Mr Lyward's Answer

by Michael Burn

The Story of George Lyward and Finchden Manor

1956 FOREWORD

Finchden Manor exists, and all the people in this book are or have been alive. Their names, except for those of Mr Lyward and his staff are names I have imagined

I am deeply grateful to Mr Lyward for his trust and candour in disclosing the story of his life's work to one who three years ago was a stranger. I am also grateful to Mrs Lyward, to his staff and to all the psychiatrists, teachers, social workers, old boys, and present boys of Finchden Manor, who have helped me with their advice and recollections, and must for obvious reasons remain anonymous; particularly to the old boy who in Chapter Nine goes under the name of Alastair Wilton, for permission to tell his story in full; most of all perhaps to Flynn, for his permission.

I have no expert knowledge of either education or psychiatry, and ask all educationists and doctors who may read this book to consider it as a narrative written by a respectful tourist in their land. Its chief purpose has been to serve as an introduction to Mr Lyward's work, about which no one can write thoroughly except himself.

MICHAEL BURN

FINCHDEN Manor was a timbered black-and-white caterpillar of a house, with a long lawn and a rose-garden, a mile from the demure country town of Tenterden. The older part of the building was Jacobean, the rest a Victorian imitation tagged on. The bays overhung, and one was supported on huge struts, like an old tree. The house looked beloved; and at night enchanted. Till ten o'clock every window blazed. The voices were all young. Chopin came from one room, boogie-woogie from another, and there was nothing haunted; but later, after the lights were out, the house withdrew into itself, moonlight smoothed out bulges and slants, and tiers of zebras seemed to have left their stripes up and down the walls

A hedge hid it from the road. You entered from the courtyard, and knew at once it could not be a private house. Even if no boy scampering like a monkey, or monkey scampering like a boy ran past, you knew; from the outbuildings, the field with its home-made goalposts, the pond that some boy always wanted to turn into a swimming bath, and the raggedness of the high cedars.

I think of it in two aspects, with which I associate two sides of what I witnessed there. The road skirting the townward side, though small and carrying little traffic, linked London directly with the sea. That way the boys walked to the cinema, the library, the shops, or to meet a girl; that way lay houses, newspapers, regular communications, and the postman came. The other way a lane slunk past the old brick pillars of the gateless drive, and after a few yards dropped rapidly to sea-level. You realised that the house was on a long ridge commanding a narrow valley. Very few houses were visible, and those few farms. Dense woods, from which flashed one white windmill, smothered the opposite slope, and southward the valley broadened in dyked pastures to the marshes. Sheep roamed them through spring and summer; in winter they were flooded and the floods would freeze.

I used to walk that way, sometimes at night, and the owl became its voice. The marshes had their legends, and were talked of as being strange and unlike other country. The sun sank boldly in front of the house, behind the four pinnacles of Tenterden Church, while here at the back the moon stole up, the air grew colder, the outlines less secure. A white mist rose out of the sodden ground, as if the sea that had covered it hundreds of years before had left a ghost. Evening after evening this mist rose, until it had breasted the ridge and islanded the four pinnacles and carved tower, which seemed to float. Bungalows, landladies, esplanades, were not far off; but here the land had not yet surrendered, and you could easily go out of sight of habitation and feel lost. The tower is a mark for miles; I imagined sailors straffling their eyes in the old days, along a coast that has remained treacherous.

Thus, on the Tenterden side, things were as they are familiar to most of us from newspapers, the ground was built on and 'developed', life lived according to convention, nothing went too deep. The other side seemed still to be waiting; not for the builder and contractor, but explorers. It was open and exciting. The house stood fast between the two - tranquil, set apart, able to disarm violence, absorb tragedy and forget both; a place of occasional squalls, yet one of the gayest and most peaceful I have ever known, and the work done there among the noblest.

Dr Selwyn first took me there and introduced me to Mr Lyward at the time of the notorious Craig-Bentley case. Two boys had gone out armed one night and, when pursued, one of them had killed a policeman. The whole country had become disturbed, not only by our responsibility for hanging one of the boys, but because crimes of this kind were being reported every day. Decent parents read the newspapers and wondered: 'If in that home, why not in mine? Do I know so little of my own child?' They became so eager to be offered cures for disorders hitherto unthinkable, that dozens of articles were published in the newspapers by those who had - or professed to have - experience of juvenile delinquency. The answer, said Dr Selwyn, had been given for the past twenty-five years by Mr Lyward, although he had remained unknown to the public, and no newspaper had asked him for an article.

Dr Selwyn knew what he was talking about, since he had sent one of his patients to Mr Lyward; this boy had previously been asked to leave two world-famous schools, and his family had been at their wits' end what to do with him. He had at once taken to Mr Lyward and already been for some time under his care; with what Dr Selwyn called amazing results. He quoted Mr Lyward as having said that anyone who wished to write about his work would need to be a poet. I was curious about the poetry, and arrived in a mood half-cautious, half-excited.

We drew up in the courtyard outside a brick seventeenth century porch. A window opened from what seemed to be a kitchen; a boy looked out and stared, but said nothing. Another crossed the yard. He wore a brown leather belt, a faded leather jacket with tassels over the breast pockets, and a porter's cap set at a slouch. He was sharpening a peeled stick with a hunter's knife. He said politely, with a put-on American accent:

'Do you want Mr Lyward? I think he's in. I'll ring.'

A girl came to the door and Dr Selwyn and I went in. The hall was old oak, and the polished staircase gleamed. We were taken into a big sitting-room. Reproductions of old masters hung from the panelling, and Scarlatti stood open on a grand piano; downstairs somebody was playing Bach. I sat in a deep window-seat and looked out at the garden of a well-kept country house; at the long lawn, with an ancestral cedar of Lebanon in the middle, bushes clipped in the shape of gigantic cauldrons, an old brick archway climbed by roses, and through another archway in a hedge a glimpse of the rose-garden. I heard shouting. Several boys had come out of another part of the house. I had to crane my neck, since they avoided the formal strip of garden under the window-seat. The sun shone. One was stripped to the waist; another wore a brilliant floral shirt. Two were wrestling. These were not the guests for whom the atmosphere appeared to wait. The Bach downstairs ended.

Later, I was to have a dozen contradictory impressions of Mr Lyward. He looked none of the types I had dreaded finding; not a professional crank or selfconscious eccentric; not the instructor of the young, complex, but hearty in manner, who is at pains to swear and 'be like everybody else'; not a Presence, or Grand Old Man, complete with half an acre of forehead, a prophet's hair, and the kind of majestic kindliness that leaves you admiring, but oppressed. He was of middle height and looked frail. He had a slightly abstracted air, and held his right hand over his heart, as if taking an oath or apologising for a hiccup.

'Do you play the piano?' he asked me
'I'm afraid not.'
The boy who came in with him asked him to play the Scarlatti on the piano, which he did. A woman with a clear strong face and red-gold hair entered - Mrs Lyward. The boy went and we had tea. I learnt that the boys had no set classes. Then what did they do all day?

No set holidays either. Then did they never go home? How did they leave, and why, and after how long? Trying to ask something precise, which called for a precise reply, I said:
'How are you financed?'
'There is a balance sheet,' said Mr Lyward. 'You can see it if you like.' I did not really want to see it. I asked, as dozens had asked before me, and have since:
'What is the curriculum?'
'There is none
'But... can you tell me what the boys are doing at this particular moment?'
'I have a rough idea. I can tell you that three are in London. Two, as you see, are playing croquet. One has just been given twenty pounds to start breeding budgerigars. Another is thinking of making a telescope, but won't get a penny till he shows that he means it. And one has run away.'
'Run away?'
'I think he'll come back. Oh - look - this is interesting !'
He was at the window, and his voice became excited.
'How many of them? Eight-ten-twelve.'

The group of boys on the lawn were playing a game everybody knows. One stands in the middle of a circle, while the others throw a ball to one another and try to hit him. They looked healthy and happy.

'You wouldn't have thought, would you?' said Mr Lyward, 'that the Lincolnshire County Council sent me that one' - he pointed - 'with a note that he had the highest possible criminal potential. And that one boasted when he came to us that he had beaten the educational authorities in Somerset single-handed, and would do the same with me. Oh, and that one - does he look as if he were "all dirt and lies"? That's what his father wrote about him.'

We went into Mr Lyward's room. Panelling again and reproductions on the wall; many books; Shakespeare and Shakespearian criticism, Keats and the letters of Keats, writings on education, writings on mysticism, writings on the origins of language, grammars in German. In one corner was an enormous filing cabinet, in another a bed. There were two clocks, neither of which was going. The alcove window looked out over the lawn and the boys playing there, and the afternoon sun poured in. I asked why the boys had come to Finchden.

'Oh, some of them have been "deemed maladjusted".' Mr Lyward answered. I could hear the inverted commas. 'Some... well, they just come. They're small, or they've been made to feel small, and they've wanted to feel big. They're really little boys, and here that's what they become.'
'Do you do a psychoanalysis of each boy?'
'No. But if by analysis you mean loosening, then I suppose we do analyse.' He got out the dictionary and established the original meaning of the word. One of his staff came in.
'What do we do here, David?' he asked. 'Are we a school? Are we a clinic? What are we?'
'Not a school.'
'I don't call this place a school. I never have, and I've always thought I never will. But perhaps after all, we are.'
He went to the dictionary again, and read out -
'School. From the Greek, skola. A place of leisure. But most people think that means just lounging. Lounging about in their way, whereas here it's lounging in our way.'
I began to feel bewildered. The telephone rang. Mr Lyward spoke firmly and at some length, and turned back to me.

'There you are!' he said. 'What am I to do with a father who comes to me with a boy in such a disturbed state, that he can scarcely even leave his room, and after he's been here only six months expects him to be fit for ordinary life?'
'How long does it usually take?' I asked
'I don't know. Can anybody ever know? I have an idea sometimes, but I never know, and I can't commit myself'
The telephone rang again. Two parents whose boy had been caught stealing wanted to see Mr Lyward 'urgently'. Mr Lyward had another long conversation, made an appointment, rang off, and began to talk about suicides in the Universities, and the relation of the Welfare State to the problem of emotionally disturbed adolescents. This reminded him of a quotation. The quotation led him to a file, out of which he fished an article he had written on this very subject years before the Welfare State came into existence or adolescent delinquency into the headlines. He told me suddenly of a boy in his care, whom no school had been able to hold, and who now seemed happy riding a bicycle dressed as a Chinaman.

'Why not let them have back their childhood?' he asked. 'Let them do all those things. If they don't do them now, they'll do much worse things later.'
A letter was lying on his bed.
'Look what the educational authorities in Leicestershire ask. They want to know what my methods are. Of course they do, but I've been at it twenty-five years, and surely someone would have had the time to come and find out. I beg them to come, even if they only spend one afternoon among the boys. The boys will tell them. The visitors needn't even see me, if they don't want to.'

It was obvious that if I were to form any idea of the place, let alone write about it, I must spend some time there, and Mr Lyward was willing, with that aim, to make me a temporary member of his staff 'What shall I teach?' I asked
'It depends what the boys will want you to teach.'
'I've no experience of teaching.'
'We'll see. The most important thing is that you should be on tap at any moment, including the early hours of the morning.'

It was agreed that I should settle in a few weeks later. I had not the faintest idea what Finchden Manor would be like, but I did have two presentiments: one, that I was about to go back to an entirely new beginning; the other, that this might turn out to be a happy story, of which the world had need.

CHAPTER TWO

IT is easier to say what Finchden was not, than what it was. I soon ceased to think of it as a school, or clinic, or 'place for the delinquent'. It was not an experiment; the boys were nobody's guinea-pigs. It evaded categories. No one called it anything but its name.

At the time I went there, Mr Lyward had about forty boys in residence, between the ages of fifteen and twenty, with an occasional fourteen-year old. The average age was seventeen and a half, a time, as one visiting psychiatrist remarked, 'when many people used to this work think it's too late'. Roughly half were private 'patients', paid for by their families and sent from public schools; local authorities paid in part or entirely for most of the remainder. There were and always had been some half-dozen whom Mr Lyward kept for nothing. He had no money of his own. Financially Finchden had to support itself For twenty-six years it had existed on a precarious margin, and looked like having to continue so. No one had endowed it. It received no State grant; as long as the boys remained there, Mr Lyward bore sole responsibility. His reputation as healer and teacher stood so high that most authorities and doctors were content to leave them to him; this, naturally enough, was not always quite true of parents

He had a staff of six, most of them in their thirties. There were no fixed hours, except for meals, which the boys cooked and served themselves, and bed-time; no fixed term-times; and no fixed holidays. The local doctor, a wise and co-operative friend, looked after the boys' health. The staff had holidays, weekends, days off; but could not be spared for the much longer vacations of an ordinary school. Although the house itself and the general sense of being immune and harboured reminded me of one of the old public schools, Finchden had no speech-days; no old boys' tie; no blazers; no chapel or school-hall; no Board of Governors, Visitor or Patron; and no conventions, written or unwritten, of what was or was not correct behaviour. It did not publish a prospectus. It was not Borstal nor an approved school. No boy, once there, could feel that he had been sent as a punishment and he found no punishments imposed. The rebel child of blue blood lived for years alongside the potential cosh boy. None seemed curious why any of the others had been sent. Once settled there, they had crossed a frontier from the past

For the first few days I was given time to find my feet. I had no duties yet. Changes, an occasional crisis, occurred all round me, situations and odd entanglements developed, of which I was only vaguely aware; some I did not know were happening at all. I could understand Mr Lyward when he was talking to the boys; but when to me, I continued to feel as if I had walked into a labyrinth. First to the morning's mail, then to an article he had written during the war, then to a memory twenty years old and still fresh; and so to the New Testament, Shelley, Shakespeare, and back to some inquiry sent him from a County Council. (He spoke of local authorities as if they were the nobles in Shakespeare's historical plays: 'Kent wants to know', or 'Northumberland is now asking ...'). I followed him, never fewer than two thoughts behind

It became clear within a week that I had stumbled on something far more than rehabilitation. This indeed was achieved; but incidentally, as part of a much larger liberation. My first clue became the small word 'respite'.

'Ponder over this word,' Mr Lyward suggested in a lecture to a learned society. 'I say it as one who loved teaching subjects, but has not officially taught them for twenty-one years; not since I decided that some young people needed complete respite from lessons as such, in schools as such, so that they could be shepherded back from the ways ... by which they have escaped for a while their real challenge...' I resolved to investigate why and how the boys had come, and what happened on their arrival.

Mostly, the parents, guardians or responsible authorities arrived at Finchden hot-foot, after a boy had either done something that had got him into trouble, or begun to behave in a disquieting manner that might. This was the immediate reason; behind lay the deeper causes. The immediate reason was brought to Mr Lyward's attention in a variety of ways.

A boy might be preceded by a letter from a mother who described the hours he would spend sewing laces and buckles and jewels, and duelling with imaginary foes who had sullied his good name, all with much bowing and kissing of hands. She had tried everything to interest him in ordinary life, but it was hopeless. Or this: 'He told me it would be a good thing for him to come home and have it out with his father. He said he would like to have a row with him. I asked if he felt that if we were both dead he would then progress, and he said yes.'

The correspondence might be prolonged over weeks or even months, before Mr Lyward decided to accept the boy, or before the boy himself decided to come. Often the parents, unwilling to agree that there could be anything seriously amiss, would state that their son 'has been much better during the past few days', and change their minds. But hope proved illusion and the request would be renewed on a more urgent note. One boy had been in rebellion against family discipline for ten years and had now begun to steal jewellery from his mother, which ended in his being bound over for two years. Or it might burst out of an apparently blue sky, as with a quiet obedient boy who suddenly broke into his own home, smashed all the glass, disappeared for four days and was found sleeping in a field. The parents added 'he has always had a happy temperament, then suddenly did not know what to do with himself - and we did not know what to do with him.'

Most of the boys had been interviewed by at least one psychiatrist and arrived complete with past history and analysis. Interpretation of course varied according to the psychiatrist; some giving a picture of an individual human being, others pedantic and technical. Or the story might start with a letter from a headmaster: 'I found out that he had been stealing, smoking, breaking bounds, and instructing other boys in the art of masturbation. It is quite impossible to get him to tell the truth. I and other masters had to persecute him fairly systematically for laziness, and I had to beat him twice or maybe three times.'

If the boy came of poor family and had been charged in a police court, his 'record' arrived with him: 'There are eight previous offences, and he has been treated by four psychiatrists. In-patient treatment at the Maudsley Hospital has been suggested, but would serve no useful purpose'. Sometimes the story was given by a social or psychiatric social worker: "The boy's mother has left her husband. The boy has had to leave seven boarding schools because of bed-wetting and running away."

It would give a very false impression to suggest that all the boys who came to Finchden had suffered from a lurid or desperate youth. Outwardly, some had been no more than "difficult" - and done no more harm to themselves or others than many who have not been 'deemed maladjusted'. Of one public schoolboy nothing more startling could be found than that 'his main defects are extraordinary unsociability and preference for his own company, so that it has always been a great bother to find anyone to share a study with him.'

A minority did have stories of sensational cruelty and neglect. Abandoned in infancy by a mother who drank too much, one boy was adopted by foster-parents, who later separated. He returned home, but continually ran away. His father bullied his mother and sister, made the boy call him 'sir', compelled him to stand still for hours, and often beat him. His

mother held him to the electric switch as punishment, got the children to do all the housework, and went away during the blitz, leaving them alone. They had no beds for two years and slept on newsapers and coats. The boy had run away just before he came to Finchden, lived for a week in an old car, and been found sleeping in the fields. The mother of this boy had been described as genuinely fond of him, but herself mentally disturbed, and unable to look after him for any length of time.

Some boys who lived in homes as orderly as this was disorderly, had not experienced even spasmodic affection. Some had experienced too much, and of the wrong sort. Several had suffered from bad schoolmasters. The head-master of one preparatory school had been a drunkard who (the mother wrote) 'used to subject my son to all kinds of indignities. He put drawing pins inside his shirt and tied his hands behind his back to stop him fidgeting. Several times he was compelled to eat until he was sick, and then not allowed to change his soiled clothes for days.'

A great number of boys had stolen - often from their parents. Many had been bed-wetters. Some had been violent. Others were afraid of the dark. Dozens had run away. Some were merely called backward and unable to pass examinations. Two or three had threatened suicide, and one had written: 'I give myself up for mad.' Several were described as psychopathic. Four or five had some form of religious mania. One, on the other hand, had set fire to churches. Several 'had illusions' and two or three had 'worn women's clothes'.

Such were a few of the labels with which the boys at Finchden arrived, and immediate reasons why they came. Concerning the deeper causes, one could not do more than notice certain features and say that they tended to recur. For example, a number of boys had parents living abroad. 'We are astonished,' wrote two such absentee parents, 'to hear of his lying, stealing, and blackmail, after two years at what we thought good schools' - the postmark Burma.

A large number, through death or absence, had no father, though fewer than ten were motherless. Often those without a father were described as 'spoilt' and 'pampered'. I had often read that 'broken homes are the chief cause of maladjustment', yet barely one in ten boys at Finchden had divorced or separated parents. Nonetheless some had homes where the parents were absentee although they returned to the house each night. There were divorces and separations of the heart, more destructive than any sanctioned by law.

One characteristic the majority of these stories did seem to have in common was that whoever had looked after the boy had tried to make him lead a life that was not his own. His own life had been 'usurped'. Each boy could have expected to come into his own life as into an inheritance, a throne; yet when he sought to claim it, he found the grown-ups entrenched there. This word of Mr Lyward's, 'usurp', became my second clue. There were degrees, and usurpation ('unjust encroachment on the rights of others') had been perpetrated in many ways - frequently with that 'best will in the world' which is so often disastrous. Parents are trustees for their children; yet so many think of themselves as owners. Some of these owner-drivers drove the child openly, some subtly; in fear of him, or with what passed for love. A great number of fathers and mothers had done their best; and their best had been too much as often as too little.

Parents had their own experiences, difficulties and standards to keep up. The child must hurry, he must get on. Examinations were not passed, and failure interpreted reproachfully as ingratitude: 'It is disappointing to have done one's best and get no results or reward.' A molehill the parents had struggled to establish was elevated into the mountain which the son must hold; 'We have quite a good business, built up by myself; and it would be a great pity if he, the only son, should prove unfit to carry on."

Sometimes the standards held before the boy were not material, but no less worrying and premature. 'By a simple receiving of the Lord Jesus into your heart, the whole outlook of your life can be changed,' a mother wrote to her fifteen-year-old. Over and over again some moral judgment was either implicit or expressed. 'I am intolerant,' wrote a father, 'and especially of laziness, funk, lack of keenness, and impertinence. I have not hesitated in my letters to the boy to try to prevent these, but have not failed to praise and encourage on every occasion. I have probably been too heavy with it all.' A friendly guardian begged his ward, aged fifteen and exceptionally childish, to 'go very slow and above all be dignified. You may want to enjoy things to the full, but keep your enjoyment comparatively quiet, and avoid being a buffoon.' The boy, arrived at Finchden, wrote back in a round unpunctuated scrawl: 'I have been into the woods here and I thought that they were lovely I have been in the fields collecting acorns and the fields are lovely ones.'

The answer was not always mild and passive. A boy could become desperate, like a wild animal tethered to a stake. One wrote: 'When I got your card, I went raving mad. Must I crawl about with my head downcast, saying I am a miserable sinner, when I think no such thing? More than once I have contemplated doing away with the black sheep. It would be a great relief to you to have no abnormal son to pay for, only I can't stand being cursed, and so I've had to resort to prep school tricks for the sake of doing something, and that's why I've destroyed your property.'

Examples such as these gave an unforgettable meaning to the word 'usurp'. One boy who had just arrived at Finchden received a letter, six pages long, from a brother several years older than himself. The brother began by telling him to live to a timetable. He must learn a list of words from books his brother would send to him, and spend one afternoon a week writing an essay to be sent to his brother for correction. He was to get a book on physics and another on anatomy, read the preface first, then read each page slowly, listing the words he did not understand, and then read all of them a second time. 'You say you are happy,' the letter went on, 'but I doubt ifyou are. You can kid your mother, so as to keep her free from worry, but you can't pull the wool over my eyes. So never lie to me.' This warning was followed by a fresh table of instructions, each of them numbered. The boy is to:

(1) send home a list of everything received,
(2) save all boxes and paper and string and send them home, sticking two labels on each parcel, one on either side
(3) always to lock his room before going out,
(4) 'Don't do other people any favours. Don't mend their clothes. Don't lend them anything, you'll be the mug in the long run. Become a professional scrounger. Make a book-case, or better still find one among the furniture and take it for your own use. Make threats, bully, cajole, so long as you get what you want, and remember you are strong enough, if you choose, to fell an ox.'

The boy is on no account to let anyone sleep in the same room. 'If your privacy is threatened, write to me, and I shall act. Don't be surprised if one day you find me walking through the gate, because I shall be visiting you when you least expect it. And if I find you are unclean, with an untidy room, or unhappy or ill-fed, I shall give you a good hiding. Never lie to me, because I trust you implicitly, if necessary with my own life, and I expect you to trust and confide in me. Nothing could shock me so much, as to find that you are lying to me.' A questionnaire is enclosed, which is to be returned with answers.

The younger brother to whom this letter was written had arrived at Finchden, diagnosed as being 'in an agitated and depressed condition, with ideas suggestive of schizophrenia'.

After observing him in a home, the doctors had come to the conclusion that he was suffering from 'a severe anxiety condition'. No wonder. The letter is, of course, an extreme example; but it contained much which appeared in modified forms in many stories.

'I would like to feel,' Mr Lyward once wrote, 'that no boy comes to school with any great ambition. I am appalled at the monotonous regularity with which they are urged to work for this or that reason or end. Over and over again I have seen a big boy near to tears at the thought that "father doesn't care for me apart from wanting me to succeed"'. And so, by seeking to possess their child, some parents lost him; struggling to make him 'normal', they drove him into 'abnormalities' of which they had never dreamed. From all these censures and pressures, Finchden released its boys, and accepted them as they were.

Often the first interview with Mr Lyward decided them to come. Tense and unable to communicate while his parents were still in the room, the boy unfolded as soon as he was alone with Mr Lyward; he became easier, responded, began to laugh.
'I like you,' Mr Lyward said to a new candidate.
'I like you, too,' squeaked the boy, described as unresponsive, and compelled to wear a deaf aid which he never used again. Parents wrote that their son now waited every morning for the letter with the Tenterden postmark, announcing that he could come.

One boy, dangerous to himself and others, said after the first encounter: 'I've never met a man who gave me such a feeling of strength.' And yet Mr Lyward did not look at all strong. What he conveyed was immediate friendliness and warmth, which made these first meetings more like a reunion. Several of the boys told me they had known, after the first few minutes, that here was the man they had been looking for. They had felt deprived of something, and had taken their revenge in many ways; yet Finchden was that 'somewhere' in the world which they had always known to exist; they had only not known the address.

And so they turned up, often with visible idiosyncracies. Henry Collingwood brought four dozen butterfly collars and a hundred ties. Tom Salford had on five vests. One arrived in a Rolls Royce, wore dark glasses, a floral shirt, and a sombrero, spoke French, German and Italian, and at once taught baseball. Harry Nevin was put on the train by the police and told it was either Finchden or an approved school. He refused to speak, eat or look at anyone; ran away after three weeks, returned on a stolen bicycle, and put himself completely in Mr Lyward's hands. Norman Ferguson wore a paste sapphire on one finger and a jewelled chain round his neck. Bill Noble said he would come if his mother could come too. Mr Lyward made an exception (which remained an exception), and had two rooms prepared for her in the annexe, paying for the alterations and charging her no rent. Paul Nevill arrived with a loaded revolver. On Jack Stormonth's first day at Finchden, a tile fell on his head, and he assumed it was part of every new boy's treatment. Edwin Mills fasted his first two days in penance for stealing a potato. Fitzy came for three weeks, stayed seventeen years, and later started a place of his own; his own first pupil wore a sword and brought him his meals on roller-skates.

And after they had come, what happened? They found security, emotional security from exterior pressures; from the mother who had badgered them with her griefs and the father with his ambition; security from ideals and from immediate goals. No one judged them. They lost their labels, and were offered their lives. I asked a man who had been a boy at Finchden twenty-three years ago what had been his first impression.
'Intense relief'
'Relief from what?'
'From school.'

What he needed when he first went there was respite from classes; he came to classes later. 'My boy hates games,' one parent said. The boy did not have to play games at Finchden; after a time, freed from the compulsion, he grew to like games and emerged an athlete.

The rambling house, with its black and white timbers and warm brick, the garden and the lawn, the sheep-cropped marshes below and the encircling woods, breathed an English tranquillity. To the boys from rich homes and public schools, this was something they knew; to the boys from suburbs something they sought on bicycles or on foot; to the boys from slums something they had never known. Day or night, no door in their part of the house - inside or out - was locked, except the larder. The staff seemed friendly, without being either painfully understanding or hearty. They did not coax you into corners and get you to tell them things. Neville might seem to be in a dozen places at once, and David might be equally elusive, but Sid - Sid was a rock. He walked across the courtyard, leaning on his stick; at one time, to please the boy who had given it to him, he wore a fez. He made jokes. If you died and were met by Sid, you would feel that all was well; if all was not well, at least you had the right companion. Mr D. was a brilliant teacher of mathematics. He kept himself to himself, was sometimes taciturn and gruff, and pretended not to like people, although he did. Peter Goddard was six foot three, a skilled carpenter and engineer, who had worked out his own method of teaching. It was he, chiefly, apart from the building firm, who had saved the house. I believe, given time, he could have repaired Westminster Abbey single-handed. He was the sort of man who seems to have an intuitive relationship with engines. Neither Mr D. nor Peter took any part in the 'psychological treatment', and at times made a point of talking jokingly as if they thought it waste of time. The boys enjoyed the dry asperity of Mr D. and Peter's rough directness, and respected both of them.

And the animals! Hamsters, rabbits, guinea-pigs, a hawk, an owl, pigeons, a tortoise, budgerigars, dogs, a monkey. Perhaps on your first day, you went into Sid's room, where you found a skeleton piano, a printing press, a hand-made television set, and the atmosphere of an alchemist's den. You might be allowed to make a tape-recording of your voice. You saw the things that other boys had made. You heard stories about old boys. No one, staff or boy, was inquisitive or censorious. You could cry if you wanted, and nobody would sneer. It was all unusual and intriguing and you felt you wanted to see more, that you might be happy there. Sandy Morton took to the place so much at first glance, that he went straight home for his baggage, without even waiting for an interview.

Sometimes I would be working in Mr Lyward's oak-room; collecting reasons why the boys there (and elsewhere) had 'gone adrift'. Upstairs Mr Lyward and one of them were singing and playing the piano. I went to the boys' concerts. Two might be playing the guitar, one a year ago a 'thief and gangster', the other described six months before as morose and full of hatred for himself and the world. Now they were easy, carefree, and young. I went into the yard. A boy looking like the dormouse at the Mad Hatter's tea-party was sitting under a tree playing happily with a dog. His mother had pampered him, his father despised him, and he had been wretched at home and school; already, after two weeks, he looked relaxed.

It seemed to me that if all those who asked, as I had asked: 'But what on earth do they do?' could only know the boys' stories even as little as I, then see them now, they would need no further answer. If the visitor could only have known a boy's face when he came, taut and hostile, and have seen it again a little later, that would be enough. Finchden had given emotional security and a last long holiday before the stress of life. If Mr Lyward had done no more than afford this blessed pause, he would have done much. In one first interview he recalled 'The boy wept for joy and my other assistant almost wept to see it.

The only explanation the boy could give of his tears was: "I can do as I want here". Before that he had been telling me: "I think I ought to work", but soon he was laughing at the idea that it was Daddy talking and not himself. It was one of those interviews I shall never forget.'.

Mr Lyward's adventure straddled the twenty-five years between mass unemployment and the building of the Welfare State. Through the experience of Finchden one could see that the rich were now less rich, and more worried for the futures of their children; while the children of the poor, less now from poverty than from monotony, sought distraction in the cinema and the gang. The good and brave impulses of parents strove desperately with rising costs - the dangerous injunction to 'get on' at any price received the sanction of what was called 'realism'.

The post-war legislation which enabled local authorities to pay for a boy's keep showed the makings of a wiser approach to troubled children than England had ever known before. Meeting many probation officers and social workers showed me how much dedication still went unknown. People seemed never to have time, or to leave their children time, to grow gradually into fulness. Did they even desire it? The term 'maladjusted' itself begged so many questions. Maladjusted to what? Should one admire adjustment to war, fear, and the hydrogen bomb? I preferred the phrase 'emotionally disturbed'. It stated a plain fact without reference to any doubtful standard. Inevitably, Mr Lyward's work laid bare nearly all the deeper human relationships. The liberation of the child led often to a reconciliation of the parents, and the parents' failure with their children exposed their own inadequacy to one another.

It is unfortunate that people should believe that any story about 'maladjustment' is bound to be violent and sensational. One boy said as he left: 'You are the most wholesome people I have ever met.' It was the world outside which seemed troubled, and Finchden that was at rest. Whenever I left to return to London, I seemed to be leaving an oasis - long after I had grown used to the general sense of relaxation, and the calm humour Mr Lyward and his staff never lost, at moments which would have driven other people distracted.

The boys at Finchden did go later into the same kinds of job as everyone else, several becoming eminent. They did become good citizens and good husbands and good fathers. But that was not all. Their liberation was a major operation. It came about by a freeing of the whole personality from the deepest level, so that those 'immediate reasons', for which they had been sent to Finchden Manor, did not so much 'undergo cure' as fall away. Finchden's influence remained with them long after they had left.

How deep it was, many did not understand for years.

CHAPTER THREE

My room in the boys' part of Finchden held a bed, a desk, an aladdin stove, and a sofa without springs, and until my arrival had been used as a class-room for two or three boys who had reached the stage of taking classes. It was on the opposite side of the house from the lawn, looking over the playing fields, and on a half-landing. Above, along a low dark corridor, lived David, Neville, Mr D. and a ghost; below, down a few stairs and through an immense oak door, the boys' rooms began, so that mine was a kind of half-way house.

