CHARLES SYDNEY BUXTON

A MEMOIR

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Mother & Child.

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BY H. SANDERSON FURNISS

"DO IT WITH THY MIGHT"

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PREFATORY NOTE

MY thanks are due to Lord Buxton for having asked me to write a Memoir of one whom I knew very intimately during the last four years of his life, and for whom I have the deepest affection. Of the many letters Charlie wrote me, very few have unfortunately been preserved, but, as will be seen in the following pages, many of his friends and relations have most kindly allowed me to make use of a large number of his letters to them, and in some cases have also supplied me with their own reminiscences. Some of these reminiscences I have thought it best to break up and distribute throughout the book in places where they seem best to illustrate certain portions of his life and certain phases of his character. Others I have printed as a whole, and these, with some of Charlie's poems, will be found at the end of the volume.

H. SANDERSON FURNISS

OXFORD, *May* 1914

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THE MODERN MOSES

Lord God, I have climbed high to Thee; alone
I stand; and if Thou count me not too frail,
Fling back this once the starry-studded veil
Which in abounding mercy Thou hast thrown
'Twixt naked man and Thy Infinity.
Lord, give me strength to see Thee face to face,
To live in Thee, be of Thee for a space,
And still, when I resume mortality,
Remember the past glory—so shall I
Bring back a message to the wistful world
Which, ever craving light, is yet born blind;
A message which no scoffer dare deny;
Then will the flame of Thy great Love be whirled
And blown about the hearts of all mankind!

Written by C. S. B. in June 1908, *and printed in*
THE HIGHWAY, *October* 1911

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND ETON

1884–1902

> Thou didst not turn in contempt from my childish play among dust, and the steps that I heard in my playroom are the same that are echoing from star to star. *Rabindranath Tagore*

CHARLES SYDNEY BUXTON, the subject of this memoir, was born on May 26, 1884. He was the eldest son of Sydney Buxton, and of Constance Mary, second daughter of the first Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock). Charlie was always proud to remember that he was a great-grandson of the first Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, who brought about the abolition of slavery within the Empire.

Of Charlie's mother, who died in 1892, when he was eight years old, one of her old friends writes to me :

His mother was passionately devoted to him, and it was delightful to see her look of intense enjoyment when he asked her searching questions or made a pointed comment. She felt vividly the responsibility of teaching and guiding children, and she always gave him of her very best. She wrote a little treatise on science for him, and she had it much at heart to prepare a version of the Old Testament which he and other children could have put into their hands to absorb, without difficulties or explaining away. She was working at this when she died. I think that everyone who knew her felt that she was an original and rare personality, both in her piquancy and in her depth of nature. She used to say really witty things in a guileless kind of way which heightened their point, and she was a most amusing talker, seeing the humour of everything. But beneath all her merriment there was a vein of sadness. The problems of life weighed on her, and she could not be satisfied with the comfortable explanations which make life easy, and she could not live on the surface of things. In this, I think, she was like

Charlie, and I can imagine that the fearlessness and sincerity of his convictions would have filled her with pride and respect.

The same friend, writing of Charlie's childhood, says :

Even as a little boy Charlie was very like what he was as a young man. He was a very thoughtful child, and I remember watching him as he played with his toys or looked at a picture-book, and being struck with his unusual concentration and absorption in everything he did. If he were told any anecdote or any little story he would listen intently, and would remain standing at one's side thinking over some little remark as if he were trying to find more in it than met the outward ear.

Though undemonstrative he had a hearty, hospitable manner, as if he liked his parents' guests, and he was a very interesting and pleasant child to be with, because he responded readily to any advances made to him, and gave such ready and welcoming attention to any attempt one made to interest him, instead of only being concentrated on his own doings, as I would rather have expected from a child who had strong tastes of his own.

In earlier years, and especially after his mother's death, he spent a good deal of his holidays at Fox Warren, near Cobham, in Surrey, a place he greatly loved, where his grandmother, Mrs. Charles Buxton, lived. The affection and care of his aunts, Mrs. Rutson and Mrs. Barnes, who lived near, and especially of his then unmarried aunt, Chenda, who lived at Fox Warren, made his life there a very happy one.

There are some amusing and characteristic stories of Charlie as a little boy in his mother's Diaries. She writes :

September 25, 1887.

Charles' chief excitement is being told Bible stories, which he loves. I *tell* them very discursively. The other day Charlie was looking at a picture of Elisha watching Elijah go up in the fiery chariot, when suddenly he said, "*I* know why Elisha wouldn't leave him ! He thought that when the horses scwashed froo the sky, there would be a hole, and then he would see into Heaven ! " He looked so pretty saying it. But sometimes he takes a less seraphic

view of things. I was giving an imaginary conversation the other day between the tempting serpent and Eve—"So the serpent said, '*I* wouldn't leave that nice apple just because I was told not to eat it!'" "Nor *I* wouldn't neither!" Charlie broke in, with a loud snort of agreement.

And again:

Cromer, December 22, 1891.

Charlie is wildly excited over his geological walks with Mr. Savin and comes home with Sydney's cartridge bag stuffed full of treasures, which *I* (privately) find a little *de trop* in the establishment.

I keep this to myself, but Ken is openly scornful. I heard Charlie exhibiting them the other day. "Look, Ken, this is the ankle-bone of a horse."

K. "It ain't very much like a horse, *I* don't fink."

C. (with some heat) "No—and perhaps *your* ankle-bone wouldn't be much like you, if you had been buried for hundreds and thousands of years."

The "Ken" mentioned above was a little brother two years younger than Charlie, who died in 1894. Of him a curious story was told me that he—though he was only eight years old when he died—felt keenly the position of servants, and could not bear to feel that they had to wait upon him. I mention this as interesting when viewed in the light of the later opinions of his elder brother. Charlie's sister Phyllis, to whom in later years he wrote so freely and so fully, was four years younger than himself.

A cousin of Charlie's, who saw much of him between the ages of five and eleven, has sent me the following charming reminiscences of him as a little boy:

I remember Charlie Buxton very well indeed as a little boy. I used often to stay with his parents in Eaton Place and also at Cromer. He and I were tremendous friends. He was a small, fair, sturdy boy, not in the least shy, and very attractive and intelligent. He was a most excellent companion and I was very fond of him. He was extremely keen on games, and during my visits we used to play the whole evening, till he went off unwillingly to

bed. Draughts, dominoes, piquet, and various card games were great favourites. Charlie played all well, and was very much in earnest over them, and he did not at all like to be beaten. I don't remember his caring so much for outdoor games, though we did play cricket and football now and then in rather a vague fashion. I recollect many country walks, looking for birds' nests in spring, and in the autumn going to see his father shoot in Cromer Hall woods. He much liked stories, and I used to tell them to him as we walked along, Charlie helping and advising as I made them up.

He was a very affectionate child. I shall never forget his delightfully warm welcomes when I came for a visit, his *rush* down the stairs to greet me, his bright face and sparkling eyes as he hung on to my arm, and the almost immediate demand for a game. He was always a very sensible child; even as quite a little chap he would arrange his toys in a most businesslike fashion. I think he was rather intolerant at other children being silly—or perhaps "feeble" would better express it in these days. I paid him one visit at school—I think it was during his second term at St. David's, Reigate—and he was most responsive and had so much to tell me. We went for a drive together in a cab, and I remember how we talked hard the whole time. He felt his mother's death dreadfully, and he never seemed to me quite the same child after that. One incident is very vivid. When I had come to Fox Warren the December after her death I had brought some white camellias from home with me to take to the churchyard, and he came into my room and saw them there. His loving thanks for the flowers and his sad little face were most touching. I shall always remember him as a dear little playfellow, so easy to amuse and so intensely in earnest over whatever he had in hand.

Charlie's first private school was that of Mr. Churchill at St. David's, Reigate, to which he went in October 1893, taking a good place. He was prepared by Miss Stokes, his sister's governess, to whom he owed much. He was happy there, and rapidly got towards the top of the school; but in 1895 Mr. Churchill left St. David's and set up a school elsewhere, and the change would have left Charlie head of the St. David's School for some considerable time before he

went to Eton. This did not appear to be expedient, and it was thought well to send him to a larger school, and he consequently went to Cheam, under Mr. Arthur Tabor, where he remained for rather over a year until he went to Eton. In July 1896—chiefly by way of experience, and with little expectation of being successful—he entered for the Eton Scholarship Examination, and won a scholarship. For various reasons, however, he did not take it up, and went to Eton as an Oppidan in the Summer Half of 1897, taking Fifth Form, and entering the house of Mr. A. C. Benson, an old friend of his father's. At that time mathematics was his strongest subject.

Only a few letters have been preserved during the first year of his Eton life. He seems to have been an ordinary happy little boy—enjoying the school life, keen on games, and not particularly fond of books or work. The love of books and of work for work's sake came much later. I remember him once telling me that his determination to aim at becoming head of the school arose from no feeling of ability or desire to work, but simply from a strong wish to please his father. During the last two or three years at Eton he developed rather rapidly, and began to show signs of those qualities which were in after years to make him so remarkable. Those who taught him and who were brought into contact with him were struck by the intense purity of his nature, and by a strength of character which, while making him entirely independent of the ordinary conventional standards, was yet combined with genuine modesty and a sweetness of disposition which made him always anxious to understand the point of view opposed to his own.

His love and devotion for his father, which were to grow in intensity through the years to come, appear very strongly

in the Eton letters from 1898 onwards. They are full of character and interest. There are in them no signs of the "duty letter" written home weekly with its record of facts. They are more the outpourings of a younger boy to an elder brother, of whose sympathy he is certain, and whose tastes are the same as his own. Even in these early days his letters reveal an extraordinary variety of interests for so young a boy—politics, games, fishing and shooting, books, birds and bird-life, flowers, all claim a share of his eager enthusiasm. All are discussed, and on all his father's opinion is asked and comments invited. His love for natural history seems to have begun at the age of two, when in his mother's Diary we read :

Fox Warren, July 9, 1886.

The moment that Charlie saw me yesterday, he said, "Mummy, see the hants now," and dragged me off to look at an ant-track he had discovered in the garden. I feel it is inevitable now that in my old age I shall be forced at last to be scientific.

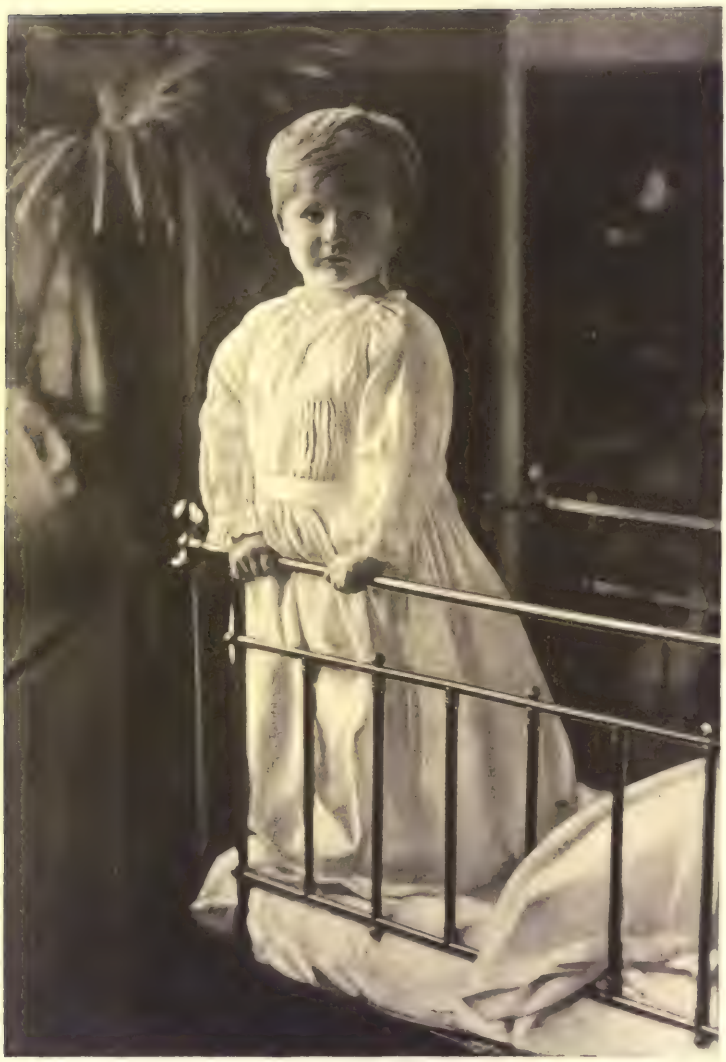
I asked Charlie if he liked being at Fox Warren, and he waved his hand in the direction of his find, and said, "Yus, hants is 'ere."

Birds and bird-life particularly had a great attraction for him ; and later, when St. Francis of Assisi had become his hero and his great example, he used to like to think that they had this mutual bond. He writes to his father on May 27, 1898 :

My Dearest Daddy,

I have a lot of exciting things to tell you. . . . There are *TWO* PAIRS OF *PIED FLYCATCHERS* nesting in Howard's mater's garden. Is it not exciting ? And he says that perhaps he will be able to get me an egg. He has already taken an egg out of one nest, and there is another nest being completed. . . .

This morning as I was coming from school, what should I see but two young house-martins sitting there ! ! ! ! I am sure they were young ones. . . .



Aged 2 years & 3 months.

The Fourth of June he would prefer to spend at Fox Warren rather than at Eton, in order to devote the day to bird's-nesting; and his collection was mainly got together on this great day. On June 5, 1901, he writes to his sister in a letter which runs into three sheets, and which contains a glowing description of a day's bird's-nesting at Fox Holm with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. George Barnes:

There are two wryneck's nests in the boxes, one of which Uncle G. and Aunt S. knew about. It was not in the place where the wryneck first put out the eggs, but in another box—5 eggs, one of which I took and blew it simply beautifully. It now reposes in the cabinet. Aunt Sybil and Uncle George vowed that these were the eggs of the original wryneck, and slanged it for turning out two nests instead of one. So we didn't look at the other box. But just before I had to go away I had a few minutes to spare, and I thought I would just look at the box. When I opened it I was much surprised, as there lay 4 wryneck's eggs. Isn't it splendid, two wrynecks' eggs in the boxes in one year? All the other boxes contained young ones or else they had flown but one, which had a redstart's nest with 7 eggs. . . .

Now prepare yourself. I think that the whitethroat you found was a lesser whitethroat. The egg is much smaller than my whitethroat's! Won't it be splendid if it is? We must measure them.

And again on June 6 and June 11 of the same year, to his father:

It is extraordinarily good that there should be *two* pairs of wrynecks building in the Fox Holm boxes. Their eggs are not really very pretty until blown, I don't think, as they are so thin that you see the *yellow* of the egg. In a long-tailed tit's it looks pink and makes the egg pretty. Phyllis's and my collection has progressed very considerably this year. I think that P. found a lesser whitethroat's nest on May 16. My reasons are in her letter. Will you ask Sir Edward Grey what the difference in the eggs of a lesser whitethroat and a whitethroat is? Is it only in size? If so, are they unmistakable? I should like frightfully to be taught the notes of birds by Lady Grey.

He played cricket and threw himself into it with the keenness he displayed over anything he took up. He sends his father in 1899 a carefully drawn up analysis of his batting and bowling averages during the Summer Half; but he was too short-sighted ever to excel in the game.

Later, when he takes to shooting and fishing—of both of which, especially fishing, he was in after years so fond—his letters are full of enthusiastic descriptions of the sport he has had or hopes to have, and of interest in that of his father. On August 16, 1899, he writes from Ireland to his father:

Thank you so much for your letter. We had great fun here the first day. I played and landed a 4 lb. grilse. I didn't have another turn. Altogether we got six salmon ranging from 3 lb. to about 11 lb. They call everything a salmon here, whether a grilse or not. The last one led us a great dance. We foulhooked him and he broke off the hooks. The river was very low and he couldn't get out of the pool, which was about 40 yards long, so we knew that we had him pretty safe. We chased him up and down. Twice Angus tried to catch him in the landing-net and once he tried to hit him on the head, but all his attempts failed, till at last I saw him trying to get underneath a large stone. So I pointed him out and Angus came up quickly and pinned him to the rock, and while someone else held the net, he "tickled" him until he got his hands under his gills, and then heaved him on to the bank, but then he nearly got away and Angus had to throw himself on him. We got him out, however, and he weighed about 11 lb. One day this week I am going to go out stalking, to which I look forward very much.

We played the cricket match to-day, in which we of course won. I made 25 not out and 18, both top scores, at which I was much pleased. I also bowled 1 wicket for 7 runs. There will probably be a spate to-morrow, as it has rained all day. We played a great bit of the match in the rain.

And again triumphantly on the 23rd:

Rejoice with me, I have slain a grouse. The happy event happened yesterday. I went out grouse-shooting with another person here and together we got $7\frac{1}{2}$ brace. I got $2\frac{1}{2}$ brace. I *was* excited when

I got my first one. I have got his legs to keep and I am going to have them mounted (at your expense).

Phyllis wrote me a very nice letter here. They think they have found out who committed the robbery. Please tell Mum I have found a flower here which seems to me to be rare, though I haven't got a book. It is like centaury, only *blue*. I am keeping a piece to show you. . . .

I am glad you had good sport with the shooting. It doesn't seem possible to get 67½ brace when we only got 7½. I suppose birds got up every few yards. When we were out towards the end it was so hot and the dogs were so demoralized that they pointed at larks ! and the keeper got awfully annoyed and kept saying, " Oh ! confoond ye ! confoond ye, for shame ! "

I have seen a tremendous lot of ringlets here, and some of those big green veined fritillary and a smaller one, I don't know what kind, and also some grayling.

In the summer of 1901 the holidays were spent on the Island of Gigha, in Scotland, where there was plenty of rough shooting and trout fishing, and these holidays always remained for Charlie one of the happiest times he ever had. He says to his father in a letter dated September 22, 1901 :

I enjoyed last holidays very, very much. I think Gigha a paradise. Perhaps the shot that I enjoyed most was when I brought down my first duck flying.

And sometimes afterwards when he was at Ruskin College, and Oxford was hot and work depressing, he used to talk of Gigha, and of the wonderful charm and beauty of the place.

Holidays in Scotland always stood for him as the most perfect form of summer holiday—more especially if he were alone with his family, and this feeling deepened as time went on. One year—I think it was 1909—he told me that he believed the house they had taken in Scotland was not large enough to take in visitors, " so we shall be quite alone with my father and mother, which is the nicest

holiday in the world." His friend Mr. Algernon Villiers writes to me :

He loved Scotch scenery intensely, and I never saw him more joyous than when I stayed with his people in Skye and at Ardmaddy.

In September 1901 Charlie got into the Sixth Form, and writes to his father :

I am in Sixth Form, and go about with stick-up collars, feeling very shy. My awful bugbear is Speeches. I shall probably have to speak very soon.

And again on the same subject :

My speech will not weigh on my mind, but I do dread it very much. I know I shall never be able to say it without a mistake.

The letters take on a more serious tone after this ; he seems to be full of a sense of responsibility, and discussions as to work and books become more frequent. His chief difficulty at this time was how to acquire a good literary style. He writes to his father in November 1901 :

I hope I shall do well in the exam., but I am rather doubtful. I cannot write good English, and that is one of the most important parts of the examination. There are two papers which have nothing to do with books, and are practically essays, and I don't seem to get any better at essays.

A few weeks later he tried for the Brackenbury Scholarship at Balliol, but was unsuccessful.

In the Summer Half of 1902 he was elected into "Pop" —that honour which is, in the eyes of the boys at all events, the crown of an Etonian career. As Captain of the Oppidans he would of course have been an *ex-officio* member in the next Half, but the boys put him up in the ordinary way, and he was elected on his merits. Seeing the homage which boys pay to athletic as against all other distinctions,

and seeing also that by his nature Charlie was in many ways unlike the ordinary conventional popular schoolboy, it was a real triumph for him.

He was to have left Eton at the end of this Half, but after much discussion it was decided that he should stay on till Christmas as Captain of the Oppidans, and go in again for the Brackenbury History Scholarship. That his literary style was improving is shown by a letter from Mr. C. H. K. Marten, his history tutor, who writes as follows in his report of the Lent school term :

His essays and all his written work show the promise which pleased A. L. Smith at Balliol : they are always thoughtful and well arranged and generally well expressed. Throughout the Half he has been regular, and in every way he is a most satisfactory specialist.

And of this report Mr. Benson writes to Mr. Buxton :

I send you Charlie's report, which is highly satisfactory in every respect. He seems to make progress, and to work with extraordinary concentration and interest. He has kept up his Latin Prose with me, and gets my History Prize. I can only say that he manifested an extraordinarily minute and detailed knowledge of the period we were doing—it fairly surprised me.

I think too that his mind seems getting more mature—I attended a paper which he read before the Essay Society on "Old Eton." It was not like a boy's paper—it was much of it compilation, of course, but he chose the right things, and his own comment was of quite a different kind from the raw generalities that boys so often, and so naturally, indulge in.

He has shown some vigour in the house—at least there has been no difficulty. I have thought some of the older boys unnecessarily noisy at times in the library—but that is out of Charlie's way, and he does not frequent it much ; but the discipline of the other boys has been good. In recommending independence of action I meant independence as far as the boys went, but I have wished about one or two things that he would have consulted me—perhaps he took independence to mean that I did not wish to be consulted. Anyhow, considering how young the boys are, and the awful majesty

which surrounded Lyttelton, it is much to Charlie's credit that there has been no susceptible change in discipline.

He is thoroughly good and energetic and wholesome-minded. I have found him *most* friendly and considerate—and I think him a really remarkable boy, both in character and intellect.

In September 1902 he returned to Eton as Captain of the Oppidans, and writes to his father :

I have already entered on some of my duties as Captain of the Oppidans. One is on a great many committees for settling various things. For instance, yesterday I spent an hour and a half discussing who should lecture here this half. Grandfather * is going to for one ; he is classed as " stinks." Then we are going to ask Augustine Birrell to lecture and so on, but this all took up a great deal of time. Then to-day I had to attend a meeting of the Committee of the Eton Mission. That was a great bore, as it hardly had the merit of being amusing. The captaincy of the Oppidans is by no means a sinecure. I have been reading some of the old records. The present Viceroy of India † was Captain when he was here, and he took the trouble to write out all the rules by which one ought to be guided in giving judgments. . . . I am writing this in " Pop," and with a great feeling of superiority. We had an election to-day, but everyone was blackballed, and we took three-quarters of an hour to elect one person, and his election was not unanimous.

Your very loving son
CHARLIE.

I feel I should like to smoke a cigarette ! !

To a nature to whom managing or being in authority was always so distasteful, such a position must have been strengthening, and Charlie began to lose his nervousness and to have more assurance. On October 5 he writes :

On Thursday I read my paper on " Izaak Walton." I don't know whether it interested anybody. There was a distinguished audience, including the Vice-Provost ! But I wasn't at all ashamed. I think I am getting rather more brazen than I used to be. Last night we had

* The late Lord Avebury. † Lord Curzon.

a debate at my Tutor's, on whether athletics are too much thought of. I said that if they were played more and thought of less we should be benefited as a nation. I opened in this strain. Most of those who opposed me did so on the utterly irrelevant ground that athletics were a good thing, and that they certainly thought games were not *played* too much, which was not the question. I carried my point by one vote.

And later :

I have been reading part of Seeley's "Growth of British Policy." I was disappointed. I like the ideas which he expresses ; he looks at everything from so far off and he seems to sort events into their right places. But the style ! I suppose the wording is correct, and indeed I like it ; it is so simple. But the arrangement seems to me chaotic. He always used to say to anyone writing an essay "let the bones show." In constructing his essay he has followed this plan, but he has put them all in the wrong places and used up many too many of each sort. The way he repeats himself is a sin and a shame. It annoys the reader and doesn't impress him any more with the fact. I admire the way in which he says something several times, and each time in a different way. But it makes me angry and bores me. I have the same objections to make to one work of Bagehot's. But Bagehot is nothing to Seeley in the way of repetition, and Bagehot has beautifully logical order, which Seeley has not. I suppose all this is presumptuous, but I was so annoyed that I have let off the steam in a letter !

The interest in work and the love of it was beginning to grow now, and he sends the following advice to his sister, who had consulted him about her study :

What I should do would be to read the period first of all in two, if not three histories, say Green, Gardiner (but he is very bad, I think, on that period), and Oman. Then begin to read some biographies. . . . I am sure, however, it is a good thing to get a *foundation* from general histories of England, and that one ought to read two or three different ones. One wants to get the history from different points of view. Not only does it make it easier to learn, but it makes it more interesting too. When once you have that foundation, I believe that biographies are a very good thing. One wants to be able to get into other people's shoes and view the

events that are passing through their spectacles. . . . I see that you are reading "Siècle Louis XIV." I think it is a very good thing to get at the French point of view. It won't be behind your period. You must remember that Louis didn't die till 1715. I think that at the same time you might be reading an English book on Louis XIV. I wish we were doing the same period.

In December 1902 Charlie left Eton. He had just missed the Brackenbury History Scholarship at Balliol, but had been awarded the Major Exhibition. His powers of expression were still his difficulty, but Mr. Benson says of him in a letter to Mr. Buxton written after the results of the examination were made known :

I have just been glancing back through my records of former reports, and following up Charlie's career. They really make an extraordinary series, and I can think of but few boys who have so steadily fulfilled their promise, and have remained so entirely modest and unaffected throughout all.

You will see what is said about his work. His power of accumulation, his retentive memory, his clear and definite grasp of facts, have a little outrun the power of expression. But I think he becomes more conscious of style, though he prefers matter to manner. I certainly should not, if I were he, aim at trying to acquire a picturesque or ornamental style—but rather at entire lucidity and simplicity. But on the other hand I hope he will read pretty widely and with a view to style.

I am truly and sincerely sorry to say good-bye to him ; he has been from first to last so entirely grateful, considerate, affectionate, and loyal that I know I shall miss him very much. He seems to me to have mellowed very much, especially lately, yet without losing any of his natural and instinctive principle. He has become more tolerant with others, not with himself. He is a very interesting boy to talk to, with decided views : but he maintains them with more grace and more deference than he used to do—not I think as a matter of courtesy only, but from a consciousness that there are other points of view.

Of his example in everything it is not necessary to speak—but I have never seen a boy with a stronger instinctive purity of nature,

or more incapable of mean or low thoughts. I confess I should find it very difficult to say what his faults were.

It has been pleasant to see the growing appreciation of what he is among the boys. I wish you could have seen the way that his speech and the mention of his name were received at our Old Boys' Dinner. The only person who seemed surprised was Charlie himself. His authority has steadily grown, and is absolutely unquestioned, and I gather that in small ways he uses it simply and outspokenly—and without any question of giving offence or causing ill-feeling.

I am *very* glad he has had this extra half. The position and the social success have just ripened him and brought out a genial dignity which is unmistakable and appropriate.

I shall always be grateful to him for all he has done for the House and myself. It is boys like these that make the backbone of Eton—and it is very encouraging when the popular verdict crowns them too.

You have every reason to be proud of him already, and you will, I believe, have still more reason to be proud in the future. Meanwhile I can only say that I wish him well with all my heart, and that there are few boys that I have known for whom I have felt so much affection and sincere respect combined. He won't forget that he has a very firm and faithful friend, and a grateful one too, in his former tutor.

Mr. A. L. Smith, of Balliol, who examined him for the Scholarship, writes to Mr. Buxton as follows :

I think it would be better to write to you direct about your son. He did very well in a year in which the competition was certainly better than the time before : for example, he beat one who had been given an exhibition last year. Some of his work was very bright, vigorous and interesting, and his best points were always extremely well put. He owes of course a good deal to the teaching he has had ; but, after all, to assimilate teaching and make it one's own is in itself a fine quality. At present he has perhaps not much depth of thought or feeling, and is a little self-conscious, with a good deal of the sanguine spirit of youth. But these things are natural, and whatever correcting they require experience will soon give. His combination of mathematical ability with good classical scholarship (probably quite up to a good second in Moderations) is quite a

remarkable one; the first subject has given his mind a good drilling, the second will develop precision and taste, and should produce thoughtfulness and breadth of view. Things could not promise better for his having a distinguished University career, and a remarkable all-round equipment for his profession and for politics.

I am indebted to Mr. C. H. K. Marten for the following reminiscences and account of Charlie and his work during his last three years at Eton.

I never knew Charlie Buxton as a small boy at Eton, but during the last three years of his Eton career I saw a great deal of him. He was one of those rare boys who showed capacity in every subject. In his last Half at Eton—when he was Captain of the Oppidans—he had a formidable array of letters attached to his name in the school list. His name ran thus—3 Buxton (7) 8 M c c f 7 α. The number 3 prefixed to his name referred to a note put at the bottom of the page concerning his prizes; and these prizes included a Trials Prize, and two "Oppidan" Prizes taken at the examinations for the Oxford and Cambridge Higher Certificates, in the second of which he obtained distinction in History and Additional Mathematics and came out fourth in the school in the whole examination, three Collegers alone securing more marks. And the other symbols indicated to those versed in the intricacies of the Eton curriculum that he had been "sent up for good"—that is to say, sent up to the Headmaster for distinguished work—seven times in Classics and eight times in Mathematics; that he had taken two certificates in the Oxford and Cambridge examination for Higher Certificates; that he had taken seven distinctions in "Trials," as the examinations at the end of each school term are called; and that he had secured a very high mark in his last examination in Mathematics.

Buxton's closest Eton contemporary was Humphrey Paul, who won a History Scholarship at New College at the same time that Buxton secured a like distinction at Balliol. These two spent a large portion of their time in my study before they went up for the examination; and they certainly made the most delightful companions. They could be intimate without being familiar—not an easy thing for a boy to be; and as they both possessed a considerable sense of humour and showed great zest in the investigation

of human politics, whether past or present, the hours spent in their company sped rapidly away. I shall always remember the time spent with them as amongst the pleasantest of my teaching life.

Buxton's work in History was good, and that it matured well is shown by the fact that he secured a First Class in the History Schools at Oxford. He had a very clear arguing head, no doubt one of the reasons why he was such an expert mathematician ; he could disentangle his facts from a mass of material, and was never one of those who "failed to see the wood because of the trees" ; and with practice he learned to write in a forcible and attractive way, and was especially happy in his choice of historical illustrations.

