry on a rock and went on fishing in his mackintosh. But it was perhaps in the finer art of dry-fly fishing in the Hampshire chalk stream that he was seen at his best. He had known Francis Francis, Halford and Marryat and others whose names are not forgotten by anglers and learned from them. Even in his old age he tied his own flies exquisitely:

when he died there were boxes full of them, some of which I had until very recently. Shooting was his second live and Red Rice and then Audleys Wood, to which I shall presently come, provided ample sport. I have a vivid recollection of seeing him with his twenty bore guns bringing down high pheasants out of the skies in his 86th year. Perhaps the moralist will shake his head at such a tale and certainly it cannot be denied that his powers were not devoted to the public service. But there is something to be said for the view expressed to me by one of the kindest old ladies I ever knew. She had come to the conclusion, she said, at the end of a long life, that it was no use trying to be kind and that the only rule worth observing was never to do anything unkind. My old uncle went one better than this; for to all of us he was benevolence itself. I think he took particular pleasure in such scholarship as I possessed: on one occasion a golden sovereign was my reward for some Greek iambics that I sent him.

Our home life was thus, as I have said, divided between my great-uncle's house and our own more modest home in Reading. We are still in the Victorian age: we had no telephone, no electric light, no motor-car. We had family prayers before breakfast and went in a troop to church on Sundays. For a week or two in the summer holidays we usually went to the seaside: a visit to Llanfairfechan stays in my memory. We bicycled over dusty roads: I was severely reprimanded by a policeman for riding too fast down a hill. I fell desperately in love with a charming girl who lived a few houses down the road. She was kind to me but married the curate. I transferred my affections to another. A happy peaceful life it was and all the time fate was preparing for us a cosmic upheaval of which we recked nothing.

The year 1900 brought great changes both to the family and to me personally. My great-uncle had become a widower and had decided that he would make his home with us. He therefore gave up Red Rice and after seeing many country houses my parents bought a substantial house, Audleys Wood, near

Basingstoke. It was within easy reach of Reading to which my father went every day. Good shooting was available and there was ample room for us all and numerous friends.

In that year I left Winchester and went to New College Oxford. The Warden of the College was then Dr. Sewell. He had held that office since 1863, having previously been scholar of Winchester College and scholar and fellow of New College. To illustrate the decadence of university institutions Dr. Fisher once declared that the Warden had battened for 70 years on the bounty of William of Wykeham without learning to read or write. This I believe to have been a slight exaggeration. He appeared to us to be vastly old and I obtained some *reclame* by affirming that, when asked to allow the College bells to be rung for the relief of Mafeking, he said that he had not allowed them to be rung for the battle of Waterloo and was not going to do so now. He died in my second year at Oxford and was succeeded by Dr. Spooner - the Dr. Spooner who as surely as Mr. Gladstone or Lord Brougham has given a new word to the language. In spite of a reputation which tended to ridicule and an appearance which did not command respect, for he was a near albino, he was a man both feared and loved and was a great head of the College. My tutor was Dr. Hastings Rashdall, distinguished alike for his work in three different subjects. His history of mediaeval universities still holds the field and in theology and ethics his books on the Atonement and the "Moral Criterion" are still read. He was, I suppose, the most absent-minded man alive. I remember a reading party in the Cotswolds where we were staying in a farmhouse somewhat isolated and remote. Never did he venture out alone without losing himself: more than once a search party of his pupils had to go out to recover him. But he was an inspiring teacher to whom I owe much. One other Fellow I must mention - H. W. B. Joseph, for to him too I owe an enormous debt. He somehow roused in me a passion - no less - for philosophy which led to success in the Final Schools, upon which he made to me the somewhat equivocal remark: "The annus mirabilis, my dear Gavin, in which you

got your degree." His reference was to the fact that in 1904 no less than six New College men got firsts in Greats. I must pass by other figures, H. A. L. Fisher the historian who became Minister of Education in Lloyd George's government andlater returned to New College as its Warden. I saw little of him at College for his subjects were not mine. Years later I remember meeting him at the Athenaeum. It was during the second world war and he was acting as chairman of an appeal tribunal which dealt with conscientious objectors. He said that he found it very hard work for it made such a demand upon his patience. I said: "But surely that is a feature of all judicial work." To which he replied: "Well, I never thought of that!" I had then been very few years on the Bench. I would repeat it with greater emphasis today.