The first morning I got up early and went down to the dining room. One wall was almost all window. An old boy, lost at sea during the war, had painted robust murals of ships in full sail across another wall. Half-a-dozen boys were drinking tea out of taxi-drivers' mugs and eating bread and jam off trestle tables. A boy was stirring porridge in the kitchen. Not being able tothink of anything else to do I retreated to my room and made the bed. Soon there was a knock at the door, and a boy came in who looked exactly like the Cruickshank drawings of the Artful Dodger. He was skinny. His hair at the back disappeared under his jacket, and in front a long black lock hung down like a question mark and obscured half his face, which was dead white. He had thick black eyebrows, and looked out from under them with an air of perpetually suspicious but amused reconnaissance, as if he were about to inveigle people into conspiracies that would surprise them. Imagine a poet and a squirrel and a jockey, put the mixture into blue jeans and a leather jacket with a bedraggled fur collar, and this was my first visitor.

'Have you really come on the staff?' he said pityingly
'I have.'
'How long for?'
'I don't know. Anything may happen.'
'Well, as long as you've got that clear. It's the hell of a place, you know. We're all mad. Including the staff'
'Mr Lyward doesn't strike me as mad.'
'He's the maddest of the lot. He's a ruddy genius.'
The boy took out a tin box and began to roll a cigarette from tobacco dust. Suddenly, as if it had just struck him, he asked:
'By the way, do you smoke?'
'Yes.'
'Can you spare a fag?' I gave him one from the packet visible on the desk. 'You'll have to look out,' he said. 'Everyone'll be cadging fags off you. By the way, you don't need to come down to breakfast. I'll bring you some tea up here. Unless ...' he ruminated, watching me under the lock of hair, 'unless you have coffee for breakfast?' There happened also to be a tin of coffee on my desk.
'I'll make it for you if you like,' he said.
Another knock at the door. The Artful Dodger put his fist swiftly round the handle.
'Wait a moment! I'll tell you who it is. I bet you a dollar it's Fred.'

It was. Others followed. Each time the Artful Dodger, whose real name was Flynn, guessed who it would be, each time was right. They wanted to know why I had come there, where I had travelled, what I had done; a new member of the staff was unusual. Their reconnaissance was oblique and conversational.
'I'm staying here till next spring and then I'm going to get a job,' said one of them.
'God help your boss!' said another.
They began to argue amongst themselves, conscious of me, but not noticeably 'showing off'. They used the word 'cured' jokingly and, whether in Cockney or public school accents, seemed fairly fluent at expressing themselves.
'Hey, what shall we call him?' said one, jerking a thumb at me.

'Got a nickname?'
'No.'
'I bet you have. You don't like it, or you'd tell us. Well, I've got one for you. Singe !"
'Why Singe?'
'Burn - Singe. See? Captain Singe. He was a smuggler round about here. No, not Captain. You're on the staff. Professor ... Doctor.'
All the staff were called either by their Christian names or nicknames, except Mr Lyward; he remained 'Sir', and when the boys were not addressing him direct, 'Mr Lyward' or 'The Chief'. I became Dr Singe.

I spent the morning wandering about the house and grounds. About eighteen of the boys had specific duties, such as cleaning, washing-up, or cooking. David and Neville taught a small group in the mornings. Two boys were with Mr D., studying mathematics. One was building his budgerigars a cage. Another, who had already built a tennis court, was starting on a canoe. Others were rehearsing a revue; others drawing, modelling, playing the piano or the trumpet, lying on their beds reading, chasing one another, making a dug-out, gardening, arguing. There was not one desk in the whole building, and perhaps one blackboard. The ordinary terms do not apply, but I suppose recreation room is the nearest description of the large and lofty hall, in which were the stage, a ping-pong table, a piano, and a dozen different activities going on at once.

The boys slept five or six to a room, although three had rooms to themselves, and huts on the edge of the playing field housed a couple each. The bedrooms reminded me of my time as a prisoner of war. Each boy had a small space which was his own and expressed his own personality. What one saw might only represent a temporary protest against having hitherto been no one, a stage, a self-assertion, a fantasy of character through which the true character had not yet emerged. One bed might be unmade and the clothes all over the place, and another as tidy as a barrack-room. I saw at various times above, near or beneath the beds a wireless set the boy himself had made; a model aeroplane or theatre; drawings of Finchden, portraits, abstracts; three hamsters in a cage; a kitten; and a puppy. One boy had collected several hundred second-hand books, another had taken a passing fancy to pieces of cheap glass, bought at the local auction; another had rigged up a telephone exchange, through which he spoke to different parts ofthe house; another had a selection of several hundred admirable photographs, taken and developed by himself; and another a fox, though this was stuffed.

At lunch everybody found knives, forks, and a place. A scrap developed on the floor; no one paid much attention, and after a few minutes the boys got up, shook themselves, and resumed eating. Peter and usually some other member of the staff came to this and to the evening meal, but they did not 'supervise'. The servers plonked the food down, returned, and shouted: 'Seconds!' and people went when they felt like going. The food was sufficient, what is called wholesome, and better or worse according to the boy who was cooking. All except one or two who sat morose and silent, taking no part, were talking; apart from shouting and slanging matches, there were also conversations, and their range and intelligence began to surprise me.

Later, unobtrusively, Mr Lyward appeared, wearing a brown trilby, and an overcoat and muffler. Arguments continued, but the boys were aware of him, and it was not long before somebody appealed.
'What do you think, sir?'
'What about?'
'What Jimmy's been saying!'
'What have you been saying, James?'

'I've been thinking we ought to have a grace before each meal,' the boy answered gravely. 'Why don't we?'
Everybody groaned. One could imagine nothing less suitable to Finchden, or the boys there, than grace before meals. But Mr Lyward took the question seriously. He did not answer yes or no. He enlarged it and put it on a different level.
'Doesn't it depend how much importance we attach to an outward expression?' he asked. 'How much do we need these forms? Is it enough if we feel things, and don't express them in any form at all?'
Jimmy answered:
'If I say my own grace, I suppose it doesn't matter what the others say.'

And so there began one of those discussions for which I shall always remember Finchden. I remember one after a concert, in a corridor, when they talked about children's theatres and ways of keeping the attention of children. Or it might be in a bedroom, or on the playing field, or in the courtyard leaning over the grocer's van; or like this discussion about ritual, in the dining room, with the cooks and servers devouring the spoils of the kitchen, and the wrestling and shouting and chasing continning all round, until some boy, unable to waste his chance a moment longer, burst out with:
'Please sir, may I go to London on Tuesday?'
'To London?' Mr Lyward turned to the others.
'What does anyone think about Paul going to London?'
'No,' in a chorus. One boy said:
'Yes, and stay there.'
'I want to see a show,' said Paul.
'A show? I thought you saw a show a fortnight ago. What sort of show? The Lord Mayor's Show? That's not till November.'
'A musical.'
'The Messiah? Henry Evans is going to hear the Messiah next week. You can go to that.'
'No. An American musical.'
'Ah,' said Mr Lyward, as if he had not known, and as if the boy had not known that he had known.
'It's very good. And I've got a friend who knows one of the actors.'
'Well, all the world's a stage. We're as good as a play here. Why do you want to see plays in London, before you've seen here?' - and Mr Lyward put emphasis on 'seen'.
'You have to pay for a play. It's free here.'
A boy called John Wirrall interrupted.
'We ought to do a play. Take it round the country.'
'Fitzy did one,' said another. 'And he did a film too. I was the blushing maiden. He shot it on the marshes. The play he produced did go all over the country.'
'It ended up in London. John Mills came to see it.'
'I mean a play about this place,' said Wirrall. 'A play about us.' 'Impossible!' from someone. 'Nobody'd believe it. And they'd take all the guts out of it.'

And so they began to talk about bad language and why they used it, and those who used the worst found themselves discussing their own reasons; and so they passed to recollections of a fabulous yet once real Mr Knox, formerly on the staff, who had worn a white beard, and been a classical scholar and a scientist and a linguist and a big journalist before he came to Finchden, and a horseman and a maker of soap and by all accounts one of the last great eccentrics, and had sworn Homerically. And Mr Lyward told the story of the parents who came to interview him and found only Mr Knox, whom they mistook for the gardener; and how, when the mother apologised, Mr Knox replied: 'Dear Lady, I am not the first person to have been mistaken for the gardener.' And when some of them did not understand the allusion, he explained.

During these conversations, Mr Lyward would be standing in the thick of the group, in his apparently withdrawn mood, his hat well down over his brow, his head well down into his collar-bone, his right hand thrust under his left lapel, looking up occasionally to drop in some casual ferment. Or he would be fully involved, disputing, laughing, making jokes. Round him hung, and hungered, these to whom those terrifying epithets had been given - 'possibly schizophrenic', 'psychopathic', 'schizoid' - talking now of anything under the sun, listening avidly, seeking, feeling outwards. The adventure showed in their faces and voices.

The subjects the boys discussed might have astonished those who had known them a little while ago and still only knew them outside Finchden. The talk moved on many planes and was fed from many experiences. At one moment the football pools; next, someone had asked the meaning of the word 'philosophy' and if there was any point in it, and so someone else had been reminded of a boy who had wanted the whole universe systematised and could not bear a clock to stop. Once they had begun to be reminded, there was no end. On the outskirts of the group would always be a boy who could not yet join in. He might have just arrived, and was uncertain. Something held him. What was this place, where so much seemed to have happened, and yet nothing happened? Even against his will he wanted to know more.

'Well, James,' said Mr Lyward. 'We still haven't answered your question about grace.
'No, sir,' the boy replied dourly.
'Come to think of it, we have very little ritual here. In fact, I can only think of one example.' The answer came at once.
'Eight o'clock each evening.'
I asked what was meant.
'You're on the staff,' a boy said. 'You'll have to be there, same as everyone else.'
After tea some might go out. They had four shillings a week pocket-money and most of them went once weekly to the local cinema. They returned for the evening meal, and afterwards, until bed-time, came this 'ritual' hour, when they all collected in a room behind the stage called the 'Guildables', after the house where Mr Lyward had started his adventure twenty-five years ago. In winter it was the warmest room in the house, except for the kitchen. As many boys as possible crowded round the stove. They read; they played chess or darts or cards; built models; argued. Some member of the staff was always there, joining in any of these activities, but never reading. Most evenings Mr Lyward came in and half the room would gather round him, some to listen and ask questions, others to scrounge.

At ten o'clock the staff put out the boys' lights. For some reason or other I went downstairs into the dining-hall. A curious swishing noise distracted me. It came from the front of the house, and I went there, wondering if Storey had come out again. The moon had gone behind clouds, so that I could only just see the figure of a boy pushing something up and down the lawn. He was mowing the grass, as if in daylight. I knew nothing about this boy, except that his name was Richard, and he was blind.

Apart then from the few boys doing regular studies, were the rest learning nothing at all? If they were learning anything, what was it? One of them gave me a hint. His name was Carpenter, and he had sudden outbursts of rage which troubled himself and frightened some of the others. He had had no home life and suffered exceptionally in childhood. I had taken him with some others to a famous house in the neighbourhood, belonging to a General Percival - who showed us round. He was charming and avuncular.
'And what's the matter with you all?' he asked. 'You all look perfectly fit and healthy to me. What do they make you do? What do you learn, eh?'
No one answered. Then Carpenter said:

'We learn to live.'
It must have been about that time I began to see something.

What were these boys, really, after all the labels of 'delinquency', 'maladjustment', 'misfit', had been removed? Physically they were adolescent. Mr Lyward once likened adolescence to January, the month of the god Janus, who faces both forwards and backwards. Childhood is the dying year, manhood the coming. Adolescents are at the age where they still feel weak in relation to grown-ups, yet are passing through the physical changes of puberty, which makes them feel themselves grown-up. The pull forward to adulthood and backward to childhood induces strain. They ease the strain 'by behaving in certain unexpected ways towards parents, themselves still getting over the shock of discovering that their sons and daughters are no longer children'.

In Home & School, the magazine he edited for thirteen years, Mr Lyward wrote: 'Any careful observer will know that a fifteen, sixteen or seventeen year old may suddenly jib in the most unexpected manner. When this happens - whether the jibbing takes the form of silence, moodiness, sudden hilarity, or stupidity or evasion - the red light is out and the person is telling you: "When I was young, I was moved to fear, or a sense of guilt, or humiliation, or undue excitement, or tightening up, about this or something closely related to it. I'm helpless at this point. I become a child and no longer aspire to adulthood. You can say or do what you will. Nothing will come of your battering. I have slipped away into another world".' The boy did not say it in words, and did not know that he was saying it at all. 'There is a child's world, and an adult world, but there is not an adolescent's world. He belongs everywhere and nowhere.' Many in whom the transition had been anything but gently eased, or not.

The quotations throughout this book are taken, where not otherwise acknowledged, from Mr. Lyward's articles and correspondence.With the growing body came the growing mind, a dangerous ally. 'Nearly all, in vain, attempt, by thinking, to avoid the pain of growing through adolescence into adulthood.' The mind was invoked to furnish weapons and defences. 'The boy's mind is at work, trying to help him to forget his individual challenge... and he identifies himself (actually or by rebellion) with group or tradition or 'school of thought' to avoid the pain of difference. A boy may refuse to recognise the opposite sex and remain emotionally attracted towards his own sex, or a girl toward her own. If a boy goes to extremes of swearmg or smoking or talking big, that is because he is more backward drawn than the others.'

There were many such who came to Finchden. Parents and teachers had ignored the overlapping of the two phases, and treated the child either angrily or proudly, as if he were already arrived in the second stage. 'If a child is forced by threat or praise or blame to behave as if he is established in the second phase, while he still needs to go back sometimes to the first, then he will not be able to say "I am sorry to have failed in this or that, will you help me?" He will not say "I am sorry" at all. He will feel "I am sorry for myself", and the emotion which would have been positively helpful, so long as it was attached merely to his inability, becomes negatively paralysing by being attached to the person as a whole. "I am weak" takes the place of "I am too weak as yet to do this or that".'

From this kind of feeling it was not a long step to self-pity, and nearly all the boys at Finchilen at one time pitied themselves. The ideals, and the pictures of something or someone to 'live up to' with which so many of them had been presented had done them serious harm. Boys who brought off - to their way of thinking - a successful imitation of the ideal had been praised, then encouraged to continue. Boys were rebuked or punished when they slipped back, the slipping back being regarded as a 'moral lapse'. It was over

words such as 'ideals' and 'morality', that Mr Lyward had many of his toughest bouts with parents. Some could never have given approval to his remark in Home & School that 'all ideals, however fine, are an imposition upon life itself'.

'The older discipline,' wrote Mr Lyward (although no supporter of the newer 'Do as you like' discipline) 'often went wrong by forgetting that the child is not something simple, but someone complex, to whom fixed standards are not applicable. ... Discipline is false whenever it brings about premature crystallization.' Sometimes, to illustrate a point, Mr Lyward invented cross-examinations of himself.

EXAMINER: You are chiefly concerned with young men in need of psychological treatment and re-education?
G. L.: Yes. In other words, people who were once 'junior' and never lived as such.
EXAMINER: What do you mean?
G. L.: I mean that they were treated too often the wrong way when they were young and had to live unnaturally in consequence.
EXAMINER: But how did that help them?
G. L.: It enabled them to carry on after they were sick and tired. Suppose a mother nags her little boy and makes him feel more and more 'I'm bad, I'm insignificant, I'm frightened', then he may get the kind of illness that causes mother to send for the doctor, or he may start stealing or becoming very good or noisy or bullying. That sly cunning creature - or unfeeling bully - who seems so unrooted, is not the original boy at all, but a part he is playing. It saves him from being quite so consciously sick and tired and starved at his roots.

The boys who became members of the family at Finchden had begun to live this kind of lie about themselves. And, for a time, it had worked; until one day the model son, the supposedly contented one, had been discovered stealing or lying or bullying, and the parents discovered themselves, overnight, living with someone they could not recognise, because they and the boy had never really met. 'He always had a happy temperament, and then suddenly did not know what to do with himself'.

One such boy came to be interviewed. His parents had denied themselves much, in order to send him to a good school, and now he had been expelled for a 'sexual misdemeanour'. They remained downstairs, while Mr Lyward spent some time with the boy alone. Charlie Ashmore was fresh, energetic, and well mannered - too well mannered - with a good deal of poise and assurance, that made it hard to see what he was really like. He was very ashamed of what he had done, he said, and wanted to get over it. Mr Lyward, after making clear that he was not going to say much about the particular 'offence', asked Charlie if he was trying to forget it. Charlie replied that he had been told to remember and be sorry. For about half-an-hour all his answers appeared to suggest that he had an entirely happy relationship with both parents, especially with his father; that he felt he had brought discredit on his family, and was wicked, but would be all right again soon.

Mr Lyward asked: 'Do you think you've always had everything you want? Would you say you were a spoilt boy?'
'Oh, no, sir. Not at all spoilt.'

Something about this remark and the too rapid tone in which it was delivered caused Mr Lyward to ask another question, then wait. Suddenly the boy was talking quite differently. It became clear that a strong underlying antagonism existed between him and his father. His father, he said, 'would not let him do things' and gave no reasons. Neighbours in their Birmingham suburb had refused to let their sons associate with Charlie, and the stigma had been rubbed in. As he spoke of all this, he became far more

communicative and less correct, banging the arm of the chair and throwing his hand out in expressive gestures, instead of sitting upright and not apparently ill at ease, with his arms submissive to his side.

When he arrived, he had been the kind of boy who caused Mr Lyward to write: 'I have no hesitation in describing the delinquent for the most part as over-moral... one who does not so much feel guilty because he has committed an offence as commit 'crimes' because he feels guilty - about what he doesn't quite know ...' Charlie now became more like a real self. He did not complain or attack. He retained his good manners and lack of overt resentment. He merely said what he wanted to say himself. Denied achievement, he had turned to sensation. The withholding of reasons for refusals had, he said, made him want to be deceitful. He had asked to go on a walking tour, and been forbidden.
'I nearly ran away,' he added, 'but I didn't, because I thought I had worried my parents enough already.'
He talked chiefly about his father, and said of his mother only
'Of course she's scared of him.'
As the three Ashmores were about to drive away, Charlie put on a rough but not disreputable tweed cap. His mother said: 'What on earth have you got on your head?', and his father leant forward and took it off. I drove them to the bus-stop and the boy, who had been so talkative and ebullient a little while ago, did not say a word. He had withdrawn.

Finchden Manor existed to smooth the boys' transition out of childhood into adult life. In other words, they were weaned. This word was my most important clue. It recurred so often that I asked three people closely connected with Finchden what exactly they meant by weaning:
One said that it meant the gradual detachment of a child from a stage where it is dependent for nourishment on someone else, until it either wishes or can be safely left to take its own nourishment.
The second said that weaning meant a movement to and fro between the more advanced 'independent' stage and the dependent stage that was being left behind. Everything possible was done during this process to make the child ready for the more advanced stage before passing into it; preparation included freedom at will to return into the less advanced stage.
The third person added that weaning involved a personal relationship between two people, one of whom knew what he (in the weaning of an infant, she) was doing, the other of whom did not.

All these characteristics were present in the re-weaning or re-education ('nourishment') of the boys at Finchden. A process usually thought of as belonging to infancy was adapted and applied to boys with an average age of seventeen and a half. Their trouble was that they had only been half-weaned; at the slightest strain they returned, or 'slipped back' into the period at which they had been most satisfied. For many this was an extremely early age - according to Mr Lyward, between four or earlier and seven. 'They have come,' he said, 'because they failed to become seven-year-olds. However they may look, and however big or cleverly they may talk, they may in truth be no more than seven-year-olds with an L sign.'

It needed a good deal of daring and even more patience to attempt so fundamental a re-education, of which nothing could be foretold with complete certainty except that it would take time. The 'treatment' of the boys at Finchden made possible a natural development of head and heart together which they might have been thought past all hope of recovering. I had had my presentiment that I was about to take part in a new beginning. I had not expected to go back so far.

On the whole the boys lost those labels which made them sound so dangerous - and it was not long before most of them actually ceased to be dangerous. People with long experience of maladjustment in other places doubted that boys diagnosed as the boys at Finchden had been diagnosed could become as harmless as my first draft of this book represented them. A psychiatrist familiar with the conduct of similar boys at approved schools asked me if I had not suppressed a good many stories of violence. Had not there been more window-smashing? Had not more boys done physical harm to themselves and others? Yet one of two boys permitted to read my first typescript exclaimed 'Does he think we're all thugs?'

How was it that so many became harmless? The majority, Mr Lyward wrote, 'had assumed some kind of camouflage before they arrived, and slowly but surely had been labelled as this or that species of delinquent or maladjusted adolescent'. At our first meeting, looking out of the window at the group playing on the lawn, he had remarked, 'They're really little boys'. On the same occasion he had added of one in particular, 'Why not let him have back his childhood?' That patient was one of the exceptions. He was not even a camouflaged boy, but a camouflaged baby; he caused all the more disquiet to anyone who really knew him because, possessing a quick brain and an unnatural neon-like awareness of himself, he could camouflage his babyhood all the more successfully and so appear, to a stranger, older than the majority.

The remainder did not take long to surrender their camouflage and emerge from underneath as boys, with all the attractive qualities of boyhood and little worse than its usual obstreperousness. This was the extent of their disarmament. Once it had taken place, different words had to be used to describe their conduct. For example, the 'fights' to which some were prone before they arrived, at Finchden became merely 'scraps'; the alarming 'crises' of others became, at Finchden, a series of much quieter 'changes'; their taut emotional 'knots', their exhausting 'conflicts' tended, at Finchden, to dwindle to 'tangles' and 'puzzles', which were far less harrowing and could be solved gradually. They remained passionate, wilful, wanton, but in an entirely different way; not with the ruinous passion, wilfulness and wantonness of frustration, but of boyishness, mischief, innocence. The game on the lawn had been a boyish game. The ragged clothes the boys wore were the unaffected looseness and untidiness of boys. Their harmlessness was boyish.

Thus small episodes, which might seem sentimental concerning other boys, become significant with the boys at Finchden; for example, that one of them, usually silent and withdrawn, gave Sid a flower on Sid's birthday, or that Henry Gore, a 'tough guy', picked Mrs Lyward a bouquet he was too timid to present. One Christmas Eve the boys hung outside Mr D's bedroom door rows of socks and pillow-cases, into which Mr D. put handfuls of coppers in the morning. One group built a miniature trolley car, painted it with inscriptions in foreign languages - Tenterden to Vladivostok etc. - pushed it into the town and parked it outside the Town Hall among the limousines. Two boys were discussing whether Mrs Lyward dyed her hair. Mr Lyward passed, and they referred it to him. 'Why not ask her?' he suggested; so they went upstairs and asked. In the year the Olympic games were held at Helsinki, the Lywards had a Finnish maid. Her birthday celebrations lasted all day. She found a banner in her honour hung across the drive, a boy ran round the grounds bringing her an Olympic torch, and she was presented with flowers. The impulses behind these actions were boyish impulses, which the boys had hidden and camouflaged before they came to Finchden but, once there, eagerly disclosed.

When a discerning psychiatrist did spend any length of time at Finchden, this harmlessness astonished him. One, with a great deal of experience, could scarcely believe that boys with such a history could sit round a fire together arguing or discussing, or play games together, or come down to breakfast together, without any supervision from the

staff, and nothing happen. He saw for himself that they did not go in fear of one another, with extremely rare exceptions; that the disarming began quickly and was continuous; and he was amazed at the absence of explosive situations.

The boys needed Finchden. Therefore they did little physical damage to themselves, the staff or one another - or to the building and its contents. During the whole history of Finchden only one boy tried to kill himself; another saved his life, and the rest never knew about it. No boy deliberately smashed windows while I was there. Furniture was not chopped up for firewood, and the garden was well cared for. All the boys, save the few, seemed, whatever they had lost or missed elsewhere, to have kept their instinct for self-preservation; and this was one reason that they, and the community, remained comparatively quiet and secure.

The boys' disarming made possible the long processes of weaning, and without it they could never have been attempted. The majority of the boys were weaned from an attitude of 'I will never accept or co-operate with anything that interferes with me, if it comes to me as a person'. Gradually they came to accept an easy personal relationship with Mr Lyward, one or all of the staff, and finally with the community. In order that they should begin fairly regularly to make this acceptance, they needed to be met ninety-nine per cent of the way. In general, the process of weaning consisted in meeting them thus and in gradually modifying relationship with them in favour of a greater interdependence.

The exceptionally difficult ones, the camouflaged 'babies', as Mr Lyward called them, rather than 'boys', needed to be met a hundred per cent of the way. They too could be disarmed, but only spasmodically, and this incomplete disarming left them more resistant to the process of weaning. Mr Lyward took them with his eyes open, often after urgent requests, knowing that their resistance would be greater and more prolonged, but in the hope that it might prove possible to wean even them - as sometimes it did. Even when it did not, they kept in touch 'and retained their memory of Finchden Manor as a kind of unique reference concerning a love which was stern and undemanding in a way they had not previously known it.'

Did the boys realise that they were being weaned? Were they conscious of their need for Finchden? Mr Lyward thought most of them only dimly aware, until they had been there some time. The feeling for it which nearly all shared was an extension and strengthening of the feeling, at their first interview, that here at last was the place they had always known existed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELAXED, disarmed, returned to boyhood, weaned anew, learning to live - none of these words answer the question, 'What did the boys do?' They were without everything they had thought they disliked, and belonged to themselves. Nobody told them not to do things, but nobody was certain to give them anything to do. With nothing to fight against and no one in whom to hide, sooner or later they were bound to take some action by themselves. Self-disclosings and re-discovery began from that.

Movement started. They became in play. Mr Lyward used the simile of the pendulum, swaying forward to the new stage, and back to the stage that was being left behind. But once the play had begun, all that they did and said was eloquent; particularly the boy who complained: 'I wish there were something to do, but I don't want to do it.'

Early on, they attached themselves to some 'thing', to another boy, or to a member of the staff. The 'things' had been numberless, and usually chosen with the aim of showing what big men they were. If they could become an expert or authority then they might be looked up to - and mastery of the outward 'thing' could take the place of an inward development they did not want to go through. Dozens of boys asked Sid to teach them wireless. He was the one who kept a supply of spare parts; they were the ones who thought grandly of the finished set. One boy knew how to make it, but never finished. Another built it by himself, made a mistake, and would not show anyone, unable to admit the mistake. Another knew how to get someone else to make it for him, and then sold it for a packet of fags. Most of them soon gave up, and either relaxed for a while with the new-found awareness of their own shortcomings, or felt about for something else.

One boy kept a record of all the games of chess that anyone at Finchden ever played. Many of them made books their 'thing', and one was in a fever for weeks whether he should lock up his 'library' or send it home. One got up every morning and dug the garden furiously all day, where Mr Lyward could see him. He stopped, after a neighbour complained that flowers had been stolen to fill up the beds, and took over a passage inside the house instead, laying a carpet, locking the doors at either end, and announcing it was now his room. Many boys went through the phase of building dug-outs underground and Wendy houses in the trees. One annexed a little shed, where he gave tea-parties; if he had to go out, even for a moment, he locked his guests in to stop them leaving.

One boy attached himself to science. He rarely opened a sentence without the words 'scientifically speaking', and insisted that everyone not only should, but did function according to 'scientific rules'. Another made a 'thing' for himself of cricket matches. He liked to behave as if he was the only one who knew how to organise and preside; if he was bowled, or other people on the field took the game less seriously, he lost his temper and bats and stumps went flying over the ground. Many boys started furiously banging away at the piano, 'but they always,' said Sid, who taught them, 'go sweet and mellow later'. Some boys attached themselves to an animal. One passed through music and Plato to astronomy, which involved him in a study of logic and appalling mental knots. He talked of building a telescope, but never finished grinding the lenses.

Sometimes two boys attached themselves to one another. This was known as 'pairing-off'. Writing of ordinary schools, Mr Lyward noticed 'more than a few pairs who, like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are rarely apart, and are engrossed in and unwisely praised for their escape-absorption in, say, aeroplanes or bird-watching'. When this happened at Finchden, it was, gently if possible, stopped. Twice a boy was sent away because of it. The rule against pairing-off was the only rule.

Boys who paired-off formed, at a tangent to or completely outside the community, a closed circle within which their development came to a standstill. They had 'a mother-and-child relationship both ways'. Their influence on one another, if influence it can be called, became repetitive and sterile, and neither took any part in the growth of those who shared the ordinary life of the community. They were bores, drilling away at one another, and never striking oil.

At first it seemed strange that so many boys should have this ague for attachment, of whatever kind. By coming to Finchden, they had enabled themselves to be detached from the impositions they had resented and rebelled against. Mother was no longer at their shoulders saying: 'Change your underclothes', or Father: 'Get to the top of the class'. They were no longer typed as 'immoral', 'disobedient' or any of the hundred-and-one epithets parents and schools had fixed to them. Yet here they were, looking for new labels and fresh ties.

Many of these boys had suffered from a mistaken discipline and an inhuman authority. Freed from both at Finchden, they were nonplussed. Had they been fully grown men they might have exulted, but the immature may clutch what they claim to hate as well as what they claim to love. Unable even to feel their own legs, let alone stand on them, they exchanged their chains for crutches.

Mr Lyward wrote to one father that his son's manner when he came to Finchden 'was so strained and obviously "put-on" that it scarcely needed the diagnosis of a psychologist to determine that his anti-social behaviour was ... one of many symptoms connected with a totally false attitude to himself and life... Beneath a super-grown-up exterior manufactured over many years (thanks to intellectual capacity above the average) there was a very scared and puzzled little boy.... He had managed to push it all away by clever cynical repartee, or by being a successful scholar. He was not even able to admit that he was a sham and bluffing. The bluff had become almost the facts.'

Seen in this pellucid light by others first, and later by themselves, some boys formed, temporarily, an opposite impression of Finchden from their first. They could not deny that it continued to give them security from all that had disturbed them. Mr Lyward stood square between them and those parents who persisted, as some inevitably did, in requiring that they should write home regularly, pass their G.C.E., and flex themselves for their careers. But within this lovingly protected terrain they were now thrown back upon themselves, and in another aspect found Finchden like a shadow. If they fell into a rage and tried to hit it, it slid away, leaving them to beat their fists against air, against thin air, with nobody bruised except themselves; though sometimes they were 'hit back', if they looked like being too scared by the absence of reaction.

And so, having previously hated lessons, they began to clamour for them. Having previously refused to do anything, they demanded instruction in a craft - only to find when their wish was met that they could not absorb the lessons or persevere in the craft. Their pretensions to be grown up collapsed at every point. Many boys attached themselves to the staff. A staff is something to lean upon; they turned the staff at Finchden into their crutches. David, Sid, Neville, had the added advantage over a 'thing' like wireless, that they could be imagined as representing 'authority', and therefore blamed as well as clung to. That was what they were there for. It was no grief to the staff, since behind the blaming and clinging of the boys were smallness, fear and hungering for love; and if by clinging and blaming for a while they could be weaned, a day might come when they would neither cling nor blame.

All the members of Mr Lyward's staff except Mr D. and Mr Hannen had once been boys themselves at Finchden and knew what it had done for them; since then, they had themselves learnt how to do the same for others. Mr Hannen, who was away when I arrived, would be dealing with literature and the arts. Mr D. was occupied chiefly with teaching mathematics, and also with finance, Peter, among many other things, with the physical repairs of Finchden. The 'psychological side' or the 'treatment', were left principally - again apart from Mr Lyward - to David, Sid, and Neville.