Yet, of course, now that Charlie Buxton is gone it is not his ability that one remembers so much as his personality. I never remember him as anything but perfectly courteous, and good-tempered, and well-mannered. I remember someone writing in a famous article of the wonder of Queen Victoria's smile ; and when I think of Charlie Buxton, I always like to think of him with his smile. Buxton's smile when he heard something which appealed to his humour, or when he was about to make some humorous comment of his own, will always be to me a delightful remembrance.

Mr. A. C. Benson has kindly sent me the following reminiscences :

Charlie Buxton was in my house at Eton for six years. He was a boy of conspicuous ability, who had an extraordinarily clear head, thought out questions for himself, and never appeared to find a subject difficult. I can remember now the look of entire concentration on his face as he worked.

He was a quiet, good-natured, invariably cheerful boy, who enjoyed life in the company of a few like-minded friends. He was one of those absolutely guileless and naturally high-minded characters whom no evil influences ever touch or come near. He was entirely courageous and spirited, unsuspicious of harm, and I think quite unaware that there were any particular difficulties or temptations in school life ; I literally do not remember that he ever did anything wrong of any kind. But he was not in the smallest degree self-conscious or superior. I am sure that he credited everyone with the same virtue and ability that he himself showed, and his modesty was a most unaffected thing.

He came to be Captain of the House, and here I think he had his difficulties. He had no athletic distinction to give him prestige,

nor had he the easy and voluble *bonhomie* which keeps things serene. But he stuck to his duties like a man, upheld discipline, intervened when he thought it his business to intervene, never complained of anyone, or invoked my assistance. I think that all this required real moral courage; and I do not think he ever let a matter slide, though he had no taste for exerting authority, and naturally disliked interfering. If he had taken an easy-going line, it would have no doubt been much less trouble; but he had a perfectly clear idea of what his duties were, and I am sure that it never entered his head to pass them by for the sake of comfort. He was respected in consequence for his quiet and serene perseverance; and I do not ever remember having a House Captain of whose conscientiousness and vigilance I could be so entirely confident. I used to feel that it was rather a strain for him, but it was a remarkable exhibition of patient and resolute courage.

He was always friendly and appreciative of any interest taken in him and his doings. Boys are as a rule, however sound and sensible they may be, profoundly absorbed in themselves and their own affairs. But I always felt with Charlie Buxton something quite above and beyond this; a real sympathy, a desire to see another point of view, and an interest in other people, not only as they affected himself, but in themselves, as they manifested their temperament and characteristics. It is hard to make clear how absolutely instinctive and unaffected all this was; he was eager, humorous, lively, and used at times to manifest a charming, almost childlike indiscretion in his talk, when one saw right into his mind and heart. I can remember even now trivial things that he said to me, little views of people and events, which were unconventional and of a pleasant simplicity which was very refreshing. He never acquired that Etonian assurance which can be disconcerting in its premature worldliness, nor did he ever adopt that curious code which invests a typical behaviour and established view of life with a rigid and even pompous sanctity. He exhibited just the natural freshness and curiosity and candour of a very able, sympathetic, reasonable boy. He used to take a decided line in discussion, and his voice would rise into a curiously emphatic resonance of utterance; but the moment he felt or saw that he was adopting too assured an attitude, he would hasten to defer, and even apologize for his vehemence. I remember, when the time came to say good-bye, when he left Eton, that he showed extraordinary emotion, to a degree which took me much by surprise, and touched me greatly.

Aged 10.

Such was Charlie Buxton at the end of his Eton career—full of promise, hope, and enthusiasm ; taking with him from Eton the best she had to give, untouched by any of the more narrowing conventions of the place. The natural simplicity of his nature was preserved and developed by the atmosphere of his home and by the love of birds and flowers, which found every encouragement there. In fact, natural history at one time seemed to absorb his attention to the neglect of almost every other form of study. He told me that when he was about sixteen one of his uncles complained seriously to his father that " it was a pity Charlie had no intellectual interests and that he read nothing but books upon sport and natural history " ! Although he had worked so hard and so successfully his tastes were not, even at the time of leaving Eton, really intellectual. But he had learnt how to work and how to throw himself heart and soul into the things in which he was interested, and when the time came his mind —fresh and open to receive impressions—was ready to throw itself with the extraordinary fire and energy of which he was capable, into the intellectual pursuits which soon began to absorb him.

CHAPTER II

OXFORD

1903–1907

Blind me with seeing tears until I see.
Let not fair poesy, science, art, sweet tones
Build up about my soothèd sense a world
That is not Thine, and wall me up in dreams,
So my sad heart may cease to beat with Thine,
The great World-Heart whose blood for ever shed
Is human life, whose ache is man's dumb pain.

IN January 1903 Charlie went into residence at Balliol as Brackenbury History Exhibitioner.* That he came up in a bye-term did not make the difference to him that it makes to many men. As Captain of the Oppidans at Eton he had already an assured position amongst the undergraduates of his year, and he seems to have thrown himself at once into the life of Balliol and the University.

He read Pass Mods, and took Greats at the end of his third year, 1905, being placed in the Second Class. During this time there is not much to record. His life was the life led by numbers of clever, hardworking, and versatile undergraduates, though it was perhaps his versatility more than anything else which lifted him out of the common rut, and preserved him from becoming the typical Oxford man of any school. He joined the Union, where he occasionally spoke during these years, and he was a member of the Russell and a fairly regular attendant at its meetings. Though not particularly good at any game, there is hardly one which he did not play at some time or another. He

* The emoluments were, however, given at his father's request to help another man in his career at Balliol.

mentions football, cricket, lawn tennis, golf, etc., and says in one of his letters: "I have been playing lacrosse, which makes the seventh different game I have played this term." He also took long walks, rode and bicycled, punted on the river, and thoroughly enjoyed running with the College boats. In his first term he even speaks of sitting up very late playing bridge—a game the very name of which he could afterwards hardly tolerate. He went constantly to the theatre, and shooting and fishing always occupied part of his vacations. He was already beginning to read omnivorously, and he kept himself in close touch with the political situation, and with topics of the day, by an unusually systematic study of the papers. He was beginning to take politics very seriously, and his letters to his father are full of questions on political matters and criticisms upon current political events.

But in spite of his enjoyment of the ordinary undergraduate amusements in these early days, there constantly appears in his letters and elsewhere a sort of haunting feeling that the very things in which he and others found their enjoyment were not the best which life had to offer—a note of pessimism, a doubt as to whether all was really weli with the world, misgivings which, growing deeper as the years went on, led him finally to Socialism. He was already developing a distaste for the conventional, and thinking seriously about the battle of life.

To Mrs. Sydney Buxton. *May* 26, 1905.

Thank you so very much for the letter and the Burne-Jones. How could you think of giving me *studs*? What an awful idea! I am not particularly given to sentiment, but I think on one's 21st birthday one does want something more within the range of the ideal, something less material and vulgar than studs. Now B. J. is a truly sentimental present; something that I shall treasure all my

life, something that may be of definite assistance to me in fighting life's battles, something that appeals to my higher nature ; as Robert Browning has it,

"We substitute in a fashion
For Heaven—poetry"

or lives of Burne-Jones, but studs ! ugh !

Society functions, or, as he was fond of expressing it, "doing things in herds," he always hated. Even in his first year he writes to his sister :

I am thankful to say that none of the family have as yet expressed their intention of visiting me during Eights Week. The date I will not divulge even to you, but I will tell you in strict confidence that it is a society function somewhat resembling the Eton and Harrow at Lord's, and that *everyone* who wants to be "chick" comes down in not only their Sunday but their Derby or Ascot best. From all such church parades the Lord deliver us. Mum will anyhow be unable to come, as she is off to Paris ; I quite horrified the Robert Smiths when I uttered a fervent wish that I might not be honoured with any inconvenient relations. If you hear of any likely to come tell them from me that I am having a rest cure to counteract the effects of over-concentrated attention to work during the Easter holidays.

Although Charlie always remained delightfully boyish, he was in some ways old for his years, and in many respects took life with unusual seriousness. He was very fond of what he used to say was Mr. A. C. Benson's theory, that one is the same age all one's life. "I have always," he writes to his sister, "been middle-aged, about 37–40, and I shall always remain that age till I am 77–80, when I might possibly grow old" ; and I remember him insisting on the same point at a much later date, when he and my wife and I had been for a long Sunday walk in the Cotswolds, and he had been particularly frivolous. In fact, Charlie was a curious mixture of the grave and the gay, often turning

suddenly from eager discussion of the most serious topics to almost childish frivolity, and he would at times wildly enjoy himself over the most absurd nonsense like an over-excited schoolboy.

To his Sister. *February* 22, 1903.

I have started a new society here of which at present I am President, Secretary, Treasurer, and sole member. It is the S.S.O.O.S., the Society for the Succour of Oppressed Orange-Suckers. On the strength of it I suck three oranges daily, and if you and Olive want to come and make a mess of yourselves in peace, my room and my oranges are entirely at your service. If you two will join, I will make you Secretary and Treasurer respectively (the Treasurer of course has to provide the oranges); but I insist on remaining President, as I founded the society. I think the title S.S.O.O.S. is a good one, as it reminds me very much of the sort of noises you and Olive made that day before the footman burst in upon you. With practice I am able to suck my oranges with the minimum of mess and the maximum of respectability and gentility.

This combination of seriousness and frivolity was one of the characteristics which made Charlie so lovable, and it remained with him to the very end. For instance, in 1911, on his way back from America, writing to a friend about his deepest religious thoughts and experiences, he adds a postscript in which he goes into raptures over a circus.

A great part of the vacations during these and succeeding years was spent at Newtimber,* a place which became more and more dear to him as the years went on. But he went abroad a good deal, spent some weeks in France learning French, went to Grindelwald for the winter sports, and also went with his family to the island of Colonsay, and stayed with his friend Mr. Wilson in Perthshire for grouse-shooting. Of these visits to Perthshire Mr. Wilson writes:

* Newtimber Place, near Hassocks, Sussex, was rented by Mr. Buxton for some years, and was subsequently bought by him.

Buxton was very keen on shooting, and stayed with me in Perthshire more than once; he was not a very good shot, but he was an excellent sportsman, and a very good companion in a day's shooting. I often think that I never enjoyed any day's shooting so much as some days' rough shooting I had in his company—he entered into the sport so thoroughly. It is perhaps not quite accurate to say that he was not a very good shot, for I remember admiring the way he was able to kill snipe. I think he had had a good deal of practice in the Hebrides that year at those birds.

In the Easter vacation of 1903 Charlie went for the first time to Italy, about which he writes from Florence with the greatest enthusiasm:

To his Father.

Then came the Alps, which were magnificent. They were covered with snow, which in some parts extended as far as the railway line. The sky was a lovely blue and the mountains showed up well against it. One of them had a ring of white fleecy cloud which clasped it as it were round the waist, and out of which rose its snow-capped head—the cloud looking almost dirty against the snow. I thought the little villages perched like birds' nests on the sides of the hills quite ripping. They don't waste much room, and the vines growing all over the available space gives a curious effect of tracery or perhaps of lattice-work.

From Florence he went to Assisi, and from there to Rome. "I love Rome," he writes, "I adore Florence, and I think Assisi can only be described as plumb or ripping according to the slang in vogue." There is a very long letter addressed to "My dear family" dealing almost entirely with his impressions of Assisi:

I am here at last in the Eternal City, but in this letter you will not get an appreciation of Rome, as at present I have but a nodding acquaintance with even a few of the more important buildings. What I shall write about is Assisi, which is absolutely the most charming town in the world, and well worthy to produce that most charming of men—St. Francis. Assisi is perched on the side of a hill, something like the hair on a priest's head, while above the town appears the green summit of the hill crowned by a castle called La

Rocca. It is a grey and brown and white little town, with a colouring which makes it look like some gigantic lichen which it is quite natural to find in such a position. In its crooked, narrow, steep little streets—*vicoli*—grass grows abundantly. The quiet peacefulness which reigns over it is a welcome contrast to all the other towns which we have visited, Turin, Genoa, Florence, Arezzo. Practically the only sign of life is the children, such jolly, charming little boys and girls, splendidly dirty, not greasy or muddy, but merely dusty, and far the happiest children in Italy. This place is far more effective in carrying one back to the mediæval days than the crowded market-places of other towns. Here one feels there can have been no change since the town was first built, and I believe the changes have been but slight. . . .

On Sunday afternoon Jenkyns and I set off to visit the church of Sta. Maria degli Angeli, which is right down in the plain below Assisi itself and stands up out of the few houses clustered round it. The church has been built round the tiny chapel which St. Francis used and the little shed in which he died. They have both been utterly spoilt by vulgar decorations which are very unbecoming in the chapel of the man who was in spirit married to our Lady Poverty. We found two men being shown round by a priest. Who should one be but the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford! So small is the world. We hooked ourselves on. The priest was a most amusing man—an Italian born in America, I fancy. He talked quite respectable English and was very anxious that at least one of us should hail from America. He took a violent affection to me, and kept hooking his arm into mine, and there was a world of meaning in the "Good-bye, young man," with which he clasped my hand as we went away! We saw all sorts of relics of St. Francis—his rope, the cell in which he used to pray, a nasty underground place, and the famous roses about which Mum will tell you. The priest alleged several curious things about them. They certainly have no thorns, but what is more curious is that they never grow above a certain height—a miserable two feet or so—and each a thin stalk with no branches. I have brought away two dried leaves given to me by the *frato*, one of which I shall keep myself, but the other I have much pleasure in putting up for auction, but no one may have it except a blind admirer of St. Francis. Thence we went to San Damiano, or rather I did alone, as Jenkyns felt slack. . . . At last after about three-quarters of a mile we reached the church, a dear little place all on a miniature scale. It was here that St. Francis first had a call, and it

became the church of Sta. Chiara, the founder of the poor Clares or female Franciscans. The whole thing is almost as it was in St. Francis' days, and there is none of the gaudy ornament which has spoiled the Portiuncula. I was shown several relics of St. Chiara, and also her garden, a sort of window-box with one or two seedy-looking flowers in it. The tiny little cloisters are quite charming, and it was a thousand pities that I was the only one of the party who saw the church, as it is the only place which is really unspoilt by the mistaken gorgeousness of the Renaissance. . . .

Altogether Assisi is one of the most delightful spots in the world, and if I ever go to Italy again I shall certainly take the opportunity to pay it a visit.

I have quoted from this letter at some length, as this visit to Assisi may unconsciously have been the beginning of the influence which the character and teaching of St. Francis had on Charlie's life and ideals—an influence so deep that it led him, while still very young, to think seriously on the relations between rich and poor, and the injustice of our own social system ; an influence which laid the foundation of the resolve to which he ultimately came, to renounce the luxuries which the world had to offer him, and to devote his life to the service of his fellow-men.

In the Easter vacation of the following year he visited Florence, Rome, and Assisi with Mr. Humphrey Paul, and again thoroughly enjoyed his time there. A year later he writes to his sister :

I am feeling just at present peculiarly Romesick. I walk about with a stick bought in Italy : the other day I had out all my photographs. I find I have got ninety-eight big ones and over thirty half-sized ones. Finally I have been courting the Muse with the two following results :

Who's been to Rome will understand
Why writ in my heart is "Greats be d—— !"
Oh to be in Florence
Now that April's here

And whoever wakes in Florence
Sees some morning unaware
That the foreign migration is passing through—
English, American, German, Jew,
And the prices are going up, I trow,
In Florence now.

When 40 makes the Lenten total
And villas fill and every hotel,
See where amid the Pitti's beauty-laden halls
The jostling crowds are blind to beauty's charms,
Save where the imperious guide-book's star-light calls—
That's the wise critic full of vague alarms
Lest what he deems a genuine Pollajuolo
A rival should pronounce no more than a "scuolo";
And though such sights may cause no piercing pain,
All will be well when summer wakes again
The mosquito—{the foreigner's *bête noire* / which sets the foreign fears agog
Far deadlier than the average English {choir. / fog.

I can't manage the last two lines.

At the end of the Summer Term of 1905, as I have already said, he obtained a Second Class in Greats, just missing a First as he himself thought.

To his Father. *October* 1, 1905.

I was glad to hear what Davis had to say, but you must remember that it is a very stock thing to say that "there were a special number of good men," etc. Of course they only give a certain number of firsts, and if the standard happens to be high the moderate person doesn't get one, but I don't believe the standard varies so much, and at any rate one is placed in one's year. Still I think my long viva did really indicate that I was on the border-line.

On the same subject Mr. (now Professor) J. A. Smith wrote Charlie the following letter:

My dear Buxton,

As Bonnerjee told me the other day when he was up that you were nervous lest you might have dropped into the third, I may venture

to congratulate you on your second. It was never for a moment in doubt in that direction. Were it not for the very heavy handicap of your scholarship, you might have aspired higher. Your History was excellent, and your Philosophy very creditable. You have done very well indeed and may reckon confidently on getting your first in Modern History. I do not think you will ever regret that you turned aside for a while to the ancients.

Yours sincerely,
J. A. SMITH.

Charlie's description of his Viva is very characteristic :

TO HIS SISTER. *July* 21, 1905.

I have just been going through an awful time in my *viva voce*. It took an hour, so that I knew I was on the borders between two classes, but which two I really don't know. They badgered me hard, and I got internally very cross with them, especially as I simply couldn't answer half the questions. At last I got so bored I began making up imaginary answers, but that didn't answer any better, and I got badly ragged each time. The last quarter of an hour was occupied in trying to find some question I *could* answer ; it was very difficult. At last the examiner—Oman, you have read his English History—said, in a despairing voice, pointing to the Balearic Isles, " Well, Mr. Buxton, *can* you tell me the names of those islands ? Balearic ? *That* will do—you can go ! " I shook a metaphorical fist and the dust off my shoes and went.

It was decided that Charlie should remain for another two years at Oxford, and read for the Modern History School. The task of presenting an adequate picture of him during these two years is easier than it has been hitherto, owing to the fact that in July 1905 he began to keep a very complete Diary, recording not only facts, but his own feelings and ideas on a great variety of subjects. The Diary also contains criticisms of books, analyses of lectures which he heard, and political speeches which he read, as well as a quantity of cuttings from all sorts of papers on any subject

which attracted him at the moment. "I have just been inspired," he says on the opening page, "by Mother's Diary to try and keep one of my own. Though it may never amuse anyone else, it will most certainly be interesting to me in the future. It shall not be for publication and I will be perfectly frank."

He had always been a good letter-writer, but from this time he developed the art of letter-writing to an extent most unusual in a young man whose life was already so full. He wrote constantly and at great length both to his family and his friends, and many of his letters have been preserved. They are delightful reading. As he often said, he thoroughly enjoyed writing letters; and he had the rare knack of writing exactly as he thought and talked, so that his letters almost made you feel that he was sitting in the room with you. His idea was that letters ought only to be written when you were inspired by a wish to write, and he held the peculiar theory that all pleasure in correspondence was gone if you ever "answered" a letter. Any questions you asked him were generally carefully ignored—a practice which was sometimes rather inconvenient; but he was nevertheless exceedingly annoyed if you failed to write to him frequently and to reply to any question which he had put to you!

It was during these years that he began with some diffidence, but with a great deal of pleasure, to try his hand at writing poetry, and towards the latter part of this time verses appear frequently in the Diaries and sometimes in his letters.

He still entered into the ordinary Oxford life as eagerly as ever, but with certain marked changes to be noticed directly. His occupations became even more varied than they had been, and his versatility, if anything, increased. For a time he even

studied music, although he had hardly any ear, and could not in any strict sense of the word be called musical ; in spite of the fact that he speaks of being worried while on a visit to some friends because he could not "keep up his music," this amounted to little more than picking out tunes on the piano with one finger. But he had a perfect passion for Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and once, when my wife was going to have the appendicitis operation, he insisted on us all going to *Patience* a few nights before to give her, as he said, "something nice to think about all the time." He once said that he would like to hear "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes" every day. With his usual thoroughness he tried to approach all kinds of music in an understanding spirit, and his inability to appreciate it more sometimes annoyed him. He was always pleased when he had been able to enjoy anything classical, and he had a very real appreciation of and love for Beethoven. There are many references in his Diaries to concerts and to his feelings about them :

February 8, 1906.

To *Lohengrin* with Veitch. Enjoyed it much more than I expected, especially the Wedding March and the song of Elsa ending "Our faith divine—for God is love," which was, I thought, really beautiful. Indeed I liked all the music which breathed triumph, or love, or peace, or joy, etc., but I hated it whenever Frederick was expressing his opinion, or when there was a war of discords. On the whole there is too much noise about Wagner (if this is typical) for me.

And again :

February 25, 1906.

To concert, which was *divine*. I haven't enjoyed myself so much since Yvette Guilbert. Miss Foster sang the old French songs quite beautifully, and the Zulueta man with his bass aria was too ripping : I even enjoyed the violin as it was Beethoven. I think the reason why I don't appreciate violin and other sorts of music is

that my mind is so small that it can only grasp a little at a time. It cannot roam over much. It can seize and appreciate and appraise an epigram, but cannot grasp an epic. It has forgotten the first half before it hears the second. Similarly I cannot appreciate the Sistine Chapel, because the pictures there cannot be taken in without moving the head: similarly with music. What I am not reading or hearing or seeing at the moment is beyond the range of my judgment. This is a lamentable and very far-reaching failure, and makes it impossible for me ever to succeed in anything which requires a wide survey—such as politics.

Hymns always appealed to him, as they do to so many whose musical sense is merely a necessary accompaniment to an artistic and impressionable temperament, and he thoroughly enjoyed the Sunday hymn-singing at Kippen House when staying with Mr. Wilson.

DIARY. *August* 13, 1905.

After tea, hymns. Very nice indeed. We had all my favourites. Also Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

And in the same year:

Rode over to Alfriston. As I was sitting in the church a girl about Phyllis' age, dressed in pink, came in with her father, who started to blow at the organ. She sat down and played awfully well some psalm tunes. Then she started singing hymns. She had a magnificent voice and I spent a delicious twenty minutes listening. She sang "We are but little children weak," "Fight the good fight," and others. One of them, I forget which, fitted into the metre of Rudyard Kipling's "Sussex," and I repeated to myself as much as I knew. The result of this idyll was that instead of sixpence I put five shillings in the church box!

He recognized and very much liked certain simple tunes, though he was quite unable to reproduce them in any way in which they could be recognized by others, and his enthusiastic roaring, quite regardless of time and tune, of popular songs with the Ruskin College students at their

social evenings is a thing not likely to be forgotten by those who heard it.

In the first year after Greats he took things easily as regards his work, and was devoting so much time to outside interests, including a great deal of theatre-going, that his father became a little nervous as to the effect of his many and varied occupations on his chances in the History Schools. He wrote to him suggesting rather more concentration on historical reading, and Charlie answered with the usual complete frankness which marks all his letters to his father, admitting that a First had not occupied the place of honour in his ambitions, but expressing his willingness to concentrate on reading History if his father thought it better.

From this time he worked steadily and hard, as was made apparent by his subsequent success in the Schools, for in 1907 he obtained one of the best Firsts in History of his year. But other interests still lay nearer his heart, and neither now nor at any time did personal ambition supply the guiding motive of his life.

The vacations during these years seem on the whole to have been very pleasant ones. He stayed with his friends and went abroad several times, but Newtimber, with his own family and one or two chosen friends, became to an ever-increasing extent as the years went on the most perfect form of holiday to him, and when he is away he is always "wondering how Newtimber is looking," and "what is happening there," and "counting the days" till he gets home.

He spent part of two Christmas vacations at Grindelwald, and these visits seem to have been an unqualified success. He liked the invigorating air very much, enjoyed ski-ing, and in the New Year of 1906 there are delightful accounts

of evenings at the Pension Kirchbuhl, where he stayed with Mr. R. K. Davis and Mr. Bonnerjee.

DIARY. *December* 31, 1905.

We had a most interesting New Year's Eve. It began with a specially good dinner; then there was an interval. At length we persuaded the little girl—a charming creature and very intelligent—to play on the piano. She was nothing loth and plays quite fairly well. Then the two ladies came in and played a duet. Then Davis sang "Tit Willow" while one of the ladies accompanied him. Then he started dancing with the little girl and broke a mantle on the gas, so we adjourned into the next room and everyone but me danced. I did try once, but couldn't, and gave it up. Then we sat round and drank some "punch"—hot sweetened wine, very good. Then more dancing—more punch—they sang some Swiss dialect songs and we sang "For Auld Lang Syne." Then we adjourned into the piano room again and sang and played fitfully. They sang the Lorrelei amongst other things. At last the bells of the church began and we stood at open windows and listened and looked at the stars, which were quite wonderfully brilliant and beautiful. Then the clock struck twelve, and we shook hands all round and went to bed—and a very good night.

And again on January 9:

Came back to find an organized snowball demonstration. Davis and I gallantly attacked, and we had a good rag. More Stubbs. After dinner when we asked for the kid we were told that the unfortunate girl had been sent to bed. So I shall not see her again, alas.

I have enjoyed myself even more this year than last. They are a most charming family, and I shall certainly try and repeat the experiment next year—or rather this.

Charlie was devoted to children, and thoroughly understood them, treating them seriously, as they like to be treated, and he made great friends with the little girl at the pension, who, we gather from a letter written to him by her mother, "cried every evening for some time" after his departure, and to whom he wrote at Christmas for some years.

In the summer of 1904 he went for the first time to Langeais in Touraine, where he stayed with the family of M. Gaunay in order to improve his French—a visit which was repeated in June 1906, when Mr. Bernard Bourdillon joined him there. He seems to have enjoyed his insight into French life, and writes long and amusing descriptions of the parties he went to with the Gaunays, and of the people he met. He writes of long bicycle rides to the places of interest in the surrounding country.

To the Family. *July* 22, 1906.

We started to bicycle to Loches—quite a long way—about 40 miles, but by twelve o'clock we had only got to Montbazon—due to a bad puncture, 20 miles of the way or thereabouts. It was piping hot, and the dinner bell sounded in our ears like the sound of the sea in a shell. So we turned aside into a delightfully shady garden by the water's edge where one fishes during coffee. There we found the spirit of Touraine and fell a victim to its charms. There was to be no more hurrying, and in effect lunch took over one and a half hours, not counting the cigars and coffee (cigars awfully good at 1½*d.* each—demi Londres they are called, and I hold that they beat the best you can get in London). It then occurred to us that the road was dusty, that the glare was terrible, that we were cool but should be hot, that a train was ready for Loches—and soon and finally, Mark Twainlike, we took the train. Loches is wonderful. I will not rhapsodize, for you must be tired of my adjectival outbursts, but taken as a whole I think it beats any town in Touraine. It has got everything down to a dungeon, over which one is taken by a placid dame who pours horrors into one's blood-curdled soul. The climax is reached when one is introduced into the "tortuar" chamber and shown the bar of iron to which the unfortunate wretches were attached. One emerges into the sunlight with a sense of relief, and it was with peculiar sensations that we saw a white pigeon sitting peacefully on its nest in one of the corners of the Château.

But he seems to have been oppressed by the relaxing air and by the general inertia of the inhabitants of Touraine,

Aged 17.

and complains of not feeling well, of being tired, and of having had fits of depression and dissatisfaction with himself.

DIARY. *July* 24, 1906.

We started off in the morning for Château la Vallière, à bicyclette as far as Langue. I was in a bad mood to start with, and it got steadily worse all through the day, until on the way back I was not worth speaking to . . . . We had a musical evening, and I was slightly soothed by Beethoven and was certainly amused by an absurd play which ragged drawing-room conversation :

Vous avez eu de beau temps ?
Oui, mon baromètre monte.
Le mien aussi.
Tiens, c'est drôle ; deux baromètres qui montent au même temps !

And again :

Votre sucre est bien blanc, madame.

I only had one moment's enjoyment all day—lying in the heather and composing the following idiocity :

D'ailleurs je sens la tristesse,
J'ai toujours des pensées rebelles ;
Mais ici la douce allégresse
Des Tourangelles

Doit dresser la peine de mon âme
Et attirer une humeur nouvelle—
Une humeur joyeuse et calme,
Et Tourangelle.

Mais, hélas, je suis trop malheureux
Pour ce qu'aucune des choses mortelles
Puisse me guérir—pas même les yeux
Des Tourangelles !

Alors seul je poursuivrai ma voie,
Car mon âme n'est pas assez cruelle
Que de combler de tristesse la joie
D'une Tourangelle !

The Langeais time was, however, on the whole a success,

and ended cheerfully with an entertainment in which Charlie appeared as a pierrot, followed by a dance. "It was the first ball I have ever really enjoyed, and the first time I have sincerely wished I could dance."

On their way home from Langeais, he and Mr. Bourdillon visited Chartres Cathedral, and of this Charlie writes in his Diary for August 2 :

A day très mouvementé. We began by seeing the Cathedral really thoroughly, inside, outside, round, above and below. Climbing up on to the tower was very impressive, and made one realize the enormous faith of a people who could raise such a monument to their God. The whole cathedral is in a wonderful state of preservation, hardly a statue missing. It is far the finest I have ever seen, and it gave me a vague and exquisite pleasure to sit in it—especially yesterday evening, when we watched a broad shaft of light which crossed the cathedral. Each person who passed through the light was momentarily illuminated, transfigured, transformed into a being of spiritual beauty. . . . The windows in Chartres are some of them glorious—especially the north windows with their wonderful rich red—lit up by the evening sun. I wish I had the gift of description and I would dilate on Chartres. It makes even the picture postcard enclosed one of the most beautiful I have ever seen.

On his return home from Langeais he had two or three delightful days at Itchen Abbas, in Hampshire, fishing with his father, and then joined the rest of his family at Penrhôs in Anglesey, where there was a large party of relations. He did a good deal of sailing, and an enormous amount of reading. He much enjoyed meeting Mr. Emery Walker at the house of Miss Adeane.

DIARY. *August* 19, 1906.

There was Mr. Emery Walker, who was one of Morris's managers and is now a photogravurer (is there such a word ?) He explained the process to me. . . . As I didn't get a long talk with him—only before and after lunch—I got but little out of him. He had met both Watts and Millais, and classed them together as being dull to talk

to—"their intellect was in their finger-tips." He had just been having a lunch with Swinburne and Watts Dunton. Apparently S. is very deaf and doesn't talk much, but afterwards they went upstairs, and S. read two acts of his new play on the Borgias, and his face lit up with genius and poetical inspiration. When Morris read poetry aloud he always laid great stress on the rhymes because, as he said, "What is the use of our taking so much trouble to find rhymes if they are not to be emphasized in the reading?" Very characteristic of his hatred of "useless ornament."