Again I have run ahead. There I was at New College in the year 1900, and lucky to be there. For my father might well have required me to try for a scholarship elsewhere. I make no personal boast when I say that it was common enough for a Winchester scholar who failed to get a New College scholarship to get one at another College. However, my father generously allowed me to stay with my many friends at New College and there I remained for four years - four wonderful years. Far be it from me to disparage the sort of education I had received, yet looking back at myself I cannot but think that it was too narrow. I was perhaps familiar with the classics, an indifferent scholar in the narrow sense yet imbued with a love of them which has remained to this day. I had read some history and much English literature - my head was full of poetry. French I could read well and of German I had a smattering, but I could speak neither tongue. Of science, whether chemistry or physics or biology, I knew almost nothing, to my lasting regret. I have always been ashamed of this and covered my shame by a sort of brashness, referring to that vast area of knowledge by the compendious term "Stinks".

At New College I continued a classical education, taking Honour Mods. in my second year. But in one respect at least my

horizon widened. Under Rendall's influence I had at Winchester taken an interest in Greek art and finding that Greek scupture was one of the special subjects in Mods. I chose it for mine. This was sufficient justification for a journey to Greece in the Easter vacation of 1901. We were a party of five, four undergraduates, Joseph Clay, Ken Hunter, Arthur Kelly and myself, and a Winchester master, A. G. Bather, who had a wide knowledge of Greece and had himself taken part in archaeological exploration under the aegis of the British School at Athens. This is not a travel book and I will say nothing of our journeys to Athens and Delphi and Olympia and Mycenae. There were no motor-cars and each expedition had to be carefully considered for our time was limited. But at the end of a long life I can still recapture the emotion that I felt on the first night of our arrival at Athens as I stood in the moonlight on the Propylaea of the Parthenon and looked over the temple of Nike to Salamis and the Aegean Sea. They were golden days. Perhaps they remain more vividly in my memory because I have travelled abroad less than most of my friends. It was in part due to the inspiration that I got from them that in the following year I got a pretty good first in Mods.

That was in the spring of 1902 and the next thing to look forward to was "Greats" the examination for which was in June 1904. There was therefore more than two years before that formidable event had to be faced and at the age of 20 two years seem a very long time. I was for nearly a year rather idle, sport. I played in the first College soccer eleven and on some occasions for the university; lawn tennis - here too I played for the College and for the university, but in neither game did I play against Cambridge. I just did not make the grade. That was the view rightly held by the selectors. In other ways I was active. I joined and became secretary of the Canning Club, a political club of conservatives here, which had been the nursery of famous men. At the annual dinner which I organised I made a

disastrous blunder. It was the year in which George Wyndham brought in a fiercely contested Irish Land Bill. Sir Edward Carson, then Solicitor-General, had been persuaded to come down and speak at the dinner. I failed to warn him that reporters were there and, unaware of their presence, he permitted himself some derogatory remarks about his colleagues' Bill for which he was severely criticised in the national press. He was justly angry with me. In this and other ways I passed a light-hearted year, making but a nodding acquaintance with the philosophy and ancient history which were the subjects for Greats. Then came the reckoning. I think I have never worked harder in a hard-working life than in my last year. Fortunately with philosophy the appetite grew with eating and, though it may sound priggish to say so, that part at least of my labour became a labour of love. And so the old saying "Amor vincit omnia" was once more justified and in due course I got a first in Greats. I remember receiving among many kind letters of congratulation one from Dr. Fisher in which he said that, whatever success I might have in life, I should never be so pleased with anything as with that first in Greats. I think he was right.

Life, however, in those years meant vacations for nearly half the year. Most of them I spent at Audleys Wood but twice I went to join my parents in Norway in July and had my first experience of salmon fishing. On one occasion my elder brother was there too and we came back together, driving southward in carioles from our lodge on the Orkla not far from Trondheim for several days and then taking steamer and train to Christiania, as Oslo was then called. One other expedition I recall. My mother's sister had made a deplorable runaway marriage with a German music-teacher (this sounds like a Victorian novel). She was living unhappily in Germany with her husband and two children. She wanted to get away from him but could not, or dared not, do it by herself. My mother determined to rescue her. A cutting-out expedition was devised. She and I and my brother started forth from England and by some means which I do not clearly recall managed to carry the poor lady and her

children out of the German jurisdiction into Switzerland. There they remained for a long time but eventually returned to Germany. I never saw them again. The benefit of this rather strange trip to me was that for the first time I saw the Rhine and had a day's boating on the Lake of Lucerne and spent some days in Paris on the way home.