One by no means trusting boy remarked of Sid, that 'you could not like him, you could only love him'. He came from East of Aldgate and had been a research chemist by profession. Heftily built, formerly an athlete, his feats of strength had become a legend; he had been able to lift two boys and hold them from the ground, one on either arm. An accident to his spine some years ago had made it impossible for him to walk without a stick, and he was seldom out of pain. His massive and still young face had the nobility of a Cockney Samson. He played the piano, the accordion, and other instruments. He was in remote or immediate control, as the occasion demanded, of the cooking. It was he who helped the boys who wanted to 'do wireless' and, if asked, taught or examined them in chemistry and physics.

The loss of his physical vigour may have deepened the resources of a spiritual and speculative nature already deep. The role into which he had moved at Finchden seemed to be that of one who reassured. The slowness of his movements seemed now to be in character. He took things quietly, humorously, and without hurry; and to many of the boys, especially the younger and more excitable, his mere appearance had the effect of a caress. He, like all the other members of the staff, knew himself thoroughly, and knew therefore how to prevent exploitation of his own particular strength, which lay in gentleness. He said of Mr Hannen: 'It is fine that he gives the boys cups of coffee. But can he also throw the coffee in their faces?' Sid could; Mr Hannen, as I later learnt, could not.

David Hobbs and Neville Guille moved about much more. An account of all the boys did at Finchden would also be an account of what David and Neville had to observe, cope with and respond to. David worked unobtrusively, and since he was about to be married I did not see much of him in such spare time as he had. He had an exceptionally sensitive and happy face. He deputised for Mr Lyward, when Mr Lyward went away, and appeared to have the same kind of intuition, which gave the illusion of being effortless. Neville was younger and more obviously keen, and his insight seemed to me to be more in the formative state, and less completely absorbed into the whole character. He was more visibly on the move. He got things going. He chivvied and organised the details of chores and cleaning-up, but not because he liked them. He relaxed by making models of celebrated buildings, playing Chopin, and defeating me at chess, and is accompanied through my memories by a trail of half-emptied coffee cups.

Sid belonged to Finchden; I could not have imagined him anywhere else. David and Neville also belonged, but it was possible to picture either of them as highly successful in another profession, although their work at Finchden was not a profession, but a vocation. No vision glimmered ahead of headmasterships at more famous places, or of fellowships in cloisters, or lecture tours abroad. Although Mr Lyward knew at least as much about the problems of adolescence as anyone else in the country, and had solved scores, he had never been invited to broadcast, and was unknown on television. None of the present staff had money of his own, and since there was no pension scheme, I did not see how they could ever afford to retire.

They seemed to have come to some kind of inward peace, which I could only feel to be there and was never put into words. The motives behind their work were unexpressed and taken for granted, permitting an easy humour in ordinary relations, which made working with them enjoyable, although it might have been tense. They had no secrets from one another, admitting mistakes frankly and hoarding no private triumphs.

Apart from having something of Mr Lyward's intuitive gift, David and Neville were also, under his influence rather than direct tuition, becoming highly trained in what may be called his method. In two particular respects, they contributed to the boys' 'disarmament'. First, if a boy did something objectionable, they did not automatically insist, as many other people might have insisted, on discussing it with him. This does not mean that they ignored it. They might come back to it in their own time - the time which in their opinion was most suitable for him, which might not appear for weeks.

Secondly, the staff at Finchden had learnt to discern the danger point of each boy in relation to themselves and to other boys, and managed not to set a match to it. Their own experience as boys certainly helped them. But the acute yet gentle insight to which gift and experience had been wrought came from training, in which observation of Mr Lyward played a principal part. Consequently the boys' feeling that they needed Finchden included a feeling that they needed the staff, which helped to keep all save the few exceptions harmless.

I came only gradually to see what made up the staff's daily round. But I could at once recognise their patience. Often they had to take quick decisions and act at once; far more often, to wait and do nothing. It is true they were not dealing with the dull-witted, as are devoted people in other places. Mr Lyward preferred to accept no one with an I.Q. below 115, although he did sometimes make an exception. Thus intelligence, wit and quickness made for a good deal of comedy and diversity, but also at times for cunning and a remarkable power to exhaust. The boys were impulsive, merry, in need, robust, trusting, intelligent, reflective; they were also cantankerous, importunate, bitter, ingratiating, pretentious, sly.

I had expected to find the staff room my one refuge. Here surely, at least after the boys had all gone to bed, peace would float down and conversation become possible about worlds beyond the heaven and hell of adolescence. Usually it was so. Then would come bad spells. Three, in mid-winter, decided to sleep out 'to see if we could stand it', and had to be brought in. One was sulking in the boiler room, another had planted himself on the stairs and would not go to his room until he had seen Mr Lyward. If a boy ran away, the headlights would wheel round the courtyard and off went David's car, or mine, or Neville's, down town, on to the London road, into highways and byways, until they caught or did not catch a figure with a rucksack, lurking for a last bus somewhere, or a lorry to hop, or merely waiting to be driven back to Finchden. And if no one was found, there were various people to be telephoned.

One hour and one hour only in the staffroom remained sacrosanct. From one o'clock until two in the afternoon Mr D. had his dinner. He ate it sitting with his back to the door, and his back proclaimed 'Keep Out'. If someone knocked, he did not answer. If someone came in, he did not look round. If someone dared to ask a question, he said, but less politely, 'Come back at two'. Had it been the Annunciation, he would have told the Angel to come back at two.

Only one boy occasionally kept late hours which made no one anxious. This was Richard, the blind boy I had heard mowing the lawn on my first night. After the others had gone to bed, he would range the house and play sonatas in the unlit hall. He played quietly and

quite well. I listened in the corridor. His playing sounded like a thread of reverie, as if he were musing to himself aloud, and his wakefulness was restful.

The suspending of moral judgments gave boys at Finchden the opportunity to feel their own way through unhindered. Respite came first, from the world in which they had been asked to lead the lives of others; then re-birth into their own.

EXAMINER: What about the words 'Train a child in the way he should go?
G.L.: The proper translation of the original is not that at all, but 'Train a child in his way', and then he will not depart from it. How true we find that to be - those of us who set out to help people to be themselves once again, to abandon their poses and their dependence upon externals (their snobberies in other words), their straining after meaningless perfection, their mean clinging to ideals to which they have to hold, only in order to count.
EXAMINER: One moment. Do you discount ideals?
G.L.: Not at all. But we have to realise that (as someone has said) they should be 'like stars to mariners', and not something we hold on to possessively, while missing the real contacts in life.

The community at Finchden recreated these real contacts. To keep them real, two conditions had to be maintained. One was a fairly ruthless quarantine. Mr Lyward had insight into the struggles of parents as well as of their children; he judged them as little, unless they themselves brandished standards of their own, under which he might think he had the right to judge them. But during the time their son was in his care he could not allow them to interfere with his methods, or warned them that, if they did, old wounds might be reopened. Security from outside interference-although not outside contacts-was the first condition he insisted on; 'unfairnesses', within that security, the second. He used the word deliberately. 'Fixed reactions to their behaviour must fail, because that would render it automatic and compulsive.' And so Flynn, on behalf of another boy, was allowed to go in search of a bear, and someone else refused permission to go to the cinema. Three boys came to Mr Lyward with the same request at the same time; one was given a 'yes', the other two a 'no', one of which was later changed to 'yes' after he had taken the 'no', and all these answers being given in such a way that all three boys should feel, however vaguely, that there was something more important behind 'yes' and 'no'. The response was never allowed to harden into a rule or habit or tradition; never into the 'premature crystallization'.

At first a boy, having misinterpreted his new-found external liberty and taking Finchden to be one of those places where you 'did as you liked', might be astonished when something was refused. 'No', as a matter of fact, was not said often. It might be weeks or months before one boy was given his first 'no', but the first day for another. An intelligent receptive boy might be left on a loose rein, which could be shortened gradually; a different nature might have to be brought to a halt at once. It depended also on what they were asking for. One boy was told at once he could not stay out late; leave once given, it would have been much harder to withdraw from him than from others. Freedom of this kind nourished some; others were not ready. The 'treatment' consisted of a sensing and a prolonged study of each individual boy's need, in the long run and at a particular moment and related always to the needs of the community.

Far more often than not Mr Lyward 'went with them twain', spending twice as much time on them, giving them twice as much caring as they had asked; this was one reason that Christmas, for example, went on so long.

The money was spent as far as possible on things the boys needed - in the sense in which 'need' is interpreted throughout this book, rather than on things either parents or authorities thought they ought to need. Finchden was a place of 'fittings' rather than of 'fixtures'. The use of money was as 'fluid' as was almost everything else, and fitted to different boys and different stages of each boy. It might appear, to a stranger, to have been 'wasted', as when all the budgerigars, whose cage had cost so much, one after another died of cold, and the boy for whom they had been bought lamented 'It'll be my turn next'; yet that money, if considered in the whole long context of that boy's story, was not wasted. A stock of timber, a lens, a volume on birds or some animal, might be and were of far more importance to a boy than a new pair of shoes; and for boys at the later stage, who had come to study seriously and easily, the money would be spent, as elsewhere, on set books and, not as everywhere, on certain special books.

The boys came quickly to give up their calculating or 'accounting' mood, and to accept and value these 'unfairnesses'. After a while they ceased to clamour, 'Jim went to London to-day for the third time in a month. Why shouldn't I go once?' They accepted differences of need, and therefore differences of response to different boys (and to themselves at different stages), which elsewhere would have been labelled 'unfair' in its full derogatory sense and resulted in an outcry.

'A boy disobeys. Nothing may happen. Would our prestige suffer? No. We are felt already to be both reliable and unreliable. They have met with many pleasant shocks, such as having unexpected meals brought them when they return from the cinema.... In this and similar ways, and by release from the idea of fairness (when, for example, the same boy received two or three times in succession more pocket money than another)... and by the knowledge that we can hardly send them away lightly, they have been startled into asking: "I can't trust the staff's reactions to be meticulously fair, but can I trust them?"'

Sooner or later, the answer from the boys' own hearts told them 'Yes', and for the great majority sooner. From that 'sooner, that heartfelt belief in this new 'family', came the development of their lives, since 'unfairness' helped to awaken that personal relationship without which weaning would have been impossible. It rendered the boys curious, enquiring. What was at the back of it all? At the back of it all they became aware not of a 'what', a theory, but of a 'who', a human being.

'The real secret of living with children lies in knowing how to be creative in taking away and in being "unfair" and haphazard, so that the gift shall never deny the children increasing awareness of the giver.... A gift by itself means nothing.'

The boys at Finchden became aware of Mr Lyward and of the staff, and so, gradually, of themselves and one another. 'It was one of my great joys,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'when I discovered how quickly they each sensed the dignity "unfairness" gave them.' In this process of 'going back to the beginning', they seemed to have been forced back, from what parents and others had told them, to discover and declare what they wanted for themselves. Through their wants they disclosed their needs. Parents said, 'You ought', until the boys came to say 'I think I ought', conflicting with - whether aloud or silent - 'I don't want'. At Finchden they might say, 'I must have', the expression of a blind instinctive want, altering later into an 'I want' uttered with joy and without involving hurt to other people. The staff meanwhile were saying, to themselves 'You need'.

The following conversation took place between Mr Lyward and a boy:

Boy: May I go and lie on my bed after lunch?

G.L.: Why?
Boy: The doctor at home says I ought to.
G. L.: Go and lie outside on some rugs.
Boy: But my mother says I ought to lie on my bed.
G. L.: You think you ought to?
Boy: My mother...
G.L.: Well, you can't.
Boy: Oh, but I want to.
G. L.: You want to?
Boy: Yes, I do so like lying on my bed.
G. L.: And that's why you want to go?
Boy: Yes.
G. L.: Go and do what you want, this time anyhow.

Mr Lyward commented on this conversation, 'I wish to suggest that in thus pressing him back from "he thinks I ought" to "I want" I am preparing the way for a deeper appreciation of the truth in science, art and religion; that he is not ready for any teaching of "subjects", and that when he is, it will be necessary to use them with a constant eye to that boy's further release from his early indebtedness to an over-anxious moralizing mother.'

Beyond their wants all the boys needed love. They needed to show and yet to hide their loneliness, fear and eagerness, but could not say so. They would ask for things when they really needed people. Some, especially the younger boys, had to be allowed to cling. 'Mr Lyward,' said Freddie, one of the few fourteen-year-olds and just arrived, 'your staff simply don't understand how badly I sleep. I must have a private room.'
The same day, he cried.
'It's difficult, isn't it?' said Sid.
'Do you really think so?' Freddie asked. 'I'm so happy I don't know what to do. Can I have a cigarette?' He asked why he had come to Finchden. 'Was it because Grandma was nasty? Is it because the staff are nice?'
Particular trouble was taken to care for him and make him feel at home, but unluckily a mishap occurred. He built a nest for a lame bird. An exceptionally difficult boy rushed by and said he'd knock it down, and did. Freddie cried. Mr Lyward passed with visitors.
'How terrible to cry in front of Mr Lyward,' Freddie said. 'Did he think I was a baby? I bet you've never cried?' 'Oh, haven t I?' said Sid.
'I bet you never have in front of Mr Lyward?' 'I bet you I have.'
The staff had cried ! - and were not ashamed of admitting it. The security Freddie had felt on his arrival, and for a moment lost, returned. Everything possible was done to fortify it. He followed Sid everywhere, and sat outside the lavatory door, waiting for him. He wanted to know everything. It was not really the answers he wanted, but someone to give answers he needed; someone just to be there.

All the boys asked questions.
'Euripides comes after Aeschylus, doesn't he?'
'If a woman is pregnant, and she'll die if she has a baby, ought she to have it?'
'Hey, who was Goering? Was he a Wop?'
Happy generation, that had to ask who Goering was.
'How do you become a ruddy journalist? I'd rather like to try it. That's if I don't go on the staff.'
And once, out of the blue:
'Dr Singe, can you tell me a cure for effeminacy?'
'I hope you didn't give him one,' said Mr Lyward.

I replied that I did not know one. Instead the boy had begun to talk about his earlier years. 'At school I took up smoking and drinking,' he had told me. 'So they expelled me, and I came here. Do you remember, the other day, I ran away?' I reminded him that I had stayed up past midnight looking for him.
'I was hiding in the garden the whole time,' he said. 'Do you know why I did it? I dared myself Ijust wanted to prove to myself that I could. It made me feel more manly.' And he talked of his childhood, explaining the need he had felt to get himself noticed, forgetting the supposed effeminacy. Often, in such conversations, a special immediate anxiety receded, giving place to deeper and more general things.

Late one evening Richard felt his way into my room, sat on the sofa and asked, in a voice that always seemed a little to mock his own words,
'I've come to ask you something about literature. I read somewhere lately about a man feeling as if veils had fallen from his eyes. Have you ever had that feeling?'
'Sometimes.'
'It seems rather peculiar,' he went on slowly and gravely. 'I just wondered if you knew what it meant.' I recalled a passage in the Acts of the Apostles, about the conversion of Saint Paul. 'And as it were scales fell from his eyes.' I said that I had always taken it to mean a spiritual rather than a physical change, clearing the spiritual vision of passions and material things. Richard listened carefully.
'Yes, I thought it meant something like that,' he said, and felt his way out again.

Grave questions, funny questions, questions that disguised an anxiety or came straight out with it, all were met; often not with a straight answer, but always in such a way that the boy's first trust was left intact, he did not feel inferior or snubbed, and his exploring continued. Some questions seemed to have a kind of heart-ache, which no crudeness or casualness or jauntiness could hide. Even in the older boys, you would have a glimpse, if you were brusque at the wrong moment, of something that had once been deeply harmed and was still not healed; and the boy would become temporarily hostile.

The staff went along with the boys, now leading, now leaving them to spurt on their own, picking them up, but most of all just waiting, and able to explain (to visitors or each other, not to the boys) why they were waiting. They had themselves run their own course at Finchden years before. They learnt the unwisdom of taking too much thought for the morrow, and the morrow had taken care of itself. 'A quickening of interest and an increased power of relaxed and effective concentration ... never fail to bring about an advance in educational standards'; and later examinations would be passed, jobs and openings would be found. Meanwhile Finchden said in various ways: "Do not be endlessly preoccupied with what he will be later. Give him his now".

Of the boys' needs, Mr Lyward wrote: 'There must be thousands of people in this country, who know that if a boy fails to achieve a spontaneous relationship with his father, then he is likely, short of a proper subsequent release from his childish values, to remain maimed for life.... But people are not moved, They pass by on the other side...'

Or, of a judge who had advocated whipping:
'It is of course very likely that the eighteen-year old labourer to whom this was said might have behaved differently if he had had the whipping. But he would certainly have been different, if he had not remained lonely and hungry for want of a proper understanding of his needs.'

Or, 'When a child says "Mine" of its parents, or a parent "Mine" of a child, in the particular tone of voice which indicates security, we know that the emphasis placed upon "mine" is not a sign of possessiveness, but of something ineffable. ... I have recently been

trying to help two young men who as children were not able to say that with any proper abandon. As far as they know, all they want now is "things", especially money. They dare not yet be called upon to discover their real need because, being unable to accept what is now available, they would suffer unbearably.'

For a time, the boys' suffering was done by others. The first meaning of 'respite' is given as 'a putting-off of that which is appointed'. The staff could not be 'disappointed', if the boys grew into manhood slowly and erratically, since the staff were there not to force but help in the weaning of them. Back-slidings were expected. Each boy sooner or later stole, though it might not be money, but pity or power. But for Finchden, each might have continued to do so. Riff spoke for many when, after a few weeks, he said, 'I feel a person, not a pawn'.

Sometimes Mr Lyward invited me to be present at interviews. They were an exhilarating and often a moving experience. But they did not play a conspicuous part in the life of this community, and months might pass before he saw a boy alone. During the early thirties, while he was still feeling his way, deep analysis and individual examination had played a much larger part in his treatment. But the conditions which had grown up at Finchden had advantages over the hospital or psychiatrist's consulting room. People who live with their 'patients', year in and year out, informally, are likely to learn more about them than those who only see them once or twice a week. The skilled listener and evoker can do a great deal to unseal the gnawing secrets. But at Finchden they dissolved more gradually as part of an accompanying growth. As Mr Lyward commented: 'The key to all deeper insight, as the analyst knows, is not technical proficiency, but love that knows something of the interpretation of one personality by another.'

At Finchden time seemed infinite. The lights which played upon the boys, and the mirrors of the rooms through which they moved, showed them in all planes and phases. They revealed themselves in relation to forty other boys, each quite unlike the other. For example, when cooking. They took this in rotation as soon as Sid - who ordered the food - felt that it could be trusted to them. One boy said: 'I want to learn to cook, because I want to be a bachelor, not for anyone else. I will cook for others if I have to, but only here.' He squared his muscles and scrounged for recognition of himself. After a time he forgot his original reasons for cooking, and began to enjoy it; about the same time he announced that he had fallen in love.

Another boy could not allow a normal meal to emerge. It had to be Chilean or Chinese, anything but British. Expecting him always to be late, Sid got everything ready, so that the boy could administer a flourish at the end. Sometimes the boy arrived for the first part, and then went away, leaving Sid to finish and inventing an excuse later. After a while he reached a point where he could complete nearly the whole meal, and Sid no longer had to arrange the ingredients; this happened about the time when the same boy was ceasing to come in so late at night.

Nigs Walker liked to be the maître d'hotel. He popped up behind visitors with a plate of bacon and eggs and a deep bow, and walked about with an air of 'This is what my men have done'. On the days he was to cook, older boys, who had passed that stage and no longer hungered for kudos, came to the kitchen and prepared the meal to a point at which Nigs could finish.

Mr Lyward once told a boy he could have a special menu for a week if he would take the trouble to write it out each day; but after two days the boy could not be bothered.

The kitchen was not a consulting room, nor Sid a psychiatrist. Yet all of this was revealing, and supplemented each day by other inactively observed activities. With no routine in which to take cover, each boy stood in the relentless open. Of this, at moments, they became sharply aware, but most of the time they did not bother. Their own rhythm slipped more or less easily into the rhythm of the community, and one soon saw where it jarred and where it harmonised.

The tormentedness, which in one boy took the form of suggesting that Mr Lyward had a microphone in the fireplace, was extremely rare. One other boy for a time believed that all their letters were steamed open. One County Council did ask Mr Lyward to read a boy's mail before giving it to him, because they wished to discover the names of his adult leaders-astray and hand them to the police. Mr Lyward refused. Had he consented even in this one instance, a fatal doubt would have been sown, an essential trust made suspect. None of the boys knew my role; the reporter-intruder, who had arrived to write a book. As far as they were concerned I was on the staff.

The regular staff did not think of themselves as 'watching' the boys. Once a boy had arrived they seldom, if ever, looked at his file. They had little time for notes. Whatever entered their memories seemed to pass under a spell which kept it there. Even at night their 'material' continued to accumulate. They did not have to ask the boys for dreams. The boys brought dreams of their own accord, at random.

'Hey, Neville, know what I dreamed the other night? I was in a room, and there was another room next door, and I had to get into it. And I couldn't. But there was a hole in the wall, see, and in the same room as me there was a man about the tenth as big as me. So I took the little **** to bits and shoved him through.' A boy might every now and then bring a dream in writing, or one of the staff might write it down. Mr Lyward might interpret it as a kind of cartoon, or ask the boys to interpret it, and so a discussion might begin. Or else it was forgotten.

'Casualness is almost my keyword,' Mr Lyward once wrote. Casual disclosings, casual counsellings, gradual casual growth, sometimes an inner crisis exploding casually - and often a casual departure.

CHAPTER FIVE

I BEGAN to keep out of my room and see rather less of those boys who, to start with, had converged upon me and insisted upon my eating at the same table. They were all intelligent and good company, but hangers-on. Flynn might have some project for a compass march, or Riff wanted to tell me how he had met the Aga Khan; and I was quite ready to prove that I could also read a compass and had met the Aga Khan. This passed the time of day, but was not the reason I had come. I had felt I was allowing myself to be flattered into the most subtle conspiracy to form a clique. Flynn more or less admitted it:

'I'm going to ask you something tricky,' he said. 'You don't have to answer.
'What is it?'
'Suppose you went for a walk one night and went into the woods, and found Geoff and me there making a camp. What would you do?'
'Try to get you back, I suppose.'
'What else? Would you tell Mr Lyward?' He watched me carefully. It became important to him, but much more to me, what I should answer.
'Yes,' I said, 'I should tell Mr Lyward.'
Flynn looked disappointed.
'H'm,' he said, 'I've lost a bet. You'll have to watch out, all the same. Or you'll get a group round you.'
I replied I would try to avoid it.
'Oh, you may not do it,' he went on. 'It's not you I'm thinking of! It's us.'
He gave me a side-look under his eyebrows, and repeated with relish, rubbing his hands: 'So watch it!'
Flynn had a varied and entertaining technique for getting cigarettes. He started by asking for a puff; and worked up; or, after offering to pay, suggested a cigarette as a loan, promising to pay me back on Friday. Or:
'Dr Singe, do you want me to be cured?'
'I suppose so.
'Then give me a fag.'
'How would that cure you?'
'It'd be psychologically good for me. I'm frustrated, see. Now if you give me a fag, that'll get rid of my frustrations.'
'And if I don't?'
'You will. You'll see.'
Once after long cajoling I gave in. He took the cigarette and added, 'Weak!'; it was some time before he got another.

He shared a shack on the edge of the football field with Geoff Miller, a boy whom he depended on while apparently succouring. They had been at the same place together before coming to Finchden. At Finchden they had been kept apart until, just before my arrival, Mr Lyward, with a definite purpose, had decided to try them together. Cigarettes mattered more to them, or at all events to Flynn, than to any other boy, and if something went wrong or they had had a row they would share their last to calm themselves down. They sold cigarettes to other boys; also empty jam-jars, which did not belong to them, for which they charged 1/6d.; also ideas, for which they charged sixpence each. They usually managed to collect three times as much tobacco a week as anyone else, and kept their capital hidden in the back of a book; at one time it was as much as five pounds.

Tolstoy begins Anna Karenina: 'All happy families are the same. Unhappy families are unhappy in different ways.' Finchden Manor had the characteristics of a happy family anywhere. It is a convenient word to illustrate those characteristics, but one should not

press the resemblance; fifty people - none of whom is related by blood, or has shared any part of the other's childhood - are not a family.

But, like a happy family, this community did seem to have existed always, and to be unimaginable at an end. Finchden Manor was the old home and only war drove the family away. Afterwards the natural thing was to return as soon as possible. 'We, the undersigned,' the boys wrote, in Shropshire, their second wartime migration, 'want to return to Finchden Manor, so long as we have light, water, and a roof, building licences or no building licences.' Finchden was empty only once again, on the night of June 1, 1951, when its coming-of-age was celebrated in London.

A number of older boys at Finchden had been there several years. Some, still struggling with themselves, were of little help to the younger boys. Several, now at the stage of working for examinations, or about to take up jobs, were given a position almost on the staff; but not at all like prefects. They seemed about to cross a frontier. Helped to this point, the next stage of their growth would come through a deeper sensing of relations between boys and staff. They came not only to games or work more easily than before, but also to people. Mr Lyward would invite them to talk to a boy arrived for an interview, who might be the same age as themselves. By a word or two, he could indicate the new boy's particular need, and they responded. These older boys at Finchden Manor had a deeper understanding of people than most boys at their age elsewhere. They were likely, too, to feel a special understanding for younger boys now approaching the same stages they themsleves had passed through. This humanity, renewed each year as boys attained it and filled the places of others before them, was part of that 'strength of the community', which made impossible any organised bullying or forming of gangs.

Of course there were boys who did try to bully now and then. There were boys who stole from the others, or were conspicuous for their crude language. But they could not dominate the community, and could not impress or frighten any other boy for long. It was not only the staff who knew the fear and need to appear grown up from which bullying or swearing might spring: the other boys knew too. It might, in one or two instances be necessary to send an exceptionally disturbing boy away. But, in general, bullying, stealing, swearing, fell away as the need to bully, steal or swear, diminished.

Some boys tried to take Finchden Manor by storm at once. One of them was a boy deprived of love. He had wrenched attention to himself in the usual ways, and been found out. Sent to Finchden, he played for it again, and on his first evening succeeded in dominating a whole room by bravado. It shook him to find that the conquest did not last, and had not really been a conquest. He was not deliberately rebuffed, but the others did not respond.

At their different stages, the boys were aware of the deeper impulses behind the actions a newcomer might flaunt on the surface. They sensed fear at the root of any kind of compulsion to 'show off'. Boastful deeds, intended to provoke awe, were met with condolence, as if, at the end of a dictator's tirade, the audience were to rise silently, pat his hand, and murmur: 'We're sorry for you.' The audience at Finchden did not need to be told how the new boy had suffered in the past. They only knew that he had. They all had. Otherwise they would not be there.

One day there was to be a dance. The boys had borrowed some trellises belonging to Nigs Walker, as a foundation for the décor. Someone annoyed him, and he demanded his trellises back, which meant - as he knew it meant - no décor. The dance was to start in a few hours. Sid came in, and found the boys helpless.

'Take the whole thing down,' he told them. He thought he knew what would happen, and it did. Nigs broke the trellises to bits and refused to cook. Sid became extremely unpopular. The boys stood about accusing the staff of 'giving in again to Nigs'. Nigs stood outside sulking, isolated. After a while the boys came up to Sid, and one said:
'We thought you were hitting at us. Nigs is the one who's suffered.'
They all looked at Nigs, until one went over and asked him to help them with the lights, and so, although the trellises were destroyed, he was brought in again to help with something different. The boys did this, not Sid. They often seemed to understand that when one of them, in sulks or rage, destroyed property, he destroyed something within himself A few boys showed their 'independence' by running away. They were sent back from afar, or found in Tenterden. No penalties. No reproof. Nothing might be said at all, or the member of the staff who had driven the boy back, late at night, might get him a hot meal. It was not independence the boy had shown, but dependence.Gently, casually, he might be drawn into the family at Finchden, accept love, and remain.

Often this 'drawing in' just happened, as a beggar is drawn to a fire. Boys who agreed to stay, but with a blank and hostile condescension, which proclaimed 'Go ahead and cure us. We're not going to help', were drawn into a game of cards, or suddenly had to smile. It might be at a concert, or at someone playing with the monkey, or during a discussion - and the game of cards, or smile, might be a beginning, even though they afterwards went back to scowls. Some boys accepted Finchden from despair, saying to themselves that this was their last hope. Some revelled in it; one remembered sitting on his bed and thinking what a joy it was to wear a dirty shirt. The feeling that had come to these boys at their first interview - 'This is it' - never left them. They found there all that had been missing, and gave all that they had been unable to give, within their own family.

Finchden also had the hospitality of a happy family. When you said goodbye you were asked to return. When you returned you were welcomed. A place was kept for you, and food appeared. Nothing seemed to have changed. A few new boys might have arrived; you did not notice them at first, because they were already behaving as if they had been there for months. You recognised a boy you had seen on your previous visit, at his first interview, strained and unhappy; already he looked relaxed and younger. Sometimes there would be a boy who sat by himself and could not yet join in. An old member of Finchden might be at supper. Perhaps he had brought his girl, or you would see him wandering about on his own, remembering places, incidents, people, Mr Knox. So it could be at any ordinary school. Here the memories were more poignant; memories not only of youth, but of thankfulness, transformation.

Visitors were sometimes nervous of coming to the boys' meals, but had no need to be. If a stranger wanted to ask questions, many of the boys could give at least as good an impression of Finchden as anyone else. They were direct and unpretentious, and talked about themselves easily, on the level of ordinary conversation. Naturally, they championed the place. If a visitor were skeptical, they suggested he should stay there for a few days and live among them. Once half-a-dozen young psychiatrists arrived and spent an hour or two in the dining-hall, each amongst a group of boys. The boy who praised Finchden most highly was one who was doing his utmost to leave. Nearly all the boys understood they were learning something they would find in few other places. They no longer thought of themselves as odd or guilty or to be pitied, and wanted to describe Finchden because they thought it worth describing, and were proud of it.

They had visits from head-masters, social workers, doctors, probation officers, magistrates, men and women. The boys could quickly recognize whether strangers had or had not an open mind. Consequently, even in an hour or two, a visitor could often feel a touch of those intimate challenges to rigid attitudes which Finchden presented to the

boys. It was sometimes the cleverest visitors who seemed to be the most closed. But the boys took to someone like the Educational Officer who asked 'Do you fellows ever cry?', and on being told 'Yes', said: 'You're lucky. It was a long time before I could.' They took less to a tough looking but vain Australian, who lectured them on I.Q.s. After they had begun to call him the Queen of Sheba, he came to Mr Lyward, said 'They don't like me,' and burst into tears. A person arrived, known ever afterwards as Educated Jones. He picked on two of the most intellectual boys and took them, without Mr Lyward's knowledge, to the local pub, where he bored and annoyed them with his views on complexes and inhibitions. Unwisely returning to interrogate the rest, he was all but thrown into the pond.

The boys liked an old lady called Mrs Hallam, grandmother of a boy who later came to Finchden for years. Her daughter, the boy's mother, had paid a brief visit and disapproved. Mrs Hallam, an intelligent dowager aged seventy, determined to see for herself. She tramped all over the place, had long talks, enjoyed and admired. 'I suppose she understood,' said one boy, 'because at her age she has no axes to grind.' Children felt at their ease at Finchden. One boy taught a little girl visitor pottery. A boy of twelve came for a few weeks before going to public school, because his mother wanted him to experience Finchden's depth and ease; he could hardly be persuaded to to leave. A visiting headmaster's child took off his clothes and bathed happily in the pond; but his parents stayed suspicious.

The boys had many friends in the neighbourhood, and no irreconcilable enemies. Any tradesman who saw them week in week out was bound to observe the alterations in them. Mr Bolton, who owned the sweetshop, would keep an eye on certain boys, perhaps for a long while: but a time came when - for most - he could take the eye away. Finchden had a good and much-loved neighbour in Colonel Cosens, who owned the adjoining orchard and took the swill from the kitchen for his hens. He and his daughter had long been friends of Mr and Mrs Lyward and the boys, and came to all their shows, pantomimes, concerts and parties. Now and then there would be big occasions, such as the play Fitzy produced and later took on tour. The hall would then be packed to the walls. The boys were hosts. They had good manners, worn as easily as their good suits, and completely without their tongues in their cheeks. This often surprised visitors. But why? It was 'the result of years of letting be, during which the boys have grown to feel that they could not buy approbation ... and that nobody will attempt to buy them either.' They had also a kind of chivalry towards one another.