Charlie went to the Carnarvon Eisteddfod, and was much impressed by it, especially by the Chairing of the Bard, of which he says:

It was really thrilling, didn't seem a bit absurd or out of date, a really national ceremony. I wished awfully I was a Welshman at the moment.

But this was not a holiday after his heart. He was not well, constantly complains of having bad nights, of being "very tired all day," and longing to get into some really wild country—"away, away from men and towns kind of feeling." He felt, and apparently was, unsociable and restless, and began to be more and more oppressed by fashionable life and luxury.

DIARY. *August* 31, 1906.

I am most unaccountably slack here; and at the same time dreadfully restless. My longings are shared between Oxford and Bourdillon, or someone who *knows* me.

Books and a friend
At the world's end

is what I really want.

Nevertheless, in some ways the time at Penrhôs was, as Mrs. Buxton told him, undoubtedly good for him. He learnt to be more adaptable, to be more tolerant of people with whom he was not in sympathy, and he says himself in one place that he is "mellowing still more in his opinions."

But all his life he disliked people in crowds, and longed for peace, open Downs, for time to read and think. On September 18 he writes from his beloved Newtimber : "It is a relief to get back here and be at rest." And again to Mr. Bourdillon on September 23 :

I don't know what, but there is always lots to do in the country. Here all is peace and content. There is lots of time to read—whether history is what is read is another matter—but I must say I have done my duty to the tune of about four hours a day. But I manage to find time for other reading too, and yet I get plenty of exercise withal, riding and shooting and fishing and messing about the garden. We have no excitements except when occasionally the alarm "Visitors!" is raised, but, thank God, it is generally a false one. "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, la vie est là, simple et tranquille." The days here "se suivent et se ressemblent," and yet are never monotonous. How dull all excitement really is, don't you think so? And it isn't that we are slack here : everyone is always occupied somehow—if it be only in shredding moon-wort, and everyone is very well.

Every year he was throwing himself more and more into life at its hardest. Every year he felt more and more the necessity of putting on his own shoulders the burden of the weak and the oppressed, and as the struggle grew harder and life more strenuous, so Newtimber and all it held of peace and love became more dear to him.

Oh to be back in Sussex,
And over the Downs to swing,
With the bright blue sky above me,
And under my feet the spring
Of the downland turf, while below me
Lies my dear home welcoming,

was the expression of his heart when life was difficult, and the feeling was to grow in intensity in the few short years to come.

During these two years, and probably earlier, there were certain forces at work which were tending to guide his life into the direction which it afterwards took, and to form the ideals towards which he was to strive. These forces were, I think, art, literature, poetry, and politics.

Brought up in a delightful and stimulating home atmosphere, his nature readily and eagerly responded to his environment, and, together with a passionate love of nature, he learned to care for all things beautiful and to study art in a reverent but critical spirit. He was much influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite school, and of all the books he read at this time the one which undoubtedly left the most permanent mark upon his mind was Mr. Mackail's "Life of William Morris." He once told me that he thought this biography had had more influence on the lives of the thoughtful undergraduates of his time than any other book, and after finishing the second volume he writes in his Diary :

September 3, 1905.

Finished Vol. II of Morris's Life : a great man ; "one who never turned his back but marched breast forward" ; a man who left his mark on his age.

He was constantly at the Ashmolean Galleries, and loved the Rossettis there.

To his Father. *May* 25, 1904.

There are some beautiful pictures by Rossetti in the Ashmolean here, four of Mrs. Morris and two others, and I have been to see them several times lately in this beastly weather.

He was a very great admirer of Watts and Burne-Jones, particularly of the latter, and there are constant references to him and his pictures in the Diaries and letters.

DIARY. *July* 2, 1905.

Have just finished Mrs. Russell Barrington's "Reminiscences of Watts." . . . It would be interesting if someone would write a comparison of Watts and Burne-Jones. Their characters were in many ways much alike. There is the same strange combination of modesty and pride, of the feeling that their work is of little value and the feeling that they are fulfilling a great mission. Both felt that they were the instruments for the moral elevation of mankind, both aimed at "the highest, the best." Both were what is called for want of a better name Celtic natures, both were influenced by the mystery of existence: neither in their heart of hearts wished to see the solution of its problems. Yet their expression differed radically. Watts was impressed with the grandeur of this mystery, Burne-Jones with its delicate beauty. Watts reproduced the permanence and magnificence of great abstractions, Burne-Jones' pictures represent the underlying beauty of things. Both are idealists, but the ideals of the one are rather moral, the ideals of the other were more purely æsthetic. This is of course misleading; Watts was not a moral reformer; he wished his pictures to be "great anthems," but such a phrase can never be applied to Burne-Jones' pictures. Their music is essentially different from that of the swelling anthem. There is all the difference between what is handsome and what is lovely. Both painters merely suggest. Watts used to call his paintings "suggestions." Burne-Jones never portrayed an actual incident, but rather the moment leading up to it.

And again on November 13 of the same year:

Went to see Burne-Jones' *Flower-Book* at the Fine Art Gallery. We were shown the originals as well as the reproductions. I was at first rather disappointed, as the reproductions are hung up under glass, and under such circumstances are rather spoilt; but when looked at in the book they attract one more and more.

In 1904 he writes to his father:

I wish there were a decent life of Burne-Jones going; I hear that there is one in contemplation. I shall certainly get hold of it to read when it comes out.

and he was delighted when Lady Burne-Jones brought out the Life of her husband, and used constantly to quote from it, saying that it was one of the most "intimate" books he had ever read, and that it made you feel as if you had been a personal friend of Burne-Jones himself. He always loved reading meaning into pictures, and this was perhaps one reason why Miss Brickdale's work particularly appealed to him. He was delighted when any of his friends bought her pictures, and I remember the joy and excitement with which he told me that his sister had decided to spend a legacy on two of the pictures shown in Miss Brickdale's Summer Exhibition of 1909.

Charlie's reading during these years was omnivorous. Besides learning Italian and reading for the Schools more widely, at any rate, than many men, he literally revelled in literature of all kinds—biography, poetry, essays, reviews, almost every novel of any importance that came out, besides a good many indifferent ones, as well as a most comprehensive list of the classics, such as George Eliot, Thackeray, Kingsley, and above all his favourite Meredith. He kept a careful record in his Diary of what he had read each day. Here are two days, one at Newtimber and one at Oxford, both very typical:

September 18, 1906.

Spent the morning over French history; just before lunch Father and I caught two fish. Afterwards Watson's poetry and then out after partridges. We got nothing, not even a shot, but caught seven fish instead—taking alternate ones. One of mine was nearly 1 lb. The twins and Mum and Miss M. arrived; after tea I began Mrs. Ady's Life of Beatrice D'Este, but was much disappointed to find that the portrait in Dmitri with which I fell in love is of Bianca Sforza, the illegitimate daughter of Ludovico, who married Galeazzo Sanseverino, and is not Beatrice. I do love being at Newtimber and feel ever so much fitter already. After tea we had

some "Pride and Prejudice" aloud, and I began "Il Santo" and the "Quintessence of Ibsenism."

October 20, 1906.

Besides "Il Principe," Musset, and "The Irrational Knot," I have been chiefly working at Charles le Téméraire to-day, looking at Davis, Petit-Dutaillis, Kirk and Freeman. Also attended Wakeling's lecture.

Towards the end of 1906 Charlie began to be interested in the writings of Mr. H. G. Wells and Mr. Bernard Shaw, both of whom were to have a decided influence on his outlook on life in the years to come. He became more than ever an enthusiastic admirer of Robert Browning and George Meredith.

DIARY. *October* 9, 1906.

I read George Meredith's "Spirit of Earth in Autumn" again. It *is* beautiful. I like the lines describing a silver birch—always one of my favourite trees.

> And here
> Like frail white-bodied girls in fear
> The birches swung from shrieks to sighs.

TO HIS SISTER. *April* 7, 1905.

I have finished learning "Love in the Valley." I really know quite a lot of poetry by heart now, and will willingly compete with you when you come down here—but L. in the V. is my *chef a'œuvre* at present.

"Love in the Valley" remained for some years a favourite poem, and he was quite excited when he thought it had been conclusively proved that it was the beech-tree which was "single on the greensward." The poetry he learnt by heart he was fond of reciting in a loud voice while dressing.

He read a good deal of Fiona Macleod, whose mysticism and dreamy beauty appealed to him strongly.

DIARY. *August* 6, 1906.

I was just in the mood for Fiona to-day. It may be nonsense, but it is not only "precious," but also sincere—and gives one vague longings.

He did not, however, confine himself to English literature. His Diaries are full of references to French writers, such as Balzac and de Musset, and later, when he had sufficiently mastered the language, to Italian authors, particularly Fogazzaro, of whose books he writes long criticisms.

Charlie was from a boy, as was natural, always much interested in politics. At home he had excellent opportunities of hearing political questions discussed, and his father always encouraged him to write and talk to him about the questions of the day. Family arguments on politics, and indeed on almost everything in heaven or earth, were a great feature of his home life. He came up to Oxford a strong Liberal, and, with the exception of one or two slight lapses, seems, during his first two years there, to have been what may, for want of a better expression, be described as "quite orthodox." He accepted the ordinary Liberal views of politics without much question. He took a keen interest in the fiscal question, and was an early member of the University branch of the Free Trade Union, afterwards serving on the Committee. His first speech at the Union, in his second term, May 1903, delivered a few days after Mr. Chamberlain had embarked on his fiscal policy, was on the motion "That Mr. Chamberlain's latest confession of political faith represents an unsound and dangerous policy." He only spoke on one other occasion in 1903, in favour of passive resistance, and not again until the Hilary Term of 1905, when he moved the motion

"That in the opinion of this House the immediate granting of full representative government to Russia is imperative." During this year he became much interested in Russian affairs, and writes with the greatest enthusiasm about the revolution in Russia in the autumn.

To his Sister.

Aren't you frightfully excited about Russia? It is the most glorious thing that you or I shall see in our lives. . . . I think it is quite splendid the way the Russians behaved and almost wholly avoided bloodshed, except the disturbances of a few hooligans. . . . I wish I was in Russia just now. It must be a splendid sight to see a whole nation rejoicing in a victory—not a victory like Mafeking, but a victory over oppression and anarchy. I should like to go and throw my cap up with them; wouldn't you?

As always, he was impatient if his family and friends did not at once fall in with his enthusiasm and immediately adopt his own very sanguine view.

A year later his interest in Russia was still further stimulated by a meeting with Professor Vinogradoff, and there is a long and enthusiastic account in the Diary for November 14, 1906, of an address which he heard the Professor deliver on the Russian situation; and a few days later he is much delighted at receiving an invitation to lunch with him.

Charlie spoke on only four other occasions at the Union, three of these being in 1905 and one in 1906, always on the losing side. He never stood for office, but was for three terms a member of the Library Committee.

He was not by nature a good speaker, and what success he afterwards achieved in this direction was acquired by steady perseverance rather than the result of any oratorical gifts. He was always very diffident about his powers as a

speaker. In a letter to his father about a speech he had made at the Union in December 1903, he says :

I don't think I can be cut out for a public speaker ; I never quite know what I am saying, and I am always at a loss for a word.

Mr. Humphrey Paul writes :

He had a good, clear voice, and I remember Alexander Shaw, who was President in the Summer Term of 1905, admired his speaking very much. But it was not first-rate ; and on the other hand it was neither cheap nor frivolous ; so that he never became a real Union success.

As regards the subject-matter of his earlier speeches, Mr. Bourdillon's estimate is, I think, correct.

His own early speeches at Oxford, apart from a vein of humour which they never lacked, were like the majority—little more than echoes of the week's speeches in the papers.

But by the end of 1905 he had improved considerably, and his speeches at the Union in that year were favourably noticed by the *Oxford Magazine* and other University papers ; *e.g.* the *Magazine* says of a speech made in November 1905 :

His delivery and style have improved enormously, and he shows every sign of developing into a formidable orator.

And again of another speech made a few weeks later :

Mr. Buxton gets better and better every speech he makes, and always stimulates even a jaded house.

Mr. Alexander Paterson writes :

I knew him at Oxford and was always struck by his thirst for acquiring information, and his modest reluctance to express an opinion. He was so amazingly painstaking and conscientious in his search for facts, in strange contrast to the rest of us who spoke at the Union and belonged to political clubs, and who fired off speeches

every other night on a multiplicity of subjects, of which we knew nothing outside the party pamphlets.

He early became a member of the Committee of the Russell Club, and served his term as Secretary, Treasurer, and President in 1905. Mr. Humphrey Paul, who was also a member of the Committee, writes: "At the Russell of course his ability and force of character made him an outstanding figure, and secured his rightful position as one of the leading members of the club." Charlie took a fairly active part in its meetings, and Mr. A. E. Zimmern says of him as follows:

We used to meet at the Russell Club, of which Charlie rose to be President. I remember reading a paper, during his incumbency, on the comprehensive subject of Twentieth-Century World History; and I recall the look on his face and the tone of his voice when he rose, a little stiff and bewildered, to open the discussion. The exact adjective with which he was good enough to let me off has also lingered in my mind: it was "apocalyptic." But we had a good discussion, which was the main thing.

He did not, however, remain for long after coming to Oxford an uncritical adherent of the Liberal party, or in fact of the party system. As early as June 9, 1904, he writes to his father:

Parliament is really too sickening nowadays. I wish someone would kick up a real rumpus and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I would join a revolution to-morrow for tuppence. If Parliament is to degenerate into a set of petti-fogging hairsplitters let's have something else. Don't you think so?

By the beginning of his fourth year he had become much more interested in social reform than in party politics, and although he threw himself heart and soul into the General Election of 1906, working and speaking for his father in Poplar, and for Mr. E. N. Bennett in Mid-Oxon, he was

becoming less and less a whole-hearted supporter of the Liberal party.

In 1904 he and some friends re-formed the Social Science Club at Oxford. It was by way of being a non-party club, and gave him the opportunity of hearing social questions discussed on their merits, apart from any considerations of party. He was a pretty regular attendant at its meetings, and there are constant references to these in his Diaries and letters.

To his Father.

I have just been assisting at the birth of a new club. It is to be called the Social Science Club or words to that effect. It is to be affiliated with a club in London, who will supply expert speakers or lecturers. There are to be about four meetings a term, and we are to have the same subject each time, so that it is hoped that it will be of educational value, and that we shall thresh the subject out in a way that is quite impossible in an ordinary Oxford club, where no one knows much about the subject and everyone gases on *a priori* assumptions, with little or no reference to facts. We are also going to be supplied with literature on various social subjects. I think this term we are going to act on my suggestion and take the feeding of the children before school, and next term we shall probably go on to either the homeless or the unemployed. I think it will be most interesting and instructive, and I am looking forward to it immensely.

Of the re-founding of this club and of Charlie's connexion with it, Mr. Zimmern writes to me as follows:

I think it was through the Oxford University Social Science Club that I first came to know C. S. Buxton of Balliol. I was a New College "Greats" Don, and he was reading for that school, and, I think, in his third year. The Social Science Club was a non-party undergraduate society which used to get distinguished strangers down to open a discussion on some public question. It had fallen on evil days and a group of us—among whom Charlie Buxton was prominent from the first—re-founded it on a more definitely social basis, with a more systematic terminal programme. We had a good many discussions as to whether the old name of the club should be

retained after its reorganization, or a new and more interesting one substituted. I was very keen, I remember, that we should call ourselves the Utopians or something else equally striking. But I was hopelessly defeated in a vote of the club, and Charlie, with his usual sound sense, voted for the old name with the majority.

He was the second President of the club after the reorganization. I was a permanent member of its Committee, on which he, too, remained as an ex-officer, and it was these Committee meetings which chiefly served to bring us together during this time. There is a fragrance of tea with hot buttered toast and general conversation associated with my recollection of these not very businesslike occasions.

Although much impressed at this time by the idealism of the Socialists, and much interested in social reform of a somewhat drastic nature, Charlie by no means lost touch with the practical questions immediately before the country. He followed the General Election of 1906 with intense excitement. He eagerly discusses the Liberal programme in letters to his father, and spends a good deal of time "Cabinet-making." On February 19, 1906, he writes in his Diary, "I shall try and keep some sort of record of the Session," a resolution to which he kept for some time. Pages and pages of his Diary are occupied, *e.g.*, with Mr. Birrell's Education Bill, containing a careful analysis of many of the speeches made in the House, with numerous cuttings from all sorts of papers, with comments at the side and passages heavily underlined. The Diary during these months must have often occupied him at least an hour a day, and sometimes even longer, and when it is remembered how many other things he had on hand, and how many letters he wrote, it is really quite a remarkable feat.

Indian problems began to interest him greatly about this time, and the Diary contains a very full summary, with comments, of a speech delivered to the New India Society at Oxford by Sir William Wedderburn, a very full record headed

"12 P.M." of "a most interesting talk about India with Uncle George," * and a long account of a meeting he had with Mr. (now Sir Theodore) Morison at Fox Warren, when "after lunch he and I retired into the study and consumed pipes and conversation till 4 o'clock. I should like to have talked to him much longer."

While during these years his interest in politics was deepening more and more, he was at the same time becoming less and less a party politician. He was beginning to think for himself, and he was coming to the conclusion that, as he was afterwards fond of expressing it in later years, when in his more impatient moods, "the country was being run entirely for the benefit of a few rich people." His study of art, literature, poetry, and politics all seemed to him to support this view. These things were to him a source of intense interest and pleasure. He found that they were some of the best that life had to offer, and he saw that they were only the luxury of the few. Why should this be so? The more he thought, the more he became convinced that the country must be governed in the interests of the people as a whole, and that all must have at least the opportunity of enjoying the pleasures as well as the necessaries of life. How was this to be accomplished? Towards the end of his life there is no doubt that the ideals of the Socialists seemed to him to provide the most satisfactory solution of the problem, and during these earlier years he was gradually, if at times unconsciously, drifting towards Socialism.

While it was his interest in art, poetry, literature, and politics which did so much to mould his thoughts in this direction, there were, I think, certain definite events in his life at this time which greatly influenced him, and which

* Mr. G. S. Barnes, an uncle of whom Charlie was particularly fond.

help to explain the attitude he afterwards adopted with regard to social and political problems. These were, first, his two visits to Assisi, already mentioned; secondly, certain speeches and lectures he heard by some of the leading Socialist thinkers during his undergraduate days; and thirdly, a few weeks he spent in the Easter vacation of 1906 at the Eton Mission at Hackney Wick.

Of the influence upon him of the life and teaching of St. Francis I need say no more here. These were, I know, constantly in his mind to the end. Of the various Socialist speakers and lecturers he heard, a lecture by Mr. Lansbury appears to have made a marked impression upon him.

To his Sister. *November* 13, 1904.

I also have been talking with Socialists—in fact, I am one myself. One came down to speak about the unemployed at our new Social Science Club. He was most interesting, and at times really eloquent. He made one ready to leave all and follow him. We had an excellent discussion afterwards, in which I for my sins had to make the opening speech, thanking Lansbury and so forth and so on.

And a few days later:

I hardly think it is possible to explain what I mean by saying I am a Socialist. I tried to do so to Mum last Sunday, and as that took a good hour, it is a little difficult to say anything in a letter. Yes, I do feel fired to go and try to do something to help, but of course I have no definite plans as yet. I can at least promise you that however simple my aims, they shall not lead me into the simple life. I shall always cling to my breakfast, and never will I desert my bath —or the backyard pump. But I should like to feel that I was of some *use*—don't you feel like that?

In the following year he writes enthusiastically to his father after hearing Mr. R. C. K. Ensor at a combined meeting of the Russell and Palmerston Clubs, and Mr. Sidney Webb at the Social Science Club. By the beginning

of 1906 he had conceived a strong desire to take part himself in some active social work, and it was decided that he should spend part of the Easter vacation working at the Eton Mission at Hackney Wick. This gave him an opportunity of seeing a good deal of life in the East End, and he made full use of his time there. He taught in the Sunday school—where he says he was not a great success—he was much interested in going over Messrs. Clarke, Nickolls, and Coombs' factories, he visited the Salvation Army training depôt, besides various other institutions, he was beaten at draughts at a Boys' Club, and he gave a Sunday lecture on Browning to some lads.

DIARY. *April* 8, 1906.

I perpetrated the last and greatest absurdity of my life. I read a paper on "Browning" to an audience chiefly consisting of post-office boys!

But more than all this, through the medium of the Charity Organisation Society he made friends with one or two working-men, and for the first time gained some insight into the lives of the very poor. He attended the Committee meetings of the Hackney Wick C.O.S., and visited some of their cases for them.

April 6, 1906.

In the afternoon working out B.'s case. Everybody in favour of the woman, very few knew much about the man. In the course of it I came across a *charming* bricklayer named J., who has helped them a lot, and is himself out of work: he had a very nice face and showed an altogether exceptionally good spirit. . . . Went to see A. B. He has had awful bad luck, and though he is rather a thoughtless fellow he doesn't deserve it.

Charlie was at this time by no means altogether in sympathy with C.O.S. methods, though he learnt later to appreciate the good work done by the Society. The case which most

interested him was that of ——, which the Committee refused to take up, and he insisted on himself helping the man with a loan, against the Committee's advice. I remember him telling me what a "row" he had had with the Committee about this case, and how determined he had been. But he added: "They were perfectly right, however."

The varied experiences of the three weeks spent at the Mission undoubtedly increased his sympathies for the lives of the poor, and made him more eager than ever to do something to help them, and to be of some use in the world. A day or two before he left he had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Lawley,* and writes in his Diary:

April 8, 1906.

Mr. and Mrs. Lawley have asked me to stay with them in June two or three days, which would be perfectly delightful. I wonder if they really want me, and whether they think I should be of the slightest use. That is the thought that drives me to desperation; I want to contribute something towards "making life the sweeter," and yet my something is so absurdly small that it hardly seems worth contributing. I think I must go in June, however.

This visit was paid, and he talked of returning to the Mission in September—a plan which, however, was not carried out.

While full of the new interests which the East End awoke in him, he seems to have spent every spare moment he had in reading. Amongst other books, he read at this time William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," which greatly interested him. His Diary during these weeks is full of the Education Bill, which he was constantly discussing with his friends and the clergy at the Mission.

The combined result of his visits to Assisi, of his intercourse with Socialists, and of his stay at the Eton Mission

* Mr. Lawley was at this time the Head of the Eton Mission.

was, I think, to increase in him the yearning to be of service to his fellow-men. This appears in the passage from the Diary just quoted, and the same idea is to be found still earlier :

September 3, 1905.

In the evening to church at Blatchington with the whole family. Service conducted by a man with a *deplorable* voice, but relieved by "Jesu, Lover of my Soul." That hymn is always a temptation to me ; what if I renounced everything and went to live a hermit's life : should I find peace in a monastery ? I think not, but that is not the question ; as long as I feel I can be of some little service I will not throw aside everything. I think I may still perform some minor part in the wheel of existence.

A year later he writes in much the same strain :

September 24, 1906.

Every evening now from 7 to 7.30 Father reads Mother's Diary to Phyllis and me. So interesting and also very inspiring. She did make the very best use of life in the best sense of that expression, and so did Father and does—but I never shall. Yes I SHALL.

One of his strongest characteristics was his determination that his friends should feel every emotion he felt, and enjoy to the full everything he enjoyed, and he was sometimes quite angry if one did not immediately appreciate to the same extent as he did the poem he liked, or the book he was reading. "Nothing," he writes to his friend Mr. R. K. Davis, "gives me a greater glow of self-satisfaction than having introduced someone to a book or a poem which they have really appreciated." As he became more and more interested in social questions, this eagerness for others to share his pleasures seems to have extended over a wider field, and he became more and more certain that there must be something wrong with a system which denied to so many

even the opportunity of enjoying the happiness and sharing the treasures that life was bringing to him.

Towards the end of 1904 he began to discuss his future career with his father. The problem, from Charlie's point of view, even at this time, was how to combine some form of social service with the career mapped out for him by his family. His father's intention had been that he should read for the Bar as a prelude to going into politics, and he ate dinners at the Inner Temple for about a year, beginning at the end of 1905. But from the first the idea of reading for the Bar does not seem to have been altogether congenial to Charlie, and even a year earlier he had realized the importance of making a right choice for the future. He was not in the least ambitious, but he felt unusually early the necessity of choosing a career which would enable him to give the best that was in him for the service of humanity.

To his Father. *October* 1904.

I will try and not be depressed ; I don't think I am pessimistic by nature, but one is rather driven to take that view when one's abilities are persistently and constantly overrated. For many people—not perhaps all—seemed to attribute to cleverness what was really pure drudgery. I have, I think, got a small "capacity for taking pains," but success needs more than that, and one feels nervous of the expectations which are formed of one. I don't think you ever realize fully that anything which I did at Eton was done by hard work. People have never thought me clever who have not met me through the medium of a blue pencil. I always had a reputation for "sapping." I was influenced partly by the motto of the family,* but principally by a desire to please you. I don't think I should ever have accomplished anything if the thought of your praise or blame had not been in the background of my mind to spur me on. I am not ambitious, I do not wish to accomplish the impossible. What I want is to find my place in the world. I do not believe in withstanding or even in withholding one's aid from the forces of

* "Do it with thy might."

nature. Every man ought to do his utmost, however humble his sphere, for the advancement of society, and though I am a firm believer in absolute necessity, I think people should act as though free will were a reality. Happiness comes from realizing one's position in life—from work and not from play, but the work must not be either above or below one's capabilities, for in either case it is wasted. If you think that willingness to work is an attribute which points to the Bar, well and good; but if you think that it would make my life useless to humanity—which is what I was thinking of on Monday—don't you agree that I had better look elsewhere? I am afraid you will think this awful rot, and you certainly will find it incoherent. But it is not mere froth, it is what I feel.

The whole question was reopened two years later, when it was suggested that Charlie should go into the office of one of his relations for a year, after coming down from Oxford, with the view of obtaining some knowledge of business methods. But by this time the idea of the Bar had become still more distasteful to him, and business appealed to him even less, while his longing for active social work had grown stronger; and at this time, influenced by the example of Mr. Alexander Paterson, the idea of social work in Bermondsey, or, failing this, work in a C.O.S. office, greatly attracted him.

To his Father. *October* 23, 1906.

I am coming up to eat dinners on Friday and Saturday, November 2 and 3, coming back here on Sunday. Will you be in London then? . . . I am afraid you will be out of town, as I should like to talk to you about the "career" business. Of course it is awfully good of Lancelot to offer to let me be an apprentice in his shop, and no doubt the work would be hard enough and interesting enough as far as that goes. But it is not a bit the sort of work I want to do. I am afraid I should hate business *per se*. The real reason, however, why I am more than ever anxious to go down to Bermondsey or somewhere is that, as I daresay I suggested in Mum's letter, they—various undergraduates with the help of A. L. Smith (though he has said nothing about it to me himself)—are trying to make

undergraduates, and especially Balliol undergraduates, take some rather keener interest in social matters, and to go and help themselves. I suppose the idea is to get up some sort of movement like the one led by Arnold Toynbee in the 80's. They are going to have meetings this term and so on to promote it. I don't know how far it will succeed. But I am sure that one example—however unimportant—is worth scores of arguments and speeches. Of course it must be remembered that in the next year after I leave I shall have several Bar examinations to pass before I can possibly "devil," and meanwhile I should like immensely to try my hand at some sort of work at Bermondsey. It may be unbusinesslike—though I don't think Mr. C. S. Loch would admit it—but at least it is human. I feel that what these people who are trying to make Balliol men take more interest want is to tempt some of us off the beaten track for a time. Then if it seems to suit us, to go back and get a little more insight into business and care before applying ourselves finally to that kind of work. But until one has a glimpse of the object for which one is training oneself the process of training is not so stimulating, and much waste must occur.

Both his father and Mrs. Buxton urged him to postpone his plans for social work for a time, being anxious that he should first equip himself for some definite profession. The question was, however, allowed to drop for the time being.

The movement to which Charlie refers in the letter just quoted was one which was set on foot about this time, principally at the suggestion and under the guidance of Mr. A. L. Smith of Balliol. Of this movement Mr. Bourdillon writes :

In the meantime, however, his interest in politics generally had brought him into his first contact with labour. During his last year at Balliol there had been a sort of College movement. An address by Bolton Smart, of Hollesley Bay, had aroused an unexpected degree of interest in social questions. More meetings were therefore held, and a "social work committee" formed, with A. L. Smith as Chairman. Sub-Committees were appointed to report as to possible openings for work by the College along specific lines, the chief definite result being the formation of the Balliol Boys' Club in

St. Ebbe's, Oxford. Incidentally one of the Sub-Committees, of which Charlie was a member, had been detailed to report on Ruskin College, and on any means that might be found of bringing its members into touch with those of the College. At first Charlie wrote in his Diary "this seems to me beside the mark"; but it led to acquaintance with a small number of Ruskin men.

Charlie naturally took a great interest in this work, and writes in his Diary with enthusiasm of the first meeting, and at great length upon Mr. Bolton Smart's speech. After each of the first two meetings he writes of long walks with his friend Mr. Reiss, when they discussed his career; and he seems for the moment to have become more reconciled to the business project, thinking he could combine this with a good deal of work in Bermondsey in the evenings.

He soon discovered that the work of the Sub-Committee formed to consider relations with Ruskin College was of far more interest to him than he had at first supposed. He writes:

DIARY. *November* 19, 1906.

The Ruskin Hall men came up to Blandy's rooms and really opened out. When they had gone we formed ourselves into a Committee and were very rosy, as I think we have really broken the ice and are doing the Ruskin Hall part of the business very well.

He had already come into contact with Ruskin College before this time, and mentions a long talk he had had in the summer of this year with Mr. H. B. Lees Smith, then Vice-Principal of the College. Mr. Lees Smith was the first person who really interested him in the Labour movement, and there are constant references in the Diary to meetings with him and accounts of conversations on labour questions. A little later, on June 7, 1906, he writes of going to tea with the students at the College, and gives an account of a talk with them on that occasion about the Co-operative

Congress and the "terrible responsibility of strikes"; and again:

DIARY. *June* 9, 1906.