I should be ungrateful if I did not also recall annual visits, usually at the beginning of October, to the home of my friend Robert Dundas in Scotland. His father rented a delightful place called Winton Castle in East Lothian at the foot of the Lammermoors. There was good partridge shooting there. We walked up the birds in the old-fashioned way. Usually they did not wait our coming. For the old and bearded keeper ignored the first principles that nothing scares gamebirds so surely as the sound of the human voice and would in resounding tones adjure us as we entered a turnip or potato field to "keep all in one drill". There were visits too to my friend Oswald Simpkin in Norfolk and one never-to-be forgotten stay with Sir Alfred Pease, father of my friend Edward, in Yorkshire where on the Hutton Moor I shot my first grouse.

Now I have come to the end of my formal education at school and university. Yet I have left out something which was perhaps the most important part of my life. I have heard it said that a man may be judged by his friends. May it be so with me! For in them I was truly blessed. Some I have already mentioned. But I must name also C. F. A. (John) Hare, who became my brother-in-law, sportsman and athlete, a man who took to his family business in Bristol the high ideals that inspired his life. Sometimes we were crazy together, not least when we set out to walk from Oxford to London at the end of term - a distance of 52 miles - without any previous training. It was a morning of fierce wind and rain when we left New College gate at 6 a.m. without any breakfast. At High Wycombe we ate an enormous and indiscreet lunch; at Uxbridge my feet gave out and ignominously we did the last 12 miles by train.

Geoffrey Smith I have mentioned: I do not think of him without emotion: he was truly καλος κἀγαθος. With him I played lawn tennis most summer days. We won the Varsity Doubles together. In my last year I was in "digs" in the High with Philip Kerr, with whom I shared a room, and Oliver Hoare, and Edward Phelips. With Philip, who became Lord Lothian, there was ever memorable talk far into the night. He seemed to me to be strangely dogmatic: the appearance was probably mutual. The roll is endless - I will mention only Albert Napier. We read Greats and talked philosophy together during term and vacation. He came to us at Audleys Wood and I to him at Hampton Court, where his mother, the widow of the first Lord Napier of Magdala, had a "Grace and Favour" apartment. Of him more anon, if ever I get so far in this record. In case I do not, let me say now that his friendship has over 60 years been a boon to me.

In 1904 then I had to face a new life. My choice of a profession was not the result of much deliberation. Until my third year at Oxford it had been my intention to try for the Indian Civil Service. But our old family solicitor, Philip Witham, staying with us at Audleys Wood, one day said to my father: "Gavin seems to be very fond of talking: why don't you send him to the Bar?" And it was by this covert but friendly rebuke of my garrulity that my career was decided. We had no sort of connection with the law and it was with difficulty that I found a member of Lincoln's Inn to be my sponsor. That Inn had been chosen for me with equally little calculation. I began to eat my dinners at the Inn in my third year at Oxford and could therefore hope to be called to the Bar in 1905 or 1906.

I must mention here an over-ambitious venture that I undertook in the summer of 1904. Fired by my unexpected success in "Greats" I conceived the idea that it might be worth while to try for an All Souls fellowship in the autumn. Here a "Greats" man is at a disadvantage, for these fellowships are given for history and law. It was clearly out of the question to try for a law fellowship. I therefore embarked on an intensive course

of modern history. It did not last long. An illness of a not too serious nature intervened and I gave up what would in any case have been a futile attempt. So in the autumn of 1904 I went to London and shared a small flat, 16 St. James's Court, with Oswald Simpkin, a friend of Winchester and New College days. There I stayed until my marriage in 1912.