Although concerts given by people outside were rare, Mr Lyward once invited the local string quartet. One or two guests sat in front in the home-made chairs, with the boys all round. The monkey perched in one boy's lap, a dog, a cat, a hamster in somebody else's, and the log-fire blazed. In an interval between Schubert and Schumann, Richard rose without a word, felt his way between the musicians to the piano and played Chopin. No one was embarrassed, or thought it strange. When my wife went later to speak to Richard, two boys at once joined her, in case she did not know he was blind. Another night Fitzy was given a farewell present, in a hall crowded with old members of Finchden, parents, and friends from Tenterden. The presentation was made after a revue, which ended with a scene from Hamlet, and the boys chose Tubby John as their spokesman. Aged nineteen, he was an amateur of heraldry, and weighed forty stone. They helped him on to the stage, where he made his speech surrounded by the Danish court in jewels and slashed hose.

It is within a corner of this quiet picture that one should place the troubles - the burning of a barn, a theft, a dog, supposed to be tied up, left loose and killing chickens. Every so often something of this kind happened, just as every so often some boy ran away. These events were not the atmosphere; like Flynn, they were the atmospherics. Ordinary people

in the neighbourhood did not judge the boys. The police showed understanding, never came to the house without telephoning - and never came at all unless they had to. When they did I used to have an impression as if all the windows had been shut, or someone were walking over a grave. When the police had gone everything seemed to open up again. While I was at Finchden they only came about five times.

The happiest families have sorrows; and the most healing communities have those they cannot heal. No true account of Finchden Manor could leave out those boys the community either could not help or could only help a little. How sick some were will become clear from the following extract from a diary by one of the staff concerning a boy called Peter Fell.

'On Wednesday afternoon I saw him in the hall, and he was crying. He said he was not unhappy. The reason for crying was that he was so happy to realise he was cured and could lead a normal life again. His chore for that day was washing supper dishes. This job, which normally takes fifteen minutes, took him an hour and three-quarters. Next day, after playing the piano, he came to me and said: "Shake me by the hand." I did so. "You may now say," he continued, "that you have shaken hands with the second Mozart, the next genius." He burst into tears, and ran upstairs.... Later he started singing. He sang all night ...'.

One boy, who went into a mental home after a week or two, did damage to Finchden costing a large sum, and disturbed the others by talking about his experiences in mental hospitals. He had an obsession that he could cure everyone. Another arrived with over thirty convictions. He committed two offences outside Finchden almost at once, which were quashed in the hope that he might remain there. He had an obsessive hatred of the police, stole a car, drove at seventy miles an hour, and tried to knife the policeman who arrested him. He gave no trouble as long as he remained within the grounds of Finchden, and the other boys were never frightened by him. He could only be persuaded to go to the police station on condition one of the staff went too. He had a warm affection for Neville, and has kept up a cheerful correspondence with Finchden from a State Institute.

Such boys - and the rest were similar - were unlikely even to have been considered at any other place without warders or resident doctors. One proved so disturbing that after several exhausting months both staff and boys asked for his removal. 'When he walks in, all the laughs become forced, and nobody dares say anything. He teases people in a way that really hurts them, and says he has only just started. If two boys are playing he has to spoil their game, he terrifies the little boys and threw one of them out of a car. He steals from shops, pushes people off the pavement, uses obscene language to girls in the town, and taunts the Jewish boys.' Every member of Finchden to whom I mentioned his name said that he was the most disturbing person they had ever met.

Just over ten percent of the boys who came to Finchden Manor remained less than six months. About a quarter of these ran away and for various reasons could not be brought back. Jim Learoyd stayed two weeks of May, 1947. There was a dance in the hall and all the doors in Mr and Mrs Lyward's part of the house were left open for the guests from Tenterden. Jim Learoyd slipped into Mr Lyward's study, pocketed a large sum lying in an unlocked drawer, and vanished. He was found a fortnight later in London, with only a quarter of the money left. The law took its course, and he could not come back, though Mr Lyward would have taken him. The remainder of these boys were taken away by parents or guardians before they had been allowed to give Finchden a fair trial.

The remaining ninety percent or so stayed at least six months. Some stayed less than a year, a few for six years or more. It cost Mr Lyward an effort to send any boy away, but

about seven others had to go because they were too disquieting to the other boys, the townsfolk or the neighbours. One or two of these stories illustrate the limits of 'maladjustment', as distinct from mental sickness in the strict sense, beyond which Finchden could not go.

Simon Parker was cruel to small animals. He refused to stop going for walks on a hill the Army used for training with live bombs. It was also fairly common for Simon to avoid meals, having sources of income from home which enabled him to feed outside Finchden. Simon was also unique in that he used to insult boys of 'lower social status', which 'is resented,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'by boys who have been to public schools, on behalf of those who have not.' He went about boasting: 'I refuse to recognise the group', and provoked bigger boys by 'borrowing' their property and offering money in compensation. 'I fear violence beyond the ordinary school-boy scuffles,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'if Simon's insults and general behaviour lead the others to retort, and he then defends himself by kicking and biting.' When the boy understood that he was to go 'into the world', he became overwrought and burst into tears. Other boys consoled him and helped him to pack, and Mr Lyward's letter to the father said that Simon 'had left with everybody's good wishes. I hope that the memory of the boys' kindnesses will remain, in spite of what he may say, and that he will continue to look on me as a friend. Our best contribution is to write him a short friendly letter now and then, and let him know that he can visit us if he wants'. Mr Lyward was asked a year later to take Simon back, but could not.

How did the mentally sick boys ever find their way to Finchden Manor? One Mr Lyward took to save from a remand home - 'perhaps a mistake?' he noted. Of another he wrote that 'the hopes of those who recommend such boys to us are not always based on any very sound knowledge of their case'. In several instances it was through Finchden's efforts on a boy's behalf that room was found for him in hospital. That these boys were sent at all is a measure of the hopes placed in Mr Lyward, and of the extreme cases he has been ready to attempt.

I was in the dining room one evening. Lights were out, and I meant to go to bed. David passed along the corridor with a boy I had never seen. I supposed it was a new arrival, except that he looked unusually ragged and furtive. Soon David returned, and told me that this had been a boy called Walter Finch. He came to Finchden the 'complete institution child'. Soon after his arrival neighbours had invited him into their home, thereby showing him something Mr Lyward was holding back. He had run away, then he had been in a hospital, and later in a job in London, from which he had suddenly disappeared. For weeks nothing had been heard of him. According to one rumour, he had stolen something; according to another, he had been living in the neighbourhood and been seen in Tenterden Church.

The truth was that he had not been living anywhere. There was a lorry parked in the drive which had been used to take the play on tour and now was used for collecting rations. It turned out that he had been sleeping there, creeping into it after lights out and leaving before anyone was awake. Unable to face any of his former companions, he had slept there for a week; during the day he wandered. David said the police would be coming for Finch in the morning. The boy's sister had charged him with stealing, and the charge could not be dropped. David had found him, fed him, and made him welcome. While he was telling me the story, I felt something of the suffering David himself must go through on such occasions, and something of what Mr Lyward had shouldered from the beginning. Some could be saved, others perhaps could not. In Finch's case, the law had now been invoked, the machinery set in motion, and all that could come from Finchden was intercession. Mr Lyward would send David to court, where he would give evidence of the boy's sickness and plead for treatment rather than punishment. He would ask for

one of the gentler remand homes, and the rest would lie with magistrates, wardens, police.

The boy slept in my room. He had my bed, and I pulled the couch across the door and lay awake. On David's instructions, I had removed everything with which Finch might have harmed himself, but he lay talking about his friends. He liked the piano. Was it still in tune? Did Riff still play the Boogie Woogies? Was there to be another concert? He came to breakfast in the morning, and the others treated him as if he had been on holiday. Whatever curiosity anyone may have felt, no one showed. Riff surrendered the piano, and Finch sat down and played the Moonlight Sonata. Neville came to the door while he was playing and beckoned to me. The police had come, and Finch went away with them. Riff went back to the piano and everything in the hall continued as before.

A little while later, David had a letter on yellow paper, from the boys' prison at Wormwood Scrubs. 'I know this is rather a sordid address,' Finch wrote, 'but there is nothing I can do about that. Well, I thank you and all the staff for all they have done for me.' He was sorry to have been so much trouble, and said that the short time he had spent at Finchden had been the happiest in his life.

A small group stayed well over a year, and either left 'on their own judgment' or were withdrawn by parents strongly against Mr Lyward's advice. The great majority regretted it. A few went to prison or to a mental home. Some begged to come back; of these Mr Lyward was able to take back a few. One, taken away, sent back, then taken away again, wrote: 'It is no go ... I long to be at Finchden', and when he came on a visit, could not say good-bye. As I studied on in the oak-room, I heard many cries from the heart, while music came from upstairs and the boys shouted in the garden.

All those around me would remain but two or three. At Mr Lyward's suggestion Arthur Ney began to cook. 'I was a gibbering wreck after the first try-out,' said Sid, laughing. The boy showed willingness, but the basic things had not occurred to him. For example, that the oven had to be hot, or that a pan put into a hot oven to heat the fat for a batter pudding would be hot too. He took it out with his bare hands. He did not drop it, or appear to blister, but gazed at it in surprise, as if this were his first real contact with worldly things. Later he had to drain the potatoes. Sid heard a dull thud, and saw them all on the floor. Arthur had taken the boiling saucepan out bodily, instead of by the handles. At the end of the day he said: 'I don't think I was so hot, but the food was,' and grinned. He continued sitting aloof, but now and then a smile broke through, making his morose face young.

About another boy, Mr Lyward wrote: 'He finds excuse after excuse for leaving his fellows and invading me in my private sanctum. I can't allow this robbery on his part to continue unchecked. But I must recognise him, behind it, for the small lonely thing he is. I must watch, for instance, that he is not compelled by his feelings of guilt and his lovehunger, nor by anybody else's blindness, into undertaking a heavy or even average programme of schoolwork. Challenging has its place, but so has the feeding which should precede it.'

Nigs Walker was a voracious 'feeder'. At times one had happy glimpses of a child, unhampered by some inner compulsion to prove himself adult. I remember how he ran under Mr Lyward's window, tilting a long pole and wearing a biscuit tin for crusader's helmet. At a dance he was the child at a party, excitedly teaching Mr Lyward the St Bernard's Waltz and the Dashing White Sergeant. After a year something still kept him at Finchden, although he had 'beaten the Sussex County Council single-handed', and had never stayed anywhere else more than a few weeks. He might announce that he was

going and still be there next morning, or put on his mackintosh and go. The same with Flynn - except that Flynn would have despised a mackintosh.

Flynn was Irish, but his people lived in North London. He was the youngest of a large family and at a very early age had been adopted by a well-to-do benevolent woman who lived in the country. When he first came to Finchden, a year before, he had been impossible. He boasted that he knew all the ropes and ran away repeatedly. One of his ideas was to go to Austria and be schooled on the famous Lippizaner horses. He knew a certain amount about the theory of haute école, and had compiled from learned works an enormous genealogical chart, showing the family tree of the horse. He had also read all the books of W. H. Hudson and dreamed of thumbing his way to South America. When Mr Lyward had allowed him to go on two hikes to distant counties, he had returned from both. But he still talked every day of leaving. 'The outdoor neurotics are often the most difficult,' Mr Lyward once said. 'You can't communicate with them, because they're simply not there.'

Out of the forty boys at Finchden while I was there, only three or four were permanently restive. The remainder had put their trust in Mr Lyward. These boys were willing to leave the decision, when they should go, to him. They were the community, stable, ever altering, and light of heart. They used technical terms as jokes. Mr Lyward once said that 'you can talk to them about themselves as a doctor talks to his students about his patients, and they don't think of the subject as themselves', but they did not get the technical terms from him. They did sketches like the following:

Enter a Boy disguised as Mr Lyward. To him enter a Boy to be interviewed.

G. L.: And what can we do for you, my boy?
Boy: Please ... I want to come to Finchden.
G. L.: And what is the matter with you, my boy?
Boy: I've got schizophrenia. (Bursts into tears.)
G. L.: There, there, my boy. (Pats Boy vaguely on head.) You shall come to us.
Boy: Oh, thank you, sir! What shall I bring?
G. L.: Bring? Bring nothing.
Boy: Nothing, sir?
G. L.: Well - ah - my boy - bring a toothbrush. And - ah - if you have one, bring a dream.

That 'ritual' hour in the Guildables room was the time at which the boys were together. Only two or three were regularly missing and sooner or later the absent phase would end. Nobody will be surprised that in such a community the externals of social and financial status appeared little. All the boys had the same basic pocket money, all wore alternately the same good or torn clothes. I have no memory at all of social bitterness at Finchden, although one or two boys came from among the richest in the land, four or five from among the poorest.

The boys' awakening relationship with their fellows was of the utmost importance, and is difficult to describe. Part of the secret of Mr Lyward's psychotherapy was the contact of each one, not merely with Mr Lyward or with the staff, but with the group. One reason that he now undertook far less interviewing than before was because the group had shown him how great a healing effect it could produce of its own; the interviews themselves now turned often around current happenings at Finchden, and their significance in terms of general problems, rather than around the past of the boy being interviewed.

'A balance was struck between each boy's interests as an individual and as a member of the group'. This balance may have been claimed by every community that ever existed,

and has certainly been advocated by innumerable teachers and preachers. At Finchden it was neither imposed as a rule, nor advanced as a precept. It was simply developed as part of the recommencing of a boy's whole life. Preparations for a dance, for a pantomime, or for Christmas, apart from all the daily co-operation involved in cooking or games or the evening hour in the Guildables Room, enabled boys, who hitherto had been unable to form a living relationship with even one person, almost effortlessly to achieve it with twenty or more, though it might be only for a short time and mark no more than a beginning.

This awakening was part of their rehabilitation, their 'cure'. On the educational side - although the two are not really to be separated - the group worked equally as a casual and all-important agent. Discussions sprang up repeatedly, impromptu. One began in the middle of a pantomime rehearsal. Mr Lyward, stopping the actors, asked whether they preferred a play to be enacted all in one place or to range through several places. The cast gathered round, other boys joined in, and soon he was telling them about the dramatic unities, and Dr Johnson on Shakespeare, and Sir Philip Sidney. Another discussion started somehow at tea, during which Mr Lyward fetched two books and talked about the constitutional significance of the old forest laws. Once the boys were talking about the Bible. Six of them went to their rooms and brought down six different Bibles. Mr Lyward explained why the versions were different. The boys fell silent, listening. 'It's when they're quiet,' he said afterwards, 'that you feel that they're little.' Examinations are usually forgotten afterwards; so is the kind of work done merely to pass examinations. These group discussions, unorganised, at random, remembered, were followed up as links in a continuous story.

'This is a community with a personality,' Mr Lyward once wrote to a County Education officer. One boy said to Mr Lyward, 'You treat us as if we were grown-up', meaning 'as persons'. Finchden Manor was therefore something both more and less than a family. No family can prepare a child for the world without yielding him to some other group, be it community or school. No other group can wholly take the place of a family. The analogy with a family is indeed best confined to illustrating those characteristics - of hospitality, cheerfulness, warmth, and sanity - Finchden shared with happy families anywhere.

Many boys went home at Christmas; some might not. Those who stayed had all the festivities one would expect. Mrs Lyward sent about two hundred cards to former boys and friends of Finchden. At such a time the sense of family was more deeply felt, maybe, than at others; but once you had grown conscious of it, that sense was as likely to strike you unexpectedly as on a set occasion. Since nearly all that was missing in the boys' childhood homes had been re-created, it seems true to say that on returning to their own hearth (or going on to marriage) the boys took with them embers from the hearth at Finchden.

CHAPTER SIX

MR LYWARD was a man with certain exceptional gifts and a number of distinguished accomplishments. His uncommonly varied experience of teaching extended over more than forty years. He was well-known as a lecturer, writer of pamphlets, and speaker at public conferences. In his other role he was (technically speaking) a lay psychotherapist, in the sense that he did not hold a medical degree. But most psychiatrists would have considered him to be highly skilled, highly trained, and his work as arduous and responsible as their own. He had woven the work of teacher and healer so closely together that the two cannot really be separated. Education, in the sense in which he used the word, meant a marriage of both roles.

Mr Lyward came from London. He suffered from ill-health, domestic disturbances, and from poverty; and at eighteen began to teach for £40 a year, at a nondescript private school. He had a fine bass voice and won a choral studentship to St John's College, Cambridge, where he took a second in History. He taught at various schools, and while still a young man was shortlisted for the headmastership of a large grammar school. In his late twenties he went to Glenalmond, where he took charge of the sixth forms and was responsible for English and history throughout the school. The Warden of Glenalmond, Canon F. W. Matheson, wrote of him as 'a born teacher'. He was invited, in addition to his sixth form work, to start and take charge of a house for junior boys. In much that he learnt and initiated then he was preparing his way what he was later to do at greater depth at Finchden. After strenuous years at Glenalmond he had a breakdown and went away to recover.

'I had by that time an inside knowledge of a variety of elementary and secondary schools and fifteen years' teaching experience.... But teaching can be a way of avoiding growing pains. I... at last found myself sufficiently released from the fear of plunging out, to turn my back upon a too cloistered safety.' Chance had put him in touch with two or three doctors looking for someone to treat and coach the kind of public school boy who either could not or would not fit. These boys had nowhere to go and it was suggested that Mr Lyward might be able to help them.

He went to live at Guildables, a Kent farmhouse owned by a friend, and the first boys shared the farm-work. He began with two, and made a success of them. In a letter written early in 1931 he described his work: 'This place is the result of my determination, when a house-master at a public school, that those boys who were sent away for delinquency, or for obvious mental sickness, should have a chance of being put right, instead of being left to the further mercy of their inward conflicts and compulsions. This work here has more than justified my contention that the boy who was generally left to "go to seed" could, with the right help at the critical moment, turn into a very useful and happy member of society. There is no difference in the emotional condition of any of them. They are all cases of arrested feeling development. The community life here is arranged so as to give them confidence in life and one another, the while they are severally going through analysis, or whatever I feel is likely to help them best towards a life in which their thoughts and feelings will diverge less widely than they did when the boy came to me. Before anybody has been here very long, he has come to accept without resentment the fact that, like many people who never come here, he has failed to grow up. The fact that the boys do all accept it makes life easier for each of them than before, where there was need for camouflage. I am, as it were, the house-master. But, while treating them all as grown- ups, I know them personally as small boys, who need encouragement and fatherliness and firmness in order to grow out of their frightened and therefore self-loving state of mind.'

Mr Lyward became more widely known in this new role. A celebrated psychiatrist wrote at that time: 'I have seen him catch hold of and enthuse a boy who is a scholastic failure, in a way little short of miraculous. He has an insight into the adolescent mind which is unsurpassed in my experience of school-masters.' Mr Lyward's 'practice' came to include girls, women and grown men. The numbers of boys went up rapidly to twelve, then twenty. The farmhouse became too small and unsuitable, and in 1935 he and Mrs Lyward discovered Finchden. They passed through the wicket-gate on the Tenterden-Appledore road on a day in high summer. The grass, parched and brown with sun, was waving waist-high. Bees and dragon-flies swarmed everywhere, roses sprawled over the half-hidden brick, and the way to the house was thick with briars.

They bought it on mortgage and gradually reclaimed it from the wilderness. By the beginning of the war they had nearly forty boys. They lived through the summer of 1940 in a shored-up cellar, on the direct route of the German bombers, while the Battle of Britain was fought overhead. The house was not hit, but the Army took it over at three hours' notice, for soldiers evacuated after the fall of France. Nine of the staff - which was larger then - and eight servants - there were servants then - were called up. Nearly all the boys were sent home for a fortnight. Had it not been for Mr Lyward's perseverance, the encouragement of doctors, officials (and that of many parents) he would have been forced to close down. With large debts, little capital, and reduced numbers, he moved to a Hall on the Welsh marches.

When he returned Finchden Manor was again on its way to ruin. Grass had obliterated beds and paths, and was marching on the windows. Only one window had more than one pane of glass. Lighting and plumbing had been torn away. Compensation was far below the cost of the repairs. But Peter, Sid, David and Fitzy, together with one or two of the boys, set to work, builders were brought in, and life was resumed in the old home.

New conditions after the war gave Finchden wider importance. Mr Lyward had begun by helping public school boys and undergraduates, but '... more and more news reaches us,' he had written in 1942, 'concerning the effect of the war and the years preceding it on all our young people. We cannot shut our eyes to the increase in juvenile crime, that is, to the number of people who are found out. And to listen to stories illustrating the shifting standards of the many who are not found out (parents of the near future) is a painful experience. Must we face with more certainty the fact that the world we know is being smashed to pieces ... what must we do ?'

The headlines were soon echoing him. Spivs, cosh boys, delinquency - terms that had scarcely been news before the war - became household words, and people looked round bewildered for an answer. Mr Lyward's work had become recognised as a national need. The first boy whose fees were paid from public funds arrived in 1944. After the passing of the Education Act, 1944, and Children's Act, 1948, applications came in dozens, and by the time I went to Finchden, doctors far beyond Harley Street, and Councils far removed from London, had begun to make use of Mr Lyward's gifts and experience. Yet lack of money, uncertainty about the future - his own and that of his staff - never ceased to be anxieties. One might say that Finchden has given security to everyone who lived there, except to its founder and director.

Mr Lyward had a pale slender face. His hair lay flat across the top of his head, above a high forehead. With him, as with Finchden, it is easier to say what he was not than what he was. He was never cruel, mean, sneering, or disloyal. But when one begins to think of other characteristics and say 'he was this', the opposites occur at once and one has to say 'he was that too'. His moods and expressions ranged between the extreme of withdrawal and the extreme of participation. He had once had polio, which had injured the muscles

of his neck. This was the reason he often held his head so low, which made his withdrawn moods seem more withdrawn. With his spectacles well down his nose, and his eyes looking over the rims like scouts over a half-lowered drawbridge, Nigs Walker might well call him 'Old Tortoise'. But when 'withdrawn', among a crowd of boys or in private conversation, he was very much present, enjoying, listening between the words, absorbing. He seldom seemed absent-minded or preoccupied.

When he joined in, he chaffed and chivvied and laughed and seemed as young as the boys. He enjoyed looking on at people, and overhearing the conversations of complete strangers, and seldom came back from some visit outside Finchden without an account of a family playing on a beach, or people seen in a restaurant, who had been 'just like a Chekhov play'. He acted them. He acted boys and parents of ten or twenty years ago, gaily and without malice. These flashbacks were continually interrupting his answers to my questions. 'Oh, but surely I told you that story?' - and suddenly the lights seemed to go out and I to be watching a film of something that had happened in the thirties.

He had no hobbies apart from occasionally making rugs. 'The only thing I can really do is sing,' he said, but he could also and almost daily did play the piano. Bach, Mozart, Scarlatti were his musicians His heart was in music and I enjoyed listening, especially when working late and he was playing in the room above. He often led rollicking choruses on the hall piano, leaving the high notes to Peter Storey. There was always music in the house. Boys believed not to have a note in them learnt to play the piano, after a fashion. All this came from him. He loved beautiful things and cherished good furniture without fuss. His house was seldom without guests. He was fastidious in personal taste and the boys' untidiness repelled him. When he gave a present he did it unexpectedly, after great trouble to select; he once gave me a rare medallion, and Neville an ivory chess set. He did not dun parents who owed him money - some still owed him hundreds of pounds. He once paid for a boy's operation out of his own money, and was always keeping several boys for nothing. For himself, he seldom bought anything but books.

The atmosphere of civilisation at Finchden came from him. Although he had rejected the forms and limits of a public-school education, he had felt at home in those surroundings. They were recalled by his way of speaking, unhurried and amused, by his books, his habit of quotation, even by the panelling in his room. No one would have been surprised to find him blue-pencilling Greek verse. Everyone knows that life at a public school can pamper and stunt those who are already too sheltered, rendering them fearful yet envious of the rough world outside, and perpetually homesick for their youth. But a public school can also offer the tranquillity and the respite from emotional disturbance, which elementary and secondary schools do not offer; and Mr Lyward, who knew both - as pupil and master - once wrote: 'Does the isolation of a public school protect its members from a too premature challenge? And if this is a psychological fact, would it be possible to provide similar security for those who cannot afford to buy it?'

It was the security of the public school he valued, not the trademark, and the security he had recreated at Finchden, in a physical as well as emotional sense. True, he had only a few fields, a garden and a romantic manor house; but as he walked about and talked to the boys, he conveyed the leisure of meads and cloisters, and into a quiet setting had successfully gathered many who were raw and loud, much that was unorthodox and adventurous. Finchden may have had many characteristics of the 'rebel' school, but Mr Lyward was not a rebel. He was both daring and original, but in ways too serious and profound to boast. He did not set out to shock, and if he did shock, it did not gratify; that was not the point...

There are orthodox rebels and orthodox diehards; one thrives on the other. In education, one bellows 'Obey!', the other 'Do as you like'. One demands corporal punishment and blazers; the other wants no discipline and insists that children should go about with nothing on. Mr Lyward came to his conviction by life. Self-government, once so popular among reformist teachers, he described as an extra - liable to be 'served out in parcels, and no solution for the boys' tautness, being only another kind of imprisoning formalism'. He thought little of any training 'divorced from the child's wishes, fantasies, and needs'. Finchden was neither explicitly 'for' nor explicitly 'against' the various attitudes for which various schools have become known. There was discipline, but none you could see. Finchden was neither Left Wing nor Right. Mr Lyward said that it was 'neither one thing nor the other, but the third'. He did possess the gift of power, in the sense that many people trusted him and were willing to put themselves in his hands. But he also stood in awe of power. He never stamped the boys at Finchden with his own image, nor bound them to him, nor insinuated his own theories. His life was spent trying to erase the disaster of such errors.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINCHDEN had grown. It had begun without rules, charter, tradition and had matured like a work of art. After Mr Lyward had left Glenalmond and started his independent work, it had unfolded out of him and around him, taking possession of his life and becoming bigger than himself. Once he wrote: '...there will always be some limit past which it is impossible successfully to push any theory.' Artists must know how to wait. He did not pump and dredge the boys; sooner or later they usually told him of their own accord what troubled them. A boy once brought Mr Lyward two lines of a verse he had found, and remarked: 'This is what you are like:
'Learning to wait consumes my life;
Consumes, and feeds as well.'

'Love that can wait', he wrote in one of his articles. The words might have been written above the porch. He waited quietly while others stood around nervously, while the telephone rang, while letters arrived from parents and County Councillors. He did nothing, when action would have been a welcome release from tension and exasperation. He wrote to a boy's mother: 'Action at all times is effective and fruitful, just in so far as it follows a period of passivity, during which the true observation and acceptance of the real facts, internal as well as external, have been made.'

But when a decision was taken, all the artillery moved up during the time of waiting would then be fired off - in attack rather than defence - and it was difficult to get a word in. He did not lose his temper, but sometimes exploded on purpose. 'My God!' said one boy, after one of these calculated outbursts, 'I heard the Chief's voice half a minute before he came in through the door.' If he told a boy to go to bed or to get out of the room, the boy disappeared at once. Waiting is long-term and strategic. Its tactical expression is timing. Some actors and actresses succeed with little apart from timing. Hold back the gesture a second longer, make the pause a second shorter, and the laugh, the tear, are lost. Mr Lyward excelled in timing, which is not a matter of flair, but needs endless patience, practice, observation. Hold back the challenge to a boy for a day, or a week longer, advance it by a month, and the chance never recurs. Over and over again action came upon the chime. He wrote a letter, and it arrived the day the boy most needed it, or suddenly forbade a liberty he had hitherto allowed, and the boy complied.

Once, expected to lecture in a room where everyone was shouting, he stood on the dais, opening and shutting his mouth but saying nothing. People near the front looked at him in amazement; soon he began. He employed his tones of voice, his silences, with a true sense of theatre and could bring down his curtain like a sunset or a guillotine. As a teacher his job was to be listened to. Hence the sudden breaks in what he said and the startling images. 'I seldom lecture to people about sex without mentioning a sword.'

Whatever his gifts, his work could not have thriven if he had been offhand in his dealings with parents or official bodies, or not known exactly where he stood in regard to public opinion and the law. Mr Lyward accepted formidable risks. It was a risk to let Richard go for walks alone; a risk to let Riff stay out late at night; a risk to challenge one boy and leave another. All pioneer work with adolescents is always in peril. If the pioneer happens to be slipshod, arrogant, or only weary at a crucial moment, then God help him. Mr Lyward had no Department or Board of Governors to refer to in difficult situations. He could not share his responsibility. He was answerable in person for everything he himself did and for all that his staff did for him, and administration had to be as thorough as the original creative side of his work.

His reports might fill five lines one month or five pages the next. He used the telephone lavishly, but did not care for it. He confirmed his conversations in writing, and when misunderstanding was to be expected, made sure that what he said was witnessed. Long reports about boys he could no longer help went from him to magistrates, mental homes and Borstals, although he was not obliged to write them, and he spent hours preparing lectures. As well as his remark that the boys were 'seven-year-olds with an L sign' other phrases stay in the mind.

'Because politeness is the very signature of sanity, we must not keep on demanding "Please" and "Thank you" indiscriminately, thereby making our members draw cheques on what is not yet theirs.'

'This boy will not bring his gifts to the altar.'

Of a new President of the Ministry of Education: 'His name is Butler. May he remember that education means to nourish.'

'His parents are kind people, and will "do anything for the boy". And so they have done for him.'

'Adults are wise to admit their helplessness quite often. The young are more willing then to acknowledge theirs.'

'We are always in danger of becoming like the people we say we hate.'

Mr Lyward thought this last phrase a commonplace. He enjoyed playing with words, which led him into some rather donnish puns, but also into some helpful rejuvenations.

Analysis: 'When I was a boy, analysis meant grammar. In later years it came to mean cure', but now after years of experience he spoke of it in its original sense of 'a loosening'. 'Always, since I pondered it all, the need for looseness for children and loosening among adolescents has seemed to me very urgent and very much neglected.'

Prep: 'Why does it so often mean anything but preparation, and only too often an ill-timed assault upon the child, challenging him too early concerning what he has not had time to digest or enjoy or relate. If it has not prepared him - rather as a sniff at the kitchen door might prepare him for a meal - has not a great opportunity been missed?'

Revise: '...has been scribbled on the blackboard at the end of term so often as to be almost meaningless. It brings to mind memories of fingers, often wetted, turning pages rapidly to the accompaniment of an almost audible murmur: "Know this, know that, know that..." But to revise is to re-see ...'

A 'spoilt' child, he said, was clearly somebody needing help. 'The child has been spoilt by somebody. And why should spoiling simply imply petting?' Words have become

encrusted with associations. To restore words to their proper use was 'One of the poet's pleasures. In doing this he may, sometimes unwittingly, perform an act of healing. If a man tells a delinquent boy of sixteen, who has been fatherless for years, that he has not the same excuse for stealing as a hungry person, a psychologist might want to blurt out: "Man does not live by bread alone". That is poetry, and there is a virtue - the word implies strength - in such a psychological approach ...'

Mr Lyward drew little on the overworked vocabulary of Oedipus complexes, mother-fixations, repressions, inhibitions... and preferred a simpler Anglo-Saxon word if he could find one. He talked of a hunch more readily than of an intuition, preferred 'crutches' to 'compensation', and wrote in a boy's report that he was 'beginning to enter a new life', not that he was 'making a successful adjustment'. Sometimes his phrases came from the boys. 'Some special skill or "subject", found to be like a stick, which is strong when used, but breaks when leaned upon...'