I did not understand before the exact objects of Ruskin College. I now find that it is an attempt to educate the political leaders of the workmen. Those who come are men of influence or standing in their various trades or localities, and they come to Ruskin College in order to learn the fundamental elements of history, economic and political science, which shall fit them to be leaders. It is a most interesting experiment.

Later we hear of him going to one of the Saturday "Socials" at the College, and asking some of the students to tea with him, and in February 1907 he describes in a letter to Mrs. Buxton a discussion which he had with some of the students on Socialism. This letter concludes with: "I now take in the *Clarion*." The idea, however, that the solution of the problem of his career might be found in work at Ruskin College had never occurred to him, and it was an immense surprise when, on May 20, 1907, Mr. Lees Smith sounded him as to the possibility of his succeeding him at the College as Vice-Principal.

DIARY. *May* 20, 1907.

Played golf with Lees Smith. He asked me to become temporary don at Ruskin College. I felt immensely flattered. He seems to be attracted by my "solidity"—save the mark! The thing is not yet settled; he was only sounding me, and I must not say anything to Father yet. I should most awfully like the job. The nearer the end becomes, the more conscious I am of how I shall hate leaving Oxford. I should be much happier and probably much healthier here than in stuffy London. I believe that the experience to be gained from the responsibility of my position would be far greater than that which I should obtain in business. From the political point of view I should have an unique opportunity of studying the forces of labour, and of making an alliance with them. I should be gaining tremendous driving force for my ideas by establishing a wide circle of acquaintance amongst the great party of the future. Of

course to accept means a great responsibility. For Ruskin College is just passing through its most impressible stage, and will in the next year or two crystallize into its final form. I hereby register a vow to accept, people or no people.

The decision was of the greatest importance, for upon his answer to the invitation depended, perhaps more than he then realized, the direction which the rest of his short life was to take, for the influence of Ruskin College upon him was far greater than at the time could have been imagined. It seemed to him to settle the difficulty which was always uppermost in his mind with regard to his career, namely, how to combine some definite work with social reform. He was just in for the History School at the time, and I remember him telling me how excited he had been about the proposal, and the difficulty he had had in dismissing it from his mind until after the examination was over.

About this time three of his friends became engaged to be married, and he writes in his Diary on May 27 :

Truly, as Bonnerjee and I agreed, we seem to be the only sane people in the world, and *we* wish we were mad! However, if Ruskin Hall comes off, my soul's health should recover.

On June 2, Mr. (now Dr.) Carlyle, then the Secretary to the Governing Body of the College, wrote definitely offering him the post of Vice-Principal. The question as to whether he should accept or not was naturally a good deal discussed between him and his family. Mr. and Mrs. Buxton were at first not altogether in favour of his accepting, but after a long talk with Mr. Lees Smith, Mrs. Buxton writes to Charlie on June 7 :

I am much more favourably disposed towards the idea. . . . I think you have been paid a real compliment in having it offered, which you ought to feel a great encouragement. . . . You have

been very dear and nice over it all, and I think you have a faculty for understanding the parental point of view, though not agreeing with it.

And on June 9 his father writes :

I have been thinking the whole question over again, and if you after further consideration still desire it, I think you might certainly go.

On June 16 the decision which was to mean so much to Charlie was made, and he writes in his Diary :

Accepted Ruskin College.

CHAPTER III

RUSKIN COLLEGE

1907–1910

> Love had not then found out that it could buy itself for an annual subscription. It was mad enough to toil and suffer in the heat of the day. *Dr. Parker*

AFTER the Schools were over, Charlie went for a short tour in the North of France with Mr. Bourdillon. But this was only intended to last for a few days, and he writes to his friend Mr. Bonnerjee from Rouen :

June 20, 1907.

I get back to England next Saturday, and then these damned Commemoration balls.

At this time he arranged to correspond regularly once a fortnight with Mr. Bonnerjee, who had gone to India—an arrangement to which he kept with some slight lapses for the next three years. He intended the correspondence to be in diary form.

I will begin the Great Correspondence, which will, I hope, continue uninterrupted. We must be frank with each other and keep back nothing. Let us write as we would in some intimate diary which we always keep locked. We are so far from each other that unless what we write be the real truth, and redolent with the character of the writer, the news when read will seem flat, stale, and unprofitable.

Charlie came back to Oxford, and took his sister to two of the Commemoration balls, and in his next letter to Mr. Bonnerjee describes his experiences :

The two balls we went to we stayed up till six in the morning. I didn't dance, and as the early hours of morning stole slowly away, I

felt awfully inclined to go up behind them and give them a good kick to hurry them on. We sang "God save the King" at the end, and I sympathized with a fervent voice which I overheard saying "*And* the chaperones"! However, my sister enjoyed herself madly and danced like a dervish all the time, so that I got a little reflected happiness, and every now and then blundered round the room with her. Besides I found most people willing to sit out, and *sometimes* one got an intelligent or charming partner.

His summer holiday was chiefly spent in Norway, where he went with his sister, and his aunt and cousin, Mrs. and Miss Rutson, subsequently joining Mr. Owen Smith, one of Mrs. Buxton's brothers, at Aurland, to fish. This he much enjoyed, and kept in his Diary a careful record of the fish caught by all the party. While in Norway he learnt Norwegian and read a good deal of Norwegian history, and for the time being Vikings and the Norsemen were his all-absorbing interest—except, perhaps, the sea-trout. He did not think much of the Fjords.

To Mrs. Buxton.

I loathe the tame, tutored sea of the Fjords—up which we are steaming just now. It is somehow unsatisfying and disappointing. It is like seeing all the wonders of the desert with a lion walking about in the foreground with a bit of coloured ribbon round its neck. Of course no one would be more horrified than I if it suddenly became rough, but then I don't mind owning that the sea has charms for me only from the land. But there is nothing more glorious than a rough, tumbling, savage sea, except perhaps a torrent. So, except at sunset when the sun looks you straight in the face at the other end of a path of gold, I don't hold with Fjords or sea voyages.

On September 11 he went into residence at Ruskin College, and entered upon his new duties. A few words on the history and objects of the College may not be out of place here.

RUSKIN COLLEGE

Ruskin Hall, as it was originally called, was founded in 1899 by Mr. Walter Vrooman, an American. His object, and that of those who supported him, was to provide a residential institution—the first of its kind in Great Britain —for the education of adult working-class students. The College was to be non-sectarian and non-political, and the students were to use the knowledge they derived there in order "to raise and not to rise out of" the class to which they belonged. The curriculum was defined as "a training in subjects which are essential for working-class leadership, but which are not a direct avenue to anything beyond." The scheme, though it had from the first the hearty support of a few leading Oxford men, such as York Powell, Dean Kitchin, Sir William Markby, Professor Goudy, Mr. Sidney Ball, and others, was for some time regarded with coldness bordering on hostility, mingled with some amusement, by the University in general and the public. The somewhat arrogant attitude adopted by the Hall towards the University and the rather peculiar behaviour of the students in its early days were no doubt partly responsible for this unpopularity. But by 1907 the College had found its feet, and had become much more generally recognized as an Oxford institution. The government was in the hands of a Council, consisting of representatives of labour organizations and a few Oxford dons, but the College was administered by an Executive Committee formed from this body. Shortly before Charlie was appointed, the management of its internal affairs had been entrusted to what was known as the House Committee, consisting of the Principal, the Vice-Principal, and the Secretary.

Ruskin Hall was originally housed at 14 St. Giles, at one time occupied by T. H. Green. A few years later, its

numbers having outgrown this house, the College was moved to Walton Street, to some tumbledown old buildings at the corner of Worcester Place, which suggested a builder's yard rather than a college. The site, however, was a good one, and had been secured through the generosity of Trade Unions and private individuals, and on it the first block of buildings worthy of the Institution has been recently erected.

At the time of Charlie's appointment, the Principal, who had held this position since the foundation of the College, was Mr. Dennis Hird. The Secretary was Mr. Bertram Wilson, who had been there from early days. Miss Giles was in charge of the Correspondence Department, the College having from the first carried on a good deal of education throughout the country by means of correspondence, and I was appointed Tutor and Lecturer in Economics at the same time as Charlie, Mr. Lees Smith having resigned the position of Lecturer in Economics as well as that of Vice-Principal, though he still kept in close touch with the College as Chairman of the Executive Committee. It was in the October of this year that I first met Charlie, and our daily intercourse at the College almost immediately led to a close friendship.

When Charlie became Vice-Principal there were between forty and fifty students in residence, most of them drawn from the skilled artisan class, nearly all Trade Unionists, and the great majority of them strongly imbued with Socialism, varying from the mildest type to the most revolutionary form. The bulk of them came from the North of England and from South Wales, and the College at that time probably contained some of the most extreme among the younger men in the Labour movement. Such was the little com-

munity in which Charlie was to play his part for the next two years.*

His duties at the College were of a somewhat varied nature. As Vice-Principal he was responsible in the absence of Mr. Hird, and as a member of the House Committee he had a good deal to do with the internal management of the College, including the discipline of the students and domestic affairs. He had also to lecture twice a week on Constitutional History, and to see about twelve or fifteen students a week with essays. But the work to which he attached the greatest importance was the organization of the social life of the College, and of imbuing the students with a right spirit of comradeship. He always made it his business to get into as close personal touch as possible with every student who came to the College, to interest himself in their home lives, and to throw himself heartily into their interests and aspirations. The students were always encouraged to come to his room whenever they liked for a talk, not merely about work, but about anything they cared to discuss with him. His books were always at their disposal, and at one time they were allowed to help themselves to his cigarettes and tobacco.

The opportunity of talks with him in his room was not taken advantage of as much as it might have been, partly I think from shyness, and partly from fear of interrupting him in his work. But old students have often told me since how much good they gained from their conversations with him, and how they wished they had availed themselves more of their opportunities of seeing him in this intimate way. He

* A good account of the College at this time is contained in an article entitled "Ruskin College: an Educational Experiment," which Charlie contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine* for August 1908.

constantly went for walks with one or perhaps two students, and this he found one of the best ways of getting to know them.

He was always most anxious to interest the students in any subject lying outside their ordinary work. They were all naturally much absorbed in politics and economic questions, and their work at the College consisting largely of the study of social, economic, and political questions, they were in danger of becoming too one-sided and of neglecting other equally important sides of life. He was therefore constantly trying to draw their attention to poetry and art. He encouraged them to read widely in all kinds of literature, lending and discussing with them books about which he was enthusiastic at the time. In his walks they of course had to share his delight in all the joys he never failed to find in the country. I remember once asking him what he said to the new students when he first interviewed them after their arrival at the College. "Oh, I generally ask them whether they read poetry," was the reply.

To his Sister. *January* 12, 1908.

I am asking all the new men whether they read any poetry. Most of them do—chiefly this year Byron! I exhort them to continue, in a neat little speech. One man after I had finished said, "But what is poetry?" and I had to take out a book of poetry and show him. And he was an Irishman!

He was naturally much delighted when he discovered a student who was interested in St. Francis.

To his Sister. *September* 22, 1907.

I have made friends here with one of the men over St. Francis. If you come down here before the end of the year I will turn him over to you, and you can talk to him about St. F. He is reading Sabatier now in a translation, and I lent him the Fioretti and my little Medieval Town Series about Assisi.

With the object of widening the outlook of the students, Charlie started a Shakespeare Society early in 1908, which met every Sunday, and where the plays were read, the students taking the parts of the various characters. The Society did not confine itself to Shakespeare, the programme being sometimes varied by Bernard Shaw and other dramatists. These meetings were a great success and very popular with the students, and they were continued for many months.

One of his duties was to find lecturers for and to preside at the Saturday-evening Socials, the Principal being nearly always away from Oxford for the Sunday. These Socials were, and still are, great Ruskin functions. At this time they always began with songs or recitations by the students ; then came a lecture by some Oxford don or someone from outside the University, the lecture being followed by a discussion. Charlie always tried as far as possible to choose subjects lying outside the ordinary work of the students. For instance, Mr. W. Temple, then of Queen's College, lectured twice, on Browning and on Shelley ; Mr. (now Sir Theodore) Morison on Indian problems, and Mr. Grant Robertson on nineteenth-century Italian history. Amongst other lecturers were Mr. R. R. Marett, Mr. Alexander Paterson, Mr. W. L. Grant, and Mr. T. E. Harvey on St. Francis, a lecture which naturally delighted Charlie, and which still lives in the memories of those who heard it.

It would be difficult for anyone who had never been present at one of these Socials to imagine how they could have been the success they were, when the circumstances under which they were held are described. They took place in a small room, measuring perhaps 20 feet by 16. It was badly lighted, and there was always a choice

between being almost suffocated by the heat of the fire and being blown away by the draught from the window. There were generally from forty to fifty students present, all smoking the strongest tobacco, as well as a fair number of undergraduates, Oxford residents, and other friends of the students. That the Socials were so popular was almost entirely due to the tact and skill Charlie displayed when presiding at them, and to his power of infusing his own enthusiastic spirit into these gatherings, which made them socials in the true sense of the word. The discussions were generally very much to the point, and often animated. Charlie maintained excellent order, and had an extraordinary way of keeping the ball rolling. The interest was never allowed to flag for a moment, and if the slightest pause occurred he was always ready with some searching question to raise some new issue, and to draw either the lecturer or one of the audience into further argument.

Charlie lived in the College in a very simple manner. He was always anxious that he should not have any little comforts or luxuries which could not be allowed to the students ; for instance, he would never have a fire in his room until the time had come for fires all over the College. He had breakfast and midday dinner with the students, and tea in his own room, constantly asking one or two students to tea with him there, and inviting undergraduates or other friends to meet them. But he always went out to a restaurant for his evening meal, sometimes with a friend, but more often alone, and in term time he dined once a week at Balliol, having been elected an honorary member of the Senior Common Room. He often played football with the students, and hockey in what is known as "the dons' hockey squash," throwing himself into these games with the

energy and eagerness which he always put into anything he did.

Lecturing and teaching were always rather a labour to Charlie. I do not think he was by any means a born teacher, and I doubt if he would have ever become a really first-rate lecturer. He took immense pains with his lectures, and spared no trouble in the collection of material for them, reading widely on his subject and often writing to his father for facts about the present-day working of the British Constitution with which to illustrate his lectures on Constitutional History. They were full of matter—perhaps almost too much stuffed with facts, and possibly a little heavy to listen to. Several of the old students, however, have told me how useful the lectures have been to them, and have expressed their surprise at the amount of knowledge they have found them to contain on reading over their notes in later years. He was always stimulating as a teacher, and full of ideas. But I do not think he really enjoyed teaching, and the correction of essays was always a rather painful effort. He greatly improved both as a speaker and lecturer towards the end of his life, and the lecture he delivered on the American Constitution at one of the Saturday Socials, when he revisited the College shortly after his return from America in 1911, was a brilliant piece of work and admirably delivered. He was fully alive to his deficiencies as a teacher. "I can't teach for toffee," he once wrote to my wife, when explaining his reasons for leaving the College. His influence, however, on the life of the College generally, much more than made up for any defects in this direction.

During the first six weeks of his time at Ruskin, Charlie was, in addition to his other duties—many of which did not

come easy to him at first—working hard for the All Souls' Fellowship examination, and his time was therefore very fully occupied. He was very anxious indeed to get the Fellowship for his own sake, but much more for the sake of the College, thinking that it might be raised in the estimation of the public if it were known that a Fellow of All Souls' was its Vice-Principal. His failure was therefore a considerable disappointment to him. He did so well, however, and was so nearly successful, that he was advised by the examiners to go in again the next year, and this he did, more to please his father than from any personal inclination. This second time he never thought he had much chance, and rather chafed at having to go over so much of the old ground again. He had got out of the way of working for examinations, and his life was very full of other subjects at the time ; so it was not surprising that he did not do so well in the examination as he had done the year before.

It will be seen from the account I have given of Charlie's occupations at Ruskin College that his working life was a very full one. It was also not free from worry. He had constantly to settle little disputes between the students, and troublesome questions relating to the domestic affairs of the College. He had a good deal of responsibility, and this at times weighed heavily upon him. In addition, the troubles which ultimately came to a crisis in the spring of 1909 were all the time adding to the difficulties of his position as Vice-Principal.

He very soon began to feel the need for some complete relaxation from Ruskin affairs, and that he must at times put the College entirely out of his mind, and he soon developed a remarkable power of doing this. I could, for instance, hardly ever get him to discuss College affairs on

Sundays. One of the expedients he found most efficacious for getting the College and his work completely out of his mind for the time being was the writing of letters. During 1907 he writes constantly to his sister, and after October 1908 daily, down to the time he left the College.

These letters, combined with my personal intercourse with him, now take the place of the Diary as the principal source of information as to what he was doing and thinking about. The Diary becomes very scrappy after Charlie went to Ruskin College, and in 1908 he abandoned it altogether. The letters were as a rule written last thing at night after his work was finished, and they deal with almost everything under the sun except Ruskin College, which is very rarely mentioned. In one of them he writes with reference to a sunset in Skye which Miss Buxton had described to him :

September 24, 1908.

Thanks *awfully* for your last letter—though it made me feel very sick at heart. I could *see* that sunset you described, and I simply longed to have been there too. . . . I don't know if your description was meant to be an allegory, but it certainly reads like one. While the rosy light of youth and its careless enthusiasms last, the open sea of ordinary plodding labour, and domestic happiness and routine, and everything which goes to make up the ordinary life seems unsatisfactory, pitched in a lower key, out of touch with one's rosy aspirations and rainbow dreams—seems in your words to be "cold and blue and very still"; but when the roses of youth fade from the sky and are veiled in darkness, we suddenly begin to understand that other world of patient endeavour, and to understand its real value and its wideness. "The rosy light was all gone, but the open sea got lighter and lighter." I don't know what you feel, but I feel still that a great deal of what goes on in this world is "cold and blue and very still," and so I live as much as I can in a dream world which, though it may be transient, is sometimes very beautiful. What a lot of nonsense I have talked to-night!

Miss Buxton's description led to the following verses :

A Sunset in Skye

The dying sun was wrapped in a shroud,
When of a sudden he
Leapt through the melancholy cloud
To clothe me in a flame of ecstasy,
And seized my mind and heart and will,
Confounding Present, Future, Past,
Till he at last
Made all things seem
One glorious dream ;
And Life was wonderful, and Death no more
Knocked at my door.
Yet in mid-joy I felt the open sea
Was cold and blue and still.

When the last roses faded from the sky,
When envious darkness reigned supreme,
And I
Woke from my dream ;
Then with a shuddering sigh
My spirit felt encircle it again
The ugliness, the horror, and the pain
Of Death ; black foster-sister, formless Night.

Yet in my misery
And pitiful sad plight,
By chance I turned and lo ! the open sea
Was nobly bright
With purer light
Than the fierce flame which had consumèd me ;
And softly round me fell
Such peace of God as passeth wit to tell.

It was into this "dream world" that Charlie tried to pass at any rate for some part of each day, and letter-writing was one of the paths which led him away from what he often found "cold and blue and very still." Sometimes he sends his sister hints on fishing or golf, at others discusses religion or Socialism. Many of the letters contain

long accounts and criticisms of books which he had been reading, and advice as to his sister's reading; they are often full of family gossip, they contain anecdotes he had heard, and in fact anything that came into his head at the moment except the ordinary work of the day.

Pictures and books were still two of his greatest interests in life, and the following extracts from the letters to Miss Buxton are very typical of the way in which he used to talk about them:

I am glad you have been romantic and enterprising enough to plunge into picture-buying. It is really far more exciting than buying a book, as the picture is always staring you in the face and asks the question whether you are still fond of it, whereas the book may insensibly drift into a dark corner and be forgotten. In fact, buying a book is like getting a new friend who may be gradually dropped if you find you don't like him when you come to know him intimately, and buying a picture is more like marriage, because you have to face it out until the end. So I congratulate you on your foolhardiness!

I think the most charming bookworm that ever existed was the old scholar in that story in "The Golden Age" called "A Harvesting," and then there is M. Sylvestre Bonnard, whom by the way you might most certainly read about—of few Anatole France can that be said. But bookworm is a revolting word altogether and really entirely begs the question, just as a book-lover does the other way. Could the man in "Over Bemerton's" be called a bookworm? Or was he too dilettante? But of course he got married, and no true bookworm, once he had been bitten, ought to marry—but then again that theory is knocked out by Romola's father—but perhaps he married before he became one. I think one might gather together rather a nice little company: if one was really a genius one might put it into the form of a dialogue and make all these charming people talk about books and their intimacies with the dead. A true bookworm does not, I think, simply browse; he has his favourites and he really does strike up a friendship with his author, and come to him for advice in difficulty, and chat with him. You *can* chat with a book if you know it well enough, don't you think so? So that really bookworms have more friends than the ordinary person, and their friends are all the very *best* people, and they can choose

them at will : it is all very well to say that "one is given one's relations, but thank God one can choose one's friends," but as a matter of fact of course the scope of our friends is decidedly limited ; whereas the bookworm has the whole literary world to choose from, and moreover he need never fear that he is boring any of his friends ; the only question is whether they are boring him. He may have quarrels with them and throw them into the corner, but the quarrels will be of his own making : he will hardly ever be despised or slighted by his friends, as they are most of them men of a generous and kindly temperament and so on.*

In the summer of 1908 Charlie spent a very delightful time with his family at Skye, which he sums up in a poem written at the beginning of Stopford Brooke's "Four Poets," which he sent his sister in October. It is inscribed : "In Memoriam, Skye, August and September 1908."

Do you remember it all,
The misty blue hills of Skye,
The curlews' comforting call
And the peewits' desolate cry ?
Do you remember the songs
With their soft undercurrent of tears ?
How we laughed like resounding gongs
At jokes we had known for years ?
For then we were children again
And nature our only book :
The sun and the wind and the rain
The place of the poets took.
They clothed us with sorrow and mirth,
Put beauty at our command :
And we *lived* for we knew the earth
No longer at second hand.
We trembled no more at Despair,
From entangling doubts we were free,
And Happiness found us there
At peace with the mystery.

* "Bookworms" had been suggested as a subject for an essay by a literary society to which Miss Buxton belonged.

But now that the memories fade,
And the dark closes down by degrees,
We turn in distress for aid
To great magicians like these.
In their presence we catch again
A glimpse of those golden days,
And through them with a lessened pain
We thread our difficult ways.

Towards the end of 1908 Mr. Sydney Buxton decided to purchase Newtimber, which he had rented for some years previously. Charlie was delighted at the idea, and writes to his sister :

I am all for buying Newtimber ; I do feel my roots are there, and I feel that it is awfully important for everyone that their roots should be in the country, and surely Newtimber is a " fair ground."

And again to Mr. Bourdillon :

A really exciting thing has happened. I am now a genuine Sussexian, in the horrible language of W. H. Hudson, with roots in the soil for ever and ever. For my father has bought Newtimber ! On March 25 it becomes wholly his ! Isn't it thrilling ? I now understand what people mean when they talk of having a stake in the country. . . . It seems almost too good to be true.

Charlie had always had a great affection for Newtimber, but from this time onwards his love for the house and its gardens and for the Sussex Downs beneath which it nestles amounted almost to a passion. He was always thinking about them and writing of them in his letters to his sister :

February 21, 1909.

By Jove, it has been a splendid day. When I was woken up this morning by the chorus of the birds, I knew it was going to be a spring day, and I almost spoilt it from the beginning by jealousy and envy. However, I read Shelley's " Invitation " directly I had got up, and having got into the right spirit, I hunted up a companion and went for a walk into the country, discoursing on things in

general—but somehow at the back of my mind I saw Newtimber and the moat, which must have been looking lovely.

February 24, 1909.

It makes me quite ecstatic and incoherent when I think of the Downs, and somehow I can see them much more clearly than I generally can other views.

In the Christmas holidays of 1908 he played a good deal of golf with his father and sister on the Pyecombe links, and became quite keen about the game. He was, however, never quite certain how much of his pleasure was derived from the game, and how much from the Downs on which he played, and although he writes :

I am sure they play golf in Heaven, and probably it was the promise of a game that made Elijah take the quickest conveyance possible.

a little later he writes the following :

I wonder whether we like golf as golf or whether it isn't merely affection for the "long-beloved Downs." I am afraid that is the reason with me.

The Sunday walks Charlie took with Mr. Bourdillon also helped him for a time to cast off the cares of the College, and to go back in spirit to the days they spent together in Touraine.

To F. B. B.

Out to the freedom and the sunshine,
  Out from the shadows grey
To the South and the singing and the red wine,
  Come, Bernard, let's away.

Let's remember no more our pity
  For weak things foully slain,
For the sorrow and the sighing of the city,
  Its ugliness and pain.

Let us cast aside for a season
  Responsibility,
And make offer of ourselves and our treason
  To the goddess Liberty.

Untrammelled of fear or of doubting,
  Body and soul at ease,
Far removed from the crowd and the shouting,
  Lapped in a tuneless peace,

Let us sit in the quiet café
  Of some grass-grown southern town,
And smoke and recall and be happy,
  As we watch the sun go down.

These Sunday walks were begun in October 1908. Mr. Bourdillon was at that time Warden of Wantage Hall, Reading, and he and Charlie used to meet at either Reading or Oxford for a walk, or sometimes at some place such as Didcot, between the two, and tramp over the Berkshire Downs. These walks and long talks with Mr. Bourdillon, in which Sussex and Newtimber occupied a prominent place, were a great source of enjoyment to Charlie.

To his Sister. *January* 18, 1909.

I spent a delightful Sunday with Bourdillon at Reading, talking of Sussex and various other things from 11.30 till 8.30—great fun. We walked out into the country in the afternoon and had tea in an inn before a cheerful fire, and then talked on into the darkness smoking pipes. That's the sort of thing I really like, especially as we were talking about what we really believed about things in general. It is an inexhaustible subject.

March 23, 1909.

I spent a delightful Sunday at Reading with Bourdillon—largely talking about Sussex—both of us wishing we were home.

Besides his almost daily letters to his sister, he was constantly writing to his friends about all sorts of subjects. Mr. Bourdillon writes :

At the time of greatest depression, or the stormy times at Ruskin College, he would break off late in the evening and write long letters (about anything so long as it was not the business that troubled him)—sometimes one a day for a week or more at a stretch.

But he had yet another form of mental relaxation, namely, the reading and writing of poetry. Poetry always meant a great deal to Charlie. He held the theory that whatever work you were doing was helped and brightened if, as he was fond of saying, you were thoroughly "soaked" in poetry. He bought and read almost every new volume of poems which came out. In the spring of 1908 Mr. Maurice Baring, who had heard from Mr. A. C. Benson that Charlie was a great admirer of his poetry, sent him some of his books. I shall never forget Charlie's excitement over this present and the letter with which it was accompanied. It led to a correspondence between them, and I remember Charlie bringing us Mr. Baring's letters to him with great pride, and telling us how tremendously excited he was to be corresponding with a "real poet." The following extract from his letter of thanks to Mr. Baring shows how the poems had appealed to him and what real pleasure they had brought him :

It is as though I had been for a long time looking through a heavily barred gate at a beautiful garden. One can see many of the flowers from the gate, and I know them so well that I almost feel they are mine. And then you came along and flung the gates wide open and took me right into the very middle of the garden, and just to the very flowers I wanted to go to. Other poets have flung open the gate, or as you would say "dispersed the wizard wall of air," and let me pass ; but they have taken me to parts of the garden which I feel I do not really understand and to flowers which, though I feel and know and see they are beautiful, are yet not the ones of which I had chequered glimpses from the gate and which I had in fancy made my own. This is all rather roundabout, but you will

probably see what I mean. The play I like much the best is "Dusk," because it was something I wanted someone to say for me, and everything is right, down to the name of the heroine. I like, too, very much the duets which occur in so many of the plays—especially the one in "Mahasena." I know no music and can hardly tell one note from another, but there is one thing which really does appeal to me, and that is Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." I have only heard it about twice, but both times it gave much the same sensation of slipping off into a kind of buoyant sea of dreams which your poetry gives me. . . .

If I thought for a moment that there really was any lovable book which you had not got or read I would venture to send it to you. I suppose you have got all F. W. Bain's little books of Hindoo love stories. If you have, I must content myself with assuring you that your present will be *really* appreciated.

It was always a joy to Charlie to be able to introduce his friends to books he loved, and these Hindoo love stories were among his special favourites. The moonlight atmosphere which surrounds them was one in which all that was romantic in his nature loved to dwell. He said that the titles alone, "The Heifer of the Dawn," "The Digit of the Moon," etc., were a delight and a joy.

Francis Thompson's poems were another revelation. The rich imagery of the "Sister Songs" gave expression to his own passionate love of nature and of all things mystical and lovely. Writing to my wife of a friend, he says:

The nobility of his character comes from these periods when he cleansed his soul by contact with nature: he is a real pagan, and unlike Thompson he can converse with nature: she is not *his* step-dame—and I don't believe she was really Thompson's either—how else could he talk of the "kindred kisses of the stars" and write all his lovely lines about spring in "Sister Songs"?

The writing of poetry, a practice begun in his undergraduate days, and developed considerably while at Ruskin College, was, I think, a real help and pleasure to Charlie.

His verses became very much a part of himself, but as Mr. Bourdillon says in writing of his poetry :

His verse was not an art—he scarcely made more than a dozen corrections even in those poems he meant to publish—but a relaxation; he said he was like the old man in Fiona Macleod who, when he was sick at heart, "made a poem, and when he had made it, he was glad."

A great number of the letters to his sister contain little poems, sometimes consisting of only a few lines, and sometimes a little sheaf of verses is enclosed. He was rather shy of showing his productions to friends, but he could not for long keep anything to himself which greatly interested him, and he was always delighted with any appreciation of what he wrote.

To his Sister. *October* 4, 1908.

I cannot help being puffed up when you say nice things about my verses, because, though I try to maintain that they are only written for my own amusement and satisfaction, I am secretly anxious that other people should think them worth writing.

October 12, 1908.

I am *so* glad you liked the verses : I feel I am justified in making them up if you like them.

"Say if you want this fountain to dry up, otherwise it won't," he writes to my wife, after several letters enclosing many poems had been written to her.

Mr. Benson writes :

He sent me at one time a certain amount of poetry, which he wrote with some diligence. It had an original touch about it, and some good phrases ; but I think he was more interested in the ideas he expressed than in the expression of them, and though he was interested in comments on rhythm and structure, and was a careful corrector, I don't think he quite realized the importance in poetry of verbal melody.