Mr. Witham had suggested that before going into barristers' chambers I should spend a year in his office and learn something of the solicitor's side of the business. That was kind of him and I went accordingly to Gray's Inn to the chambers of his firm, which had the distinction of being the chambers once occupied by Francis Bacon. The Withams were an old Catholic family and the firm acted for a number of such families. The tin boxes which adorned the walls bore names that sounded like a muster of the Young Pretender's followers. I did not get all the benefit that I might from my stay in this office. It was a strange world in which I found myself and I did not take easily to the company of a less than clean managing clerk who was supposed to initiate me in the processes of the law. However, the year came to an end and in the course of it I passed most of my Bar exams. I then went as a pupil into the chambers of a prominent Chancery junior, George Lawrence, to whom Witham's firm sent most of their work. He was a man upon whom the gods had showered their gifts - an athlete whose record in the hurdles for Oxford against Cambridge stood for many years, an actor - his performance as Cassandra in the Agamemnon was long remembered - a singer with a fine, if untrained, voice, he came down from Oxford with the world at his feet. Nor were his prospects marred by his marriage to a daughter of Lord Davey, then Sir Horace Davey, who was pre-eminent at the Bar. Yet there were two defects in his character. He was incurably dilatory: solicitors vainly called and called again for papers that had been left with him. But, secondly, - and this was no doubt the root cause of his dilatoriness - he was over fond of the bottle. I shall not forget the shock that I had the first time I dined with him at his own house, when he got quarrelsomely drunk and

my fellow guests and I had somehow to find our way home. It was perhaps a mercy that, having become Treasury devil - an appointment that was much criticised - and being therefore on the way to the Bench, he died under an operation which his undermined constitution could not support. To me he was ever generous and kind. We played golf together sometimes and fortunately he had no difficulty in beating me. He was a good raconteur and witty in season. I remember his return to chambers full of indignation at what he considered a failure of the Court of Appeal to appreciate his argument. "That Court", he said, "is like Ridley in three minds instead of two!" Now Mr. Justice Ridley was notoriously a judge who could not make up his mind and was apt to hover between two opinions both of which were wrong. As I say, he was kind to me and I would not be unkind in my recollection of him. His death was a sad blow to me, for having no connection in the law I could reasonably have hoped that he would find me a niche either in his own or some other chambers where I might have found advancement. I had in the meantime passed my remaining Bar exams. without any distinction and after doing a further period of pupillage with Sir Arthur Underhill, a noted conveyancer, and eating the necessary dinners I was ready to be called to the Bar.

I was duly called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in October 1906 by the Treasurer, Sir Edward Clarke, whose son Adrian was called by him at the same time. Adrian's son, Edward, is now a fellow bencher of the Inn. I was called but saw no prospect of being chosen. The outlook could not have been more dim. I look back on the next two years as the unhappiest in my life. For a time I had a seat in Lawrence's old chambers, which had been taken over by Cyril Hartree, a former pupil of his. But there was no opportunity there. He could manage all the work that came to the chambers and much more. I moved then to a small dark room in the Chambers of my friend Oswald Simpkin. That was a hopeless move and I was near despair when I was invited by James Austen Cartmell, a Chancery junior with a very

large practice to go into his chambers and devil for him.

I must explain how this change in my fortunes came about. Soon after we went to Audleys Wood there came to a small house in the neighbouring village of Sherborne St. John a family which was to become a paramount influence in my life. It consisted of a Mr. Frank Mellor, K.C., the youngest son of Mr. Justice Mellor, a distinguished judge of the Queen's Bench, his wife and two daughters. Two close friends of mine at New College, Geoffrey Lawrence and Philip Langton, afterwards Lord Oaksey and Mr. Justice Langton, were already friends of theirs. The way therefore lay open to a friendship which, as I shall narrate, led in 1912 to my marriage to the elder daughter Mary. But an immediate result of that connection was that in London I became known to a Mr. Trower, later Sir Walter Trower, the head of a firm of solicitors long established in Lincoln's Inn. He, learning of my plight and knowing something of my university record, mentioned my name to Austin Cartmell who was looking round for a "devil". An interview followed and very soon I was installed in his chambers to share a room with W. J. Whittaker, a truly remarkable character. The head of the chambers was J. G. Butcher, K.C., member of Parliament for York. He had left Cambridge with high honours and had an early success at the Bar but by the time I knew him he had somehow faded out: his practice at the Bar had dwindled and he carried little weight in the House of Commons. His long political service was, however, eventually rewarded by a peerage and perhaps as Lord Danesfort he felt that life had been good to him. Whittaker, whose room I shared, was monumental in figure and in learning. He was for many years a tutor at Cambridge - I do not recall whether he was a Fellow of Trinity - and worked with Maitland whom he worshipped this side idolatry. His learning was prodigious but he was incapable of applying it practically to the facts of a particular case. I have known him to assume upon a first cursory reading of a case submitted to him that an interesting question of law arose and spend hours and days in its examination - only to

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