Finchden had sprung from the creative impulse of a man who was less a maker than an awakener, offering the boys understanding and respite to discover their true life for themselves. He was dealing besides with boys who, by his own definitions, had at least two faces. 'They've been made to look small, and have been trying to look big. ... Adolescence is like January, the month of Janus. ... I knew a boy who would sell a little shilling for six big pennies. It took him a year of "being done" before he was sensitive in regard to the quantity and quality of coins. His life was a queer mixture of feeble surrender and rebellion. He would rebel vigorously enough against washing and work. Yet, physically strong though he was, he would cry out after a very brief spell of manual labour "I can't go on, I'm done!" ' At times Mr Lyward might address himself to such a boy's mood of rebellion, at other times to the mood of feeble surrender, or might move lightly or challengingly between one and the other, while always retaining that touch at a deeper level which kept the boy disarmed and trusting.

One of the most vivid disproportions, at Finchden as almost anywhere else, whether among adolescents or adults, was between head and heart; some people have even referred to it as the schizophrenia of Western civilisation. 'There is no difference in the emotional condition of any of them. They are all cases of arrested feeling development', Mr Lyward had written. Not all had brain enough successfully to 'plaster over the wound'. With any who had, Mr Lyward might choose to play about for a time on an intellectual level, waiting for him, running him beyond his depth, then changing the subject entirely.
He had great skill in changing the subject and made a deliberate use of interruptions. 'An account of what I had been doing from minute to minute and from point to point would not exclude digressions, whether they were literary, or such as I made when I said, "Oh, look at that damage to the wall!" to a thirteen stone seventeen year-old who had recently knocked over his form master. This brought us both to our knees examining the wall, "interrupting" a conversation in which I had deliberately taken him beyond his depth but which proved a considerable "loosener".'

At times obviously Mr Lyward appeared to certain boys like a father, one who was 'guiding their natural but arrested growth 'away from the mother and the natural dominance on certain levels of the woman, towards the father or protector or breadwinner desire within themselves'. At another time he would need gently to hold up a boy whose possessiveness for a girl had become like the possessiveness of a child for its mother, and who was crying and clutching at him. He had to give, yet not give, and often, when he did not give, a boy would take it as a deliberate but temporary attitude. Yet it was an essential part of his approach.

My accounts of Mr Lyward's talks are in general mine, not his. But this condensed account of two conversations of his own shows how facts about the boys were brought out, the shifting of approach, and the way in which something said to one boy might be used to clarify things to others:

Ronald Hall had been worrying Mr Lyward on and off throughout an evening about a fortnight's leave at Christmas.
RH: There are two possibilities. I could go home or stay here. I would like to go home this year.
GL: Right.
RH: Yes, but if I go home I shan't be given any money.
GL: Well, stay here then.
RH: Oh, but I want to go home. (His mother had said how much better he was last time he went home, 'but I wish he would stay indoors more').
RH: (again): I want to go ... (This went on until GL. said):
GL: There seems to be a third possibility - for you to go home and for us to give you money.
RH: Oh no!
GL: You mean you won't ask? (Gradually it became clearer that RH. had told certain people that he intended to try to get a larger amount than most boys would have got, and Mr Lyward said):
GL: Well, you can't have that. (RH. still could not face the facts and said tetchily):
RH: What I've been trying to ask you all the evening is whether it is better for me to go home or stay here.
GL: (firmly): To go home and accept the situation about money will be the best.
RH: Can I have three pounds?
GL: No. The boy started to shout in the bitterest tones, 'That's just what I've always had to put up with.' He slammed the door. Later he ran out of the house, but was found in bed by Neville at 11 p.m., and since it was a rainy night was asked if he would like something hot to drink. He said, 'No, thanks, Nev, I'm all right.' The dispute with Mr Lyward had taken place on the stairs. Three other boys who had been present asked Mr Lyward ten minutes later if they could be allowed to embark on an enterprise. In the middle of the talk Mr Lyward said to the most resistant of them,
'How far did I go to meet Ronald?'
'Ninety-nine per cent,' said the boy.
'Dared I go one hundred?'
'No.'
'Don't tell me why not. I can see that you know.'
Sent for next day, Ronald grinned and said, 'I lost control last night for the first time. I feel better.'

He added, 'Were you baiting me on purpose last night ?' Mr Lyward answered, 'No. I never bait you. But when you people persist in shutting your eyes to a third possibility and in going round in circles, I sometimes decide to call a halt. You were granted the power of reasoning, you know, and there you were, wanting something so badly you couldn't reason at all. All the others could see that. They always can - until it's their turn to go blind and discuss only two alternatives.'

This account does not show the length of time Mr Lyward spent trying to get the boy to come to the third possibility, before the boy hit his head against the facts and called it being baited. Boys at times used this phrase, because they could not feel that they had run themselves against someone who would not budge. One per cent not given was essential,

but ninety-nine per cent given was not far from breast-feeding. The second incident is also given in Mr Lyward's words:

Sam Hutton was heard grumbling. G. L. was with two or three boys in the scullery by the corridor. It emerged that Sam was hungry. It was then 10am and he had only just arrived from sleep.
G. L.: But you were late for breakfast and goodness knows that's not a quick proceeding. (A group quickly gathered.)
S. H.: I wasn't waked.
G. L.: This waking of boys is new, isn't it? (Three boys all bore witness that it went back as far as 'living memory'. It is queer, by the way, how some boys remember nothing about their first year at Finchden - as if it had been a dream.)
G. L.: Well, perhaps it's not such a good thing. I'll talk it over with the staff - oh, not with you! Perhaps you'd all start waking up of your own accord if you weren't called. Anyhow, who is it wakes you up?
Voice: The cook.
G. L.: Fetch the cook. (Cook is fetched.) Did you wake up everybody this morning?
Cook: No, sir. Only the ones in the guest house.
G. L.: Then who woke the house?
Cook: Harry did, sir. (Harry is fetched. This is the kind of hustling they like.) G. L.: Morning, Harry. Did you wake up the house?
Harry: Yes, sir. But I forgot Sam. (Sam was so obviously the centre of the picture. For about ten to fifteen minutes talk ranged round the importance of facts, with humorous illustrations of arguments from false premises and of false arguments. You would have thought the original matter was slipping away. Everybody was happy and even Sam involved.
G. L. (suddenly): So Sam didn't get called? Why should he be called? And missed his breakfast and hasn't said 'Please may I have some?' (Sam grins.)
S. H.: Can I have some breakfast, sir ... please?
G. L.: (looking round vaguely): Good about the 'please', isn't it? (Enter Maurice Newall, having just got up, to judge by the greeting on the faces of the rest.)
G. L.: Have you not had any breakfast, Maurice?
M. N. (laughing): No, sir.
G. L.: (studiously avoiding any further talk with Maurice): What should Sam have?
Deep Voice from the corridor (Richard, from Chapters Three and Four): Give him bacon and eggs. (General laughter.)
G. L.: Right. Give Sam bacon and eggs, cook. It's a comic situation, anyhow. (Somebody murmurs, 'May I also ...')
G. L.: That would be merely silly. (The sudden changes of tone play no small part in the disarming, provoking play, fluidity.)
G. L.: (after some more chat): Have any of you noticed that as we got nearer to the facts everybody got quieter - this often happens - facts of any kind, I mean.
Boy: And it gets funnier. (He meant 'lighter'.)
G. L.: I'd love to make a study of noise.
Voice: What, here!
G. L.: Not only here. (This is discussion again, starting. Meanwhile Sam is having his bacon and eggs cooked. Presently Davidson is spoken to in a quiet friendly voice)
G. L.: When we get down to facts, you've run away twenty-one times, haven't you, Edward? That can't be said not to have its funny side.
ED.: It has its funny side anyway. (This is the kind of blind reply to be expected from him, Mr Lyward becomes completely serious and says)

GL.: Does it, when you think of the trouble it puts the staff to, and that it's your symptom, and how sad it is for you? (The boys enjoy the fluidity and feel released within it. Not long afterwards Stallard followed Mr Lyward to his front door to enquire about something. Mr Lyward chatted for a short while, and as he turned to go in, said to this hysterical boy, at last showing signs of steadying):
G. L.: You often ask questions about religion when you're not playing jazz. I don't expect when we were getting more factual and quieter just now, you found yourself thinking how silent God is to most people?
'I never thought of that,' said Stallard quietly, as Mr Lyward went into the house. At times Mr Lyward would turn the 'passive' attitude of one who would not budge beyond a certain point into an active shock, provocation, or challenge, suddenly - for example - sending a boy home because he knew it was time for him to go. Another boy arrived at Finchden with Meccano models, to which he clung.
'I love my father and mother most in all the world,' said this boy, but later,
'I love my models most in all the world.'
'I thought it was your father and mother,' said Mr Lyward.
'Anyhow, I think it's time we took your models away.'
He took them away. The boy cried himself to sleep, awoke refreshed, and scarcely troubled about his models again. More than twenty years later, he remembered their removal as something that had to be done for him.

Now and then challenges of this kind had to be made because Mr Lyward knew that he had little time. He knew a boy called Frank Cotton had to leave soon, and came across him in Mr Knox's laboratory. With deliberate intent to provoke, he assumed the same tone of voice he guessed the boy's father would use whenever the two met. He had not reckoned with someone else coming in at that moment, turned his eyes away, and Frank Cotton hit him. Mr Lyward fell back, struck his head on the concrete surround of the stove, and was concussed. Having recovered consciousness, he went off to write an editorial for Home & School and said later to a group of boys, 'Well, it's done something for Frank, but please don't all try to get clear that way.' As a matter of fact, no others did; it was the only time Mr Lyward was ever hit.

Stories of this kind, told out of their long context of the whole treatment of a boy, are intended only to illustrate the almost infinite variety of Mr Lyward's approach, which makes it difficult to find suitable adjectives for him. Sometimes he would be using two approaches at the same time, playful yet not so playful, artless yet full of art. When trying to explain himself to an adult, he would sometimes move both his hands up and down as if he were juggling. He was a master of prepared improvisation and studied offhandedness and, to use another theatrical saying, 'threw his lines away' among the boys in such a manner that they were quite certain to be picked up.

He qualified almost anything that sounded like a crystallised definition, thus uncrystallising it. His determination that nobody should harden, no response or explanation become automatic, sometimes made things difficult for his staff. For these reasons it was clear that he could never be satisfied with my book. The result was sure to be too hard-and-fast. 'I shall ask to review it, I think,' he reflected, 'and I shall start: "This account of work among adolescents, which bears one or two striking resemblances to my own..."'

To what extent did Mr Lyward's success derive from some 'gift' personal to himself, and to what extent from a method which could be continued by others ? The disarming of the boys seemed due to a gift he possessed of bridging the gulf between himself and the boy. In this way youth and maturity met - not on the level of the boy's mask and Mr Lyward's logic - but heart to heart. He himself said of this gift: 'I rule myself out as having any

experience at all and became as one of them'. He also said that, when sitting back in a chair and looking up at a boy, 'I might be the same age. I feel as if, consciously and by virtue of experience, I do know what he is like, and yet am seeking.' His enquiring in that 'innocent' fashion invited the boy to respond 'as if we were both on the same side of the fence'. He approached the boys himself with so little weight of preconception: he remained entirely open to receive the impressions of them as they were, entire.

He that felt many people, on finding themselves with children, were hindered by being too conscious of age. They could not themselves become as children. This, he felt, did happen to him - and yet he never completely lost awareness of his own maturity. Somehow the majority of the boys sensed both qualities. They felt him to be wise and at the same time one of them. Mr Lyward could see a boy immediately, as a whole; yet a special quality beyond experience enabled him to respond to what he saw in such a way that the boy, whatever his camouflage had been, became a boy, and harmless. Without this special quality, the process of weaning became impossible. The process itself was a method, and could be learnt.

Mr Lyward's marriage was a happy one, his relationship with his son easy and friendly. At one time Mrs Lyward had taught the boys. She was a good dancer and taught them dancing too. She bound up cut hands and sprained ankles, but since the boys were seldom ill with anything more serious than a cold it was only at shows and parties that she went into their part of the house. If Mr Lyward, humorously or seriously, sent a boy along to her, she surmised the spirit in which it was done. She had a calm character, able to take the worst, if it happened, as it came.

Mr Lyward seemed a man who had come to a simplicity beyond complexity. Having arrived at that point where difficult things do suddenly become simple (and all the previous struggles are momentarily forgotten) he caused one almost to believe that nothing lay behind his work but common sense. He demanded everything of himself and gave everything, whether through participation or withdrawal. 'We must lie more open than we often do,' he once said, in an address to teachers and parents. 'We must risk being hurt.' He shared the happy stages of re-birth, as he also shared the suffering. If he too had not felt some deep sense of security, he could no more have supported the suffering than the boys themselves. Without this inward strength, constantly renewed, he would have faltered, or lost hope.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A DISTINGUISHED doctor told me that work done at the depth of the work done at Finchden was badly needed. He knew of men with the vocation, but they lacked training. To love, and yet remain disinterested: what text-book could teach that? The staff needed to be aware of their own personal moods, determining their attitude towards each boy not by their preference, but by his need. If they felt bad-tempered, they had either to get over it or else use it, knowing they were using it. If in a good humour, they had equally to beware. Sid, to whom smaller boys often clung, took care never to turn into a kind of mother-figure; the whole place could do that when required. David and Neville had to avoid becoming exclusively figures of authority - or wastepaper baskets for surplus confidences.They had learnt much from Mr Lyward, though in them the control tower was still perceptible; in him it had disappeared.

The staff must be prepared to find and perhaps, in a report, explain that the first signs of new growth were not necessarily amiable. A boy released from moroseness or even primness might take to obscene swearing; another stop bed wetting and start stealing; a violent boy might become withdrawn, or the other way round. A boy who had idolised his mother decided that he hated her; one who had worried other boys chased girls. It was quite common for an unnaturally neat boy to become, to the same extreme, dirty and untidy.

Some of these inevitable stages of growth might be either awaited or induced. 'Peter Harrington,' wrote the famous Mr Knox, 'must be a reincarnation of Little Lord Fauntleroy. He has collected a series of bottles of toilet requisites, which he has marshalled like soldiers on a shelf. His arithmetic sums show a devastating neatness of arrangement and accuracy. I deplore it, but at present dare not interfere. The picture is completed by the fact that when he meets an academic problem he cannot see through, he just goes dumb.' And of another boy, he said that he came from a nice home 'and has the untidiest room. He has now lived through this and developed a rational neatness based on his personal desires.'

When the first change was outwardly for the worse, some parents complained. When it was for the better, they were likely to assume that the boy was 'cured' and could now return to his ordinary surroundings. Yet many masks might be formed and discarded, before true outlines were established: the process involved an awakening of the whole personality.

'I hate you!' cried one boy, reluctantly returning from Finchden to his real father, although Mr Lyward knew that he was ready to go, and the next moment flung himself into his father's arms. All that was essential to Finchden involved paradox: growth as always had a double face. Dying leaves clung to young branches, falling off almost unseen until one day most of the trees struck good roots. Thereafter all that parents had waited for - jobs, exams, self-control, 'taking his place in the world' - began just to happen. David said: 'The boys, too, see that they and others round them are growing, and they have a welcome feeling that there isn't a moment when anyone is fully grown.'

What Professorships have been endowed for timing, what degrees are given in learning how to wait? A boy took the staff something that to him mattered greatly, and they seemed to ignore it; after, when he had forgotten, they reminded him. At an apparently quite simple 'level', when Ivor Marples complained that his chocolate had been stolen, David appeared to pay no attention. Two days later he gave the boy a bar, saying 'I bought it for you.' Later, the secretary of the local cricket club telephoned to say that Ivor Marples had been infiltrating into the pavilion and taking his tea free with visiting teams.

David asked him lightly if he could do this and at the same time grumble about someone at Finchden stealing from him. This magnification of small things, together with a lessening of big things, was part of the 'method'.

I once asked David whether the work done at Finchden was of the kind that can be passed on, and in reply he gave me some rough notes:

'I was one of those who came to Finchden Manor for help,' he wrote. 'This means that I have been "through the mill" myself. But in any case I am sure one would have to be the sort of person to "receive" from the "transmitter". Personally, I made, deliberately, a division at the point when I became employed and took on a job and did not expect my "employer" to help in the ways that he had, in another role, before. This was my way. As well as being the kind of person able to "receive", one must also attempt, quite soon, whilst still only perhaps sensing the truth and sometimes seeing proof of Mr Lyward's statements, to develop one's own beliefs and way of life. I suppose that at some such time as this I became ready to receive a more disciplined training. I think this meant, again as far as I was concerned, an enlightenment of what I was doing intuitively at one level, and an increased awareness of the kind of "structure" I had to work in. This latter was at another level, concerned with the boys' physical and material needs etc., as regards themselves and maybe involving their parents, teachers, local education authorities, and so on.' 'To restate some of the above in terms of daily contact and help for the boys, I have had to become able to recognise them for what they are. (One can be trained to spot camouflage, to interpret needs, actions, frustrations, help selfpity, etc.) I have had to become able to respect them as persons, not case histories. I have had to become able to be responsive to their needs as I see them, and sometimes, if I can get no nearer, responsive to their wants. All this I try to become with the object of building up a good relationship; and, to put this approach to practical use, I have been aware that I must remain open, at any time and any place to any thing - almost!'

David also wrote of instruction in letter-writing and the making of reports and of certain details of method, which included lightheartedness, skill in waiting, 'the employing on occasions of delaying tactics, and where necessary the taking of evasive action, while remaining true to one's convictions and belief in the best way to help the boy in question. Some of this in its turn involves leaving the door open for advance or retreat of oneself or of the boy.' He wrote of a stage arriving 'when some of the "R's" are beginning to be reciprocated', and of a third stage in his own training and development. 'Perhaps Professionalism is the word to use now. One has collected enough instruments to operate. I suppose co-operate would sound whimsical? One uses more incisively one's instruments, and becomes glad to work for one's results. With greater maturity I still found I had much to learn about protection. Many examples can be given of the boys' need of protection; protection against parents, against themselves, against outside contacts. One can be trained to see who is suffering from pressure from outside and who from pressure of his own making. One can be told what to say to either. So often one hopes to reach some reconciliation ...'

One other attitude of the staff's helped to keep the boys disarmed. Sometimes, if a child irritates its parents, they will say, 'There, you've done it again!' They thereby transform criticism of the action into criticism of the child - and make the action seem habitual. At Finchden care was taken that the action should be isolated, and not regarded as 'typical' of the boy who had done it. This restraint helped greatly to free the boys from the sense of guilt and of being 'hopeless' and 'incorrigible', which had been induced in so many of

them. How many children have acquired a bad habit as a result of having it attributed to them!

David's notes are not those of someone attempting to impose a discipline from without, or some inner discipline which the boys 'ought' to learn. Rather, they are the notes of someone who had been such a boy himself, and had found his own way, which had kept him in their midst, in the same atmosphere, and still very much a member. David, and the rest of the staff were doing 'no more than' help the boys to find their ways; and yet how much this meant!

What it meant can further shown by answering three questions often asked about Finchden Manor; the first about violence, the second about sex, the third about the nature of the discipline.

As regards violence: no human being would have failed to be frightened, physically, by one or two of the boys. On one occasion Henry Carpenter asked for two shillings. Neville gave it him, and added: 'That's all for a while.' Carpenter threw it on the floor. When he asked for it again later, he was refused. He lost his temper and knocked things over. The next day he was given twice as much pocket money. Once he walked off the cricket field in a fury; when he asked to come back, Neville said: 'I never turned you off'
'All the same, may I come back?'
He came back, scored brilliantly, and said: 'I had to blow off to have my innings.'
He had blown off but without harm to others. Would it be far-fetched to substitute 'life' for 'innings'?

There were scraps, mostly friendly, though they might occasionally become dangerous; the staff had then to make up their minds quickly. Their decision depended upon the boys directly involved, and the onlookers. A scrap between two boys of equal size might be allowed to go on, if neither was likely to be upset and if no boy nearby might be upset. Obviously, if the boys looked like doing each other physical harm, they were stopped.

Remembering some of the boys' past stories, it was surprising how little they had injured one another during the twenty-five years of Finchden's existence. Sometimes inspired casualess averted violence. One enraged boy was chasing another with a poker, when he passed Fitzy, who said: 'Oh, give me that a moment, I want to poke the fire.' The boy gave it up. The few 'violent incidents' that did take place seem insignificant because the atmosphere of the whole place was one not of violence, but disarmament. Neville once had his face badly scratched, and David had a brick thrown at him. None of the boys ever suffered much worse than a black eye. During my time at Finchden, there was only one bad fight.

One evening Sid was in the yard and heard shouting from the kitchen. There he found Seton and Henry Carpenter pounding one another wildly. He walked between, pushing them apart, and then circled round until they stopped. Later they started again. Peter was then in the room. He managed to get the other boys out, but - for once - could not manage to separate the two fighters, who seemed 'possessed'. They were fairly equally matched and both strong; both, in that mood, were capable of using anything they could lay their hands on. Peter, after sending a message to Mr Lyward, followed them carefully, removing possible weapons; he trailed them into the big hall, where they went on wildly hammering one another.

Mr Lyward had just come back from speaking at a conference. He did not feel well and was sitting half-asleep in front of the fire when Peter came in. He went down into the hall, and saw in an instant that both boys were in a mood to go on fighting till they

dropped, and worse. 'I knew,' Mr Lyward wrote afterwards, with emphatic underlinings, 'that I had got something that belonged outside here. The two boys had, as it were, already removed themselves from the community, but there were their bodies still in Finchden Manor. I knew at once that I had got to bring them back to Finchden Manor if I could.'

Seton turned on Mr Lyward for a moment, threatening him. Mr Lyward clapped his hands, then said in effect, in a very quiet voice, to both of them, while they were momentarily separated, 'You are outsiders brawling in my house. This isn't a fight between two boys. This is something that belongs outside Finchden. You must come back here, or your bodies must be removed. If you decide that you belong outside, then I shall send for the police.' Then he walked away.

The boys stopped fighting; nor did they continue after Mr Lyward had gone. 'The word "police",' he wrote afterwards, 'might easily lead a stranger to believe that I make threats. I never do. I state facts. I stated it as a fact that they were outsiders brawling in my house, and did not just say that they were "behaving like" outsiders. It was the only time I have ever used the word "police" to the boys in that way, and its use then had NOTHING in common with a threat.'

Either boy could have floored Mr Lyward. He had said little, and that little quietly; but the effort he had made and the after vibrations left him exhausted for two or three days.

Sometimes it was hard to believe that parents and doctors and schoolmasters had written with such grim foreboding about these boys. There was a day I especially remember towards the end of winter. I had not realised how late I had been working, and was surprised when I put away my papers and went outside to find that dawn was breaking. The trees were coal-black against the lightening sky. Nothing was stirring. The doors and windows of the house were all open. The cock crew and the sun rose beneath gathering clouds.

I slept for a few hours, till someone woke me to say that the local hounds were meeting in the neighbourhood and that some boys wanted to go. Mr and Mrs Lyward took two in the back of their car, and I filled up mine. The day was windless and sunny, with a blue sky and frosty air. On the way the boys argued whether blood sports should be forbidden and, as usual, dashed off to all kinds of subjects, among them Plato. It turned out that Oliver Newton really had read the Republic. He admitted that he had not understood a great deal, and Mr Lyward thought it time for him to stop. Fred Stiles, a Cockney, wanted to know what was meant by Platonic love. I told him, and he said: 'Crikey! Is that all? I thought it was something illegal.' Soon they were discussing film stars, forgetting Plato.

We arrived at the meet. Mr and Mrs Lyward stood patting the horses. Mr Lyward wore his brown Trilby and a thick coat and muffler, and was looking in an abstracted way at the faces of the hunt followers. He seemed to have taken to a Jorrocks-like character, with leggings, stock, and a windbitten face. 'I like people who are real,' he said as they moved off 'I can get on with that kind of parent, even though they disagree with everything I do.'

Two boys wanted to walk. We left them on the road, and after we had followed the glimpses of scarlet for a while, drove back to Finchden. Sid was in the Guildables room playing with the monkey. The boys had alarmed it, and Sid was coaxing it along. It was trying to crack a nut. Sid showed, and the monkey copied. Sid sneezed and the monkey sneezed. Sid shook out his handkerchief, then gave it to the monkey, who shook it out in just the same way. Sid put some sticks together, and said to the monkey 'This is the

jungle', then scattered some grains of earth above and said: 'This is rain.' The monkey neatly collected all the sticks and scattered some earth. By evening Sid would probably have taught it to play the piano.

The day continued merry. Nigs Walker was in one of his boyish moods, more like the others, less of the infant camouflaged. I took him up Tenterden Church tower and we waited for the bells to ring. Back at Finchden, someone was searching for Mr Hannen to make him pose in the position of the Rokeby Venus, which the boy said was physically impossible. A conversation began in the dining room, among the debris, in the middle of which Flynn asked artfully: 'Are you writing a book about Finchden?'
I said that it deserved a book, and they began to remember.
'Remember the day the psychos came? Remember the bloke who sang all night? Eight solid hours, at the top of his voice. Wasn't there a guy who used to ride a bike into Tenterden dressed as a woman? Who was the one who set fire to churches before he came here?'
A boy turned to me: 'If you go off and write a book about this place without asking the Chief's permission, I'll knock your block off! Some journalist bloke did that.'
'Why shouldn't Dr Singe?' said Flynn. 'He used to be a journalist.'
'Because it'd be too easy. Crikey, though, I'd like to put the Chief into a book. What'd you call him, Dr Singe? A trick-cyclist?'
Chorus of 'no'.
'Why not?'
'They just dope you and try to make you talk.'
'What would you call him then?'
'God knows. He's certainly not a ruddy schoolmaster, or none I've ever come across.' And they began to tell stories about the places they had been to before, with singularly little malice - the past was the past - and a lot of comedy.

In the evening came one of those informal concerts which Mr Lyward would demand at a few days' notice. It was an intimate occasion, without guests. The boys put on some cross talk and slapstick; a trumpet solo; an aria of Handel; and a take-off of an Oedipus complex, which began with a mother carrying a difficult child and ended with the child carrying a difficult mother - a story that had occurred more than once in Finchden's life. The unrehearsed standard was not high, but the concert gave pleasure because of its lack of self-consciousness, and because some of the boys were taking part for the first time and it had meant a struggle for them. After community singing, they danced or stood discussing by the smouldering log fire. Nigs Walker gave Mr Lyward another lesson in the St Bernard Waltz, and a boy accustomed to hunt balls taught an eightsome reel. Mr Lyward accompanied old songs on the tired piano, the boys gathering round him to turn the pages and join in the choruses. He remained until past eleven, playing Bach and Brahms and Beethoven, stopping to discuss a composer for a few moments and continuing to answer the boys' questions as he played.

They stayed up for a time, and I wondered, as I had the first day Mr Lyward had pointed them out from his window, if anything was really 'wrong' with them. If they were all so 'normal' and contented, as they had seemed during the whole of this day, was this prolonged respite necessary? Why should they not be studying all day and made to do the same as everybody else? Especially a boy like Drake. Look at him, talking to Neville in the corridor. He was nearly twenty. He had been at Finchden four years. He had an extremely good brain. He ought to be in a University. Suddenly Drake's intelligent face became red, then white. His voice blazed up like a paraffin thrown on a fire, and he hit Neville ferociously on the side of the head. 'Come on!' he screamed, 'what about that fight!' Neville did nothing. Drake hit him again. Neville went to bathe his face, and Drake rushed into the staff room. Old early resentments poured out. 'I felt it boiling up for days,'

he said. 'I'm confused if I do lose my temper, and I'm confused if I don't. I feel utterly unwanted.' I saw him later when he went to bed, again looking calm and intelligent, the one who ought to go to a University. Neville had a black eye and was lucky not to have worse.

So ended the perfect day, far from perfectly; yet for Drake perhaps something necessary had now happened. Occasionally a day might be all disturbance, and no scherzo, and yet have some healing close. That evening was the only time I ever saw one of the staff hit. Why? One reason that there was so little violence was that the boys knew they needed Finchden; another, that the staff, by virtue of their training, did not provoke the boys. The boys also knew they would get little satisfaction out of attacking the staff, who were not going to hit back.

The story which best illustrates what became of violence was a stock one, told best by the boys. The boy concerned - 'dear old Ed' - was a square stolid gruff 'tough' with a ponderous voice. 'Before I came to Finchden,' he used to lecture new arrivals, 'I was no good. No good at all. After three months, I stopped being no good. I was born.' Towards the end of his time there he became restive again and now and then threw things at the staff. David said something that enraged him. He rushed into the garden, picked up a brick and stood fingering it under Mr Lyward's window. David went after him and was in time to hear him growl, 'No ... no ... perhaps not. After all, the old ***'s only doing his best.'

CHAPTER NINE

I HAVE chosen to tell the story of Alastair Wilton in full for two reasons: first, because it illumes a relationship between boy, Mr Lyward and parent - in this instance the mother; secondly, because Mrs Wilton had many feelings which a majority of parents - and possibly educational authorities - naturally shared about Finchden. She stated them vigorously and at length, before her son went, while he was there, and later, when she decided he ought to leave. The doubts and recurring anxieties, which might be felt by any mother or father faced with the same problem, were put with particular force by Mrs Wilton.

Alastair Wilton went to Finchden three years before the war. He came of well-to-do parents. His father, who had been a naval officer, was dead. His mother loved the boy, her only son, deeply, but had spoilt him. She was a Scotswoman and lived near the Border with Alastair and his sister. The sister was several years older than the boy, and of a vigorous and dominating character. Alastair often dreamed of Victorian surroundings. Mrs Wilton had many of the solid characteristics of that period, and when people spoke of her I thought at first of Queen Victoria. She was small and sturdy. Her letters were seldom fewer than four pages long, with strong underlinings; 'must' was a favourite word. But she was not stuffy. She had vivacity and vitality, loved to fill her house with young people, and gave hilarious parties at Christmas, at one of which she dressed up as the old Queen.

She had firm religious faith and went regularly to church, but did not insist that her son should go. She had high ideals and definite standards of right and wrong and did many kindnesses to many people. Much that she said or wrote sounded excellent; in relation to he son some had proved mistaken. The inflexible side of her character was softened by an endearing honesty; at a fairly advanced age she could admit and adapt herself to unfamiliar ideas and even reveal her vulnerable real self. Consequently one ends her story with admiration and sympathy.

Her spoiling of her son had been in part brought about by a serious illness of his. One boy at his school had died. He had nearly died and this crisis had affected both mother and son deeply. Alastair had already begun to play upon her at his preparatory school, begging her to take him home. During his first term at a public school he caused such commotion that he had to be taken away and handed over to a tutor, Mr Greenacre. At the end of the holiday Mr Greenacre took him back, but the boy 'worked himself into so hysterical a condition that neither housemaster nor school doctor (wrote Mrs Wilton) would consent to his remaining at College. His present firm intention is never to return to any school, large or small.' Whenever return was suggested, he threatened suicide or chewed playing cards. 'He is dominating the situation at home,' wrote a psychiatrist to the family doctor, 'and being extremely difficult and unpleasant. He clearly needs to be away from home with someone much stronger than Mr Greenacre, and there are many other problems. He is primarily hysteric. … I am not sure whether you know Mr Lyward of Finchden Manor, Tenterden. I have great confidence in his capacity to handle difficult situations …'

A few days later, Mrs Wilton paid her first visit to Finchden. She took to Mr Lyward, but (and there were to be many 'buts'), 'we are a rather critical and observant family. What perplexes me most is the effect his surroundings and above all the other boys will have on Alastair. They struck me as having been, or being, far more nervously ill and less normal to all superficial appearances than he is. I recognize that there are serious things wrong with Alastair's outlook on life. Probably that's the case with all of us (I mean most of us);

but whether he would not feel – "Good heavens, they must think things pretty wrong with me if I'm sent among boys like that!" – and what effect this might have on him, I don't know.'