Charlie was, however, quite alive to his own imperfections. He writes :

> If I could rime
> Like winter-time,
> Making all fair
> With silver wear,
> I'd die content
> With life well spent.

And he often used to laugh at his own fondness for his poems.

Poetry-writing was to Charlie another entrance to his "dream world." Thus Mr. Bourdillon writes :

The figure round whom the dreams were woven was for the most part that of some actual person ; yet it often took the most widely different forms. From Ardmaddy he writes :

> "Why does day linger ? Art thou mocking me ?
> For here I see thee in the shimmering bay
> Isle-sheltered, and in blue hills far away ;
> I hear thee in the shore-birds' symphony,
> I feel thee in the golden sun-drenched fern,
> And in the windy darkness soft with rain,
> And in the wild white waters ; till I yearn
> For promised peace and end of fevered pain.
> Alas, although I find thee everywhere,
> Still dost thou leave me to my old despair."

It is here that he finds himself in accord with Fiona Macleod and F. W. Bain and Maurice Baring. . . .

Most often it is the moon in which he finds the personality—James' "higher power"—which "redeems" him. It is a sort of natural and unconventionalized Pantheism : the savage says to the stone he trips over : "Have I found thee, O mine enemy ?" He said to Nature : "Have I found thee, O my—Beatrice ?"

Yet it was more than "Beatrice." Sometimes it lost altogether the symbolical and the naturalistic elements. Then it was Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" that satisfied him—then he wrote of those he really knew well—and then (again in the winter of 1907–08) he writes "Moses" : and again in the following :

Ah, give me not the torch of truth
To carry high :
Thou God, who saw'st my wasted youth,
Thou knowest why.
I wish that I had never found
Truth's sacred flame,
For now, alas ! 'tis well-nigh drowned
By tears of shame.
Her good report is turned to ill
In my soiled hands,
For I've no courage to fulfil
Her stern demands.
Am I for Truth's sake then to sin ?
Must I deny
I'm in Truth's service and therein
Would gladly die ?
No, no, for Truth's immortal rays
Will always shine—
Through sin and sorrow's mortal haze
Flash out divine.

To his many other occupations at this time Charlie added a little Volunteering. "I am now, I believe," he writes to his sister on October 29, 1907, "a Second Lieutenant in His Majesty's Volunteers ! So don't encourage a war."

He was very fond of the following quotation from a letter of Charles Kingsley :

> Luckily for me I can stop from all work, at short notice, and turn head over heels in the sight of all creation and say I won't be good or bad or wise or anything till two o'clock to-morrow.

"That's a splendid spirit," he once said, and it was one which he did much to cultivate in himself. Had he not done so, the strain of his work at Ruskin College, the ardour with which he studied social problems, and the intense feeling he had for the suffering of the poor, which at times made him quite miserable, would have almost overwhelmed him.

Charlie's principal reason for accepting the post of Vice-Principal had undoubtedly been a desire to be of service to the Labour movement, but he also realized that the position gave him an unique opportunity of studying the Labour movement, and of getting into close touch with working-men, Socialists, and others who were working for social reform. When he first went to Ruskin he was a keen Socialist, and his sympathies were much more with the Labour party than with the Liberals. The internal affairs of the College were, nominally at any rate, managed in a very democratic manner, and he hoped to find there the true democratic spirit, and to see developed amongst the students all the best sides of Socialism—its high ideals, its sense of brotherhood, its sinking of the individual, its love of humanity. But in this he was before long to be grievously disappointed.

About this time he joined the University branch of the Fabian Society, and often went to its meetings. I think this is the only Socialist society he actually joined, though at one time he subscribed to the Independent Labour Party. His views on Socialism at this time are well expressed in the following extracts from the letters to his sister :

October 12, 1907.

Now for your letter of September 24. "Surely to make all men prosperous and give them equal chances to rise isn't an end in itself," you say, but that is an unfair way of putting it. You might as well say : "Surely to make all men prosperous in Heaven and to give them equal chances of getting there is not an end in itself." Those who give up other religions make a religion of Socialism, and that religion is the religion of brotherhood—the feeling of being organically connected and related with everyone else. I think that William Morris puts it as beautifully as anyone in the mouth of John Ball : "For I say to you that earth and heaven are not two, but one. . . . Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of

fellowship is hell : and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that ye do them, and the life that is in it, that shall live on for ever and ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth from the earth shall wane." I don't think you can call that material, or an unsatisfying ideal ; nor is it fundamentally different to what you mean by religion. It *is* religion and has no need of any other. Nor should it be hostile to true religion in others—nor above all to that true religion of fellowship, Christianity —but when it sees how many of the very priests of Christianity set their faces against any new ideal and any reform of this world, though it is admitted that this is a place where men " fit " their souls for the next. How can a man fit his soul for the next world in a slum ? How can he fit his soul to become a member of a great fellowship of equals when he is confronted by men who treat him as dirt and refuse to share their opportunities with him ? Is a religion which can tolerate that except with pitying eyes a religion of fellowship ? Surely the religion which can defend the accumulation of riches in one hand—when that accumulation is at the base of our present miserable condition—is not a real religion of fellowship. All honour, say the Socialists, to men who carry out their religion faithfully, for they will join the Socialist ranks—but let us tear down the god of those who go to church because it is a respectable thing to do, or who listen attentively to a sermon and then go and do just the opposite because " business is business." Such are some of the arguments used by Socialists. Everyone has a right to his own opinion about God, and to Socialists He is not one " from whom all blessings flow." He is rather one who only helps the man who helps himself, and has little or nothing to offer to the man who is " contented " ; surely a far finer conception. Don't be misled by the word " atheist." It is quite absurd that the man who admits that he has not quite made up his mind on subjects which have puzzled the greatest intellects should be dubbed atheist and scorned by the smug bank clerk who hasn't given a thought to the matter unless perhaps he has had a dangerous illness. There is no such thing as a real atheist, and though some Socialists in their bitterness attack Christianity, I do believe that fifty years hence a very much altered Christianity, a much purer Christianity, and one much more like Christ's conception will be accepted as the religion of Socialism. But unless the Church is very careful, though the ethics may be the same, the beliefs on which they are founded will not.

October 17, 1907.

I admit your middle-class bogey is the most pointed objection to Socialism. I don't myself believe in it. If Socialism is to succeed at all, it will have to pay attention not only to the economic but also to the moral and intellectual improvement of England. The movement which will produce Socialism will, of course, die down when it has accomplished its object, but if it is of the quality which I believe it is, it will leave a legacy of art and poetry and music, of education and culture, which will materially weaken the powers of Philistinism. After all, a movement which has produced a dramatist as good as G. B. S., a poet as good as William Morris, a novelist as good as H. G. Wells, a decorator as good as Walter Crane—and a longer list might be made—can hardly be accused of tending towards middle-class stagnancy. After all, the secret of middle-class Philistinism is the necessity they are under of wearing a top hat. They are "superior" to the artisan and can only live by aping the aristocrat. Also each one is given by his father about half a talent which he must develop a little or he would lose his self-respect, but at the same time he must do it in the same way as his father. Surely if all education were free the young man would not be under the same obligation of following in his father's footsteps.

Sometimes he writes in a lighter vein, as in the following, on the feeding of school-children :

I believe the cry about the breaking-up of the home is a mere bogey. The slum child's home is the *street*, and when women have to spend all their days in factories they don't have much chance of "home life." Besides, is a home built up merely on the material basis of meals? I hope not! Otherwise Mum's refusal to give me bread sauce must be sapping our family life. It will be outrageous if Mum sends Denis to a school—away from her for *weeks!* and no longer fed by her loving hand!

Six months at the College, however, brought at any rate a partial disillusionment. Many of the students at that time were not at all what he had expected to find them, and while most of them professed the Socialist creed, the most pronounced forms of individualism were at times

rampant amongst them. There were constantly disputes between the students, and complaints about the food and other domestic matters, with which Charlie had to deal. The relations between the students and the Staff as a whole were unsatisfactory, and from the first Charlie had found it difficult to co-operate with the Principal, Mr. Hird.

To Mr. Bourdillon. *April* 16, 1908.

We have practically knocked off work here for the time being, and I am going to be wafted away from this black Aceldama of battle on Saturday. It is a little wearisome to be in the midst of one long unending struggle with democratic independence, and it will be a great relief to get home to the bosom of my family and resume my wildest socialistic apparel.

To his Sister. *October* 8, 1908.

From 9.30 till 1 o'clock this morning was spent in dealing with a "crisis." It is very worrying work being here, and what is much worse is that it disillusions one so terribly. I don't think I am any longer a Socialist, except in the presence of smugly self-satisfied persons who have never given the matter a thought, I am certainly not a democrat, I don't think I am a Liberal, it would revolt me to be a Conservative, so I don't know what I am. I think my present opinion is that it doesn't much matter what one is, and that the best thing is to help on any movement in whatever direction it may lead which has any real vitality in it. In other words, having lost all faith myself, I admire and am trying to help faith in others : but it is trying work trying to govern people who are fired by a faith which one does not really share. I feel here as if I were a follower of Erasmus set to control a college of out-and-out Lutherans. I have a great deal of sympathy with them, but——

And a little later :

I believe I could get quite keen on the "Back to the land" cry, if I did not know it was so futile nowadays. We have gone too far, but as we have taken the wrong track let us make the best of it, and the best of it is to establish Socialism. I think the Socialist State will be a hateful place, but at least it will be less hateful than the present condition of things. I believe complete anarchy would

be really preferable to Socialism, but then again complete anarchy is almost unthinkable nowadays. We have got so used to the policeman and the tax-collector, so again one is driven to develop along the present lines, and so to trying for Socialism. But before we get Socialism we shall have to reorganize our morality. The ten commandments are ridiculous in modern society. We are told not to commit murder, but not told not to sweat, which is far, far worse ; we are told not to bear false witness, but we are not told our responsibility for the ills of society ; we are only taught not to covet our neighbour's goods—bourgeois capitalist advice ! If people practise the love thy neighbour as thyself, it is only with cash, and only in a few selected cases—a kind of hush-money.

> "They smite with one hand to heal with the other,
> And call the smitten their 'loving brother,'
> Thereby gaining additional kudos—
> But their kiss is worse than the kiss of Judas,
> For Judas sinned through his evil passion,
> But *these* for lack of imagination."

I feel in a most bitter frame of mind, and you get the vitriol thrown at you !

And again :

I couldn't help wondering all the time whether I really still am a Socialist. I am in many ways (if you will forgive confessions !) a frightfully extreme reactionary. I think the whole of civilization since the agricultural stage one gigantic error, due to our trusting to the lower part of our nature, namely, our instincts. Still, as we have made this error and made it so thoroughly that there seems little or no possibility of retrieving it, I feel that we ought to make the best of it, and the way to make the best of it is to vote for Socialism and if possible live in the country. But I don't a bit think that Socialism is ideal, I think it is horrible—but less horrible by far than what exists to-day, where you have thousands of people living in conditions where only the reason can survive without sufficient attention being paid to developing their reason, let alone their higher instincts. They are therefore simply guided by a combination of the lowest instincts and a kind of debased cunning. Under such circumstances, they ought to be shot before they do themselves more harm, but those who rule civilization and believe in civilization

won't allow this, as it would bring civilization to an end ; as that cannot happen, alas, then the only thing one can do as a human being is to try and uplift these people, and the only way to do it within the system of civilization is by science, *i.e.* by Socialism. What rot I do write sometimes. But I really am a reactionary.

But a little later he takes a rather more hopeful view :

To his Sister. *February* 27, 1909.

I am afraid it is not so easy to get a rise out of me about Socialism as it used to be. But I think that for the vast mass of the population there would certainly be more liberty under some system of Socialism—at any rate they couldn't be much worse off. How much liberty has a man to choose his employer ? How much liberty have the employees of the Assurance Company got who are being forced to join the new Army scheme ? Would a mother if she had liberty return to the factory almost directly after her child is born and leave it to be looked after by a stranger ? The real key to the evils of the present situation is that labour is the most perishable of all commodities, and yet it has to compete with others in the open market.

In the March of this year Charlie had a correspondence on Socialism with his grandfather, the late Lord Avebury, and the following extract from the last of these letters seems to sum up very well his position at this time :

I am no longer a Socialist myself, though no doubt I should find myself in agreement with most of their practical proposals. But until the State does something towards educating its citizens, I shall always subscribe to Socialist parties because I believe them to be a great educating influence ; they are rapidly teaching the working-man to take an interest in politics, not merely on election day, but all the time: they appeal chiefly to his reason and his intelligence : they stimulate him to read for himself. No doubt the result is rather a narrow-minded creed—though not more so than the orthodox unthinking Liberal or Conservative—but surely it is far better that a man should read nothing but Karl Marx than that he should never read at all, and spend all his spare time *watching* football matches and betting on the result. And I have sufficient faith in the common-sense and intelligence of the average

working-man to believe that after a time he will break through the narrow groove and take a more broad-minded view. But the conditions telling against education, and the discouragements which a working-man must face seeking education *as things are*, make it absolutely necessary that he should be led into the path of education by some strong overmastering faith in an ideal, however crude, and of course if it is to appeal to uneducated men it *must* be crude. So that, to my mind, to stand aloof and vilify Socialism is to warp the most healthy development of working-class intelligence and to give an excuse for the Marxian cry of class war. Rather should those who desire to see working-men educated enter the Socialist movement and influence it from within.

He was really as keen as ever about politics, and as eager as ever for reform. But he was becoming less certain than he had been when he first went to Ruskin College as to the methods by which reform was to be brought about. His ideas were less revolutionary than they had been, and his close contact with some of the picked men of the Trade Union world had taught him how many obstacles to reform were being imposed by a want of moral backbone and by the crudity of the ideas of even the more thoughtful and better educated amongst the working classes themselves. Writing of Charlie's attitude towards politics, Mr. Bourdillon says :

In 1905, when the Diary begins, he had begun to distinguish, but hardly to criticize. His notes . . . are the comments of a student. By January 1908, when his Diary practically breaks off, the intense attention to every political move has for some time been relaxed ; the interest has become calmer, and the attitude primarily one of criticism.

At the end of March 1909 the trouble which had been slowly brewing ever since Charlie first went to the College came to a head, and a crisis took place in its affairs. It is, I think, unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the causes

which led to this crisis, and Charlie would have been the last person in the world to wish to revive unpleasant memories. It will be sufficient to say that Mr. Hird's views as to the objects of the College, as to its administration, its relations to the University, and as to methods of teaching, were totally at variance with those held by Charlie and the rest of the Staff. This naturally led to constant friction, and it became impossible to maintain any sort of discipline amongst the students, or to carry out the wishes and instructions of the Executive Committee. Matters became so serious at the end of 1908 that a Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee was appointed in December to inquire into the position of affairs generally. The Sub-Committee met frequently during the next few months, when all the members of the Staff were cross-examined, as well as several of the students, and Charlie, Mr. Wilson, and myself each sent in a long memorandum on the questions under discussion.

The Sub-Committee reported in March 1909, and acting on their report Mr. Hird was asked by the Executive Committee to send in his resignation, on the ground that he had failed to maintain discipline in the College. Mr. Hird complied, and was, I think mistakenly, allowed to explain to the students the reasons for his resignation before this had been done officially by the Executive Committee. Mr. Hird's explanation on March 26 was immediately followed by what was afterwards rather absurdly known as "the Ruskin College strike." A good deal more importance than it deserved was attached to it by the public, mainly owing to the undue prominence given to it by the Press. There was much to be said for the men's point of view. Mr. Hird had a most attractive personality, and had succeeded in making many of the students not only extremely fond of

him, but had also inspired them with a great belief in him. They knew little of the friction existing between him and the rest of the Staff, or of the questions at issue before the Sub-Committee. They felt at once that he had been badly treated—a feeling which his farewell speech undoubtedly did much to foster.

The students demanded Mr. Hird's immediate reinstatement, and this being refused, the so-called strike began. It consisted in the students refusing to attend lectures or to have any personal intercourse with any of the Staff except Mr. Hird. There was some talk of abandoning all their domestic duties, but a threatened counter-strike on the part of the cook very quickly put a stop to this development!

The strike was a bitter disappointment to Charlie, and although there was no personal element in the attitude of the students towards him, as he very soon realized, he nevertheless felt it most keenly. As he said at the time, there was no question of ingratitude; it was simply a matter of business. The men were applying ordinary Trade Union methods, but the mistake they made was in regarding the College in the light of a factory, and the Staff as their employers. What distressed him most, however, was the feeling that the students did not trust him, and that he had failed to make them really his friends. "It isn't nice," he writes a little later to a former student, "feeling that many whom one had been glad to call one's friends now cut one in the street," and having his meals alone, at the table where he was accustomed to sit in cheerful conversation with some of the students, was most painful to him.

Most of the evenings during the strike he spent at my house. He was generally much depressed when he arrived, but very soon recovered his ordinary cheerfulness, and for a

few hours would put the College completely out of his mind. I remember he read aloud to my wife and myself a good deal during these evenings, among other things Mr. Galsworthy's "Strife," which he thought very appropriate. He was a very good reader, and particularly fond of reading aloud. But as the time came for him to go back to the College his spirits again sank, and we could see how much he was feeling it all.

But he never for a moment lost heart, and all through these trying days acted with the utmost good temper, and with a courage and tact that would have been surprising in a much older and much more experienced man. Of this time Mr. Zimmern writes as follows:

> Our friendship naturally continued when he became Vice-Principal of Ruskin College, and during the storms he had to weather there. I remember how galling it was to feel that we of the University who sympathized with his position there could do nothing to help him lest our action be misunderstood. He had to face his troubles alone, and how bravely and quietly he did so, only those who saw him during that time can say. One of the most vivid recollections of him that come back to me is of a walk I took with him to Wytham Woods while the troubles were at their height. We spent a happy afternoon talking about the things we generally used to talk about, I probably enlightening him about the future of the universe, and he me about some of the more definite and practicable ways of shaping it. We did not discuss the College situation at all during the walk. But when we parted at the corner of Worcester Street I just simply said that I hoped he would go on keeping his end up. "That's all right," he replied quietly—and I knew it was. He grew to be a strong man during those days.

Though the strike appeared to be unanimous, there were from the first two or three students who were opposed to the attitude adopted by the main body, and several others who were more than half-hearted about it. On the third day of the strike Charlie first became aware of this fact, and

was able to get into communication with the leaders of this small minority, which was gradually becoming larger. The negotiations in their early stages had to be conducted by correspondence, and one of the students of that time has kindly allowed me to make use of the following letter. I quote it as an example of the able and diplomatic manner in which Charlie handled the situation.

Thanks very much for your note and the enclosed letter from . . . which I return. I think I would rather not have anything from you that I should not be at liberty to repeat to the Executive Committee, but of course anything which you communicated to me I should tell them without mentioning your name. But you could be of real use in persuading the students to abandon their present attitude. The Executive Committee, I know for certain, naturally understand the feelings of intense regret and sorrow with which the students must have received the news that Mr. Hird has decided to retire on a pension, and they are quite prepared to see those feelings expressed in the usual ways. But they are *not* prepared to allow this expression to take the form of breaking the rules, or a general strike. Such methods will undoubtedly be met with the sternest repression, and if necessary they will not hesitate to send every student away. They are, however, very anxious not to resort to such extreme measures, as they realize that to do so would be to punish the innocent with the guilty. But unless the innocent form a group to resist the tyranny of the majority, they will infallibly suffer with the rest. Now I feel sure that there must be several students who, like yourself, while feeling very deeply the loss of Mr. Hird, at the same time realize that the methods which have been adopted will neither serve the students, nor the College, nor Mr. Hird. They will not serve the students because, unlike a factory, the College can easily get others to fill the places of the strikers. Nor will they serve the College, because it must to some extent injure the reputation of the College temporarily. And finally such an attitude will have a most prejudicial effect upon Mr. Hird, who will be not unnaturally held responsible for it, whether or no he really is ; and as . . . says, if he were responsible it would be a most dishonourable action. If you could manage to persuade a stray minority—or even possibly a majority—of the students to see things in this light, you would be helping them, the College, and Mr. Hird.

The Council met in London on March 31, and two members of the Executive Committee came down to the College on the following day and endeavoured without success to induce the students to accept very lenient terms. The discontented minority was, however, gradually increasing; by Saturday, April 3, it numbered sixteen, and by the following Monday the strike had practically come to an end. It was decided to close the College for a fortnight, and at the end of this time any student who signed an undertaking to abide loyally by the rules of the College was to be allowed to return.

Much of the pleasure of Charlie's life was centred round his little half-sister Doreen, of whom he was constantly talking. She belonged in some mysterious way to his "dream world," and he often spoke of her as though she were some elf—a being not entirely human. At this time of storm and stress it was probably a relief to him to turn to thoughts of her, and on April 2 he sends the following to Miss Buxton :

To Doreen

I wonder if you
Have heard the to-do
We're having down here :
My word ! it is queer
How some men will act
In the dim realm of fact !
For you and I know
Men *can* always go
Whatever their plight
To a land of delight,
To revel in dreams
And bathe in the beams
Of a light that is far
More bright than the gleams
Of sun, moon, or star.

Yea, short is the space
Our tired souls must trace
'Tween earthy prose and
Songs of dear Fairyland.
And when we are there
We no longer share
In the pain and the pride,
In the anger and grief
Of souls that are tried
Without hope of relief
Through the storm-laden days.
For here are the ways
To green hills and the sea,
And Felicity
By a dewpond we find—
How fresh blows the wind—
Yes, *this* is what's true,
Not that how-de-do!

When the College reopened, all the students, with the exception of some half-dozen irreconcilables, returned. But the bad feeling evoked by the strike was to leave its mark on the life of the College for some months to come. The new Principal was not appointed till September, and Charlie was left in command, and but for his tact and good judgment it is doubtful whether the College could have been kept together at all. Some of the students were thoroughly disloyal, and really only came back with the object of wrecking the College from within. These were actively engaged in helping Mr. Hird to form a rival institution, first known as the Plebs College, and later as the Central Labour College.

To his Father. *May* 1, 1909.

Things are slowly settling down here, but I am afraid there is a small band of irreconcilables who will cause all the trouble they can.

To his Sister. *May* 1, 1909.

Things look much better here than they did last time I wrote. The College is, however, still divided into three sections—the militant irreconcilables, the moderates, and those who "broke strike"—these are more or less equal groups. At present the moderates control the policy, keeping the side of the militants, but forcing them to adopt their policy. But more and more students are getting disgusted at the whole thing, and whatever their views want to have done with it, and start studying again without interruption.

To Mr. Bourdillon. *May* 7, 1909.

I'm getting rather sick of this place. The students have come back without any sense of loyalty to the institution ; and a group of them, uncriticized by the others, are spending their spare time in helping a movement hostile to the College. It makes one despair of humanity.

The last six months Charlie spent at the College were a great strain on him, and he was constantly longing for the quiet of the country, and I remember Mrs. Buxton telling me that when he came home in August for a few days' rest he was absolutely worn out, and unable to do anything but lie about in the garden. "The whole of this year," he writes to a friend, "has been awfully worrying, and worry pulls me down far more than anything else." He had had to abandon Grindelwald the Christmas before, and his holiday then had been cut into by meetings of the Sub-Committee on College affairs. He had only a short fortnight at Newtimber at Easter, and in June a plan for a tour in Touraine with his sister and Mrs. Rutson had to be given up, owing to the disturbed state of the College. He had no proper holiday until he joined his family at Ardmaddy Castle, near Oban, in the following October.

His life at this time, nevertheless, could by no means be described as unhappy, and there were times when he enjoyed

himself to the utmost, in spite of the troubles connected with his work at Ruskin. In June he had two days' fishing on the Itchen with his father and Sir Edward Grey, and there were occasional days in London or at Newtimber with his family, which he always enjoyed. The Sunday walks with Mr. Bourdillon were continued through the summer, there were occasional dinner-parties with his friends in Oxford, and long, happy days spent on the river. Of these days on the river he writes to his sister :

May 21, 1909.

I regret to say that I have been badly demoralized by the acting and the general slackness while you were here, and I spent the whole of yesterday afternoon on the river. Frank Ward and I took out Miss Pope and a Miss Metcalfe. . . . It was an absolutely perfect day, and we had great fun—so much so that it was carried unanimously that we do go out again to-day.

On the following day he writes :

I had a perfectly delicious day yesterday on the river. Everything was so perfect and everybody was so happy that one wished it would go on for ever : I had almost the Skye feeling, and then as the day imperceptibly glided into night with its "slip of the new moon," I felt like I did when I was steaming smoothly down between blue distances from Portree to Mallaig. The very beauty of the scene was tugging at one, giving one an indefinable desire to be merged in something else, which is akin to pain and yet full of a delicious joy, and all one's feelings intensified a thousandfold by the knowledge that it is all slipping away—was it my youth going or what ? or was it only the inevitable effect of the first real summer's day which one enjoys more than any of its sisters that follow ? Anyhow, I was purely contented with life yesterday.

And a few days later :

The day is very unattractive, and indeed anything would be anticlimax after last week.

The acting to which he refers was some scenes from

Shakespeare, which were got up by my wife and some friends of hers, and in which he took part. Of this he writes to my wife :

I know that I have seldom had so much fun as I did this last week, and I'm sure "we few, we happy few, we band of players, will yearly on the vigil feast our friends and say, 'Twas thus and thus we played upon the eighteenth May !"

During August and September he spent a good many Saturdays and Sundays with us at Ascott-under-Wychwood, a village on the edge of the Cotswolds where we had taken a cottage. He generally went back to the College on Saturday night, coming down again by the only Sunday morning train, which brought him to the cottage before breakfast. I remember him sitting on the garden wall and reciting poetry to us in a loud voice while we were dressing. We used to go for long walks over the Cotswolds, lunching in village inns and looking at churches. He was delighted with the country, so much so indeed that he had constantly to remind himself that it really was inferior to the Sussex Downs. It was after one of these walks that he sent my wife the following lines, which he wrote in the train on his way back to Oxford :

Stillness of death and a lowering cloud,
Fruit where the flowers have been ;
Yet a lark is singing his song uncowed,
There is sun on the distant green.

On one of these visits to Ascott we took a walk through the village in the evening, and found a Tariff Reform van on the Green, with a meeting in full progress. Charlie, with his characteristic impetuosity, at once flung himself into the fray, and was soon engaged in a violent argument with the speaker and the chairman, whom he accused of

deliberately trying to deceive the audience. The discussion was perhaps fortunately put an end to by the necessity of his catching his train back to Oxford. The little episode, however, made a great impression on the village, and Charlie is still remembered there. An old woman said to me at the time of his death : " Why, that's the gentleman who came and spoke up for the poor on the Green."

Charlie's time at Ruskin College was, however, drawing to a close. His father had long been anxious for him to take up political work, and early in the summer had already begun negotiations with regard to his standing for Parliament at the next General Election. Charlie himself felt that he was not cut out for a teacher, and thought he had done his work at the College. Dr. Gilbert Slater, the new Principal, had been appointed, and I believe Charlie thought that things might go more smoothly if he, who had been obliged to play such a prominent part in the strike, were no longer there. He says in a letter to my wife :

> It is rather a wrench bringing it all to an end, but it had to come some time, and this seems to be a convenient opportunity. Also I feel that I have done all that I was useful for here.

Dr. Slater came into residence in September, and Charlie stayed to help him until the end of the month, when he joined his family at Ardmaddy Castle. He returned to Oxford for two or three days at the end of October and attended a meeting on Ruskin affairs, and he was at the College again for a short time in November, when his official connexion with it came to an end. Most of the refractory students had left, and with the new set that arrived in September the troubles subsided, and when he left he felt quite reassured as to the future of Ruskin.

This satisfactory state of things was almost entirely due to Charlie's good influence and patient work all through the summer, and the following extract from a letter written by Mr. Lees Smith to Mr. Buxton at the time of his resignation would, I know, be endorsed by all who were working with him then.

July 7, 1909.

His firmness and courtesy since the outbreak have had a great influence in rapidly bringing peace inside the College. He has had one of the most difficult positions which any man could possibly be given, and you can be proud of the way he has filled it.

Charlie's time at the College had been a most valuable experience for him. He had obtained an insight into working-class thought which he could hardly have gained elsewhere. His life amongst the students had helped him to clear up his own ideas on political questions, and he made several firm friends amongst them, with whom he corresponded to the end.

He revisited the College three times after ceasing to be officially connected with it—in April 1910, when he received a presentation from his friends amongst the students; and again in March 1911, when he delivered the address on the American Constitution to which I have already referred. This was a memorable occasion, when three Vice-Principals were present—Mr. Lees Smith, Charlie, and Mr. Allsopp, the then Vice-Principal. They all spoke amidst great enthusiasm, and Charlie thoroughly enjoyed himself. He was pleased with what he saw of the state of the College at this time, and writes to Mr. J. Lawson, a former student and one of his greatest friends:

I was down at R. C. the other day. Everything except the finances was going splendidly, and I think that the finances will very rapidly

recover once the Trade Unions realize their responsibilities. . . . There are a splendid lot of men there now, very high average ability and working hard. . . . We had a splendid Saturday evening, the only blot upon the proceedings being the absence of Miss Giles.

For Miss Giles Charlie had a very tender affection. While at the College hardly a day passed on which he did not go to her room and talk over College matters with her. Unlike most young and ardent reformers, he was always willing to ask and consider the advice of those who had years of experience behind them. I remember him once saying that it was a great privilege to be able to go and talk things out with Miss Giles, and I know that the friendship which existed between them was a real pleasure to both. They used to have expeditions to the theatre together, she dining with him at a restaurant, and afterwards he would go back with her to a little supper in her lodgings.

To her, with her great love and devotion to the College and to the students, whom she always speaks of as her "boys," the strike was a real personal sorrow. All through that time Charlie's thoughtfulness for her was as characteristic as it was delightful. One day, when the whole Staff had to go to London to meet the Executive, I remember the care with which he arranged that anything unpleasant should reach her ears in as gentle a manner as possible, and in any lifting of the cloud which overhung the College his first thought always was to "run and tell Miss Giles."