Mr Lyward answered: 'I sympathize with you because it must be a difficult decision to make. The simplest answer I can give s that I have seen many parents grappling with the same problem and making the same criticisms, and finally months later expressing their gratitude and satisfaction that they had accepted this place as a whole and not in part. It would be comparatively easy to run a place which would appeal to visiting parents, but would not inevitably help the boys. … I could put you on to many parents who would assure you, but I would rather you made a venture of faith.'

This skirmish recurs at the beginning of many of the boys' stories. Other parents were doubtful about untidiness or bad language or absence of curriculum. Mr Lyward wished them to accept Finchden as an 'act of faith'. But once or twice, if he felt that the parent was likely to be more than usually upset by appearances, in the boy's interest he made an exception and deliberately set the stage. In preparation for Mrs Wilton's second visit, he sent for a dozen boys of Alastair's age, all from public schools, and asked them to arrange a formal tea. He explained that he had never done such a thing before; there was now a reason. … 'The mother is genuinely puzzled, and you can't blame her.'

So the furniture was polished, and the tea laid on a table with a white cloth. Mrs Wilton arrived with Alastair and his sister, to be met by a gathering of tidy boys in their good suits, with clean nails and smarmed-down hair.
'This is a plot,' said she, in an aside to Mr Lyward.
'Of course it is,' he answered.
She was displeased and remained stiff. She refused a cigarette offered by one of the boys, suspecting poison or a practical joke. 'Thank you for our pleasant visit,' she wrote, 'although I did not greatly appreciate my reception! Alastair was quite favourably impressed. I think his chief misgiving is that his many gifts will not be sufficiently developed. My principal misgiving is that I don't feel now that there could be any real reason why he should stay at a Clinic like Finchden Manor for more than six months at the outside. The aim we should all have in mind is to restore him to the normal as rapidly as possible – he is putting himself on the right road fairly rapidly by his own efforts …'

Mr Lyward answered; and thus a correspondence was fully launched which was to continue almost weekly for five years. (With Alastair himself it continues to this day.) 'I am not at all sure,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'that you would ever be able to trust anyone or any place which has challenged you views even as kindly as we have done; and in that case we should be in the impossible position of being only nominally free to help Alastair. I must know how far you are likely to go on for ever spoiling Alastair's chances, even should he come here. I am therefore going to suggest that you try to recognize that you have now reached a limit, past which it would be unwise to go. In other words, I must reject your suggestion of visiting here again tomorrow. It cannot do the boys here any good if you should come again so soon, or that you should so obviously question our suitability for a boy whom they recognize as like themselves. Nor would it help them if my patience was strained by parents too often past a certain point.'

I can now leave the letters to speak for themselves, commenting only where necessary. On the one hand there is Mr Lyward. At that time he had taught for nearly thirty years. His independent experience with maladjusted boys so far extended only over six years, but he had spent many more in charge of his junior house at Glenalmond. On the other hand there is the boy's mother (or in other instances his father, or both mother and father), - unwilling, naturally suspecting the unorthodox, to trust their son by 'act of faith'

to a total stranger. Yet all parents – in this, as in scores of other cases – felt with varying degrees of awareness and honesty of mind, that they themselves had failed somewhere and that, if they did not agree to some kind of special treatment, they might ruin their son's life. Many, like Mrs Wilton, thought in terms of a few months' stay. Many again thought of some slight adjustment back to 'normal', of some quick 'cure' for the original 'offence'. Many found that the boy's real disturbance lay far deeper than they had dreamed.

'I am sure you must realize,' wrote Mrs Wilton, 'how unhappy and worrying is the slow realization that one's child has passed more or less (no doubt largely through one's own fault) out of one's control and power to help. I am afraid I don't take things on trust at all easily; partly owing to special circumstances of my own up-bringing. … A very large number of people, including my doctor, urged me to leave Alastair at his first preparatory school. I did so against all his own entreaties for three years, a course which I am sure has contributed very largely to his present unsatisfactory condition. … If Alastair comes to you, I will certainly endeavour not to "spoil his chances", but I don't quite know what you mean by this accusation.'

July 6, 1936
'Dear Mrs Wilton,
One of the things I am most grateful about is that I still feel for each parent as he or she comes here, as I did when I started this work. If anyone has been brought up so that she feels insecure, then how can she be other than possessive? It is not a question of blame, and you would be well advised not to blame yourself at this juncture. It s much harder for me to take the line I took in my last letter; and yet I had no alternative, if I was to introduce limits and thereby give you some temporary rest from the wearisome inner urge to press on and on in the forlorn hope of finding a hundred percent certain solution. Alastair's trouble is just that he must be completely certain before he moves. Do you remember the line in the Psalm – "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet" – not any more light than is necessary to make the next step.

July 7
'Dear Mr Lyward, (Mrs Wilton wrote)
Thank you for your kind letter. I admit a good deal of weariness, thinking by day and dreaming by night of what is really best for Alastair. As you say, it is the vain search for the hundred percent certainty. What I do not quite see is how your methods will give him grit and pluck and energy to fight all his tendencies to laziness and unreliability. However, we can "wait and see", and I will do my best to trust.'

Alastair and Mr Greenacre paid a visit to Finchden, but nothing was decided. Mrs Wilton and Alastair spent their holidays with relatives in Ireland, where Alastair was 'very sensibly sociable with other young people, both boys and girls and was quite willing to make his own plans with them if ours were too energetic for him.' He had also begun to paint 'and hopes for opportunity and encouragement in this creative effort when he comes to Tenterden.'

A change now appeared on the Wilton side of the correspondence. Mrs Wilton, tired of Alastair at home and anxious to do something, began to press Mr Lyward. The boy 'will come to Finchden Manor as soon as you return from your holidays, which I hope may prove restful and enjoyable. Will you be so kind as to let us know later when you are ready to receive him?' Alastair meanwhile began to stall; it would soon be his birthday, and Mr Greenacre had promised to help him with his paintings and to give him drawing lessons. Mrs Wilton wrote to Mr Lyward again: 'I sometimes feel that some step or sign from you at this juncture would be of great help. I and my daughter are the only source of

pressure on Alastair to come to you.' A week later Mr Greenacre had found another pupil, and had less time for Alastair's art. The underlinings to Mr Lyward became more frequent. 'The time is very ripe for you to move. I think Alastair should come to you after a quiet week-end on Monday next.'

Mr Lyward was not to be hurried. He would never permit any parent to think that he had 'forced' a boy to come. Alastair dashed off several more canvases. The last letter before his enrolment at Finchden came from the boy himself, typewritten but mis-spelt, and showing more than a trace of hauteur:
'Dear Mr Lyward,
I hope that when I arrive, I shall find you all arguing, then I shall not feel so homesick. I am very anti-psychology, but of course have very little knoledge of it. It seems that psychology is a great help for some people, but me – NO. Wether or not I wish to swallow a pack of cards is a matter not yet decided.'
At the end of October, aged fifteen, chauffeured and with several canvases and a large sketchbook, the difficult one arrived.

Alastair took against Finchden at once. Of course he wrote to his mother, and, as at his preparatory school, demanded to be removed. He gave her a feverishly exaggerated account of the place, which, as it was meant to, thoroughly upset her. She telephoned Mr Lyward in distress, and wrote Alastair a letter of wounded but sensible reproof. 'I think you are making a desperate attempt to get me under your thumb. … I refuse to be a source of endless sympathy to your dramatized version of yourself. You don't give me facts in your letter. Why not? If you are convinced of them, tell me what they are.'
Mr Lyward's answer filled three typewritten pages. Many of his letters to troubled parents were at least as long. The documents in Alastair's story, covering five years, run to at least two thousand pages.

'Dear Mrs Wilton,
First, I want to reassure you, if I can, that you have my sympathy, if you imagine that I am not taking into account how perplexed and pained you must be about all this, then you will be wrong. … Alastair cannot be expected to be completely happy anywhere at the moment, or completely satisfied that any place whatever conforms to his conception of what is desirable for him. … Long after he is quite happy, he will find it impossible to say so, because that would constitute a climb-down. Meanwhile the only line he can take is to ferret out whatever would make a good story and exaggerate it, keeping in mind the things which might worry you. … In this way he keeps you on tenterhooks, and hopes to keep me on tenterhooks too. It is vital to his well-being that we should not get caught so easily. Remember that fear lies behind all this, and therefore every time the trick succeeds, the fear is kept working below the surface, whereas each time we can defeat the trick, we reduce the fear. The world will not stand for this sort of trickery, nor can his real self ever be satisfied that way. What we do here is to defeat the trick so gently that sometimes he never knows. We do not leave him, as the world would, but help him through these moments towards more wholeness of life.'

This letter gave Mrs Wilton 'great hope and comfort', which was undermined almost at once by another 'terrible' letter from her son. 'He does not threaten suicide or even running away. He only begs me to see him and learn what he calls the "truth" from his own lips. If I don't, he says he will run away from me and withdraw all confidence.' She begged to see Alastair alone.

'Dear Mrs Wilton, (wrote Mr Lyward)
So soon as Alastair is with you or writes to you he takes on a new personality, one which needs to do two completely opposite things: (1) to win his way back to an exclusive

position and capture a monopoly of your interest, affection, time; in fact, your soul; (2) to hurt you as much as possible. This he needs to do because he himself has been robbed of his manhood by the over-dominance of the feminine element at home, and by such lesser but important things as being kept ignorant of sex and therefore compelled to bluff and feign knowledge which he hadn't got. It sounds simple, stated like that, but it all goes in a vicious circle and the two opposite needs stated above keep the circular movement going …

Can you see at all from the above that the one fatal thing at the moment would be for me to respond thoughtlessly to either you plea, or his, that you should come together at this moment? If I did consent to your meeting, the maximum need for mothering and the maximum need for hurting and dominating mother would be joined. It is our job here to stand between the two forces in conflict and bear the brunt, but I would not have you in your old position ever again, and you cannot call that being unkind to you … I believe, if I wished, I could fix upon the actual time when Alastair wrote his letter to you. I was informed that when he enquired for ink he was quite cheerful.'

Alastair was quite cheerful. He had been given a private room and was allowed to furnish it himself; he asked for a fire, but this was refused. A visit to London followed, with Mr D., to buy a wireless set. 'He assumed the part of a guide,' Mr D. reported, 'anxious to impress me with his knowledge of London. … He told me he knew where Selfridge's was, namely in regent Street, and was surprised when he failed to find it. Was assured by myself and several dealers that a wireless set which would do what he wanted had not yet been designed, and probably never would be. Showed a preference for sets of flashy appearance, with an obvious lack of internal finish. Wanted to go to an expensive place for lunch. I took him to Lyons Corner House. He was rather disdainful and said that he didn't like crowds. Suddenly said: "I suppose really it is awfully good for me to come to a place like this". We went to a film and he proposed another visit next week. I said I might not want to come to London next week, to which he replied that he thought the present visit had been most enjoyable and successful, and that he would ask Mr Lyward to let me come again with him again. On Ashford Station, he tried to get chocolate out of the automatic machines without putting in a penny; and seeing some of the restaurant tea-cups on a ledge said: "Do you dare me to pinch some?" I said: "Please yourself", and he took one and wanted to bring it home with him.'

Alastair was also gambling. He invited Mr D. to pay his debtors with money from the office. 'He produced the list showing amounts owed to him – 4/6d. in respect of money-lending and 6/6d. for cigarettes. This he totaled at 10/6d. I took the list and told him the figures required digesting, as I had no authority to pay boy's debts. He said I was prejudiced. He came to me again when I was in bed and said: "Although I dislike you exceedingly, could you tell me…?" – and asked for some technical information about his wireless set. I gave him the information, and he thanked me and went away.'

Alastair of course was not nearly as wretched as he had led his mother to suppose. He had a way of posting her emotional storms; by the time they reached her, he was sunbathing. He was cunning, sanctimonious, and often merry. In one photograph of that time he is wrestling with another boy, his face caked with mud; another photograph shows him looking like an assertive golliwog. He had taken to games, which elsewhere had terrified him, and had begun to do lessons with Mr Knox.

Mr Knox was so rugged yet gracious and versatile an eccentric that he not only justifies but demands a digression.

Mr Lyward had first met him while searching for a second-in-command. On a friend's invitation, he had gone to a club near Pall Mall, and had been introduced to a tall, thin, stooping gentleman with a red nose and a walrus moustache, who was wearing a high stiff collar. Mr Lyward immediately said to himself 'Impossible!', yet before the meeting was over, it had been decided that Mr Knox should come to Finchden. He remained on the staff until his death.

He gave his age as fifty-one, but was probably 60. He came of a brilliant family and had been a classical scholar at Balliol. For years he had lived in Paris, as foreign correspondent for a big newspaper. He spoke fluent French and had the Legion d'Honneur and another French medal. He had jumped out of a window for a bet and broken both his arms below the elbow. He had written three books: one on electricity, one on engineering, one on The Soil, and arrived at Finchden with several dozen copies of Newton – The Man, foreword by Einstein, published by Mr Knox. He taught mathematics, science, French, history, English, Latin and Greek. He held formal classes, but most of his teaching was done as a running commentary on various kinds of practical work, on which he embarked as soon as he arrived.

His injury did not prevent him – sometimes alone, sometimes with the boys – building a suite of laboratories, some of which the Army left standing. He dug a well 18 feet deep at Guildables and, bending his shrivelled forearms perpendicular in front of him, carried piles of bricks and heavy blocks of cement, talking as he built and accompanying himself with quotations from Horace – which he knew almost by heart – and with tremendous French and Elizabethan oaths. In one laboratory he made soap; the first experiments burnt the table, but later he turned out a pleasantly scented brand, some of which he sold. A skilled gardener, he planted a shrubbery of lavender and rosemary, out of which he distilled lavender water. Salesmen would be engaged in rich and stately conversation about cosmetics. Every few months, packing cases arrived for Mr Knox, containing valuable equipment, which he got cheap from a scientific friend. He also erected a printing press, and while at Finchden published a small anthology and a work on ratio and proportion called The Bed of Procrustes. During the war, unable to buy graph paper, he printed his own.

The boys called him 'The Old Boy'. They put Vim on his rice pudding, but he did not notice. In the town he was known as the Professor. He smoked about eighty cigarettes a day, and sometimes had four going at a time. As soon as he had settled in, he discarded the formal dress in which Mr Lyward had first encountered him, and wore, while building, a white coat sprinkled with cigarette ash and trousers without turn-ups, held round his middle with a piece of string. He seldom bought clothes. When he did, he sent into town the gardener's boy, who had come to Mr Lyward for treatment, with instructions to bring back half-a-dozen suits from which Mr Knox chose one. He shaved off his moustache and substituted a beard, grizzled and stained with nicotine, which he either pruned like the late King George V or allowed to cascade to his breastbone. His fine hands were black with nicotine, his black nails like talons. When Sid – then a boy- asked why he did not cut them, Mr Knox picked up a diminutive head of type off a glass-topped table used while printing, and enquired majestically; 'How could I do that with short nails?'

He had a wonderful twinkle in his eye, and false teeth which did not fit. When he wanted to put a cigarette to his mouth, his broken arms made necessary a superb circular movement; his teeth fell with a clack, and as he exhaled he hissed like an escaping jet. He slept little and ate little, but drank tea all hours of the day and night, out of a mug, encrusted on the outside with chemicals and printer's ink, and blackened inside with tea

leaves like an ancient pipe. Mrs Lyward once bought him a new mug; the offer was received graciously but with pain, not successfully disguised.

He had the grandest of grand manners. When asked an unwelcome question, he pretended to be deaf. He could argue his way into or out of anything. His gestures were generous and vast. He took a liking to a dog of Mr Lyward's, gave it commands in several languages, alive and dead, and tossed it biscuits as a prize. 'Buy seven pounds of chocolate biscuits,' he ordered Sid. Sid bought them and Mr Knox fed them to the dog. "Could I have one?' asked Sid. "Of course,' said Mr Knox amazed: 'do people eat chocolate biscuits?'

Suddenly Mr Knox would give a boy a prize of one, ten or twenty cigarettes, if the boy remembered a French idiom or a scientific formula. During the war, when tobacco was hard to come by, he lost an apparently safe bet and had to give one boy a thousand cigarettes for remembering a quotation.

He had lost touch with his family, except for one sister. Once a well-dressed stranger came to Finchden. Mr Knox met him.
'May I speak to Mrs Knox?' asked the stranger.
'I am he,' said Mr Knox, in his beautiful voice, rich and rare as the best claret. 'What can I do for you?'
'I'm your brother,' said the stranger.

Mr Knox seldom went away from Finchden, except to have his hair cut. When he did, standing well over six-foot, with his beard long or short, looking like a cross between Trader Horn, father Christmas and a pillar of the Academie Francaise, members of the public thought they surely ought to know him. One Christmas Sid accompanied him. Mr Knox had taken pains with his appearance. His trousers, still tied up with string, were concealed under a long grey overcoat. His beard he wore outside. He had on a khaki shirt, a pink tie, and a pork-pie hat bought from one of the staff for sixpence. 'Who is that gentleman?' asked the railway porter.
'That's Mr Knox,' said Sid.
'Of course, of course.'

Mr Knox traveled first class. He crouched in the window seat, brooding over the platform. It was war-time and all the carriages were full. A woman hurried along, complaining to the station-master. She stopped and pointed accusingly at Mr Knox. 'There!' she cried, 'People who haven't paid!'
'What are you doing in there?' demanded the station-master.
'I? Are you intimating that I have not paid? Mr Hopkins, (Sid), these people are incredulous. Be good enough to show them our tickets.'
A soldier laughed so much that he put his rifle through a window.

Mr Knox and Sid changed at Crewe. Mr Knox's brown shirt was hanging out. Watched by an austerity and uniformed crowd, he undid the string, tucked in the shirt and said to Sid: 'Now we'll have a spread.' War-time restrictions meant nothing to him. He took a taxi and they went to the best hotel – no food. They went to the second best – again no food. 'Never mind, young man,' said Mr Knox to the driver, 'take me anywhere we can get two dozen eggs!' Even one egg was unprocurable. Time and change had passed him by. They stopped at some traffic lights. 'What are those?' asked Mr Knox.

He loved learning, and taught with enthusiasm and reverence. All his experiments were scrupulous and exact, all his instruments lovingly cared for. He double dug and weeded his patch of garden, laid down pipes and sprinklers, and collected cart-loads of manure.

He gave the boys the feeling of history and the feeling of a language, and chuckled with delight when Sid once answered 'Mais oui' instead of only 'oui'.

A photograph shows Mr Knox at the desk of his self-built laboratory. Through the window is a glimpse of another building not yet finished. The mug of tea stands in front of him. The sun is shining on the gaunt, imperious face, the grizzled hair and beard, and he looks like Ulysses in old age. He died during the war before the return to Finchden. As he was dying, Sid would come to his room and real aloud in French Dumas' Black Tulip and The Adventures of Arsene Lupin, and Mr Knox would arouse himself from his coma to correct pronunciation. He told his sister that he had spent the best eleven years of his life at Finchden. Scruffy, civilized, lonely, brilliant, robust, he had found his haven there, and was loved, and those he taught have never forgotten him.

Mr Knox had a tolerant but not high opinion of Alastair Wilton.
'Alastair resembles every other boy who has come to Finchden Manor in that he presents problems which are entirely special to himself and demand immediate attention. In trying to give him the help he needs, the staff are very much handicapped by the difficulty he finds in believing that he stands in need of any help at all. … He professes a high standard about sex, and is stern in castigating vice. At the same time he has gone out of his way to get other boys into debt by lending them money and cigarettes at usury, and inducing them to join him in a gambling game, which he plays for hour after hour of the day and night. He walks into the laboratory where set teaching is in progress, and thinks nothing of disturbing it. He makes a noise at night and parades his money. … All this does not condemn him … but it will probably be a long time before he realizes that the very boys whom he affects to despise will be those whose help he will owe his outlook. It is through some of those phases of life at Finchden Manor which he justifiably dislikes, that he will find it possible to set in order his own house.'

Alastair continued the furnishing of his room. 'Of course,' Mr Lyward wrote to Mrs Wilton, 'he tries to make me feel that this is all a sort of bargain he has struck with you and me. I gently waved aside the notion of bargaining – so gently, that he can still talk in that strain to other people, i.e. I have left him with the crutches he still needs.'
Alastair continued his conspiracy to divide and rule. He wangled holiday after holiday out of his mother for some time. He went home for a while, and in a chatty letter (still typewritten) to Mr Lyward said that he did not think he would come back yet. He tried to invoke his mother's support against Mr Lyward for a longer holiday; at the same time he decided while at home to like Finchden Manor and use it against her. He proceeded to 'analyse' his own family, in a way in which he was certainly not being analysed himself. Mrs Wilton took this seriously and was again upset.

February 27, 1937
'Dear Mr Lyward,
Firstly I want to say how greatly improved we all found Alastair. He is happier in himself, more unselfish in small things. Will fetch and carry very kindly for me and his sister on many occasions. He admires you immensely but … I would like to tell you some of his statements with which I found it impossible to agree. I imagine they are only half-truths. (1) We or he are not to blame for anything, nothing is his fault – merely his misfortune or else his mother's fault. (2) One need never feel any sense of shame for any failure. (3) It is no one's concern and matters nothing what one does with one's life or talents. (4) Psychology is the one and only way, an improved version of Christianity. It is impossible for anyone to achieve maturity by any other way. …' The letter went on for twelve pages. Mr Lyward replied in two lines: 'I do assure you that, as you said, you were merely seeing the first effects or hearing half truths, and you need not take them to heart.'

In fact Alastair was gradually drawing away from his mother; she knew that the silver cord was being loosed. His letters home became more frequent. When he did write, he asked her and his sister never to come to Finchden again, as a result, wrote Mrs Wilton, 'of some rather tactless chaff on my part about the state of his room.' Mr Lyward again reassured her. In December, Alastair decided to stay at Finchden Manor for Christmas. It was the first Christmas he had ever spent away from home, and his mother was hurt and sad.

About this time, Alastair decided he would like 'to do some engineering'. Mr Knox included him in a class. Alastair's wish for learning at that moment was insincere; as with other boys, the time had not yet come. He tried an examination and failed. In his next reports he was described as 'showing a general joy in life. … The rougher, more virile elements are beginning to demand incorporation into the whole … and his aesthetic side is now quite pronounced.' He was ' for the most part happy and very alive, but now and again he gets a fit of depression. … I have not actually discussed his depressions with him, but I consider them an important indication of a disturbance in the region of his instincts …'

Mrs Wilton wrote post-haste:
'Dear Mr Lyward,
In my ignorance of psychology, occasional fits of depression would not trouble me much. Are not all emotionally sensitive people prone to experience both more exquisite delight and a deeper sense of sorrow than are the thicker skinned type? I don't know what you mean by the disturbances in the region of his instincts.'

Alastair was growing, that was about all, but Mrs Wilton suggested a visit, as she had not had a talk with Mr Lyward for some time. Alastair had already been there much longer than she had expected, and showed no wish to leave. She had done her utmost for a year and a half to continue her 'act of faith', yet despite her feeling of respect and friendliness for Mr Lyward, she could never get over her dislike of Finchden Manor and her distrust of the other boys. She was torn between her wish to keep Alastair to herself and her delight at his visible improvement.

One afternoon she arrived.
'Alastair seems very happy,' she said, seated in Mr Lyward's room, 'in spite of his companions.'
'Or perhaps because of his companions?' said Mr Lyward.
'Oh no. I refuse to believe that. How could anybody be happy with a lot of abnormal people?'
'But he is happy, isn't he?'
Mrs Wilton did not answer. Then she said; 'But I suppose you'd say no one was normal?'
She picked up a photograph of a not prepossessing-looking boy, which happened just to have arrived, and said with distaste: 'I suppose this is a finished product?'
Mr Lyward decided to bring about a crisis. As she continued to make disparaging insinuations about the other boys, he began to tap loudly on his desk, then brusquely interrupted her: 'I don't want to hear any more of this! Take Alastair away! Clear Out! Take him away! And I don't expect you've ever heard that in a drawing room.
Mrs Wilton suddenly wept. 'You know what's wrong,' she said: 'I'm jealous of you.' Troubles of her own childhood and youth came out and their release enabled her to explain why she had spoilt her son. She begged Mr Lyward to remain her friend.
'Will you keep Alastair?' she asked him.
'Of course I will.'

She went home. Next day:
'Dear Mr Lyward,
I would like to thank you very warmly for out talk yesterday. It helped very much to clear my mind of some of the difficulties you encounter in Alastair's development, and has also greatly deepened the confidence in which I leave him for a longer period in your care. I am so sorry that at times in the past I felt mistrustful and resentful towards yourself against my better judgment and reasoning. I think you do understand how difficult it's all been for me, and how my own pride has been hurt by Alastair's difficulties. How I would have rejoiced in the usual schoolboy successes in work or games! The greatest happiness that the future could hold would be the knowledge that my love was of some help to him. For it is the standing aside that is so bitter a lesson, and I've been trying during the past two years to learn its necessities.'

With his reply, Mr Lyward sent her two long poems he had written at Glenalmond many years before. 'I send them not so much because they represent what I've been trying to say to you. But they may reveal to you a little that I am deeply moved by the facts of the spiritual life of which you are aware – not that I think you now look upon me as a destroyer of values. Your last letter makes me the more willing to let you see them. I dared not use them, or anything like them, to convince you earlier.'

And in another letter a few days later: 'I admire greatly the way you have yielded to certain facts. People like you have an innate strength, which causes them to resist us forcibly – as you did at the start. The same strength enables them to share their boys' gradual release. Others, who accept us in a superficial way, never say later that we have opened any windows for them.'

The rigidity of both Mrs Wilton and Alastair was now broken. The ice floes were melting, and as often happened during a movement of this kind when 'life's genial stream begins to flow', there were revulsions and hesitations and blocks, which made it seem nothing had changed, that nothing had been freed. The conflict of dawning relief and the old self-pity was harder for the elderly woman to bear than for a boy. A real person was stepping off the pedestal; sometimes she stepped back and became the marble ideal again. She wrote to Mr Lyward: 'I am developing slowly from the fundamental truths you have laid for me, and among them, as I see them, are these; that love which is jealous and possessive or looks for a return is worthless; and that the early fierce protective mother-love is, I suppose, largely an instinct for the preservation of the species, that must be 'outgrown.' When Alastair again decided not to come home for Christmas, she wrote: 'The last thing I could wish is that he should go against his feelings, though I do dearly wish that he had wanted to be with us, and that is what hurts.'

About this time Alastair became extremely truculent, which (Mr Lyward wrote to Alastair's doctor) 'gave us a great many chances of helping him, and me many chances of useful analysis. Alastair began to show much more hostility to his mother after he senses that his mother was more with us, and we had to go very carefully in relationship to his hysterical tendencies. I would say that the hysteria is what prolongs matters so.'

Mrs Wilton found herself unable to pay for a holiday abroad, and Alastair resigned himself to not going. At about the same period Mr Lyward wrote 'For the first time I really felt it safe to speak to him "like a father", when to my dismay he got a letter from his sister offering him a few weeks in the South of France (for which their trustee was to pay). Rightly or wrongly, I felt I dared not say "no" at this particular juncture. It is not the first time that his sister has cut across his interests here.'

From near Antibes, Alastair wrote Mr Lyward his first really boyish and cheerful letter, chiefly on surf-riding. The priggishness was less marked and the typewriter had gone. He dreamed that he could not leave Finchden, and that a torrent was carrying him away, from which he saved himself by clinging to a crumbling rock. On his return, Mrs Wilton begged Mr Lyward to let her have Alastair at home for at least three weeks, so that she could hear all about France, and Alastair dreamed:
I went for a ride across a heath with my sister. When we got to the end of the heath, she went a different way, and I discovered I was riding two horses.
He went to his mother's, and was kind and considerate to her, but spoilt the holiday for her by being rude to his sister. 'He was very coarse and crude at her expense,' wrote Mrs Wilton. 'She tells me he drank too much while in France, and on one occasion was really offensively silly at table d' hote in consequence. On one occasion here a very dear, older lay, for whom Alastair has a genuine liking and who is anything but narrow-minded, refused to dine with him, as a protest against his conduct. He does seem to take the line "Why should I bother about people I'm not likely to see much of?", though they are most kindly disposed towards him. …'

"Dear Mrs Wilton, (wrote Mr Lyward)
… I should have expected a certain amount of what you wrote. Alastair's feelings of being inferior to his sister abroad and the feeling of being the little boy at home were the two most likely to be kept at bay by an "over statement" in terms of crudity. … It is very important that Alastair's extremely strong instincts should never again be merely bottled up to work their way along unsuspected channels. His fear of their strength has been for years the greatest of all his fears, and now that the lesser forms have been dealt with, he must inevitably come up against the real fear – "Whatever will happen if I let myself go?" … What you see is the result of this conflict which is severely touched up by the presence of his sister, and of older people associated with the old days, when he felt small and could do nothing but boil up inside.'

Alastair dreamed of his dead father, of girls at the seaside, riding horses, of rivers, and of his dislike of his sister. He dreamed of a prison guarded by nuns. Hitler occupied Prague. 'Alastair's fear of war (wrote Mt Lyward) was probably ad great as that of any of the boys here.' He began to dream of being chased by Germans, of aeroplanes crashing in flames, and then of being chased by wolves. He had more dreams of quarrels with his sister and an encouraging report.

'Alastair continues to show signs of working his way (irritably at times) through his humiliations connected with his sister. This must be very painful and for my part I am amazed by the underlying strength which enables him to go on with his contemporaries while these old feelings are being digested and dealt with inside. … He is going through a terrifically he-man phase, spending most of his time in physical activity of one sort or another.'

Suddenly, Alastair wrote a letter, hitting out at his sister. 'From what I've seen of you,' he wrote, 'you might think you were the only person in the world who has suffered worries and unhappiness. In fact you're just the same as everyone else, and on the whole other people make less noise about it.' Alastair told Mr Lyward that he had sent this letter. Mr Lyward reassured Mrs Wilton, but asked that the sister should not visit Finchden. 'She could easily hold up Alastair's progress by interrupting the "working through" process.'

'Dear Mr Lyward, (Mrs Wilton replied),
… that his complexity over his sister should be so deep-seated surprises us all, because it is absurd to consider her as out of the ordinary. She has failings, of course, and no doubt

one failing is to be somewhat dominating. Is it likely that Alastair has inherited a jealous disposition from me? … We know that he has received deep and permanent help from his stay with you, but I am puzzled that you should seriously consider a meeting with his sister could possibly endanger the work you are doing on his behalf.'

'Dear Mrs Wilton,' (replied Mr Lyward),
'I do not just want you to agree with me blindly. What I hope always is that wherever your resistance is based purely upon instinct, vision (not pressure) will gradually reduce the resistance. I hope the same for myself. What I must do is protect myself and the place, and individual boys, from anybody becoming too angry or too weary to go on with a long drawn out case. … I wish you would feel more generous toward yourself regarding the jealousy. It will go quicker if you recognize it as the natural feeling of a child (not yet cleared) rather than think of it a something you ought not to feel. If you incorporate it, it becomes part of your strength; but if you do not, it remains something which from neglect goes on sapping from within.'
Four days later Mr Lyward held one of his 'sessions'. It was directed chiefly at another boy, but in the middle he turned on Alastair and told him to stop grinning. Next evening Alastair dreamed:

I had gone mad and was rushing wildly around at home. I saw my mother and slapped her face. She didn't seem to mind, and then she and Mr Lyward told me to try and be quiet and put me to bed in the nursery.

It was now May, 1939. War was approaching, and Mrs Wilton wanted Alastair home. Her suggestions that he should leave Finchden became more insistent. But he did not want to go home and she was bitterly disappointed. Mr Lyward reassured her.

'Dear Mrs Wilton,
… I do not know if you had, as a girl, any experience of how difficult holidays with the family can be to adolescents. I have lost count of the number of adolescents who have had that experience and talked to me about it. In other words, Alastair is not being so very unique about this particular matter, only more frank, and a little more intense, owing to his fear of the confusion in his mind which would come about if he tried to hurry forward what I must call his reconciliation with those who (unwittingly or otherwise) have overpowered and humiliated him in the past. This reconciliation s on the way, but in so far as reconciliation constitutes a rebirth, it cannot be hurried …

'… And may I be allowed to help you by warning you against feeling bitter at Alastair's attitude? There is no occasion for that. When we feel bitter about such attitudes of adolescents, as are universal, we are merely in the grip of unacknowledged self-pity, which is looking for justification. It is hard sometimes to rejoice at the sight of the next generation really growing up, but at least we must not accuse them of a heartlessness which is not theirs.'

Mr Lyward did not think Alastair ready to leave Finchden. After explaining that the confusion in the boy's mind was not yet clear, he added an important paragraph: 'I hold that he would not have any serious difficulty in reaching an average public school academic standard in about a third of the usual time. Many boys by bringing their emotional troubles to their schoolwork create the difficulties which schoolmasters wrongly think of as residing (for those boys) in the subjects they study.

These words summarize one of the principal aims and achievements of Mr Lyward's work. Many boys, before this letter and since, once cleared of their emotional trouble, settled down happily to work and passed examinations in which they had previously

failed. Another paragraph from a contemporary letter to the boy's trustee may here be quoted:

'About two years ago,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'two parents of prospective members of this community visited us in the same month or so. The first was a mother who had been sent by her husband to ask me to reduce my fees. In the course of conversation she suddenly said: "It has been a difficult year, you see, we have had to sell some of the hunters." The other was the wife of a merchant service captain who had just agreed to the reduction of his salary from £800 to £400 in order to keep his job. She said: "I will get rid of the house and live in rooms so that the boy can come to you."
It has been difficult since then to know what to reply to parents who may or may not be picking us out as the first or one of the first "luxuries" about which to economize. I feel also rather like the surgeon who met criticism of his account by altering it to: "For performing operation £25, for knowing how to perform operation £200".'

August came. A crisis had arrived in Alastair's development. He felt ready to go home, but for the moment Mr Lyward refused permission. 'I sympathize with you utterly,' he wrote to Mrs Wilton, 'in your desire to have Alastair home. But I feel that I must now speak in no uncertain way. He has once again reached the point where I can treat him firmly and say, "You have just got to accept authority without question and without modifying everything to suit yourself." If this phase is now broken into, I shall probably have to do it over again. … You have shown understanding, but I cannot refrain from telling you that there is always just that extra something that has to be surrendered. The something about which one says, "Not that, please!!" …'

At the same time, while on holiday, Mr Lyward sent Alastair a note, saying: '… I am so anxious that you should take advantage of this chance I have given you of accepting the decision of "somebody in authority" without question. In ordinary language, even if you don't like something, can you lump it cheerfully? This means a great deal to you. Please have a go at seeing what it's all about.'

War was declared and at the beginning of October Alastair went home for three weeks. 'I want to tell you,' wrote Mrs Wilton, 'how lovely these weeks have been. He was so bright and considerate, and it did one good just to feel he was around …' But, 'there is still a little pang of jealousy, and I somehow feel I am just his little mother, whom he loves in a sweet protective way. I suppose I have lost for ever the power to be a friend on an equal footing …'

'Dear Mrs Wilton,' (Mr Lyward answered),
'… I am sure you can hope to be treated as an "equal friend", if you will deal with the self-pity and gradually give up wanting to be "of influence". True influence can only come as a result of relationship, and only when the relationship is not desired in order to exert influence … So long as one needs people as badly as you once needed Alastair, one is bound to try and hold them by being useful to them …'

Alastair continued to dream about girls, of being carried out to sea, about his mother and his sister. In one dream he slapped his sister's face and told her exactly what he thought of her. He dreamed that an old boy returned to Finchden and said that Alastair had become more masculine, 'and I burst into tears …' he dreamed he had grown a beard.

In June 1940 he went home again. His mother and sister, expecting him to return to Finchden at the end of the holiday, went away for a visit, leaving him alone. He rang up Finchden. Mr Lyward was away. Alastair wanted to know whether it would be all right for him to take a job as a mechanic. 'I suggested', noted the assistant who took the call,

‘that he should write to Mr Lyward, and I said there would be no harm in making some enquiries. I also advised him not to commit himself to anything until he had either heard from Mr Lyward or had had a talk with him.’

Thus began the last stage of Alastair’s accoutrement for life, and perhaps the most interesting, since it was during this last stage, as with many other boys, that Mr Lyward had his hardest struggle with the parent concerning the real nature of his work. His own attitude was all the more difficult to vindicate, because the boy of his own accord now wanted to leave. The parents’ opposition to Finchden had evaporated. They acknowledged what Mt Lyward had done, and were grateful. It therefore seemed obvious that the time had come for Mr Lyward, his part played, to withdraw and leave the boy to choose his own path in the world. Against these solid arguments Mr Lyward had nothing but his own vision and diagnosis of the boy. As at the beginning, so at the end, he asked another ‘act of faith’. Mrs Wilton was naturally delighted when she heard of Alastair’s project to go to work.

‘Dear Mr Lyward,
You must know how I have rejoicing in my heart. I am glad that Alastair feels himself ready to be independent …’ Mr Lyward was still on holiday, and had not yet seen Alastair. ‘Thank you for your letter,’ (he replied). ‘I did not trouble you about a meeting, because I can only judge the situation by seeing Alastair. He was not ready to go to work on a sound basis when I last saw him. And as the difference between being ready and apparently nearly ready is not a little, but a lot, in its effects and ramifications on his future life, I cannot offhand advise his going with something vital to go through after he leaves. He may, or may not, finish the last little bit after he leaves, whereas I know that when they have completely surrendered here they have saved themselves for certain (at the best) years of loneliness and bewilderment, and (at the worst) a further breakdown.
‘I am sorry. But I must keep on sticking by what I know. Alastair knows in his heart that I am right. And he knows that he will not be called upon to stay a day longer than is needed to crown our patient work and his own patience over these difficult years. All the boys are back now, and Alastair owes it to himself to come back and see me, which shoes how near he is to being free, even if I have to say that he had not quite made the final surrender and become as a little child. With kindest regards to you, of whom I always think as yourself having made a very wonderful surrender where Alastair is concerned – one amply repaid I am sure, but made without certainty that it would be …’

A week later Mr Lyward met Alastair in London, and wrote his account of the interview briefly in a report. ‘I would have agreed to his going to work but for the quite obvious proofs he gave that he was not quite ready. It was three minutes after his statement “I intend to go whatever you say” that he suddenly said, “I am coming back with you”. It is the old business of accepting and therefore developing within himself, “the father principle” without which he seeks life always as an “escape back to mothering”.

Mr Lyward described the meeting at greater length in a letter to a doctor. Since it is of the highest importance in understanding Finchden manor, and perhaps of interest to all who care to examine whether they have confronted life with fear or freedom, I give the relevant passages in full.

‘ … I went to London to see Alastair after he had telephoned that he wasn’t returning. I would have willingly agreed to his trying himself out but the fact that he very soon revealed over lunch that he was not so much going out to a new adventure, as running from the final acceptance of that one element in life here which will clear him for life of the futility of rebellion.

It is extraordinary, even to us here, how he clings to the "right" to run his own life and be supported whenever things go wrong. His most revealing statement to me that day in London was: "Well, I thought if I went off – (i.e. left Finchden while nominally on a holiday) – and things didn't go right, you would out of your infinite kindness have me back." I do hope you will see what I saw in that. He is not quite free of what I called to him the "mother-child principle", which is equivalent to "whatever I do Mummy will be there", and is not yet strengthened by the "father-child principle", rooted in him. This latter is equivalent to "I am prepared to go and take the risks".

For quite a long time he hasn't been far off the change from the former to the latter. But the final inner change is evidently very hard for him to achieve. The difference, however, between having achieved it before leaving with the statement "Aren't I clever – so long as I'm secretly held up from behind", is enormous. … I had already said to him over lunch in London, "Well, Alastair, I don't advise you to go on a runaway from Finchden basis, but I shan't stop you." So far as I knew, he was going, when he suddenly came to himself and said – "I will come back with you"'.

The process of 'clearing' reached a climax four months later. Finchden had moved into Shropshire. Alastair had been with Mr Lyward over four years. Mrs Wilton, who had not heard from Mr Lyward since the meeting in London, wrote on Alastair's nineteenth birthday, 'You have effected such great and good changes in Alastair, that one does hope, despite possible weaknesses, which he must recognize and learn to guard against, and which even your teaching cannot wholly eradicate, that he is by now able and fitted to do something on his own. I have no doubt if it were not for this ghastly war, you would have advised Alastair to leave before.' She added that she had saved some petrol, and suggested coming to Shropshire for the weekend. Mr Lyward and Alastair both answered that she would be welcome.

She arrived, looking forward to the long country drive, and to seeing him, and bringing his sister with her. The pleasant weekend became a crisis. Alastair had two rows, first with Mr Lyward in the streets of Ludlow, the second with his mother in a hotel, where he accused her of running his life, and behaved worse than ever before. She drove straight home and after resting for some days wrote to Mr Lyward. At the beginning of her letter she put two quotations: 'Holiness is an infinite compassion for others', 'Happiness is a great love and much service'.

'These are glorious truths,' she wrote, 'and I believed that your psychology was bring Alastair towards them. I felt a great trust and a great hope. I am very bitterly sorry that that sad visit has destroyed my trust. I cannot see that your explanation that he was suffering from the painful shock of discovering his utter lack of independence, could account for the return of symptoms of which there has been no sign for so long. I find it difficult to reconcile your statement that, after the scene you had described you had with Alastair in Ludlow, better relations than ever had been established between you. Neither Alastair nor I have written to each other. I don't suppose he has been hoping I would, as much as I had been hoping he would.'

Mr Lyward answered:
' … Before Alastair can be co-operative, he has got to stake out a claim for himself as a separate person, entitled to respect such as he has never had at home. The boldest and healthiest move has ever made in this direction, to my knowledge, was the one which hurt you here recently. It was unpleasant because it was taking place years after it should have done, but couldn't. Through your pain and tears you might well have welcomed it as a sign of developing strength, without which he can never love you, except in the self-seeking way a child does. … Can you imagine anything more devastating than to be

dominated and inwardly emasculated by two women and subsequently challenged by them to manifest the strength and therefore the generosity and chivalry of a contented male?

The real irony is that you tend to hold me responsible for the time it all takes, even after you have admitted that none of you was able to be co-operative for so long a period after Alastair came to us. I know you have looked to yourself and the part you have played in the past. You will remember, as I vividly remember, about the time long ago now, when I told you to take Alastair away. Must I say that again now? And if I do will you say that it is a threat? Or will you realize that there must be a limit to the number of times I tell you what is in my power to do and what is not?

Eleven years of this work have provided me with enough evidence: (1) that I know what I am doing, (2) that I do it as fast as I can, (3) that there is no way of explaining to parents, who are trying to avoid the suffering of realizing the part they have played in the past, and the suffering connected with revising their values …' Mrs Wilton did not write to Mr Lyward again for over two months, during which time she had several cheerful letters from Alastair. When she did write to Mr Lyward, it was to raise one final doubt – a doubt naturally in the minds of many parents in regard to any person whose position or character had given him influence over their sons.

'There are one or two aspects which disturb me, and the first is Alastair's intense dependence on yourself. It has taken me a long time to realize how dependent he was at one time, on me; and now how really dependent he is on you. Unless your teaching is going to develop Alastair himself and what there is of real individuality in him, you will surely have failed. His humour seems to me his truest self, and that he has always had. But his opinions, his very phraseology are echoes of yourself. I don't say its not an interesting and agreeable self, but one feels too strongly that he feels so safe in being your reflection, that in giving in to your wishes and plans for him he is seeking refuge and shelter from an unpleasant world. That is surely not what you wish for him ultimately. Most people urge that the longer he stays with you, the more dependent he will become. If it were true, it would be very wrong for him to stay longer. Most of my friends beg me to urge Alastair to leave; but as they have not the advantage of knowing yourself, nor did they know, except in very few cases, what Alastair was like, their opinions cannot be wholly convincing. Two people only, whom I respect highly, have advised me still not to cut short the progress which seems to have set in again since Christmas …'

Mr Lyward replied:
' … First and foremost dependence is – just dependence, neither good nor bad. What matters is not that a person "depends", but upon whom he depends and what is likely to come about eventually as a result. And again, will you forgive me if I say that you might by now have reached the view, that of all the people Alastair might depend on, I was (in view of my work and experience) the safest one – the one most certain to know a good deal (may I say, an exceptional amount) about "dependence" and its dangers. For this is what I claim to know, - this, and the futility of hoping that anybody like Alastair could ever become self-confident, without having first placed his full confidence in somebody of his own sex, who was above all (as a father should be) interested in using his dependence at a safe rate to free him of it.

Dependence is neither a good nor a bad thing. It is just inevitable. The special difficulty where Alastair is concerned is that he took so long to risk transferring his dependence from a woman to a man. I doubt whether it could have happened until he had broken

away from you, as he did roughly and painfully last November. I think it is now safe to say that he has at last complete confidence in me – not as a God (this was how as a child he trusted you), but as a person. The echoing about which you write is, however, a not too pleasant reminder that you have remained a God for him too long (liable, therefore, to stand between him and God), and that he still finds it very hard to accept anything less. As he becomes more accustomed to sharing the responsibility for his life with me – this is how to use dependence to free him – he will not need to echo me. If he is echoing me now, it is because he needs to do so …'

About two months later,
'Dear Mrs Wilton,' (Mr Lyward wrote),
'Alastair came to see me about ten days ago with the statement that he wished to try himself out as a mechanic. I agreed to this …'
And so Alastair Wilton left Finchden.
'I do most deeply thank you,' Mrs Wilton wrote in her last letter but one to Mr Lyward, 'for all your trouble and toil to help Alastair. I hope that in his healed adjustment of himself he will show his gratitude to you throughout his life. I still hope and look for the fulfillment of your early promise when you told me that although he would pass through a difficult phase with myself of apparent lack of affection, in the end the harmony of real love would be fully restored.'

The rest of the story is briefly told. For several months Alastair worked in a small factory not many miles from Mr Lyward. It worried him that he should have been exempted from military service. He thought of having himself 're-boarded' but the original exemption was confirmed. It was some while before he could bear to spend much time with his mother; his resentment against her was still strong. Yet he moved north, though not right into Scotland. After some time he had saved enough to rent a garage. He married happily and had a child. His mother, far from being jealous, was delighted with his wife and the 'harmony of real love' for which she had hoped began to be restored.

Alastair worked hard. He had very little money, but made enough to buy his garage. In every sense he could now stand on his own feet. Such troubles as came his way he could now cope with by himself. He wrote to Mr Lyward every few months, and later paid Finchden a visit now and then. Sometimes he asked for advice, but the 'echo' had disappeared and he spoke in his own voice. He was elected to local councils and held a number of responsible positions. Amusing traces of hauteur remained, but he could laugh at himself and let others laugh at him. He had gained loyalty and depth, and developed the 'wide culture', of which Mrs Wilton had once spoken as coming from Mr Lyward and Mr Knox, although he no longer painted. (The canvases with which he had arrived at Finchden were never mentioned again and are still there.) Above all, the self-pity had vanished.

Except for one more letter, Mrs Wilton's correspondence with Mr Lyward ceased in 1951. Finchden Manor celebrated its twenty-first anniversary in London. The Fortune Theatre was taken over and the boys acted a play, which Fitzy had produced. The audience consisted almost entirely of parents, doctors, social workers, teachers, probation officers, old boys who had come to pay their tribute to Mr Lyward. Ten representatives of a County Council arrived to see one of their most difficult boys act, and four girls hired a taxi from Tenterden. Mr Lyward spoke from the stage after the play, Mrs Lyward spoke, the staff took their curtains, and one of the theatre attendants, who had never heard of Finchden before, burst into tears. Among the audience was Mrs Wilton.

That was the last time Mr Lyward saw her. In the same year she died. From things she said during her last illness Alastair believed that her friendship with Mr Lyward had

given her a strength which enabled her to face death in peace. He afterwards found among her papers, and returned to Finchden, the two verse plays which Mr Lyward had sent her after her visit fifteen years before. She had meant to post them back, but had kept them. A letter – one small sheet – written in 1946 had been attached to thank him for the plays '… you lent me, to help me in the unhappy days, which thanks to your goodness are over and passed. Alastair is a great joy to me now. Both my children are married, and when I am sometimes rather lonely and self-pitying, I summon to my help the help you opened my eyes to see. I am very well and happy. All my best wishes to you and yours, and your wonderful work …'

CHAPTER TEN

WHEN talking or writing to parents Mr Lyward often spoke of himself as 'mediating'. When a local educational authority paid the boys' fees, the triangle of boy, parent, and Mr Lyward became a quadrilateral. His work thus involved him intimately in two dramas - the boy's relationship with father and mother - and that of the boy, as an individual, to the needs and requirements of the State. This second drama also involved the autonomy of Mr Lyward's own work: the conditions under which it could or could not continue, and his own personality as a man of original vision not always amenable to rules.

As Mr Lyward said in 1948 at the Conference of the National Association for Mental Health: 'The problem of mental health is now ceasing to a certain extent to be one of health, and becoming one of education. But there is not much point in regarding it as an educational issue, if inspectors dealing with difficult children are going to look at the wrong things, instead of trying to find out, and knowing how to find out, whether, at the places they inspect, there is real love operating in a disinterested way.

A Council had written asking whether a certain boy might not be ready to be trained for a career and leave. Mr Lyward wrote back four pages for which 'report' is far too cold a word:

'...Since the boy turned his back on academic achievement, which is what happened, he presented a picture of someone groping in new territory, but not, I would say, completely lost or frightened. Certainly he had to be watched for depression or apathy or both, which he might as it were build into his play-acting. This last was a marked feature of his life when he came. After disappearing to some extent, it reappeared in a very marked manner indeed last summer... I decided not to interfere, apart from reintroducing him to an earlier part of his life by...' (some details follow).'... These touches the other boys took up, and by about the end of August his posturing was coming to an end, and since then he has returned to the circulation within the community which characterized his early days here, but at a deeper level. He is more relaxed and his humour is not tinged with bitterness. ... But he is still resistant, rather like a cat, who will do many things until it is asked to do them, when it asserts its independence by merely moving off. As long as this need exists, any attempt to involve him in the future seems to be premature, and therefore his general education here is still oblique rather than direct... I could never see anything coming of an attempt to patch up. I think risks had to be taken in helping him. But I also think that if he had been going to deteriorate he would be showing signs of doing so now, whereas I felt the other day that I had never seen him so quietly alive. ... It is not possible to write a report on him which doesn't relate to love and faith rather than plans ...'

To this letter the Council wrote a warm reply, fully in agreement with Mr Lyward's wish that the boy should not be hurried. 'How tired of it they must get,' Mr Lyward once said, thinking of parents. 'How long it takes ... on and on ... and on...'

We have seen something of the manner in which boys arrived at Finchden - at what point did they go? 'There are those,' Mr Lyward wrote, 'whose departure is arranged by us; those taken away before we actually give the word; and those taken away against our advice.' What, at Finchden Manor, was the test of readiness? They themselves talked of 'making the grade', or of 'going with Mr Lyward's blessing', or, jokingly, of 'being cured'.

'Cure' of the particular trouble or 'offence' for which a boy had been sent to Finchden Manor was usually the least to be achieved. To some parents Finchden was only a kind of mental spa, a Harrogate of the emotions, at which their child was to do a quick course and depart. 'His habits must be cured at all costs,' wrote one father, 'I cannot let him stay

with you more than a few months.' A mother decided that her son had taken the waters sufficiently and withdrew him. 'Last night I called all the family into the library,' she informed Mr Lyward, 'and told them that if any ordering about's to be done, it'll be done by me.' As she drove her son away she said, 'The first thing you'll do is have your hair cut'. In other words, he was going back to the very circumstances which had caused him to be sent.

This assertion by parents that their sons were 'better' (often made before the boy had even arrived at Finchden) usually meant that the symptom of maladjustment - it might be pilfering, eczema, asthma, violence, etc. - seemed to have disappeared. Such fathers and mothers viewed Mr Lyward as a masseur of the emotions who would make sure the boy never got into trouble again, then push him through examinations, so that he could 'catch up' the time missed at an ordinary school. It was not in terms of 'cure and cram' that Mr Lyward approached his work. The readiness to leave of a 'thief' did not only mean that he had stopped stealing.

Mr Lyward wrote of a boy called Fred Sutton, who came to Finchden with a long list of minor crimes, and later did well:

'I do think that he is convinced at last that he counts. But he still will not be denied his own way in certain respects. Is he a weak character, who should not be expected to surrender to the total situation here? We find this difficult to answer. We are still inclined to hope that our life here will help the softened Fred Sutton, once so bitter and tight-lipped, to reach a realization of values clear enough to keep him out of all serious trouble, and away from the rehardening effects of possible punishment.'

What do those phrases mean? Most of us have 'certain respects' in which we will not be denied our own way, believing ourselves to be right and others wrong. Why a boy should be expected to 'surrender to the total situation' at Finchden Manor, more than to 'the total situation' anywhere else. At first glance, it may seem extraordinarily presumptuous in one mortal man to declare, once boys have accepted a community' which happens to have grown up around him, that they are then ready to go out into the world. Mr Lyward made no claim for his community other than that it was one. What the words meant he put quite simply in a letter he once wrote, while on holiday, to a boy at Finchden:

'I hope you will welcome a letter from me even if it is only a small one. At the time I went away you were beginning to see things clearer. This is to say that I hope you are able to use that time as a kind of base from which to move on. There is no need for me to tell you that you have gifts. But it is important for you to discover that your real need at the moment is to measure yourself; as it were, with your contemporaries of all kinds (not primarily the clever ones by any means). This is the way to develop what I suppose must be called "guts". You see, you use up what guts you've got in rebelling or grumbling or "digging your toes in". Once you've started using them to mix and accept other people, (independent of their brains or attainments), just because they're there, all kinds of things would happen. I had the feeling that you were on the verge of seeing this, and that is why I have written. I've tried not to put it scientifically. But I know you will be on better terms with yourself, as soon as you do what I have tried to hint at above. Whoever or whatever (again to put it that way) robbed you of your guts, only you can start acting in those ways which will reassure yourself that you've got them. 'This might perhaps be put "robbed of living your own life, so that you could live theirs"; but you must remember that it's no good sitting down and saying "now I'll live mine". That is best achieved by accepting the fact of other people around you and that we are all linked up; and not being "selective". Gradually, if you do that, you will find that you are living a life of your own (you can't do that in a vacuum). You need not confuse the above with "Being unselfish", etc. I'm

merely suggesting that you accept a fact - the existence of others round you - and by "accept" I mean "in practice". (The other thing would be mere acquiescence).'

Acceptance 'in practice' meant contact and co-mingling, rubbing of shoulders instead of turning a cold shoulder, friction not in the sense of dispute, but ordinary friction among other people. Amber, by friction, becomes electric; human beings become individuals by friction, not by remaining apart. 'You can't live a life of your own in a vacuum'.

Elsewhere Mr Lyward wrote of boys '...coming to accept the common humanity each shares with his fellows and individuating out of that rather than by denial of it.' Surrender - what did surrender mean? The gradual losing of an artificial self; which might have found expression:

'...in a boy's picture of himself... or in one of those almost fanatic attachments ... or some connection in the town.' Any of these attitudes was capable of keeping a part of him outside the community. Aloofness also found expression in certain attitudes towards the community itself; which on the surface gave certain boys a deceptive air of having 'made the acceptance' and begun to take part. Good mixers, for example: '...many good mixers are really aloof in the deepest sense, being under compulsion to mix all their waking hours. They need sympathetic understanding, too,' wrote Mr Lyward, 'for they miss all that is missed by those, whose manifest aloofness matters only in so far as it tells us of the same deep-seated confusion.'

There is also a particular kind of helpful person, who, while appearing to have accepted the community - indeed to be its most devoted servant - has really not accepted it at all, but is using it as his foil: ' ... unhealthily generous towards its other members, trying to buy what cannot be bought, feeling that they are wanted only for what they have or can do', and not for what they are.

One boy, feeling inwardly humiliated by all his family, had consequently acquired a thirst for power. He brought this thirst with him to the new community, which he tried to dominate by being helpful. He was unwittingly encouraged by a probation officer who counselled him '...always to think what Mr Lyward would like you to do and be one move ahead'. Mr Lyward composed one of his imaginary cross-examinations round this story.

G. L.: Surely that was bad advice on the probation officer's part ?
But if (asked the imaginary questioner) the boy developed the habit of doing what society preferred, it would be good?
G. L.: Good for whom? This particular boy was quite capable of that particular trick, among others. ... He could dominate others quite easily by being helpful, couldn't he? He did, in fact, try this method and often anticipated me by at least one move - causing a great deal of consternation by so doing. Clearly we didn't do what he would have called the obvious thing. We didn't say 'Thank you'.
Q.: You let fly at him, I imagine?
G. L.: No - we took no notice, quite often.
Q.: But wouldn't it have given him selfconfidence and assurance to feel that his help was acceptable and accepted?
G. L.: Have you ever watched a person like this giving his help? Is he clearly straightforward and honest? I'm not too sure that the effort to get a move or more ahead of me is straightforward. It's certainly calculating and...
Q.: One moment. I think I see one thing you are concerned to stop - calculating, planning, and the like.

G. L.: Agreed. But that must not be taken to imply that I am completely against all planning and calculating; certainly adults have to plan and calculate. But not concerning their near relations with others, nor in the daily ways of straightforwardness, honesty and helpfulness. This boy was calculating how to maintain power or (more accurately) how to maintain a precarious hold on life which he doesn't realize to be so precarious.
Q.: You want to loosen that hold?
G. L.: Yes. Slowly; no faster than he is unconsciously discovering a better way. This 'helpfulness' trick - a confidence trick if ever there was one - always breaks down here and leads to such a boy trying others, frequently stealing, or even bed-wetting.

Sometimes those who have been dominated in childhood and adolescence seek in later life to dominate others: it may be by their beauty, or by their brains, or by their self-pity. Sometimes, surrendering themselves to some powerful group, they seek domination through the group. This is not a true surrender; it can often be the surrender of a coward, without inward strength, and deeply influenced by vengefulness. Several adolescents at Finchden, whom visitors might think to have surrendered to and accepted the community, were in fact trying either to own it or to be owned by it. In neither instance had they begun their deeper personal relationship with it.

The key to 'surrender' and 'acceptance' at Finchden was personal relationship. What the boys surrendered was a self too artificial to have personal relationship with anyone. What they accepted was a community of personal relationships, not 'the community' as an idea. 'I run a community,' Mr Lyward wrote early in the life of Finchden Manor, 'of which no one is expected to be a loyal understanding member. I have had the joy, in consequence, of continually watching a larger proportion of people co-operating, without stimulants, than in any community I have known, where "community spirit" is preached in and out of season as an ideal, to be achieved by all and sundry from the moment of entry, regardless of their capacity or their prior needs.'

Surrender took time. Acceptance took time. 'It is surely safe to assume that no adolescent is determined never to participate, but that all aloofness is an attempt to gain time. The more neurotically aloof adolescents are those, whose life to date has been one long cry of "give me time" ... their fear of the moment of contact dominates their whole lonely existence ... they have never had their external form of living properly informed by their spirit of spontaneity. They need to be helped not to worry about the group ... while they recapture the joy "of their own time".' Hence, respite - and the patient willingness of the staff to be clung to. 'Release can only come for these boys if somebody will acknowledge their tendency to become identified with and possess everything and everybody they touch - somebody who thus will help them to move, little by little, towards the joy of free relationship with that one person. Relationship to a group may then follow.'

Of course, not all fulfilled the last stage of their development. Mr Lyward might decide that Finchden Manor could do no more for one boy - at that moment; or that another would benefit from taking a job - at that moment. The boys jokingly said: 'I am cured!' Once, seriously, suddenly, dramatically, a boy declared, 'It's happened!' From that day colour came into his face and his relationship with Mr Knox, who was teaching him, grew warmer. Mr Lyward had taken over the expression. 'It' might 'happen' to one boy while at Finchden; to another, not until he left; of a third he said that 'it happened' as the boy went through the gates. It was often difficult for a boy - as for anyone - to change in front of the person who had made the change possible.

They left, as they had come, in all kinds of ways. Mr Lyward or one of the staff might take special pains to find a suitable job for one boy. Another had a stroke of luck. Some

found their own jobs. Mr Lyward might say: 'I suppose it's time for you to go - you'd better start looking in the papers.' One or two boys had to be 'eased out'.

Had Finchden Manor been nothing more than a cure or a crammer, the boys might not have come back, or come back only on friendly and nostalgic visits. But since it had shown them the beginning of a way of life, their association continued naturally. Mr Lyward scarcely had to say 'Keep in touch'. Most boys took it for granted that they would. So many things, which had not been clear to them at Finchden, might become clear on a return visit. So many things he had not been able to do, so many words he had not been able to say, while they were still living there, became possible and appropriate after they had left.

Sometimes a boy's departure coincided with an examination. When a particular kind of boy was ready, he could absorb knowledge easily and quickly. I have a thick sheaf of notes which Mr Lyward used while preparing a boy called Stephen Morrison for the G.C.E. - chiefly for the advanced and scholarship papers in history and English literature. The notes cover several hundred pages, and had been supplemented by large but simple charts showing, as if on a family tree, the social and political development of the Western world, the flowering of language, the literary genealogy of our poets. The chart of European history is divided horizontally into four parts, 'Renaissance and Reformation', 'Bourbons and Hapsburgs', 'Enlightened Despotism', 'Liberal Movements and Nationalism'. The salient dates and personages of French history are written vertically down the left-hand side, and the dates and personages of other European countries parallel, the most important being circled and shaded in red. Names of influential writers are interwoven, so that the thought and events of the whole period and continent appear as part of an interrelated but not intricate pattern. Mr Lyward's notes on the set books in English literature, written in that quick scholar's hand which so easily came to resemble music, defy summary. One sheaf is occupied with a comparison between Dryden's All For Love and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra, another with Chaucer, another with Milton, and so on. One page recommends a modern critical work, with a note: 'If you understand this book and use it with your text, you can't want more on your Milton. When you've done that, turn over'; and, over, there follows a fresh sheaf outlining Milton's relationship to his predecessors. Another page presents a summary of a poem by John Donne, with a note to the boy: 'This is a prose analysis. Does prose analysis suggest the nature of the poem? It does not suggest the tenderness and real feeling. Actually the flimsiness of the argument accentuates the feeling' ... and then, written boldly right across the page and underlined three times, 'But can you see (feel) that?', with an instruction crowded into the bottom corner, 'You will find the feeling only in the inflection and cadence, so read the poem aloud'.

Some of these notes were Mr Lyward's own, and some a recreated presentation of other people's thoughts. He seemed to me to be a great impresario of learning, a Diaghileff of education. He took European history, or the works of half-a-dozen great writers, and evening after evening staged them for one boy, whose five months of concentrated hard work had only been made possible by perhaps twenty-five, maybe even fifty months of relaxation.

During the same period, Mr Lyward was taking a class of about twenty boys in the big kitchen - being the warmest room in the house. Although these classes were chiefly concerned with French grammar, they verged and were so arranged as to verge upon at least a dozen other subjects - particularly algebra, phonetics, English literature, and the controversies of the Middle Ages. Sometimes they took an hour, sometimes two. They had no rigid continuity. Years of experiments had shown that something boys had been told on Monday they might have forgotten on Tuesday, but absorbed by Thursday.

Consequently he might not revert to it until Thursday, and then in a different light and from an unexpected approach. He seldom taught straight ahead, but with a carefully designed deviousness. He varied the frontal attack upon a point of information with outflankings and detours, so that it came to be seen in the round, from several angles, and not only, like a pylon, as a bare link along a formal chain.