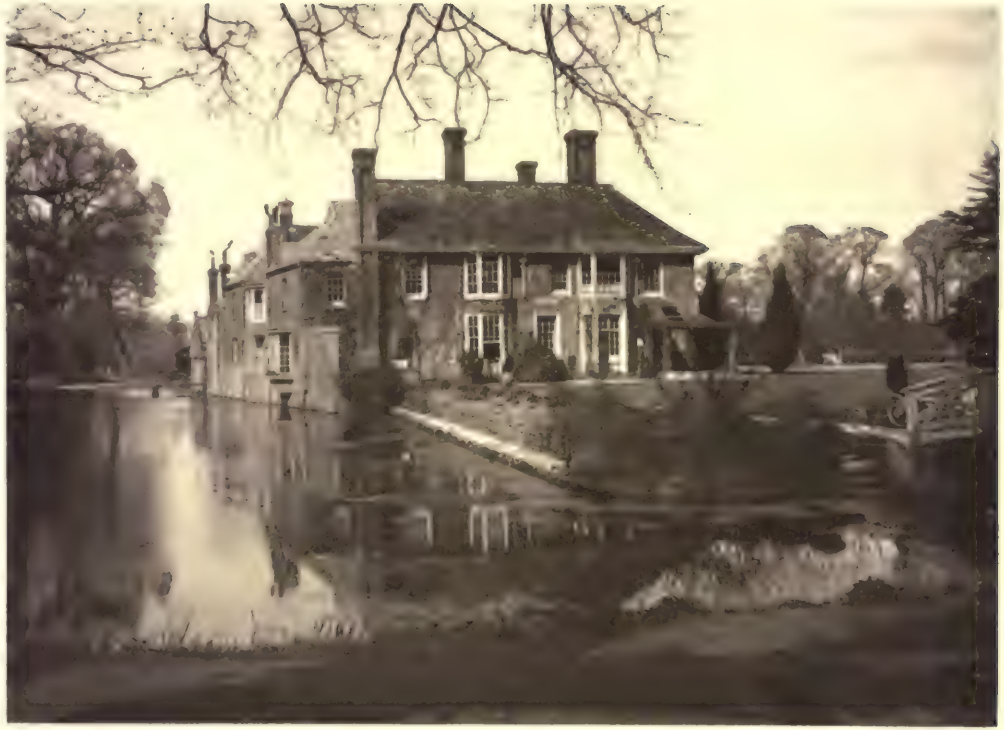
She for her part came to regard him with a very special affection, and many little arrangements for his comfort and well-being at the College were made by her without his knowledge. She has often told me how she used to

look forward to hear his step along the passage and to see him burst into her room to pour out some new enthusiasm or to talk over small details connected with the day-by-day life of the College.

The last time Charlie came back was in June 1911, when the College was rejoicing over a great success in the examination for the University Diploma in Economics and Political Science.

Ruskin College was and always remained very near to Charlie's heart, and, as will be seen later, it was to be closely linked up with his scheme of work for the future. It was his legacy which made it possible to open the present buildings at Ruskin College, and in the large hall which bears his name is placed the Memorial erected to him "by those who lived and worked with him here." It takes the form of a bronze bas-relief, in the centre of which is a head of Charlie in profile; on the right is the figure of an agricultural labourer, on the left that of a miner, and beneath are the words of Browning which Charlie himself once applied to his hero William Morris, words which those who lived and worked with him at the College feel apply with equal force to himself:

> One who never turn'd his back, but march'd breast
> forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dream'd, though right were worsted, wrong
> would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight
> better,
> Sleep to wake.



November

CHAPTER IV

WOODBRIDGE: THE BOARD OF TRADE: AMERICA

1909–1911

I have found my place in God's plan—I am of use.
WINSTON CHURCHILL, *The Inside of the Cup*.

CHARLIE'S official connexion with Ruskin College nominally came to an end in January 1910, but two months before that time he had already begun his work as Parliamentary candidate for the Woodbridge Division of Suffolk. It had always been his father's wish that he should go in for politics, and as early as March 1909 there had been some suggestion of his standing for Parliament.

As has been explained in the last chapter, Charlie's political views had undergone a considerable change during his two years at Ruskin College, and in fact during the last year they were continually in a state of flux. I remember him saying one day when he was dining with some other friends and myself that he really did not know what he was. "One day I am a Socialist, the next I am not. I think I am really a Radical—certainly not a Liberal." His real sympathies were with the Labour party, but at the same time he welcomed and was in full agreement with nearly all the Liberal measures of the past few years, and at this time he regarded the Liberal party as the force in the country most capable of carrying out immediate practical reforms. He explains his position in a letter to his father, written in March 1909, when the idea of his standing was first mooted.

As to my opinions, they are still rather chaotic, but I should think

they were practically the same as the extreme Radicals, who are after all only nominally distinguishable from the Labour party. But I have a horror of the average middle-class Liberal . . . and I couldn't speak against the Labour party.

And later, in July, in reference to a particular constituency :

I suppose it is unlikely that a Labour man will be put up . . . because I don't think I could stand against a Labour man unless there were no Conservative candidate, and even then I shouldn't have my heart in it.

With these views he had no difficulty in falling in with his father's wishes that he should stand as a Liberal, and he thoroughly enjoyed the prospect :

To his Father. *March* 5, 1909.

Thank you very much for your letter, which naturally excited me a great deal. I should like to stand . . . most awfully . . .

All these things make me feel so horribly lucky. I never move a finger—except to my books—and all things are added unto me.

But he had still thoughts of social work, and even as late as October was considering the advisability of living with Mr. Paterson in Bermondsey. However, he decided against this, at any rate for the present.

To Mr. Bourdillon. *October* 18, 1909.

I have had to decide not to live with Paterson. My people are awfully anxious that I should be at home : and I think I want to be.

In July negotiations with regard to his candidature were still going on, and there was also some talk of his standing for the London County Council. He was not actually adopted as Parliamentary candidate until November, when he was asked to stand for the Woodbridge Division. The arrangements were brought to a head rather suddenly, and he had to hurry back from his holiday in Scotland almost at a moment's

notice, to be interviewed by the leading Liberals of the constituency. I well remember his excitement when he burst into our house one evening a day or two before he was finally adopted, to tell us the news, and how he set me to work for the rest of the evening, pumping me for the latest arguments against Tariff Reform, to be used in the speech he was to make to the large Liberal meeting at Ipswich where he was adopted a few days later. Of his adoption as candidate Mr. W. Rowley Elliston, who himself contested the seat in December 1910, writes as follows:

In November 1909 the Woodbridge Liberals were looking for a candidate. Mr. R. L. Everett, who had been before the Suffolk electors since 1880 and had been returned by a majority of 179 over Captain E. G. Pretyman in 1906, had announced his intention of not standing again, and Captain Peel was in the field in the Conservative interest.

On Friday, November 12, 1909, C. S. Buxton, who had been brought down by the late Mr. Felix Cobbold, M.P., met half a dozen of the Woodbridge leading Liberals at the Ipswich Committee rooms. It fell to me to entertain Buxton while they were conferring together, and then he was brought into the room for an informal talk. Buxton, I think, rather astonished the members of the old Suffolk Liberal brigade by some of his views on social questions, but they took to him at once and unanimously agreed to recommend him as candidate to the Association. This was done on the following Tuesday, November 16, and Buxton's address delivered before a crowded meeting at the Ipswich Reform Club was very well received.

One election contest is very much like another, and of the Woodbridge campaign there is nothing unusual to record. Charlie worked hard in the division till just before Christmas, when he took a short holiday, part of which he spent with me at Oxford. He was of course full of politics, and spent most of the time discussing the arguments he thought of using in his speeches, and in collecting and concocting

anecdotes for them. But what I chiefly remember about him then is his extraordinary cheerfulness. He was in the highest spirits. He was very much interested in the chauffeur who took him about to his meetings, and with whom he made great friends. Socialism seems to have been the bond of union, and Charlie used to discuss Socialism and economic questions with him as they motored along the roads. If I remember right, he gave the chauffeur Mr. Beveridge's "Unemployment" as a Christmas present. Charlie always took a great deal of trouble in selecting his Christmas presents, and no one was ever forgotten.

Both Charlie and most of his supporters were quite sanguine as to his success at the poll, and his defeat by a majority of 894 was a great surprise to him.

To Mr. Bonnerjee. *February* 8, 1910.

Personally I thought I had won till I actually got into the counting room. The swing was with me up to the last, and we had splendid meetings, while my opponent had rotten ones. The betting was freely on me.

His behaviour at the declaration of the poll made a great impression. He was the first to congratulate Captain Peel on his victory, and in seconding the usual vote of thanks to the Returning Officer he said: "We have had a very hard fight, but we have had a very fair fight—and while there are those who find it very difficult to make friends with the friends of my opponent, I have found it impossible not to make friends with Captain Peel." There was throughout the whole campaign, as the local paper pointed out at the time, an entire lack of personalities. Charlie became extremely popular with his supporters, and he was pressed to stand again, and at one time fully intended to do so.

Mr. Elliston says:

The general impression created by Buxton's campaign was that he was an able and very promising candidate, who with his opportunities was certain to come to the front and make a good Parliamentary position for himself. He became popular, and we all liked him very much. The news of his early death made quite a painful impression in Suffolk.

Mr. Henry Harwood, who with his brother, Mr. Alfred Harwood, was constantly on the platform at Charlie's meetings, and who was one of his leading supporters, writes :

Mr. Buxton was one of the most delightful men I have ever entertained. Our acquaintance unfortunately was very short, but from the first introduction he exhibited that beautiful spirit of simplicity and good nature which was unrivalled in my experience. His was a rare life so unexpectedly cut short. He won the respect of everyone, his opponents as well as his friends.

I was myself able to attend only one of Charlie's meetings, which was not a great success ; but it was held in one of the Tory strongholds of the constituency. He, however, succeeded in getting a fairly good hearing under very unfavourable circumstances.

Charlie prepared his speeches with the thoroughness that characterized all his work. They were full of facts, and his points were always well put. I think he was at first, at any rate, not sufficiently elementary for his audiences, but he seems to have improved in this respect towards the end of the campaign, and at Mr. Asquith's Ipswich meeting he spoke after the Prime Minister, and did well before a big audience. Mr. Alfred Harwood writes of his speaking as follows :

He was a fluent speaker—so much so that even his opponents acknowledged that "he had the gift of the gab." His speeches were so simple and clear that everybody could understand them,

and his evident sincerity made them the more convincing. He possessed an almost perfect knowledge of current political problems, was always ready with a prompt and crushing answer to any question, and his repartees were very effective.

The General Election taxed Charlie's strength to the uttermost, for besides his own campaign, which he conducted with an energy unusual even at such times, he worked at Poplar for his father, for a day or two at Northampton for Mr. Lees Smith, and also spoke for other friends. When the election was over he took a complete rest for about a month, spending the time in London and at Newtimber. Mr. Buxton, who had become President of the Board of Trade, then appointed him one of his private secretaries, a position he held for the next six months.

Of his life during this period I am unable to say very much. He lived at home most of the time, and so there are no letters to his family, while he seems to have written fewer letters than usual to his friends. In a letter to Mr. Lawson he says :

I don't feel the same energetic desire to sit down and write a letter. It's not so much that one hasn't time : it is that one lacks the necessary feeling of security against interruption.

I only saw him once myself during this time, when he spent two or three days with us at Littlehampton. He did not tell me much about his life in London—I think because he did not wish to worry me, as I was recovering from an illness. But it was easy to gather that he was not happy in it, and that it was not at all to his liking. He spent a good deal of time during this visit in reading aloud to us Mr. Wells' "Food of the Gods," roaring with laughter over it. He had thrown off London and the Board of Trade for the moment, and when he left set off on a tramp through Sussex

to Newtimber, which he enjoyed to the full. He went for several such tramps during this summer, the confinement and conventionality of his life in London making him feel more than ever the need of the country. He detested conventionality. "Did you notice the gusto with which I read the words 'Do not conform to the world' in the Lesson in church this morning?" he once said to me when I was spending a Sunday at Newtimber.

However, Charlie's work at the Board of Trade interested him a good deal.

To Mr. Lawson. *March* 30, 1910.

I am acting as one of my father's private secretaries—very interesting work. I see behind the scenes, and hear all the arguments about knotty points—for instance, in connexion with Labour Exchanges—discussed by experts. I have heard a good many of the discussions with officials about the business in South Wales. Officials are on the whole far more sympathetic to the labour point of view than I had expected.

But he disliked the life he had to lead, and London he hated. The only form of London society which at all appealed to him was dinner-parties, which he always enjoyed. He was also becoming rather disgusted with politics, and impatient for reform. Thus he writes to Mr. Lawson in the letter just quoted:

I rather agree with you about politics being unsavoury and unsatisfactory, and the terrible way in which people can be bamboozled. I don't believe that it is a question of amount of education so much as of the kind: and even then it is quite extraordinary how one can be taken in by sheer repetition. That is the secret of all advertisement. . . . What depresses me about politics is the awful power of money. To start with, in most places the candidate is chosen less for his opinions than for his long purse. The best men are only too often barred out simply because they can't pay. Even if this were remedied, and even if there were no

such thing as real and direct bribery, money would still tell enormously, as all the processes of an election are so costly—as I know to my own horror. Getting rid of the power of the House of Lords is only a feeble beginning in the direction of real democracy in this country, and one of the reasons why I am on the whole rather against a Second Chamber is that under existing circumstances every additional election gives an added power to money.

But there was one occupation during this summer which did something to reconcile him to his life in London, for he was at last able to carry out his long-cherished idea of working with Mr. Paterson in Bermondsey. He was only able to go one evening a week, and to help on one occasion at a week-end boys' camp. But I remember him telling me how much he enjoyed this work, and how much he wished he could do more of it. Of this time Mr. Paterson writes to me as follows:

He began to come to me in Bermondsey on Thursday evenings. He was shy of doing anything. He still wanted to learn. It was the night when boys out of work and boys on probation from the court came to see me. Charles would only act as registrar, and sat taking notes of what they said, keeping a register of each case in his own methodical way. But when he could be persuaded to take a more active and direct part, his tremendous interest and sympathy were immediately observed by the boys, and "the gentleman what's always writing when I comes to see you, sir," became a very real friend indeed.

It was in the summer of the same year that we were badly in need of an adjutant at a week-end boys' camp. Charlie was pressed, and accepted, protesting his incapacity. His was not a manner or personality to capture at first sight the quick cockney boy, but the strange, unexpected thing happened. In twenty-four hours the camp had realized that he had put his whole heart into it, and the preparation of meals and the clearing-up of them, the organization of games, collection of money, and the general discipline all went with a swing.

In July of this year it was decided that Charlie should

visit Canada and the United States, and spend the autumn and winter there, the idea being that he should see something of the world, and that such a tour would help to equip him more fully for his political career. For politics had not been abandoned, and his father still looked forward to the time when he and Charlie should sit together in the House of Commons. When Charlie's career had been under discussion in 1906, it had been suggested that after the History Schools he and his friend Mr. Algernon Villiers should go round the world together; but Charlie was not very enthusiastic about the plan, and his appointment to Ruskin College of course put an end to it. Mr. Villiers was now to be his companion, and Charlie looked forward to the new experience. He writes to his father:

August 30, 1910.

It is awfully good of you to send off Algy and me in this way. I am sure we shall enjoy ourselves enormously, and I hope it will be a help to us afterwards to have seen something of "the way they make things hum."

He was at this time, however, thoroughly unsettled and dissatisfied with his life. He seems to have felt that he had not yet found his life's work, that he had failed in all he had done hitherto, and that he was in danger of drifting, without definite aims. Mr. Allsopp, then Vice-Principal of Ruskin College, tells me that he rarely saw Charlie so depressed as he was shortly before he started for America, and his state of mind can be seen from the following extract from a letter to Mr. Allsopp:

I am giving up the Board of Trade next week and am going to travel till the end of the year in Canada and the U.S.A. Then what? I am not sure. I have not really got a clear notion either of what I am capable or of what I want to do. . . . I am beginning to think dimly and vaguely that I am too much entangled in a

system, and that what is necessary is some sweeping simplification of one's life. How this is to be done is still vague. I am going to think it out on my travels.

And the same idea runs through the following :

To Mr. Bourdillon. *August* 21, 1910.

Surely your argument that one ought not to give up the jobs for which one has received one's education is rather a *petitio principii*, and like the old assertion that one ought to do one's duty in that state of life, etc. Surely the whole object of education is to give one a true sense of proportion, and if this new sense of proportion condemns those jobs for which one's education has fitted one, then it is surely a pity to continue doing them. Education should give one freedom. But it is just these series of vicious circles that I want to break. We do things not because we want to do them, or because we think they ought to be done, but either because if we don't we lose caste or because all our previous life seems wasted if we don't use our carefully trained abilities in the stereotyped way. (I am very sleepy to-night, and cannot put it properly.) What I mean is that so much of what we do is of the nature of keeping up appearances. I want someone to revolt against the civilization of appearances, and if no one else will, then I will try.

He was, however, now as always able to shake off his fit of despondency at times, and to throw himself heart and soul into the interests of the hour. He took a short holiday in August, which he spent with his uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. George Barnes, fishing in the Shetlands, and writes to his father :

To-day I had the day of my life. I went up alone to a loch some way off where nothing much has hitherto been caught. I came back with three fish of 2 lb., 2 lb., 3 lb ! and I lost another which broke my line, carrying off a newly rigged-up cast. All these four were on within half an hour : and all of them I saw rise beforehand —not caught on the " chuck and chance it " system. They all gave me simply splendid play—better than any of the Itchen trout. The 3-lber. jigged out the line until there was only two yards left. It was awful luck landing him, as he was hooked on the bob-fly, and the rest of the cast had broken away on a rock or something at the place where the bob was joined on. . . . I wish you were up here.

While in the Shetlands he went out for a night with the herring-boats, and writes his sister the following letter, which occupies twenty pages of note-paper :

August 26, 1910.

On Wednesday night Jim Barnes, Tony, Ralph, and I went out with the herring-boats. It was most awful fun, and the amazing thing was that though it was pretty rough, we were none of us sick, and I didn't even feel ill. Tony and I went out in one boat, the other two in another. The first difficulty which had to be surmounted was to get "wheesky," as it is absolutely *de rigueur* that guests on a fishing-boat should bring whisky to share round with their hosts. The difficulty was that no one on Whalsay has a licence to sell. However, as you know, Uncle George's morals in out-of-the-way places are not quite the same as on London pavements, so he approached the local storekeeper confidently in his request for whisky. The local storekeeper said, "Whisht ! whisht ! the excise-man is about the day ! " but he drew Uncle G. into his shop and there a transaction took place. The details are not known, but it is thought that Uncle G. informed the storekeeper that he was about to order two bottles from Lerwick, and begged the loan of two in the meanwhile. At any rate Uncle G. emerged from the interior triumphant (*pace* Mum, and Miss Mitchell) with a bottle of whisky under either arm.

Then we were free to start. The boat we were in was the *Verdine*, LK 476. (I refused to go in the *Annie* as I remembered the ill associations connected with that name in Colonsay.) She was a boat about 60 feet long, with a big mast, and another small one ; but there was always plenty enough wind without putting up all sail. The ship has practically no bulwarks—except a raised board a few inches high—admirable for tripping over, but useless as a means of saving one from falling overboard. The crew in the heaviest roll used to walk nonchalantly up and down, balancing themselves awfully well, but Tony and I at first had to go about on all fours ! The crew consisted of seven men and a boy. They were all extremely nice, and there was no distinction of person. It took quite a long time to make out who of this jolly company was the skipper, as there were practically no orders given, everyone seeming to know what to do, and all of them understanding each other perfectly. Most of them were pretty old, and all of them were far

older than they looked. Those of them who were the youngest made special friends with us, and were the most perfect hosts.

Directly we started we all gathered below, and had a meal. These splendid strong men eat very little—chiefly oatcake and butter, with a little treacle. We saw no meat all the time, but I think they have one meat meal in the day. After this meal, shared with them, most of them turned in for a little sleep. Tony and I went on deck, and were allowed to steer the ship by the compass, which was very amusing. We left Whalsay about 12 o'clock or so, and went straight out with a good breeze to the fishing-grounds, 20 miles away out to sea. It got rougher as we got away out to sea, and the rollers were bigger ; but as long as we kept sailing, the motion would not have been very unpleasant to anyone. However, we got to the fishing-grounds about 5 o'clock, and then we simply drifted with all sail set till it was time to shoot the nets about 7 o'clock. While waiting we rolled and pitched tremendously, but somehow or other I never felt the least ill. We saw some exciting birds while waiting, stormy petrels, Fulma petrels, a great skua, etc. The stormy petrel is the size and shape and colour of a house-martin. It skims up and down the lanes between the rollers, and one never sees it for long at a time. The Fulma petrel is a bird the colour and size of a herring-gull, but with long stiff wings, like a swift, whose flight it resembles. It is called a "Molly" by the sailors because of its stupidity.

At last it was time to shoot the nets, which took an hour and a half about. They are attached below to a heavy cable, which sinks them, and above to a few buoys made of dried sheepskins. They hang about six feet below the surface. There were forty-seven of them, each 25 yards long by 18 feet deep, so that they covered a wide space. After they were shot we attached the boat to them, and simply drifted. Most of the men turned in, but Tony and I sat on deck, and enjoyed ourselves. It was awfully cold. I had on two vests, two woollies, one flannel shirt, two thick waistcoats, one thick white sweater, one ordinary coat, and a mackintosh, and yet I was cold ! But it was quite lovely. The sun was setting over the Shetlands in the distance, and while the glow, which lingers a long while up here, was still visible, we saw out to sea the moon gradually disentangle herself from a dark jumble of clouds, to ride free and beautiful in a clear patch of sky. The deep water out there is the most lovely colour I have ever seen, a clear transparent liquid blue.

Finally Tony and I turned in to the little cabin, and slept upon the benches at the side. It was pretty thick in there. There was a boiler for the engine, which pulls up the sail, etc., a stove for cooking tea, a man smoking a strong pipe, and eight others of us sleeping! I had an awful nightmare: I dreamt I was in the Board of Trade in a gale: all the desks heaved up and down; every now and then a Head of Department shot in an undignified way through the door into the President's room, and saved himself by clasping the President round the neck, and so on—horrible scenes. It struck me as natural that Webster was away that day!

At 1.30 o'clock we were called, and had a welcome little meal in preparation for "haaling" the nets. It was of course still night, but there was a hidden moon, which made it fairly light. The "haaling" was a lovely sight. One looked over the side, and saw in the water what seemed to be a number of glow-worms, luminous in the dark of the sea. Then, as they came out over the side, they flashed suddenly silver. As it grew gradually light the glow-worms faded, but the fish were still silver-shining in the dawn. But the weirdest sight were the whales. There were two round our boat, great fellows about 25 feet long. They came to eat the fish as they fell out of the net as it was being drawn aboard. In the darkness the only thing one could see of them, when they were submerged, were their two side-fins, which are silver-white. They looked, however, in the water like two great luminous eyes with much the same kind of light as glow-worms, about five feet apart, belonging to the same monster, which could give long odds to the Hound of the Baskervilles. These eyes played round the ship all the time of the "haaling," but gradually faded with the dawn, and in their stead one saw a great shadowy shape gliding easily through the water, and coming up at intervals to blow. It was thrilling.

Finally the nets were all in, and we set sail for home, with, I am sorry to say, only a moderate catch of fish. On the way back, at least when we got into calmer water near land, the men sorted out the fish from the nets. This they did by jerking the nets, with the result that several herrings were jerked overboard. We were followed by a crowd of lesser black-backed gulls, which fought for these. It was incredible to see the speed with which one of these gulls would bolt a herring whole! But having done so, it had to sit down on the sea for some time to recover. We got back about 8.30, very cold, but having enjoyed ourselves enormously, and having had a wonderful experience. We slept the rest of the day,

and read rotten novels, thoroughly exhausted ; but the men started out again directly they had landed their fish.

Your very loving
CHARLIE.

For the moment herring-fishing was the one thing that mattered.

But what was he to do with his life? Or the old question—How could he be of some use in the world? These were the thoughts always uppermost in his mind in these days, and he welcomed the American tour rather as a breathing-space. It would give him time to think, and its importance lies in the fact that it helped him to lay the foundations of his plans for the future.

Charlie and Mr. Villiers sailed for Quebec on September 1, and spent about a month in Canada. They then stayed for ten days in Vancouver with Charlie's cousin, Mrs. Rupert Butler, and her husband. Mrs. Butler, formerly Dorothea Boyle, was a fast friend of Charlie's. From there they went on to San Francisco. Part of November was spent in big-game shooting at a place called Jackson's Hole, in Wyoming. Towards the end of the month Mr. Villiers was obliged to return to England, and Charlie gradually worked his way eastward to New York, which he reached a day or two before Christmas, stopping about a week in Chicago and a day or two at Boston on the way. After Christmas he visited St. Louis and Washington, and then joined his uncle, Mr. Bertram Buxton, on a three weeks' expedition to the West Indies. He got back to New York at the end of January, and after staying a few days there, he again went south, on a short visit to the Bishop of North Carolina, and then at the end of February started on his homeward journey. Mr. Villiers writes: "Charlie was an ideal

travelling companion. His kindness and good spirits never failed, and as his general health recovered from the long strain of his work at Ruskin College and the election, he grew more and more buoyant and enjoying."

He did not enjoy the Eastern Canadian towns, and was glad to get out West. Nor did he care for the most obvious characteristic of society in Canada. "To him," says Mr. Villiers, "the 'get on or get out' spirit was the most abysmal thing on earth. The triumphant 'boost' of a commonplace Canadian revealed a lie in the soul unendurably hideous. . . . At Toronto Charlie had two days of internal pain and deep depression. This I think may have been an attack of the illness which fell upon him with such tragic swiftness nine months later. At any rate, it set the seal upon his detestation of Eastern Canada."

Two things, however, Charlie greatly enjoyed in Eastern Canada. One was a visit to some experimental farms which Mr. Fisher, the Minister for Agriculture, had started at Ottawa, Brandon, and elsewhere ; and the other was a few days' stay with Mr. Kenneth Bell, an old Balliol friend, at St. Agathe, in a "summer home" among the woods and rivers of the province of Quebec. "He threw himself," says Mr. Villiers, "with ardour into the daily 'stunts,' and chopped wood furiously. Bell was teaching at Toronto, and hating the majority of his pupils cordially. Charlie loved vehemence, and vehement onslaughts on commercialism in education and respectability in society were like wild music to his ears."

Charlie naturally took a keen interest in Canadian politics, and he wrote at length to his father, myself, and other friends upon the political situation, describing conversations with Canadians he had met. But he seems to have soon come to

the conclusion that Canadian politicians, whether Liberal or Conservative, were of no use to him. They were all bound up to the old order—each for himself, and the Devil take the hindmost. He was often depressed at the thought that the Canadians were, as he believed, slowly drifting into the political and economic tangles in which we in the old country had become involved. His dislike of towns and town-life seems to have grown upon him while in America, and what he certainly enjoyed most were the experiences of country life he had there while visiting Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Butler, and the time at Jackson's Hole.

Of his stay with the Butlers Charlie writes with the greatest enthusiasm, and he appears to have thrown himself heart and soul into their life and occupations. Mrs. Butler writes :

He was wonderfully interested in every detail of the life out here. My husband was working hard at our orchard at that time, and Charlie insisted on helping, and spent hours leading the pony up and down the rows of raspberries when they had to be cultivated. So keen was he to enter into the life that he went into Victoria and bought a pair of overalls, which he wore with great pride.

Charlie seems to have thought rather vaguely from time to time of settling down in Canada or the United States, and trying to work out some of his ideals there. He told his sister afterwards that he had taken a map of Sussex with him in his pocket for fear he should never come home. He writes to her from Vancouver :

I want to settle down here dreadfully for good. One could earn one's own living, and no longer be a parasite. Also one would be earning one's own living without in any way compromising with or bolstering up modern civilization—at least for a time, but one has an uneasy feeling that in a short while all this lovely country will be overrun by a growing Victoria.

But Sussex and his own home there had too strong a hold over him to allow the idea of settling in America to take permanent root in his mind, and he also felt that there was work which needed doing in England, and in one of his letters home he says : " England needs colonizing just as much as Canada."

He particularly disliked the speculation in land which was going on, and in a letter to us complains that owing to this " everyone is restless, no one has a real home. There is none of the serenity and homeliness of an English countryside." In this connexion Mr. Villiers recalls one amusing incident, which happened while they were in Vancouver. " We went into town," he writes, " to meet some of the advanced local Radicals and Trade Union leaders. Charlie explained and defended the land taxes of Mr. Lloyd George's 1909 Budget. The British Columbia Radicals were dismayed. They were themselves in ' real estate.' I don't know whether Charlie was more amused or disgusted."

Jackson's Hole seems to have suited Charlie down to the ground. Of the hunting expedition Mr. Villiers writes as follows :

He threw himself heart and soul into the long-expected hunting expedition. At San Francisco we accidentally came across a man who fired us with his account of sport in Jackson's Hole, Wyoming. Our first camp was three days' journey from the railroad. Here was the life which Charlie enjoyed in every fibre. The sense of remoteness and of freedom was what his heart desired. All day long we were hunting wapiti. The evenings we spent round the fire in the teepee, listening to extravagant tales of gigantic beasts and prodigious shots. The guide who went with Charlie was a regular stage swashbuckler, full of strange oaths and amazing blasphemies. Charlie enjoyed this rather farcical personage immensely, and for the man who came with us as cook he had a genuine affection.

Here is Charlie's account of the time, taken from a letter

addressed to the family, written from St. Anthony on December 6 :

At last I have emerged from the backwoods (which, by the way, are those described in "The Virginian") after having had a great time. For a month I have lived in riding breeches, risen before dawn, slept in a bed bag on the floor, let my beard grow (it is a dandy), and had one "wash down" a week (baths being impossible). I have come to the conclusion that the only really good place to have one's meals in is the kitchen, and that any house with more than two rooms in it is an absurdity. If I really followed my heart's desire I would buy a ranch in Jackson's Hole. All the people who live in that paradise are each one more delightful than the next, and they are really democratic—you cannot tell what is a man's trade—whether cowboy, doctor, blacksmith, or storekeeper, from their speech or appearance or attitude to one another. Everyone is accepted for what he is worth, and the dollar is not almighty in Jackson's Hole. Perhaps it is because their nearest railway is almost 100 miles away, and they are divided from it by an appalling hill, but I think it is really because of the wonderful mountains amongst which they live, and the fact that not a man but has tramped and hunted amongst them. Mum wanted to know whether the women were Pankhurstian. I am afraid I cannot say much about the women. I only saw four to talk to ; but those I did see were "good fellows" like the men, and at the same time they were women. The hunting was a roaring success. I expect or rather "guess" that Algy will have told you all about it. I got a really good mule deer head, which for the number of its points (twenty-tree) is pretty well a record in these parts. I also got a very fine wapiti's head with six points on either side—and all of them great long points, and finally the day before the season closed I got a bighorn sheep. It is not a very big head as heads go, but it is not one to be ashamed of. It measures 12½ inches round the base of the horn. He rolled over precipices and down slopes for about 1000 feet, but luckily his horns were only a bit scratched. The elk or wapiti are not very difficult hunting, and there are thousands of them, but the deer and the sheep are very exciting indeed—the sheep because of the roughness of the country and the hard work it entails, and the deer because of their shyness. There is nothing more exciting than following up a deer track in the snow through a wood, having to be continually on the alert, as you don't

know when you may come on him, and you must see him before he sees you.

Charlie's intense love of sport of all kinds may have struck some of his friends as a little difficult to reconcile with some of his views. As to this Mr. Villiers says: "When it was a question of sport, I don't think Charlie was ever ashamed of being able to indulge in it. He loved it so naturally and so joyously that it must have been impossible for him to think it wrong." Had he been tackled on the subject, he would probably have said that sport, in England at any rate, had become too much the amusement of the few, and that he would like more people to have the opportunity of enjoying it. He always hated the elaborate apparatus of the big shooting-party.

Charlie had hardly left Jackson's Hole for more than a week when he was again absorbed in social questions in Chicago, where for some days he helped the sweated garment-workers in a strike which was then in progress. Although he mentions this strike in his letters home, he says nothing as to the part he himself took in it. Mr. Zimmern, however, who was in Chicago a year later, writes: "The President of the Women's Trade Union League at Chicago told me how modestly and unobtrusively he offered his help during the garment-workers' strike, and how useful it had been." While in Chicago he went over Armour's factory, which greatly interested him. In connexion with this visit he says very characteristically in one of his letters home: "I never feel comfortable in the offices of business magnates, because I always feel that I am there under false pretences, and that if only they knew how I feel about them and their business they would at once show me the door."

Of the rest of his stay in America there is not much to tell. He admired Washington, and in spite of himself could not help rather liking New York.

To the Family. *February* 1, 1911.

Do what I can I cannot help being exhilarated by New York and its wonders. Probably I should be carried right off my feet if I stayed here much longer. I cannot exactly define why I enjoy being here. It is something in the air which is so exactly the opposite of London. One cannot give a reasonable explanation.

Of Washington he writes :

It has impressed me enormously. It is the only civilized city this side of the Atlantic which I have yet seen, with the possible exception of Winnipeg. All the others were far too tainted with capitalism and its results before they began to make themselves places where a human being could feel proud to live in. Of course Washington may be just as bad as the rest, and there certainly is the most horrible slum facing the gardens in front of the Capitol, and in the White House there is Taft. But in spite of these defects, and the probable existence of still worse slums which I have not seen, Washington is sure a crackerjack city, as my friends in Wyoming would say.

On the whole, Charlie thoroughly enjoyed the tour, and it had given him what he wanted—time to think out plans for the future. He left England with his mind unsettled, with the feeling that his life had been a failure, and with the fear that he might never make it a success. He came back full of hope and energy, with a definite object before him and plans for work—work which he felt must be done and which he could accomplish. The importance of the visit to America, as I have already said, lies in the fact that it was while there that his plans for the future began to shape themselves in his mind.

Aged 25.

CHAPTER V

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

1911

Thou canst not finish thy work, but needst not therefore cease from labour. *The Talmud*

CHARLIE got back from America at the end of February. Although he had a definite aim before him, he had not even yet decided on the details of his plan of work, or the means by which he could carry out his ideas. He had, however, quite made up his mind on one or two points with regard to his future. He was not going into politics, he was not going back to the Board of Trade. He must break away from the ordinary conventional life led by the majority of young men of the class to which he belonged ; he must live in the country, and his work must somehow or other be connected with the land. "Get back to Mother Earth" was a thought which was constantly in his mind. "I am more than ever convinced," he writes to Mr. Bourdillon on his way home, "that to people like me before one can live properly one must (1) burn one's boats in some way, (2) get back to Mother Earth."

His idea of "getting back to Mother Earth," though strengthened by his tour in America, and especially by his visit to Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Butler and while he was at Jackson's Hole, did not originate there, for as early as September 1909 he writes to his sister :

I do feel very strongly that the present restless state of the world is because we none of us have a sufficiently intimate acquaintance with Nature, and because we do not live in the open air enough. I should like to go back to the time when everyone tilled the fields,

and everyone was face to face with a healthy reality. But if we cannot do that, at least we can get back to Nature as much as possible, and above all things we should be with her at all the great crises of our lives. Only so in the meantime shall we get the necessary strength to fight against the devils which have been fostered of civilization. But if one believes these things, what is the use of cherishing them secretly in one's heart and not proclaiming the message to the world ?

At that time Charlie was very much interested in the writings of Edward Carpenter, which left a deep impression on his mind. A year later we have this same idea of " getting back to Mother Earth " much more fully developed in the following very remarkable letter which he wrote to his sister from the Shetlands a few days before he sailed for Canada :

August 21, 1910.

The Devil says : " See what a happy, useful life you can have if you will only ' do your duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call you.' You can take your hereditary place in the House of Commons as a Liberal member, and devise useful and humane and beneficial reforms. . . . You might acquire great influence in the party and you might possibly guide it into more advanced channels. If once you had acquired this position and could speak with authority, couldn't you gradually educate the people of England up to a new conception of social justice ? Then again what could be more attractive than to be the heir of Newtimber and to feel yourself rooted in Sussex soil ? . . . You love Sussex, you love your family, you love public speaking. Here is a career for you, an honourable career in which you may have all these. Everyone will applaud, no one will say you are doing wrong. Why do you hesitate ?"

But God breaks in sternly : " I call upon you to renounce your class, I call upon you to renounce your riches, I call upon you even to renounce your family. . . . Never mind what the world says. . . . It will heap all kinds of hard words upon you, it will hate you as a traitor. But this will only prove that you have been right. You cannot serve two masters. You cannot divide allegiance between God and Mammon. You are a feeble vessel, but the most you can do to shake this cancerous growth born of Satan which men call civilization is by renouncing it altogether (and especially by renouncing your

ill-gotten riches which spring from it). You cannot preach against capitalism and yet remain a capitalist. But from another point of view is it better that you should remain at ease, or that ten working-men—your comrades—should have the advantages of Ruskin College for a whole year? Other people live on £50 a year—why cannot you? Why cannot you earn it by the sweat of your brow? Will not this bring you into sympathy with those who do? Will you not find it easier to explain to them the horrors of civilization? Your operations may at first be on a small scale, but they may grow, and you can always speak to a large public through the newspapers. This business will be hard and difficult. You will not find it easy at first to make a living at all. Begin therefore at once to learn.

"But remember that you will not be hated, you will not suffer hunger and fatigue in vain. You will have great rewards. You will have the knowledge that you will have accomplished a little—however little—to shake the foundations of society. You will not have a clear, but at least a clearer conscience. You will have freedom—the freedom to say and think exactly what you like and what you feel, and above all the freedom from the tyranny of public or family opinion. You will gain your bread by labour in the open air under My sky. You may look forward to settling down in a cottage on a farm in Sussex within sight of the Downs (possibly you might be a shepherd upon them), and finally you will fall asleep in Me—in the body you will become part of My green fields, and in the spirit you will become part of My peace which passeth all understanding." *

During his stay in America the determination to make some radical change in his life grew in strength. The problem he had to solve was how to combine the working out of his political ideas with life in the country and work on the land. On the journey from Victoria to San Francisco he sketched out to Mr. Villiers a plan in many respects similar to the one which he finally adopted. With the money he then possessed he intended to found scholarships at Ruskin College for students drawn from among agricultural labourers.

* It is, perhaps, worth noting that this letter, such a striking contrast to the one describing the night with the herring-boats (*see* p. 113), was written only five days earlier.

Charlie himself was going to work on the land in Sussex, and later on have a small holding, so that he would be able to nominate the scholars. He looked ultimately to the formation of a small band of agricultural workers in touch with the general body of organized labour, whose aim it would be to bring the conditions of life and work in the country up to the level of the organized trades. A month later, however, the scheme had taken a somewhat different shape :

To his Sister. *December* 6, 1910.

I have been thinking about what I had better do a great deal while I have been out here. I feel more than ever that I cannot ever be really content in any job which identifies me with the capitalist class (forgive the jargon, but there is no other language so exact at present invented). Also I feel that one of the grave problems of the future will be the harmonizing of the forces of labour in the town and in the country ; and it is time that someone made a greater effort to preach the gospel amongst the agricultural labourers of the southern counties. I have seen what country life can be in Jackson's Hole, and I do not see why there should not be the same spirit and life under the shadow of the Downs. Anyway, I am going to try. My plan is this. At present I have £10,000 of ill-gotten wealth. I propose quite illogically to keep £500 and to hand over the rest to Ruskin College on condition that they accept two nominees of mine every year. I then propose to get a job as an agricultural labourer somewhere in Sussex, preferably at Storrington, because that is near the Downs and not too awfully far from Newtimber ; also Francis Thompson lived there. This will be the hardest part of the job by a long way. Having got my job, I shall gradually pick out individuals who will be sent to R. C. After two years as an agricultural labourer I shall spend six or eight months at Reading learning theory. I shall then apply for a small holding, which will make me independent (this is where the £500 comes in). By this time we shall be a small band of agricultural labourers—the nucleus of a movement. We shall shortly after this meet together and choose one of our number to run for the County Council. If once we can capture the C. C. I believe there will be no difficulty about (*a*) organizing a Trade Union, (*b*) sending a Radical M.P. to Parliament. This will not be for ten years or more, but I really

believe it is worth doing, and if we could once light a candle in Sussex, which is looked upon as so hopeless, we could soon send out emissaries and make converts in the other southern counties.

On Christmas Day he writes again to his sister :

The Great Plan . . . is gradually crystallizing in my mind, and every now and then a new detail crops up. What I mean to do really is to found a new brotherhood. But we shan't have any organization. We shall have to have some distinctive sign—possibly a red tie, so that we may know each other at sight, and our strength. The brotherhood will spread gradually from village to village. I don't see why it is impossible ; stranger things have happened before. If John Ball could make the countrymen understand in 1381, why shouldn't a new prophet be discovered who, trained at Ruskin College, would still be sufficiently in touch with his comrades to make them understand the meanness and injustice of things as they are ? As for me, it would be a deliverance, and I believe a deliverance of that kind would stimulate all my faculties and make me more useful. I wish I knew someone who would share the adventure with me.

While Charlie was becoming more and more sure that his future work must be connected in some way with the land, his political ideas were also developing, and they underwent a marked change during his stay in America. "From the moment he went to Ruskin," writes Mr. Bourdillon, "his political ideas begin to form ; and from the first they have a basis of personal feeling. 'If only we could turn the corner,' he writes in March 1908, 'England might be a place in which one could live with less shame, less remorse, and less moral uneasiness.' His candidature at Woodbridge in January 1910 had more an indirect than a direct effect ; it seems to have left him with the feeling that his exposition of Liberalism had been unreal : but it marks the point at which he pinned his faith definitely to the ideas that had begun to form in his mind." His views on social questions had ever since been gradually becoming

more and more extreme. "During his stay in America," continues Mr. Bourdillon, "these ideas matured, and when he returns they have already linked themselves up with his personal inclination and desires." "I know," Charlie writes to Mr. Lawson, "that I have come back from the U.S.A. with all my views confirmed, and the more extreme ones confirmed the most." He now felt and spoke of the wrongs inflicted by our existing social system with an intensity sometimes amounting to bitterness. He hated capitalism and all its works, and he longed to shake himself free from wealth and luxury and to throw in his lot with those who had the hard things of life to bear. "I am in love with Socialism," he writes to a friend.

On the expedition to Jamaica with his uncle, Charlie met the Bishop of North Carolina and his daughter, Miss Cheshire, and made great friends with both of them. On his way home he began a long correspondence with Miss Cheshire, largely with the object of converting her and her father to Socialism. The following extract from the first of these letters, written on the homeward voyage, is, I think, a good statement of his own views upon Socialism at this time :

All Christians surely must be Socialists. Christ not only preached and set a good example, He did things. He healed the sick. He was the great thinker of His age. Socialism is only a practical guide as to how to apply Christianity to modern conditions. It is based on the best thought of the day, or at least the most live thought. Ever since the Reformation men have been far too keen about saving their own souls. All the emphasis has therefore been on personal private conduct rather than upon the practical application of Christianity to public affairs. We have heard a great deal of the Christian father, the Christian neighbour, the Christian servant—not enough about the Christian citizen. This did not matter so much before the Industrial Revolution, when nearly all relations were personal relations, and the citizen's duties were not clearly distinct

from his duties as a father, master, or neighbour. All that is now changed. There is one street for the rich, another for the poor, and they are therefore no longer neighbours. The man who owns the shares in a concern knows nothing whatever of the workmen he is employing. He takes his dividends and asks no questions. The evils resulting from this break in personal relations were terribly intensified by the wild and reckless orgy of competition which forced nearly everyone connected with business to choose between destruction and the abandonment of Christianity. So they invented that soul-destroying motto "Business is business." Socialism as I understand it is the application of Christianity to these modern problems. There may be other ways of applying it, but I don't believe that any other will prove more than a temporary remedy, a mere tinkering with symptoms.

"The desire to give his life in some way for the cause of others," writes Mr. Bourdillon, "became more acute in America, where the contrast seemed greater. When he came home it was like a fire burning in him. He is prepared to risk all for this, now—to burn his boats." It was in March 1911, on a walk on the Berkshire Downs, that the synthesis burst upon him. He had by that time definitely thought out the details of his plan, and had decided to set to work at once to carry them out, come what might. The final decision made him very happy, and seemed to lift a great weight from his mind. "For four years," he writes to Mr. Bourdillon, "I have been without a guiding star. Now I have got one . . . I don't want anything else."

On March 27 Charlie writes to Miss Cheshire: "I am going to spend the next year learning to farm in order to try and start a labour movement in the southern counties of England, which are popularly, but I think wrongly, supposed to be wholly given over to Conservatism." By the middle of April he had got to work, and on May 27 he drew up with his usual thoroughness a long detailed statement of his plans. This he sent to Mr. Arthur Ashby, whom

he had asked to go into partnership with him. Mr. Ashby was himself the son of a small-holder in Warwickshire, and had spent all his life on his father's farm. He was then just finishing his course as a student at Ruskin College, and has kindly allowed me to make use of this statement, which is as follows :

Our object is broadly to start a democratic movement in Sussex.

Such a movement can only be started locally. The agrarian revolution on the Continent, which, while it falls far short of what we desire, has many things in it which we might adapt, was in most instances started locally.

Raiffeisen, for instance, who was the pioneer of credit banks in Germany, began in an out-of-the-way village, and his movement spread gradually and naturally by its own weight. A democratic movement depends partly upon the spread of small holdings ; partly upon the strengthening of the solidarity of the labouring classes by Trade Unionism, and the winning of higher wages ; partly upon the spread of education of the right sort.

It is doubtful whether Trade Unionism can ever be successful in the southern counties among agricultural labourers

(*a*) Until they have seen a concrete instance of the advantages of solidarity such as co-operation can show.

(*b*) Until it is very easy indeed to get a small holding, which would result in their being able to stand out for better wages, because the alternative would not be starvation, workhouse, or the city, but a small holding. This strength is absent at present ; and it must be remembered that the result of cheap telephones will be immensely to strengthen the farmers.

(*c*) Until they are likely to be backed up by an independent public opinion, such as only a society of small-holders can supply.

It is therefore my opinion that the first step is to assist the small holdings movement.

It would be an error to devote our activities to establishing isolated small-holders in various parts of the country without adequate previous training and, above all, without opportunities for co-operation.

Nor do I think it would be wise for us to hook ourselves on to existing small-holders, as, for instance, at Chailey, as so much depends upon the spirit in which the small holdings are originally taken up, and it would be well to start from the beginning ourselves.

It is therefore clear that the problem can only be approached through a wise use of allotments. We must induce those of our neighbours who have not got them to take up fair-sized allotments, if possible with the idea already fixed in their minds of subsequently proceeding to take a small holding. On these allotments they must learn that intensive cultivation by which alone a small holding can be made to pay, and which in nine cases out of ten will not be practised on the farm where they are employed.

At this stage will come our greatest difficulty and most important task. We must induce these allotment-holders to combine for purchase, sale, or still better for credit in a "credit bank." Into this co-operative society or credit bank we must endeavour to draw the village cobbler, carpenter, blacksmith, tailor, etc. It is important to include them for the sake not only of variety, but also (*a*) to emphasize the solidarity of working-men of all classes ; (*b*) to add to the stability of the credit banks, as they will require productive loans at different times of the year to the others.

At this stage, if the County Council cannot be induced to move, we must spend some of our funds in getting adequate demonstrators to give practical lessons in intensive agriculture (and I hope we may be able to do this ourselves, too).

Also some of those suitable must be sent up to Ruskin College ; and will, I hope, introduce a broader atmosphere into village life.

The women must also be included in the movement through chickens, which they must be induced to keep and co-operate in selling the eggs.

This co-operation can be cemented through the Village Club and Room, with dramatic societies, etc., etc., including, I hope, natural history societies.

Also possibly by collective action through the Parish Council. If such combination is once possible, then we can form ourselves into a co-operative land society, and start as a colony of small-holders all at the same time, as has been done elsewhere. We should start, not as crude individualists, but already knowing something of the advantages of co-operation, and with some knowledge of intensive

methods of cultivation ; and finally with broader ideas than is possible in most villages, where no one has come in contact with the vital Trade Union movements as those who go to Ruskin College will have.

Having established our colony, the example will, I hope, be contagious, and anyhow we shall have by this time worked out a practical programme, and some of us ought to be able to gain the confidence of the labourers sufficiently to be returned as their champion to the County Council. I believe in time we might gain a majority, but even a small number of us on the County Council would be as effective as the Labour party in Parliament. It would "buck things up" wonderfully. From County Council we might aspire to reach Parliament, but I am thoroughly convinced that it is more important to send our best men to County Council than to Parliament.

This is but an outline, and the details must be filled in. There will also be many side activities on our part, especially in the direction of trying to get better educational facilities ; but I have stuck to the main outline.

Under these circumstances what should our farm be like ?

(*a*) We want to find a district where there are substantial allotments.

(*b*) As we are going to work through allotments, our farm should, I think, produce *such things as can also be produced on allotments or cottage gardens*, in order that we may

(i) Help the allotment-holders with advice.
(ii) Co-operate with them in buying and selling.
(iii) Lend them tools.

(*c*) Our farm must be a small holding worked as far as possible by ourselves, otherwise we shall find it hard to get in touch with the labourers, who are justly suspicious of patronage.

(*a*) A small-holder should have more than one string to his bow (but you know more of this than I).

Taking these conditions into consideration, it seems likely that we ought to try something like small fruits, vegetables, and chickens (this last especially in Sussex, which is a great chicken-fattening centre. You sell your chicken to the chicken-fattener).

What we have to do :

(i) Fix on our farm as soon as possible.

(ii) Visit successful small holdings, and especially any in Sussex ; and perhaps travel in Ireland or Denmark.

(iii) Get ideas from Lincolnshire or Norfolk Trade Unions.

(iv) Get cautiously in touch with the National Land and Home League.

(v) See one or two people like the Rev. Hewlett Cooper, who started the Land and Home League in Wiltshire, now merged in the National Land and Home League, and Fairfax Cholmely, who started the interesting co-operative movement at Brandsby, in Yorkshire.

(vi) Finally, I must learn my job as a farmer.

Charlie of course realized that these plans would in all probability have to undergo alteration and modification in several respects. "They are sketchy at present," he writes to Mr. Ashby, "and cannot be properly worked out by myself without your help, and above all without knowing what is your particular bent. But they will form a basis at least for our discussion."

Charlie realized at once that the first thing to be done was to make himself a thoroughly good practical farmer, and when he came to stay with me in Oxford towards the end of March he was already immersed in books upon agriculture. His first idea was to go as an apprentice to a farmer in Sussex, but he finally decided in favour of a course at the South-Eastern Agricultural College at Wye, Kent, and went into residence there on April 21.

To Mr. Ashby. *April* 23, 1911.

I got here late on Friday night, and on Monday morning I start to learn the rudiments of practical farming on the farm here. I quite agree with what your father says about the "paying farm," but the Principal here . . . strongly advised me to spend a month or two on the farm here first, where I can learn the elementary, obvious

things, with lots of *different* people about to question. He also thought that it would be difficult to find a practical farmer who would be able to teach the very elementary part (which needs much more practice to teach than the advanced scientific part), and that most farmers, if one were completely ignorant, would be liable to despise you and not teach one very much. Anyway, I came to the conclusion that it would be better to start here for a short while, and move off on to a practical farm after harvest. But I am not bound down too closely, except that I have paid my fees for next term. This ends at the end of July, but I have the right to stop on here on the farm if I so desire till October 1.

Charlie of course threw himself into his new work with his characteristic ardour and enthusiasm, and soon became quite absorbed in both practical and theoretical agriculture. He was, I think, in many ways happier during the few months he spent at Wye than he had been for some time past. The open-air life thoroughly suited him, and he was remarkably well, while every detail of his work was of intense interest to him. On May 27 he writes to Mr. Ashby :

I am progressing with my milking. I passed the first test this morning very easily—namely, 1 lb. a minute from sitting down to getting up and cow dried. I got 11¾ lb. in 7½ minutes, and so became an " efficient " ; I have still to pass into Class I. Of course that was done with a very amenable cow. Practically none of them kick here, and they are used to duffers. But there was one heifer which kicked a little, and I have been taught on her what to do. I get on fairly well with mowing. They mow all the green food for the cattle.

And again to Mr. Haywood, an old Ruskin student and a very great friend :

If you have any friends who are vegetarians from humanitarian motives you can tell them from me that they are d——d hypocrites. For every living thing that is killed to serve the beef-eating Briton, at least 10,000 living things are slaughtered for the

benefit of his vegetarian brother. I spend the greater part of my day studying the private family affairs of various bugs, with the object of compassing their death and destruction with the greatest convenience to myself, and the rest of the day is spent in practising this warfare. Nearly all bugs come under the excommunicating ban, and in general the rule is "When in doubt, kill!" There are, however, a certain number of bugs which one ignores as being of no possible interest to anyone but themselves; and there are just a few which one greets with a cheery smile because they prey upon our natural foes. But behind their backs, one complains of them as hopeless slackers. For instance, the larva of the ladybird certainly does eat aphides which spoil the crops, but then it never turns up until the whole place is crawling with aphides, and it is too late to do any real good. The truth is, it doesn't want to have to go far for its food, but it trumps up the silly argument that if it eats all the aphides at the beginning of the season, it would afterwards starve. This is ridiculous. Why must it be so fastidious? Why not change its food? That little devil the raspberry weevil does. It started eating apple-trees for the first time this year. Why cannot the ladybird make an effort? But my heart is too full.

Charlie had not been two months at Wye before he was, as those who knew him would have expected, ready with suggestions for practical reform in the domain of agriculture. He wrote two very long letters on the subject to his cousin, Mr. Charles Roden Buxton. These letters, which are too long to quote in full here, were published shortly after Charlie's death in *Our Land*. Small-holders, he says, have at present to get their training on allotments. Successful small holdings, therefore, will be those based on such crops as can be practised on an allotment. This points to fruit and vegetables. The Board of Agriculture must be made more efficient; it could do much to help, *e.g.*, by taking vigorous steps to check the spread of diseases such as the American gooseberry mildew and the black scab of potatoes. Tobacco-growing should be encouraged for the sake of nicotine, which is the best spray for aphis. Board of Agriculture

leaflets should be advertised in all country post-offices "Why shouldn't country clergymen be supplied with literature and made to stick it up on all church doors? What's the good of having an Established Church?" Fruit-growers are handicapped by lack of Government information as to the fruit-crops of the world, which is supplied by all other important Governments. Model buildings should be set up all over the country, so as to teach people the best methods, and anything educational of that character should, if possible, precede the setting-up of small holdings. The letters also contain suggestions as to what he thinks should be the policy of the National Land and Home League.

There was, however, one serious blot on Charlie's happiness during the first part of his time at Wye, and this arose from his inability to persuade his family to take a favourable view of his projects. His plans were fully and frankly discussed with Mr. and Mrs. Buxton, but they could not agree with the extreme Socialistic opinions he held, and they were naturally much disappointed when he had to tell them that he could not live the kind of life they had planned for him, or take up the career they had so much hoped he would follow. It had for long been Mr. Buxton's great wish that Charlie should be a Member of Parliament and work for the Liberal party, and Charlie, though I think he might later on have stood for Parliament as a Socialist candidate, had now quite made up his mind that he could not stand as a Liberal. This disagreement with his family and the feeling that he was disappointing them were a great grief to him. He did not say much about it when he stayed with me shortly before going to Wye, but from the little he did say on the subject I could see how

much he was feeling it. On April 21, the day he arrived at Wye, he writes to his father as follows:

I am very sorry we differ so much in opinions. I should like to be able to work with you, but I cannot. Each generation must strike out a new line for itself. If it did not, the result would be stagnancy and political death. When you were my age you held as relatively extreme opinions as I do. You are now working them out. If you had not held them as a young man before other people you would not be anything like so successful in putting them into practice. The same applies to me. I may be wrong, in which case I shall be a failure; but I may be right, in which case I shall have a chance of working out my ideas. In any case it is surely for me to take the risk. I am afraid that I have been very inconsiderate in the way I have aired my opinions. I am very sorry, especially as whenever I think it over I realize that your opposition to my ideas is really kindness and anxiety for my future. It makes me feel very mean and small when I think of how little I have repaid you for all your kindness. But you must not ask me to sacrifice my feeling of faith in my ideas, and when this conflict is consuming my soul I am liable to become more hard and cruel and selfish than I usually am. So I want to ask you to let me follow out my own ideas in my own way, making mistakes perhaps, but I hope learning from them. You must know that I love you very much, and it is just because of that that I feel so despairing and angry when I find a conflict between my love of you and my religion. I don't want to have to choose between the two: I want to be able to keep both.

And again on April 24:

I don't want not to be communicative, but I do want to feel responsible, and one can only feel that when one feels one has made up one's mind. Standing for the County Council is a case in point. I feel very much that I don't want to stand or think of standing before I have found my feet as a farmer. Nor do I want a vote which I feel has been manufactured for me. I want as far as possible to take as little advantage of privilege as I can. Everything that I do which I feel not to be due to my own ideas or exertions—and that comprises a large percentage of my life at present—tastes bitter, and I want as soon as I can to be rid of it.

The letters to his father and sister which I have quoted

throughout the book will, I think, have shown something of the affection he had for them, and his relation with his stepmother, Mrs. Buxton, was a very beautiful one ; no one who saw them together could have imagined that he had ever known any other mother.

To M. A. B.

Strong in your love for others, you are free,
Amid the misery and fevered strife,
To shape the rich mosaic of your life
Into a living picture, fair to see.

For all the world's a garden to your eyes,
Wherein, as oft among your Sussex flowers
At home, you fill the large sweet-tempered hours
With garden craft and ministrations wise.

The memory I cherish more than all
Is of you binding up a broken rose
With tender, careful hands, unhurriedly :
And so will you be doing at the close
When in the silver evening comes the call
To the blue palace of infinity.

In writing of this poem to Mr. Bourdillon Charlie says : " It applies to a good many people, and they are the best kind that exist, don't you think so ? Socialists talk and talk and talk and do everything by proxy in the far future, but these people accept and improve the present, and really make the world which exists beautiful wherever they happen to be." " It's awfully nice of you," he once wrote to Mrs. Buxton, " to take such a really sympathetic interest in all my hopes and ambitions, in spite of the very prickly way in which I talk about them." His ideas were always argued out with her, and he and she were usually the leading disputants in the family arguments to which I have already referred.

Hardly a meal passed when he was at home at which some question of politics, literature, art, or what not was not hotly debated between them. Charlie loved these discussions, and they were certainly most amusing to listen to.

Another great delight of his home life was what he used to describe as "a rag with the twins." His devotion to children has been already mentioned. He spent much of his time when at home with his little half brother and sister, Denis and Doreen, devising for them and taking part in games of the most riotous description. He was always thinking of things which would amuse them, and constantly wrote to them when he was away.

To Denis [*aged five*]. 1903.

My dearest Denis,

How are you? Did you send me a present? Shall I thank you for it? Won't you accept my very kindest thanks? How often have you fallen in the moat? And have you caught many fishes? What are we going to do when I come back from Oxford? Shall we look at the Golliwog book? And shall we "wag"? What do you think I have been doing here? Do you know that I have been on the river in a punt? Have you ever been in a punt? Are you aware that it is most awful fun? Will you come and see me when you grow older and go out in a punt? Shan't we have fun? Shall we splash each other? And shall we get f-rightfully wet?

Have you read a book called "Wee Macgreegor"? And do you think that you and he are exactly alike? Can you answer all these questions? Won't you ask them all to Doreen too? May I say good-bye? And am I not your loving brother

Charlie?

To Denis [*aged nine*]. 1907.

My dearest Denis,

I *was* so pleased to get the Holous Chicki fund. A pound is a great deal of money, as you will find out when you get a little older, and it will be a great help to us. It was rather difficult to make out the receipt, as you and Doreen spelt the principal word

differently! I am very sorry to hear that R. Hood, Esq., has been misbehaving himself again.

"There was a young pony called Hood,
Who never behaved as he should;
When put in a cart,
He kicked it apart,
And reduced it to splinters of wood."

I found this lovely poem the other day, and I thought how well it applied to Robin Hood. I wonder who the Hood was the poet talks about. He must have been nearly as naughty a pony as Robin! I must say I think you're wrong about the war—at least I hope so, as I cannot possibly waste my time shooting Frenchmen—besides, they might shoot me, and then where should I be?

"There was a v. tall volunteer,
Who ne'er had a gringle of fear;
When they said, 'But there's war!!!'
He replied, 'What a bore,
For I doubt if I've time to be there.'"

I seem to have come across quite a lot of appropriate poetry!

Your loving
C. S. B., 2nd Lieu.

To Doreen [*agea eleven*]. 1909.

My dearest Doreen,

My birthday is to-day, so your letter arrived just right. Thank you very much for it. Do you know how old I am?

"For a quarter of a century
I've had an unadventury
But very pleasant time,
At Cromer, Newt., F. W.,
And (save for R. C. trouble) U-
niversity sublime."

I hope you are quite recovered from being ill. I don't think anyone cares two straws about you, because *I* never knew anything about it till just the other day. However, it appears you were shamming—pretending to have mumps or something which

anyone could see with half an eye you hadn't got. If you really want to give me a present, you can write to me once a week for the next month. That would be a very nice kind of present and wouldn't cost any money—besides supporting Daddy's post-office !

Your very loving
CHARLIE.

I saw a most interesting sight the other day : there were a whole lot of caddis-worms (the things which make odd little houses of all sorts of scraps, do you remember, in "Water Babies") crawling about at the bottom of a stream. Every now and then one of them would begin walking up a rush. When he got to the top of the water he would wait some time to collect himself, and then he would suddenly walk out a full-blown May-fly with gossamer wings. He would seem a bit surprised at first, and would have to try his wings once or twice, but he soon got used to them and whisked off to a dance which was going on in a field near by.

TO THE TWINS. 1906.

Twins, all hail,
And list a tale !

Nine happy years ago you were tiny little things
With chubby angel faces but without the usual wings.

Next year you mostly spent in screaming and in squalling
In a manner which was truly worse than kittens caterwauling.

In the second year your eating required an ample bib—
To say you weren't disgusting would be to tell a fib !

Six years ago your little tongues began to wiggle-wag,
And you left your loving brother a limp outquestioned rag.

In the fifth year of existence your spirits 'gan rise
Higher still and higher ; you redoubled endless whys.

Four years ago you turned aside to poetry and books,
And peace sometimes revisited a few Newtimber nooks.

But still whene'er the noise of home did momentarily flag
You pulled your willing brother out and made him "'ave a wag."

And so on through the lengthening years your joy's eternal store
Was lavished on your parents, though they never asked for more.

And now to-day I do believe you are a model pair,
Though Doreen lacks a hankymose and Denis well-brushed hair.

And so I wish you all success and many a glad return
Of birthday treats and happiness—and I hope you'll live and learn.

Twins, all hail,
I've done my tale!
Take kisses three
From C. S. B.

The letters to the twins, as well as some of those to Miss Buxton, are full of nonsense of all kinds—verses, parodies, and all sorts of family jokes, many of which were kept going for years together.

Like greedy trout she would always rise
At ever the same old worn-out flies,

Charlie once wrote of a cousin. Mr. R. L. Reiss, who knew Charlie very well, in writing to me about him, says: "Might I add a word on his extraordinarily strong family affection, amounting almost to veneration?" and I know that this is no exaggeration.

When this strong affection for his family is remembered, and when it is also remembered how anxious he always was for others to share his enthusiasms, his disappointment can easily be imagined when he found that he must go on his way without the full sympathy of those he most loved. His family, however, gradually became more accustomed to the life he had chosen for himself, and therefore more reconciled to it, and Charlie spent several very happy days at Newtimber during these last few months. He intended to take a farm in the autumn, and Mrs. Buxton, on whose judgment in such matters he always relied, was consulted as to the suitability of the houses on one or two farms at which he looked during the summer.

Charlie's love for Newtimber was as strong as ever, and in fact he seems to have felt that the comfort and refinement of his home were becoming almost a temptation to him. He loved luxury, and although he had always lived in the simplest way ever since he went to Ruskin College, this at times meant to him real self-sacrifice. But he was acutely conscious of the difference between his own worldly fortune and that of other men. He sometimes used to say, with a note of contrition in his voice, that he had never had to economize in buying books. He seemed to feel almost guilty for being comparatively rich—that he must atone for it by devoting whatever he had to the service of others. He writes to Miss Cheshire on June 27: "I was down in Warwickshire, staying with the family of the man who is going to share my farm with me. . . . It was a most interesting and enjoyable experience. . . . You have no idea how refreshing it was, after the luxury and unreality of the life I have hitherto led, to get back to the simplicity, self-reliance, and reality of such a life close to nature. The life is very hard, but it is healthy, and the man who lives it cannot feel all the time that his prosperity is at the expense of others." Charlie is here referring to a visit he paid to Mr. Ashby's home during Coronation week—a visit after his own heart.

It was arranged that Mr. Ashby should spend a day or two with Charlie and his family at Newtimber at the end of July, and with regard to this visit he writes to Mr. Ashby:

My people are very anxious to make your acquaintance, and they would very much like you to come and stay . . . at home in Sussex. I do hope you will come. If you come, you will temporarily have to take for granted a good many things which you and I are out to get rid of. But I expect it will interest you to

make a sociological study of life in a country-house at its best—because my mother fills her surroundings beautifully, so beautifully that at times one is tempted to feel that a system which can produce so perfect a picture cannot be so utterly cruel and unjust and unchristian.

The following is also very characteristic of Charlie at this time :

I am very glad you can come and stay on the 29th. I gather you would rather go on the Sussex tour *after* than *before* the visit. Don't bring a dress suit. I would sooner you didn't come at all than that I should be guilty of getting you into a dress suit. They are indeed the last degradation of civilization—ugh ! You might bring some kind of knapsack, so that we can carry our clothes on our backs while walking round Sussex, and be as independent of trains as possible.

Mr. Ashby's visit was followed in the first week of August by the tour to which Charlie refers. It consisted in a week's walk from one end of Sussex to the other, one of the objects being to look at various likely farms of which he had heard. The tour was a most strenuous one, as they often walked more than thirty miles a day in the great heat of that year. Mr. Ashby told me that, although he recovered at the end of the time, he was quite knocked up after the first two days, while Charlie hardly turned a hair.

He went for several other long walks through Sussex and Kent in the course of this summer, generally alone, and the following extract from a letter he wrote to Miss Cheshire, describing a walk to Dungeness, well expresses the effect produced upon him by wild and lonely places :

Do you like these wild places of the earth ? I love them. I never feel lonely in such a place, but always exhilarated—in fact, I feel a kind of renewal of life—all the more so if I have a sympathetic companion ; but he must be very sympathetic. I hate being in that sort of place with anyone who is not impressed, who is not in tune. Maeterlinck says that the greatest test of sympathy is to be silent

with a person. If you can do that and enjoy it, then you are in sympathy with one another. I think an equally good test is a long walk, especially when there is a chance—as there always is in England—of not being able to get a bed at the end of it.

Charlie was naturally deeply interested in the numerous strikes which were taking place at this time, and especially in the general railway strike of August. As might have been expected, he whole-heartedly espoused the cause of labour, and the following, taken from one of the last letters he ever wrote, is most characteristic of his point of view :

To his Sister.

Does it not strike you as absurd that this feeling of unrest which is so prevalent in the labour ranks, and has appeared all over the place, showing itself to be really universal, has no representative in the Cabinet, which is supposed to represent the "people" of England? If the "people" of England had really been represented by the Liberal party, there would have been no strike, because the railway directors would have been told that they must put their house in order or be deprived of their responsibilities. It is absurd for a Government to be impartial in such matters. It isn't impartial on how strong drink shall be distributed to the people, but low wages are worse than strong drink. This talk of impartiality maddens me.

On Sunday, August 27, Charlie started on what was to be his last holiday, intending to spend a few days fishing with his father at Itchen Abbas. He had always been a little nervous of appendicitis, and once or twice during the last few years when not feeling very well had consulted doctors, thinking he might be going to have it. He was always reassured, but the fear may unconsciously have been at the back of his mind, and it was possibly this which made him, when seized with severe pain on his way to Itchen Abbas, get out at Winchester and see a doctor. He was told that he was suffering from indigestion, and continued his journey. But though on Monday the pain abated slightly, on Tuesday

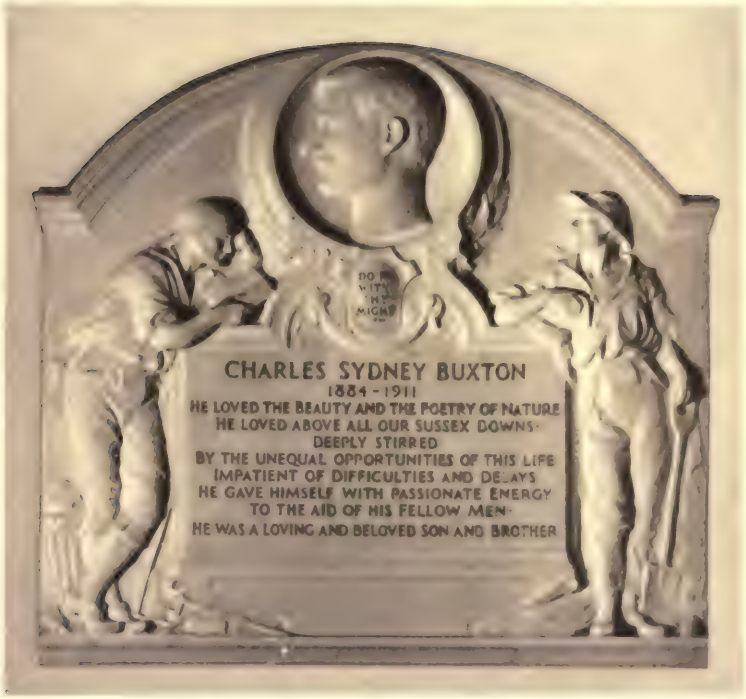
he became so seriously ill that his father decided to take him straight home to Newtimber, motoring all the way. Mrs. and Miss Buxton arrived home in the evening, and a Brighton surgeon was immediately summoned. He diagnosed the case as a very bad form of appendicitis. An operation was performed in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Although there were already symptoms of blood-poisoning, it was hoped that if his strength held out he might recover, and during Wednesday he seemed to rally a little. Early on Thursday morning, August 31, however, it was evident that there was no hope, and by 11 o'clock all was over. His intense desire to live was manifest to those who were with him at the last, and he made a supreme effort to conquer death ; but he faced his end with unflinching courage.

He was buried in the little churchyard at Newtimber on the following Monday in the presence of the few who loved him best, and what I think most struck those of us who were present was that the funeral in its simplicity and surroundings was exactly what Charlie himself would have wished it to be. His favourite hymns were sung, and on the service papers was printed the following passage from "The Pilgrim's Progress" :

> Then there came forth a summons, the contents whereof were : "That he must prepare for a change of life, for his Master was not willing that he should be so far from Him any longer"

—words which were a comfort to some of us who could not help asking the question "Why ?" Charlie often used to say that he thought the most beautiful words in the Bible were "The Peace of God which passeth all understanding," and in that Peace he lies under the shadow of the Downs he loved so well.

* * * * * *



Memorial in Newtimber Church
with an inscription by his father
The Memorial at Ruskin College is the same but with a different inscription

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

I had thought of calling this last chapter "The End," but on thinking it over I changed the title to "Plans for the Future"; for it was not the end. In the Sussex Memorial scheme, founded to bring education to the agricultural labourers in the Sussex villages; in the Buxton Memorial Scholarship, which brings each year an agricultural labourer as a student to Ruskin College; in the annual scholarship, founded in his memory and provided by past and present students of the College; in Buxton Cottage on the Chiltern Hills, bought by the Workers' Educational Association and opened in his memory as a resting-place for those who are devoting their lives to working-class education; above all, in the hearts and lives of those who were inspired by his example, Charlie still lives.

REMINISCENCES AND IMPRESSIONS

From Mr. R. K. DAVIS.

IT is difficult to set down on paper an "impression" of Charlie Buxton as I knew him for nearly five years at Balliol, and by his letters and by occasional meetings with him since. His death is still so recent and the impression of him still so fresh that I almost feel that he is bound to see what I write, and to smile. And if I were to try to put down an appreciation of his character and abilities, he would smile with reason ; those who worked with him, or for whom he worked, are the people to do that. He and I were friends, and all I can attempt is to say what made his friends so many and so fond of him.

To begin with, he had the widest sympathies of anyone I have known. He could discuss games, though not much of an athlete himself, and he could discuss still better the biggest and most abstract problems. He could give himself up to amusement and enter into the most childish of rags with glorious abandon, and he could cut himself off from society in order to work with complete cheerfulness. He knew a great deal of Browning by heart, and possibly more of W. S. Gilbert. He was excellent company in any mood.

Then, perhaps as a result of his wide sympathies, he was magnificently tolerant. He had a tremendous sense of the absurd, in himself as well as in others, and so one never minded what one said to him or did in his presence within limits. For behind his tolerance of absurdity and wildness were ideals of honour and cleanness that he did not obtrude, but that everyone knew were there, and were not to be

forgotten. He had it in him to be an ascetic, and I think his purposes were drawing him in that direction ; but no merely external rule or conventional prejudice influenced his judgment.

Just as he solved the problem of Oxford—to work hard at one's own subject and yet live a complete life, without excluding any form of activity or even amusement—so he managed to be infinitely good-natured without any sacrifice of principles. He never minded a joke at his expense—at the careless way he put on his clothes, on his wild efforts on the hockey-field, or his laborious efforts to speak in foreign tongues, or his passion for comic opera. The jokes are flat now, but the smile with which he received them is one of the most salient and lovable of recollections. When I try to picture him, I usually see him standing in front of the fire with his hands behind him, possibly a pipe in his mouth, but always a broad smile evoked by some ridiculous story against himself or me or one of his other friends ; and his smile never made an enemy. Or else I think of him as making a speech at some debating society, with his hands on the back of a chair in front of him, his body swaying to and fro and his head thrust forward, while his strong feeling wrestled with his slowness of tongue to find expression for that belief in democracy which touched philosophy at one end of the scale and life at the other.

Of his more intimate self he showed me a good deal, in letters and in the verses in which he sought to find expression. He had moods of depression—times when he felt that much of his life was being wasted, or when he longed for a clearer vision of his life-work. But the remedy was usually to be found in some close contact with Nature—a tramp on the Sussex Downs, a moonlight walk, " a sunset

touch, a fancy from a flower-bell," which restored to him his faith in himself as part of a universe in which "all is beauty, and knowing this is love, and love is duty." This was the burden of his poetry and his philosophy. I think he always had a sense of being unpractical—a fear that, after all, his schemes were too much in the air—and the desire to make himself efficient in some simple kind of work. At one time he took up with enthusiasm the idea, thrown out half seriously by a friend, of starting a book-shop that should be also a lecture-room and an educational centre : and I believe he might actually have tried to carry it out if other projects had not opened. This side of his nature was, I know, finding great satisfaction in the ordinary duties of a farm labourer, which he was learning in order to equip himself to help the agricultural labourer to a higher and freer life.

Perhaps if I were to select one memory of him from among many to keep for life, I should choose to think of the reading-party in a little pension at Grindelwald, where it was he who made us read and who taught us to ski, and where he made friends with all the family of mine host, especially with the little daughter of the house, aged nine or ten—a friendship which I believe was maintained by letters for several years. Nature, simple folk, children, and college friends—all these were in their different ways dear to him, and his death seems a loss to them all.

From PROFESSOR W. L. GRANT, *of Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, who was Beit Lecturer in Colonial History at Oxford from* 1906 *to* 1910, *and an intimate friend of Charlie's.*

THOUGH other friends remain whom I have known longer, for none of them have I quite the same feeling of tenderness that I had for Charlie Buxton. There was in him that

mixture of quiet strength and quiet sweetness fitted to call out affection. In connexion with his life I always think of Tennyson's ideal knight :

> Who reverenced his conscience as his king ;
> Whose glory was redressing human wrong ;
> Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it.

Withal there was in him no touch of the prig. He had much stronger passions than appeared on the surface. Once when I propounded a theory that social service demanded a priesthood, that there should be "a celibacy of the chosen," he broke out with great earnestness : "My God, I haven't it in me to live like that." Connected with this was his strong sympathy with the anarchistic and the Bohemian. I remember on one occasion in Common Room we sat together through the evening after dinner, and exchanged reminiscences of odd characters we had met. I was able to tell him of some Paris anarchists, acquaintances of mine ; he made me promise to introduce him if we were ever in Paris together, and next day wrote me a note saying that the past two Sundays he had sat next to a don who had talked nothing but Oxford gossip, which had seemed to him so dull that he had intended to stop dining, but that the past night had more than repaid him. At the same time he sent me two volumes of the poems of his favourite Meredith, with the inscription "In memory of a conversation, Nov. 30th, 1908."

In modern literature he delighted, though taking more interest in the author's philosophy of life than in beauty of form. I remember long talks on Meredith, Wells, and Synge. Connected with the vein of passion in him of which I have spoken, I recall that in Meredith he knew by heart most of the sonnet cycle "Modern Love," and that in

Wells he picked out for special praise the long night walk of the lovers through the rain, in "Tono-Bungay." "Wells has come round from his belief in order to a belief in great moments," he said. "A few great moments on the mountain-tops are to him all that we can hope from life; the slow descent into the valley would only disillusion; and so the lovers part. I am not sure that he isn't right." I remember a long discussion between him and Beveridge of the Board of Trade on Arnold Bennett's "The Old Wives' Tale," both agreeing that no book had ever so strongly made them feel the everlasting process of one generation after another, but Charlie maintaining that it also gave him very strongly the feeling that one's little moment in the process was worth something, that the thing was worth doing.

He was extremely sensitive, as his face showed. It was at least as much from the sordid, the narrow, the defiling as it was from actual want that he wished to free those for whom he worked. Thus he was not a fighter. When the "strike" at Ruskin College was on he got from it only pain, no thrill of battle. The solid, stubborn, silent opposition was to him like a rain of heavy blows.

Another side of this was the impression made on him by natural objects. On one of our walks, after stopping to look at a long field, blood-red with poppies, he said suddenly, "Come on; two minutes more of this would make me want to murder someone." On another such walk he confuted very vigorously my theory that everything was somehow atoned for, that for everything there was compensation, that for high and low on the large scale things worked out about even. This to him, so full of loathing for the injustice of the world, seemed cruel and untrue.

But the only time I ever saw him really angry was at an address of mine at Ruskin College, when the discussion became for a moment acrimonious. What seemed to him lack of courtesy to a guest he promptly resented, amid the applause of the great majority. He had a keen sense of humour, and nothing pleased him so much as an incongruity, a mixed metaphor, or a piece of American "high-falutin."

But I would give quite a wrong impression of him if I represented him as either shrinking or weakly æsthetic. Evil and good alike he took with quiet humour. Nor, in spite of his sensitiveness, was he fastidious in meats and drinks, or in his surroundings. He lived at Ruskin College in the simplest way, and seemed equally contented to live and eat there, or at Balliol, or at home in London.

Whether he would have come to the front in politics is doubtful; he had the ability and the high unselfish purpose, but he would have shrunk from the hurly-burly. Yet a few years of struggle might have hardened him. During his campaign in 1909 I wrote to thank him for his admirable election address, such pleasant reading after the "Conservative cant and Radical rant" of which I had seen a good deal. He promptly wrote back that very little of the Radical rant seemed to him too strong.

His mind was curiously subtle. Sometimes he seemed to be making for small and unessential points, when suddenly the principle came out. Once, after hearing a paper of mine, he asked me three apparently unrelated and rather trivial questions. Then he suddenly put my three answers together, asked a fourth, and had me in an *impasse*. This habit of questioning, and of worming his way into a subject, made him, as an undergraduate, argue with his tutor, A. L.

Smith, much more than is usually the case, and more than, in his opinion, Smith altogether liked. "But it is his own fault," said Charlie; "he stimulates me so that I just have to ask questions."

He was a perfect listener, intensely interested, smiling in a kindly way behind his glasses, with just sufficient of the inquisitive in his look to lure one on. He was generous in his praise of others, though not uncritical, and always interested in their work. Of gossip, whether kindly or malevolent, I never heard from him a word. Though interested in individuals, it was always of their work or of their view of life that he spoke. No man whom I have known was more free from the slightest touch of jealousy.

From MR. JOHN LAWSON, *Student at Ruskin College*, 1906–1908.

To me, the outstanding thing about Buxton was always that he did not "carry his heart on his sleeve." He had ever a large amount of reserve. He never talked of himself. I know that very ambitious men have successfully cultivated this trait for personal purposes; but ambition does not go a long way to do a kindness, nor is it ready to show instant and constant thoughtfulness towards all, as was the spirit which has left us.

When he came to Ruskin his life was by no means a bed of roses. Most of the men were older in years and in hard practical experience. To men who had laboured with their hands all their lives, who had been compelled to stand straight up and give an account of themselves from boyhood, who had met men of like pattern in the Trade Union and political world, and learned to strike and be struck without any of the niceties of speech—to these men came Buxton,

sensitive, refined, and scholarly. It must have been hard for him, but I never heard him complain. Eager to gain the confidence of the students and to prove his absolute faith in the ideal upon which the College was founded—and at the same time to demonstrate his sympathy with the working-class movement—he gave himself up thoroughly to the task.

It was during an afternoon walk that I first learned the true value of our new Vice-Principal. He discovered that I was reading Sabatier's "Life of St. Francis," and immediately all conventional conversation was thawed under the heat of his enthusiasm for one who was himself an enthusiast for the Kingdom of God on earth. He revealed himself as a genuine idealist, with sympathies broad and deep in social matters, and desiring nothing better than to spend himself in that work.

I never heard him speak of religion during the whole of the time I knew him, but I felt that day—and further experience deepened the impression—that Buxton was an intensely religious man in the best sense of that term. His ambition certainly was social rather than personal; he was always ready to give sympathy, but did not look for it from others; and perhaps what is the most definite manifestation of a fine soul is that he never spoke hard words of anyone—not even when there was an overpowering reason for it.

When that regrettable occurrence took place which ended in a number of students and some of the Staff leaving the College, Buxton and myself differed in our views of the affair. But with his unfailing charity, which I am afraid I scarcely deserved, he insisted that it was no reason why it should interfere with our friendship. In pathetic terms he wrote: "It isn't nice feeling that many whom one had

been glad to call one's friends now cut one in the street." But withal, he never yet either wrote or spoke in hard terms of one of his opponents.

He was not given the opportunity to prove his real worth to the world. His actual work covered very few years. But those who were privileged to know him during those few years realized that he was a sincere and strong man who had great possibilities in him for service to his kind. And because of this, and also for the personal pleasure of his friendship, many people sincerely mourned his death. But those few years were enough to enable him to leave a lasting impression upon those among whom he moved, and upon the cause for which he stood. And when Father Time has put the work of men and movements through his sieve, and saved only that which is of real value to the human race, I have no doubt but that it will be seen that a genuine man like Buxton could do more service in a year or two than some men could do in a full lifetime.

From THE HIGHWAY, *October* 1911 :

CHARLES SYDNEY BUXTON

MAY 1884—AUGUST 1911

As gold in the furnace hath He tried them

THIS mound, set in a quiet churchyard, within sight of his father's house, is—can it be ?—above the last resting-place of C. S. Buxton. The acorns patter, this September morning, from a mighty oak above, and the lilac branches sway in the wind. A pile of wreaths and a broken pillar—it is finished.

CHARLES SYDNEY BUXTON

There are those among us who are unable to rejoice in the abiding presence of those who have passed through the grave and gate of death, but not one of us who is unable to rejoice in the blessed memories of a devoted life, and to know that no man's true work ever passes away. A man's thoughts, much more than a man's deeds, are the heritage of the race for evermore. He who lies, with feet toward the dawn, under the mound we stand by, lived, as all who met him know, a life of gentleness and kindness, strengthened daily by high endeavour. His heart ached for the distressed ones of this world, and, full of their pain, he was preparing himself for a long battle with the false forces which depressed the lives, and prevented the high achievement, of the rural poor. But it was not to be. His sword and his spear dropped from his nerveless hands, but not to the ground, for others, in his faith, will carry on the fight.

He was a silent member of our Association, but he came to us—we remember it so well—on an evening when, in the early days of our London work, we were meeting at Morley College. It was at the beginning of his task as Vice-Principal of Ruskin College. He had just taken a First Class in the History Schools at Oxford, and was glad to be at the beginning of his life's work.

No one will ever know, not even his dearest friends, how full of anxious pain those years at Ruskin College were, but we all know that he has left an inspiring example of how a true-hearted man should act in a time of difficulty. He never sought to justify himself, and he was generous in his appreciations of the sincerity of those who sought to destroy the work he cared for.

No one will ever know the numberless ways in which he helped on and encouraged those who stood in need of

sympathy or assistance. It would be idle work, and alien to his spirit, to try to piece the tale together.

It seemed to us that, especially after his return from America, he was racked, more than he could bear, with the sense of pain in the community. He hated the injustice of our social life. His training and his sound sense made him very practical, but his spirit was lacerated and torn.

Is it too much to think—surely not for some of us—that he was needed in the high places?

ALBERT MANSBRIDGE.

POEMS

IT has been difficult to make a small and yet really characteristic selection from the many poems which Charlie wrote. They are written in such varying changes of mood and impression, so many of them reflecting his inmost thoughts at different times, that one is tempted to include many more than is possible in a volume like the present. In making the selection I have been guided chiefly by Charlie's own opinion, and have included those poems which he particularly liked and enjoyed writing.

TO MY FAMILY

My dream's no more the wilds of space,
Beyond the blue;
In Sussex is my resting-place
At home with you.

Like minor poets I have longed to play
With golden suns,
But now I'd rather spend the day
By winding "runs."

The Downs, the Downs are better worth
Than starry heights;
Here in this corner of the Earth
Are all delights.

TO MY FATHER

No Roland you with fierce two-handed sword,
Reeling victorious through the press of life,
For ever drunken with the wine of strife,
And boasting him the chosen of the Lord.
For you outdo the boast with silent deed,
And say "'Tis done" before we can surmise
What is the quiet purpose in your eyes,
Or when you mean to sow the quick'ning seed.
Surely your soul has won its Peace and Strength
From that clear summer-haunted Hampshire stream,
Which flows with simple faith for all its length
Through fairylands of colour, scent, and song—
And so inspired, mysterious to the throng,
You pass unhampered to fulfil your dreams.

TO PHYLLIS

Who paints the freshness of an April day?
Do I not know you all too well for speech?
Others we praise for what they do or say,
But you for what you are. Far out of reach
Of all humanity to some you seem—
A statue of Diana in a garden set;
Type of young life, pure energy—but yet
Cold in the starshine, nerveless, 'neath the gleam
Of the calm, distant, unconcernèd moon.
Fools! they know nothing: they've not seen you smite—
Fearless, untrammelled—at each lie or wrong:
They know not how you bring to all the boon
Of woman's sympathy, as She of Night
Weaves through the world the silver thread of song.

TO DOREEN

THE sonnet is not for you : its limits would be a strife
With the wayward play of your moods and the pulsing joy of your life,
O elf divine.
You have wandered into the world from a land of dreams and delight,
You are one with the beasts and the birds and the stars that dance through the night,
And the moonshine.

You are wild and strong and as free as the deer on the mountain-side,
And yet you are tamed by love, and even your woodland pride
Softens at times :
Wise, yes, indeed, you are wise, with the wisdom of all wild things,
The memory deep in the heart of past existence that clings
Like trembling chimes.

Morals you've none like those who act by their rule of thumb,
But whatever you do is right, for you *know*, and wherever you come
There is no wrong :
For you've the health of the sea and the strength of the hills is yours,
And you come with a laugh on your lips and dance through the motley hours,
And this your song :

Mother, I loved you
In Fairyland,
So I've come to you ;
Give me your hand.

Say will you love me
As I love you ?
I who act waywardly
All the day through.

Will you accept my
  Spirit so strange ?
I am so happy,
  I cannot change.

Weeping and laughter,
  Sunshine and shower,
I follow after
  Moods of the hour.

Calm as the hill-tops,
  Blown like the sea,
Fresh as the dew-drops,
  I'm always free !

. . .

Mother, I loved you
  In Fairyland,
And so I come to you:
  You'll understand.

TO R. K. D. WITH A COPY OF CAIRD'S LAY SERMONS

Could we but meet upon this mountain height,
Together watch the sun,
Scatter the cold and dubious shades of Night,
Then were our souls at one.

Then might a silence hallow all our past
We spent as comrades here:
Each petty deed of good or ill at last
In the new light made clear.

Then should we know the all-wise care of Him
Who wove these strands between
Our souls: and we should feel His love not dim,
Nor longer darkly seen.

And if I cannot climb so high to you,
At least together we
Trudged the worn track beneath; so let's renew
Our pledge of sympathy.

ARDMADDY, NOVEMBER 1909

LIFE, Life, I *will* love thee,
Though thou unlovely be;
And if I love thee, wilt thou not take on
The beauty of the all-creating Sun?
And I in busy trance
Shall melt into thy radiance,
And losing myself shall find
Peace and a restful mind,
Henceforth to hold a steadfast way
Through change and seeming swift decay
By loving thee, by loving *all* of thee,
By understanding sympathy
With stones and flowers and beasts and men,
By feeling all to be brethren:
For nothing lives unless it share
Its breathing with the common air;
No soul has life within a void,
Nor can its glories be employed
Save in a free communion
With Life wherever it has shone:
And in this splendour might I share
By loving thee, oh Life divinely fair.

But how shall I
Compass this mystery?
How love thee, how escape this cloud,
This "self" which wraps me in a shroud
As though a corpse, and hides mine eyes from Life,
Till now with all creation I'm at strife,
A dead thing vaguely hurled
Into the starless space which glooms about the world,
Till Life's a bitter and a hostile thing,
And "I, I, I" alone I sing,
Through cold, unfriendly spaces wandering—
Yet still I can recall a dim intelligence
Of Life's most holy radiance,

And sometimes spring will set my thoughts a-dance,
Or some sweet goddess wave a distant light,
As now, to cheer my formless night.

Life, Life, I *will* love thee,
Though thou unlovely be,
And if I love thee, wilt thou not take on
The beauty of the all-creating Sun?

THE MODERN POET

Is this poor sheaf of songs
    All I can give
As recompense for wrongs
    Whereby I live?

Millions have strained and toiled,
    Suffered, starved, bled
That I might lie unsoiled
    On a soft bed.

Thousands in slums to-day
    Live worse than brutes,
To give me time to play
    With Learning's fruits.

Only a spirit-birth,
    Flame-like, intense,
Could in its joy be worth
    Such grim expense.

Yet are these joyless songs
    All I can give
As recompense for wrongs
    Whereby I live.

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