Usually his 'digressions' had been minutely planned, although he sometimes did so impromptu. None of the boys who had been at Finchden any length of time was surprised at his apparent irrelevancies, any more than they were surprised at his deliberate 'unfairnesses'. They came to accept and trust his treatment of a subject, in the same way as his treatment of themselves - having learnt from experience that in the end he led them somewhere. The journey held a fascination of its own. It is not unusual to find among Mr Lyward's notes an elementary translation into French, sandwiched between an algebraic equation and a few words on Tyndale's and Coverdale's translations of the Bible. When the classes in the kitchen were coming to an end, Mr Lyward gave the boys a craftily selected list of a hundred words and expressions they had discussed in order to discover what different individuals remembered. The first nine are:

- connotation;

- mensae, of the table;

- relations;

- Comus;

- visual image;

- first person, singular number, future simple tense, active indicative mood of the verb 'to have';

- Dr Johnson;

- Ben Jonson;

- T. S. Eliot.

People may well ask what on earth this meant. The answer is that one boy might see the word mensae, for example, as nothing more than the genitive of a word meaning 'a table', another see beyond that to the meaning 'something that is measured'. The third might remember the Latin word 'mens' for 'the mind' or 'measure', and so recall that the role of the mind is to measure, not to dominate or possess. The word 'mensae' was thus directed particularly at an eighteen-year-old boy called Andrew Salter, a 'compulsive thinker' given to fantastic questions. Six months later I saw him as Aladdin in a pantomime the boys were putting on for a hundred local children: he was much happier and hardly bothering to think at all. When he started to think again, it would be as a more relaxed person, 'with head and heart reasonably at one', and produce better and quicker results.

The feeling at these classes was friendly, but not lackadaisical. A boy who did not understand might interrupt Mr Lyward, sometimes to be left behind deliberately or to have the whole class reduced to the speed of the slowest. Often Mr Lyward turned his

own 'lecture' into a dialogue with a particular boy, or into a general discussion. He put written questions such as these:

- 'What is meant by "solving" an equation? Try to connect the word "solve" with another word you know';

- 'Compose four lines in the style of "No more Latin, no more Greek", using the sound and the rhythm to express a mood or feeling', (30 minutes);

- 'Fill in the gaps in the following... "To use the word motor car in a speech by an Elizabethan would be to perpetrate an ... But... (who?) didn't worry about that.'

He told the boys, 'You will either know how to fill in these gaps at once, or not know, in which event no amount of extra time will avail you. He gave them three quarters of an hour to write 15-20 lines about the effect on themselves of a preliminary study of phonetics, particularly interesting among boys with several dialects '(... you can let it all take the form of a letter, if you like.)' His private notes on the boys in this class describe them severally as 'punctured'; 'concerned and faint'; 'wide open'; 'earnest and frail'; 'solid and held'; 'slight and penetrating'; 'rich and spendthrift'; 'clever and precarious'; 'thoroughbred'; 'penny plain'; 'canine and romantic'.

He took words to pieces, passed the pieces round, then reassembled them and made them work, so that they became 'words with power'. Sometimes he drew a diagram or picture to delineate a word's first meaning. All the time, whatever he was teaching, he illustrated, bringing the unfamiliar into touch with the familiar. '"There are a great many Tudor houses in Norfolk". That is perhaps a better way of starting a talk on Ket's Rebellion than to say, "Wealth and land had accumulated in a few hands." It startles by its apparent irrelevance. It belongs to the present. It refers to something that can be seen today by the two eyes in your head. It starts the less intellectual or more emotionally disturbed child trotting along with the others. It gives significance to the conclusion that the rebellion was social rather than political. It gives a good many wandering notions a local habitation. And if you refer to the memorial recently erected to the rebels on the four hundredth anniversary, you help your pupils to link their lives with today's people in Norfolk and with the other lovers of fair play of a bygone age. Both time and space are spanned.'

The boys in that kitchen class would have had little difficulty in composing one small essay Mr Lyward asked of them, on 'detective work in study'. He had turned each of them into a sleuth. He had given them a host of clues; if they learnt to pick them up and follow them, the time approached for more specialised tuition, with himself or some other member of the staff. That tuition enabled Stephen Morrison to pass two 'A' levels in five months, at scholarship level, in subjects he had never touched before. The boys were thus involved in a kind of treasure-hunt. Stephen's private tuition and the kitchen classes were set pieces. But in fact education ('nourishing') continued casually and conversationally all the time.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN SUCH an atmosphere, among so many opening hearts and minds beginning quietly to become receptive, nothing seemed impossible. One evening Mr Lyward had spent an hour or two in his own part of the house, giving two boys a music lesson. They went back to the dining-room for supper, where he followed them, meaning to finish his remarks about scales. He noticed a boy, John Farmer, a recent arrival, round whom a kind of stalemate had developed. John could do nothing but mooch about, reiterating that he was going to leave.

Mr Lyward decided that this situation could not be allowed to continue, and shouted at the boy, deliberately appearing to have lost his temper. He went on to shake up the others in the room. Two boys who should have been washing up were not there; a custom had evidently grown up that boys who did other people's chores one evening need not do their own the next. He wanted to know why. A discussion began, and continued while he chivvied them, sending two to clean the kitchen, another to sweep the dining-room, and joining another in the scullery who volunteered to wash the plates, 'if you'll do the pots and pans, sir.' Another boy, who had lately won a valuable University scholarship, was kidded into doing the washing by another 'while I do the drying', which meant 'while I do nothing'.

Soon a dozen boys were involved round Mr Lyward. He took them into his confidence and discussed aloud what could be done to help John Farmer to take part in their community life.
'I've never seen you in a temper before,' observed a tiny boy who had just arrived. 'You all shirk the hard work of chores,' Mr Lyward told them. 'It's instinctive. But here you are actually enjoying them.'
'I've noticed it's always enjoyable when you're doing a job and we're helping,' said one boy.
'Well, I'm going to start the history of French literature with you,' Mr Lyward told him, and quoted Ronsard's 'Dieu est en nous et par nous fait miracle'. At that moment a boy who had been out on a 'holiday', and far from certain to return, slipped into the room. No one paid particular attention. Mr Lyward noticed him, went on talking about John Farmer, and added quietly: 'After all, miracles do happen.' One boy muttered: 'Especially here.'

The boys' trust made Mr Lyward's great variety of methods possible. He could 'improvise' a few minutes' parrying with one boy, in order to make something clear to the community, or spar with the whole community, in order to help one boy. On these occasions, too, the boys' detective instinct was provoked. Where was he leading? What was he going to say next, and to whom? The younger boys were rather bewildered, but the relaxed and friendly feeling was probably new to them and since everyone else seemed to listen, most of them listened. A few boys were bored by his circuitousness. The older ones waited quietly; somewhere round a corner of allegory or digression would appear some moral issue, deepened, concentrated to the point where it shone as a fact.

At the 'sessions', which Mr Lyward summoned from time to time, he suggested rather than lectured. If he had decided to attack a particular boy, he normally did it by way of poignard-like questions. The boy thrust back vigorously, merely exposing his defences and weak spots. Mr Lyward might manoeuvre into a position where he could administer a coup-de-grace, or laugh and allow himself - not often - to be worsted, or drop both their weapons and refer the whole issue to discussion. There were so many possibilities that no 'session', just as no boy, seems in retrospect to have been 'typical', except that most ended gaily, and in all Mr Lyward made great play with visual images. If ever people by

indirections found directions out, the boys at Finchden did. Mr Lyward would have told the parable of the Good Samaritan as though the accident had just happened on the Tenterden road.

One evening he called all the boys into the hall. They sat waiting for him in a semicircle, on the stage, round the walls, on the floor, on window-ledges. He came in, wearing his Trilby and a woollen scarf; and took a chair in the middle.

'Who knows algebra, I wonder?' he asked vaguely. He had just been doing algebra with one boy; it had suggested the kind of game he was now playing, aimed at discovering whether they could think in symbols. 'Henry, do you know algebra?'
'No, sir.
'Oh, I'm sure you do. What would you say is one more than Z?'
'One more than Z?'
Long silence.
'If you know that, Henry, you know the whole of algebra.' This was said with that kind of double entendre to which I have already referred; as if he knew and they knew he was talking rubbish, and yet there was something serious behind.
'Why Z? Why not another letter?' asked a boy.
'Don't spoil it. Come on, Henry.'
Henry was coaxed into agreeing that one more than Z was Z + 1.
'Now why did I say Z?' Mr Lyward asked.
A boy answered: 'Because if you'd said A, someone might have said that one more than A was B.' 'And ?' 'Well - B's different.' This was good for that particular boy.
'All right. If you know that, you know all algebra.'

Most of the boys received this calmly. Some looked puzzled. Two or three shrugged their shoulders, as if to say 'mad'.
'I'm afraid this session is going to be about money,' said Mr Lyward curtly. 'We don't often have sessions about money, do we?' Silence. 'I thought coming back in the car this evening that we'd have to. I'm going to talk about hop pickers first. Some time ago two or three of you went hop picking. They earned quite a lot of money, and put it in the office as arranged. But the last two apple pickers - your money isn't in the office. How much of it do you have left - Alan?'
'I don't know.'
'You don't know?' Mr Lyward looked amazed. 'You must know. You've got it, haven't you?'
'Some of it.' '
How much?'
'I don't know exactly.' '
You must have quite a lot.' It turned out that Alan had about £6 left.
'And you, Paul?' Paul was a boy all for 'divide and rule'.
'I haven't got any.'
'You haven't got any?' Mr Lyward looked astounded.
'No.'
'Where is it, then?'
'In the bank.'
'In the bank! The office is the bank. What do you mean by the bank?'

'It's in my father's bank.'
'In your father's bank! Who told you to put it there?'
'No one told me. I sent it home. It's my money.
'Is it your money?'
'I earned it - '

'It was agreed that when any of you went hop picking or apple picking, you should put the money into the office.'
'I don't agree. I made the money and it's mine.'
'The whole question of money is becoming rather urgent,' said Mr Lyward. 'I'll tell you why. People (actually the police) have been inquiring about some unfortunate accidents to Mr Cope's chickens. Mr Cope is our neighbour. It seems that one of our dogs is under suspicion. If convicted he - or rather she - will have to pay. Has she any money to pay, Riff?' to the boy who owned the dog.
'I tied her up. She can't have done it.'
'Is she tied up now?'
'Yes.'
'Are all our animals tied up? Eric, is your tortoise tied up?'
'No. She's asleep.'
'How do you know she can't get out when she wakes up?'
'Because she's in my suitcase.'
'It seems the tortoise is acquitted. Still, it looks as if Riff's dog is going to be arrested for destroying Mr Cope's chickens. She'll have to appear in Court. She'll have to get up on her hind legs and say: 'I can't help it, I've been led a dog's life." Is that an excuse? And who'll defend her?'

'I'll defend her,' said Riff.
'Suppose she's guilty?' (She was). 'She can't pay. We'll have to pay. We - who is we?' Long pause. 'Do you really think you had a right to put that money in your father's bank, Paul?'
'Yes.'
'And Archie Combe - you've just had ten shillings from the office for your fare home.'
'Yes.'
'On top of the ten shillings your mother sent you?'
'Yes,' laughing slightly awkwardly.
'It was bad luck your mother wrote and mentioned it,' said Mr Lyward gaily.
'Yes.'
'And you still ask for ten shillings from the office?'
'The other was my own money.
'There!' exclaimed Mr Lyward, slapping his knee. 'That's one we know well, isn't it? Isn't it amazing? "Oh, but I can't spend that on it ! That's my birthday money." But the money from the office isn't different. There's always this special thing that's my own - something that's got nothing to do with us here at Finchden Manor. Why is it your own money?'
'Because my mother gave it to me.'
'And so it's all right for Paul to put his ... ten pounds? ... fifteen pounds?... twenty pounds?...'
'Eleven pounds,' said Paul.
'His eleven pounds in his father's bank?'
'I don't know,' said Archie.
'Paul does. You don't think he's hoping for parental support ? Parents. I'll have to sit up for this.' Mr Lyward sat up. 'Do you want your parents to be involved ?' He surveyed the boys over his spectacles. 'Perhaps I ought to involve them and you in the chickens. When the barn was burnt I was asked to pay for that. I don't know why the boy who burnt the barn didn't wait till the chickens were in it. We could have had it all together.' Mr Lyward opened a book. 'I'll read you something about money. It's from Spenser's Faerie Queen':

God of the world and worldlings I me call,
Great Mammon, greatest god below the sky,
That of my plenty poure out unto all,
And unto none my graces do envye,

Riches, renowne, and principality,
Honour, estate, and all this worldes good ...

'Do you like this metre - the way it goes?'
'Couldn't care less,' Paul answered, but only Paul. The others were enjoying.
Mr Lyward continued, 'Mammon had a daughter', and went on quoting,

'There as in glistring glory she did sitt,
She held a great gold chaine ylincked well,
Whose upper end to highest heven was knit,
And lower part did reach to lowest Hell;
And all that press did round about her swell
To catchen hold of that long chaine, whereby
To climbe aloft, and others to excell:
That was ...

...What was Mammon's daughter's name, do you suppose?'
'Ambition,' said Riff.
'That was Ambition,' Mr Lyward finished the quotation. 'It seems to me you, Paul, and you, Alan, have married her already. Do you really want to have large sums of money floating about this place? Do you, Jimmy?'
'Yes, sir.'
'You'd get into the position of the boy who was here once who used to lend it out at interest.' Mr Lyward closed the book. 'Who thinks money can really supply you with all you want?'
'Nine-tenths,' said one boy.
'Four-tenths.'
'Two-tenths,' said a boy particularly keen on money.
'All I know,' said a boy called David Bradley, 'is that I find it difficult to live on four bob a week.'
'Do boys never do anything for nothing? When I was a boy ...' Mr Lyward slipped this in deliberately. It was an old joke and he expected interruption.
Sure enough it came. 'Ah!' said a boy. 'Geoff Miller would have walked out.' Geoff Miller had once sent Mr Lyward a note "forbidding" him to use certain expressions including "When I was a boy".

'Would you go hop-picking for nothing?' asked David Bradley. 'I'd say that anyone who did that was out of his mind.'
Mr Lyward looked round them all. 'People sometimes say "Why not get them all to do some gardening and pay them for it?" I've always refused. It always seemed to me that something would be lost. Do you agree?'
Almost everyone said 'Yes', and obviously sincerely.
'Of course,' Mr Lyward murmured, 'there was the incident of Francis's tent. Remember it caught fire - by an act of internal combustion? Who paid then?' 'We did.' 'You all most gracefully agreed to a suggestion I made at that time (boos). How many of you think I'm going to ask you to pay the thirty-two pounds for the chickens? That's what I think we owe.'
Half the boys held up their hands.
'Hands up those who think I'm not.' Almost all the rest held up theirs. Mr Lyward paused and said, 'Well, I'm not. When is the dance to be, Owen?'
'It's up to you, sir.'

'Of course, you do realize we might have to have the dance without food and without music, if there isn't any money to pay for it?'

Long silence. 'The hop-pickers are having their money kept for them. But' (as it were, underlined in red) 'the apple-pickers' money might even have been used to increase your four shillings a week. That was another possibility I had in mind. I had been thinking of something of that sort.'
Again this was said half-teasingly, since the apple-pickers knew their money was not going to be made community money; and yet there was a serious point. Another long silence.
'I'll contribute one pound towards the dance,' said Paul.
'Who thinks that a good idea?' asked Mr Lyward.
'I don't,' said a boy. 'We'd never hear the last of it.'
'Of course, there's Archie Combe's ten shillings. How many of you think I'm going to ask him for it back?' Half the hands went up.
'I don't know,' said one boy.
'Nor do I yet,' said Mr Lyward. He got up. 'Well, anyhow, the situation's exactly the same as when I came in. We haven't decided anything. You all know perfectly well that I wouldn't let you have a dance here without food or some new records. But you do see that all we've been talking about is related?' General assent.
'Henry, what is one more than Z?'
'Z + 1.'
'Good.' Mr Lyward walked away. A group surrounded him at once, Owen wanting to know about the dance, Riff protesting the innocence of his dog, and Paul offering to surrender all the money in his father's bank to Mr D., an offer which was passed by.

Flynn left Finchden Manor dramatically, after a 'session' far less peaceful than the one just described. Two nights before it took place he had kept the lamp in his and Geoff Miller's shack burning till midnight, in order to read a magazine about horses. Neville had seen the light, come out and taken the lamp away. This had angered Flynn, who had gone into the house and banged on Neville's door, insisting on seeing him. Neville had told him to go away. Flynn was thus in a thoroughly bad mood.

This time the 'session', which Mr Lyward called without any particular reference to Flynn, took place in the staff room. Mr Lyward sat deep in an armchair, with the boys crowded round the walls and on the floor. He began in his usual leisurely fashion, elaborating an allegory about people who preferred the condiments of a meal to the meal itself, which Flynn, who was standing just behind me, accompanied with impatient comments under his breath. When Mr Lyward mentioned pickles and sauces Flynn, who was feeling far from allegorical or poetic, grunted, "We never get them". Mr Lyward spoke next about the boys' growing habit of asking permission to go into Tenterden on Mondays (that day was a Monday). Why? he asked. Was it so necessary for them to get away from Finchden immediately the new week began? Why were they so impatient?

"Do you consider Sunday as a different day from all the rest of the week?" Mr Lyward asked.
"Yes," said some; others, "No". Some thought Monday a special day, because it was then the new film began.
"Is it so necessary for you to see the new film at once?" Mr Lyward asked. This discussion about days of the week went on for some time. Flynn continued his angry mutterings. I thought I could see the point round which Mr Lyward was taking his preliminary ramble. On Sunday the neighbourhood seemed dead; no distractions, above all, no cinema. If therefore the boys all demanded permission to go out the moment Monday dawned, did it not appear that they could not manage without those distractions? Did they use Finchden merely as a hotel, for its accessories, and were they indifferent to its sustenance and spirit? Hence the allegory of the condiments. The telephone rang. Mr Lyward went into his room to answer. When he returned a boy had lit a cigarette.

"Who told you you could smoke?" Mr Lyward demanded angrily, by now aware of hidden possibilities in this session (and saying, "Here goes!" to himself) 'Put it out!' The boy put it out. Mr Lyward went on talking about cinemas.
'Films are a drug,' a boy said virtuously.
'I suppose you sometimes do have to have drugs for sick people,' said Mr Lyward. He started to quote some lines of poetry:

'They pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,
Pale ghosts of men, who hover to and fro,
Hugging their bodies round them like thin shrouds,
In which their souls were buried long ago.'

He had forgotten the next lines, said so, and continued:

'Whose ever-open maw by such is fed
Gibber at living men and idly rave,
"We only truly live, and ye are dead"
Poor souls! the anointed eye can surely trace
A dead soul's epitaph in every face.'

The calm tone in which this quotation was delivered particularly angered Flynn, though he told me later that he liked the words. His mutterings became louder and more frequent. Mr Lyward and one or two boys began to discuss what was meant by 'killing time', which led Mr Lyward to talk about the kind of boy who was attracted outside, who went often to the cinema, who sat alone, went for walks alone.

'Yes, you ******', Flynn was rumbling, 'I want to go for a walk now. ... I want to go to the pictures now....'
'Has anyone anything to say?' Mr Lyward asked, as if casually.
'Yes, I've got plenty,' Flynn said under his breath. I heard him and asked in an aside, 'Why don't you say it?' and it was then that he exploded.
'What else is there to do except kill time!' he flung at Mr Lyward. 'What the ******* hell have we got to do here! What do you expect us to do except grub up fag-ends and collect enough ******* empty bottles to get enough money to buy another fag!' He was trembling all over. Geoff Miller, also in a tense excited state, was crushing his hand with a kind of dead man's grip, and without knowing it was crushing his foot too. Flynn could only keep his balance by remaining unnaturally rigid. And all the time Geoff Miller was urging him on in whispers, 'Go on! Give it him!'

All Flynn's frustrations came pouring out, all his pent-up arguments. He felt completely confident for a moment, more confident than he had ever felt.

'If we have any one main thing we can do, we have it taken away from us,' he shouted. 'Wireless - horses - whatever it is! So we've got nothing left except to sit around and go to the pictures. There's no week here, no weekend! The only day that counts is Friday, because that's when we're paid! The day we come here's the beginning of the week and the day we leave's the end and that's all! Weeks are like seconds, they don't count ! Nobody remembers the seconds of an hour that's past, but I'll make bloody sure you remember this second for the rest of your life !'
'Why did you come here?' demanded Mr Lyward, rounding on him deliberately.
'Because I've been kicked here and kicked there and now I've been kicked to ******* Finchden!'
'Why did you come... ?'

'Because I was ******* well made to come....
'You didn't have to come here...'
'I didn't want to come...'

The telephone rang again and Mr Lyward spoke without leaving the room. This telephone call was Flynn's undoing. Before, he had felt in command. Everything had poured out without thought. After the call was finished he tried to collect the threads and lost them. Trying to gain points, thinking before he spoke, he became inarticulate and in a minute or two really hysterical. Amid the rage of words and tears I heard all his hates - names of headmasters, names of doctors, names of psychiatrists - and then Mr Lyward cutting in, attacking him in a hard, cold, deliberate voice. When he spoke of Flynn's 'guttersnipe existence', it seemed for a moment that Flynn might become physically violent. Perhaps he didn't hear.

'You're told you can go when you like,' he shouted, 'and then you are kept here, just by words and talk and being told you're not ready to go, until you ******* well don't know what to think about yourself' He went on for a minute or two, then, when he had no more to let go, shoved his way to the door and left. There was a long silence. Mr Lyward sent Neville to follow Flynn. Two or three boys could not throw off the tension Flynn had left behind and had identified themselves so emotionally with him that they had to say something in his support.

'Where is all this leading to, sir?' one of them exclaimed.
'Nowhere,' retorted Mr Lyward, 'unless it shows you something. Do you think that boy's ready to leave? Did he sound like it just now?'
'All the same,' said another boy, 'Some people do want to go and try things out for themselves.'
Mr Lyward turned on him. 'What effort have you made?' he demanded. 'You've been given permission to look for a job for yourself What have you done about it?' In fact this boy had done nothing.
Mr Lyward gently and slowly recovered the threads of allegory. He knew exactly what he had done, and that the vibrations would be felt for some time by himself and others. He needed and contrived to end the 'session' lightly on laughter and a dying fall, and most of the boys dispersed quietly.

Flynn packed his rucksack and waited to see Mr Lyward in order to get money for his departure. He refused to speak to Neville, went round to the entrance to Mr Lyward's part of the house and arrived just in time for Neville, who had dodged round another way, to put his foot in the door. Flynn refused to wait and left. Neville followed him to Tenterden; not for the first time. They tossed who should pay for a cup of coffee. Neville lost. No wonder; it was a double-headed penny. But somehow Neville managed to coax Flynn back to Finchden, where he came to see me. He resumed his accusations against Mr Lyward and the whole place in a calmer tone of voice. After he had been talking for a few minutes, I interrupted him and went to tell Mr Lyward that he was with me. Mr Lyward consented to see Flynn for ten minutes in the staff room.

They talked like old friends not for ten minutes, but for an hour. Flynn started by saying: 'I want to leave whether it's bad for me, or not.' Mr Lyward answered that if Flynn wanted to do that, he could always feel that he had Finchden behind him, as a place to which he could return not, of course, as a resident, but as a friend; the staff and he himself would always be ready to listen and help with advice. He made it abundantly clear that he thought Flynn in no way ready to leave; but if he did leave, it would be with everyone's best wishes 'though not' (smiling) 'with my blessing'. Flynn became quite relaxed. He apologized for his outburst, and was soon giving an account of the time when

he and Geoff Miller had run away and Fitzy had had to fetch them back from Hampshire. When he described the two of them asleep in a ditch with a white flag flying, Mr Lyward laughed and said: 'I wish I'd come to fetch you,' - all this in the room in which Flynn had been swearing at Mr Lyward only two hours earlier.

Finally Flynn asked how much money he could have. Mr Lyward asked how much he had been given on his last hike.
'Five pounds.'
'How long was that for?'
'Ten days.'
'How long are you going for, this time?'
'Well, I shall try to find a fellow who's starting a ranch in Suffolk. I may need a week.'
'What proportion of five pounds does that make?'
'Oh, come on, let me have the whole five pounds.'
Mr Lyward laughed. 'Oh, all right, have it,' he said.

So Flynn went off in search of a job early next morning, with five pounds from the office, a ticket to London he had bought to run away, and three pounds he had extorted out of another boy which he had not mentioned. If he had mentioned the three, he would not have got the five.

He returned for the last time as a boy at Finchden to collect his belongings and acquisitions, and to say goodbye. I was with Mr Lyward when he came in. They talked in a friendly laughing way for a while. Then Mr Lyward said: 'There's something I knew about you when you first came here. I couldn't say it to you then, and I haven't been able to say it the whole time you've been here. Now I can. He took a sheet of paper and drew a large figure, like a small child's drawing, holding out two pin-like arms. Underneath he wrote 'Giver'. Further along he drew a large square package, inscribed 'Gift'; further along still, a much smaller figure, inscribed 'You', holding out its arms to the larger figure. 'What you have always been asking for is the gift,' Mr Lyward said. 'What you have really wanted is the giver.' For a moment Flynn said nothing. He and Mr Lyward bore a strange resemblance to one another at that moment, Mr Lyward seated, his face down on his collarbone, Flynn standing, his face dug into the collar of a blue polo sweater. Then Flynn reached out a hand, folded the paper, put it into his pocket, shook hands and went out. I drove him to the station. He said he had never expected to leave Finchden in so friendly a way. He had expected to be chucked out, he said, 'as I was everywhere else', and he named boys, who - as he thought - had cordially disliked him, but had come up to wish him luck. 'Have you got that bit of paper?' I asked. He tapped his breastpocket. 'I'll keep it all my life,' he said.

Mr Lyward once said that truancy had become more of a problem everywhere since the war. Before the war most boys came to stay, whatever other difficulties they caused. Flynn once said: 'I am a nomad'. Mr Lyward seized the word and used it the same evening half-jokingly to a Probation Officer. 'There is now a nomad population'. Boys who left on their own were an extremely small minority. The overwhelming majority never even thought of walking out. It does stand out, however, that a larger number of boys took their lives into their own hands after the war than before. The reason may be that Mr Lyward now had a different kind of boy. Many now came to him from a much poorer class. They felt the pressure to get on much more acutely than the well-to-do, especially if they had also had difficult homes, or none.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HERE is a catalogue of labels attached to boys when they came to Finchden:

- confused and feeling persecuted
- sexually delinquent and grossly inattentive to studies
- depressed, with wrecking tendencies
- manic-depressive
- schizophrenic
- hysterical, emotionally infantile, egocentric, sexually confused, almost entirely incapable of controlling his behaviour
- more neurotic than psychotic
- a thief, expelled from school
- transferred or expelled from fourteen schools
- unable to fit in at school, a truant, full of irrational fears
- a liar, with no money sense
- hysterical and refusing to eat
- suffering from persecution mania
- unable to fit in, a compulsive thinker and bed-wetter
- schizoid, a shoplifter, and suffering from persecution mania
- profoundly disturbed, and detested by his parents
- immature and educationally backward
- schizoid, truant, and a thief
- hysterical, and a burglar of his own home
- truant from school in order to look for his mother, later put on probation after prostitution on London streets
- hysterical, physically violent to his friends, a destroyer of property
- a thoroughgoing rebel
- backward, difficult, unable to face life
- a liar, thief, and bedwetter
- dangerously anti-social, expelled from schools in England and America
- violent, resentful, possessed with a chronic feeling of guilt

So far had these labels been forgotten that when I produced this list both Mr Lyward and his staff said, "Who on earth were they all?" Once at Finchden the boys did not seem like that. It may be thought encouraging that those to whom such descriptions were applied afterwards became:

- Commissioned, then tea-planting
- civil servant, and later an expert on the 'maladjusted'
- salesman, helped refugee organization at great personal risk, later an administrator
- passed examination with top marks and is doing well
- aircraft inspector during war, later returned to industrial firm
- high Colonial official
- fighter pilot, later in aircraft industry
- clerk in shipping firm
- Woolwich, then R.A.
- apprenticed to aircraft firm, farmed in Africa, returned to business combine in this country
- teaching
- artist, and adviser to well-known firm
- apprentice in building trade
- apprenticed to electrical firm
- farming, later in hotel business

- chartered surveyor
- director of shipping business
- business, developed serious physical illness, now doing secretarial work
- owns a market garden
- group captain in RAF, now runs large business.

Had a former boy at Finchden become an Archbishop, he might still have been a less striking success than those originally described as 'not very promising', and reported later as 'having found a job and stuck to it', or 'managing all right'. Alastair Wilton once dreamed of a horse that had only three legs 'yet seemed to get along all right'. Some boys are born 'with only three legs', and no one can give them a fourth; yet after leaving Finchden, such boys 'got along all right'. Many boys did not go into the kind of jobs their parents might have chosen - the members of Mr Lyward's staff possibly among them. Yet it cannot be questioned that the latter are 'doing well'.

To some boys, Mr Lyward gave literally the will to live. One old boy received terrible wounds in the war which needed nearly twenty operations. But for his time at Finchden, he told a friend, he would never have wanted to go on living. Another said it had enabled him to survive three years as a prisoner of the Japanese. David Norris arrived at Finchden, having been found in possession of a cosh.
'What do you most want?' Mr Lyward asked him.
'A home,' said the boy. 'And I'd have had one if my mum hadn't gone off with the bloody lodger.'
'What would you think of a place where you would be given stern love?' Mr Lyward asked.
'I've never heard of that kind,' the boy answered. 'Sounds as if it might be all right.'
He stayed for eighteen months, did well in the Air Force, and took a good civilian job.

Above almost all else in importance, Finchden outflanked self- pity. All their previous lives the boys had been nagged, neglected or misunderstood, had not been given a fair start, and so on - with a reiterated litany of complaints. One boy who had witnessed many scenes of violence and brutality between his parents was described when he came as 'manic-depressive'. Years after leaving, he wrote:

'Thank you for helping me to obtain an optimistic view on life. If it wasn't for that and a sense of humour, I should be right down and yelling 'Nobody loves me!' How stupid that sounds now. And to think that at one time I actually believed it! It is a tremendous help to be able to talk about the worst happening in a humorous way, and at the same time hope for something better'.

The story of Finchden Manor is overwhelmingly one of happy endings, or rather of happy beginnings: since the boys were given that chance to start again which life so seldom affords in later years. One thinks of all those others who never went to Finchden and are now in prison or needlessly unhappy.

One thinks too of those parents who withdrew their sons against Mr Lyward's advice. A few remained unable to acknowledge, despite doctors' evidence, that their son was 'disturbed' and that they themselves were partly responsible. When the boy did not turn out as they wanted, they blamed Mr Lyward.

The anxieties of all parents concerning the future of their children have increased. Too many forget that it is impossible to inject into their children the experience they themselves acquired from the inevitable mistakes of youth. Parents who exhort their children to lead the kind of life they themselves have led, risk revolt from those of strong

character and despair from the weak. Many parents have not had the emotional tranquillity to reach an understanding of their child's needs, which would give far deeper help than the mere indulgence or refusal of his wants. Parents are also wise to avoid phrases like 'You've done it again!' which tend to make an action appear a habit.

Is it surprising, then, that Finchden was often able to help parents - or that Mr and Mrs Lyward formed deep friendships with the families of boys who had been liberated there? Many boys brought their wives and girls to see Mr Lyward. In one or two instances, where the marriage had begun to go wrong, they came to him for advice.

It was before the age of seven that things started to go wrong with the boys who went to Finchden. No-one denies that overcrowding and bad housing may have a bad effect on children, yet surprise has been expressed that so much adolescent crime should come from 'respectable' homes. The change of external environment at Finchden Manor made some boys more (and others less) comfortable than they had been at home and school. The real change, common to all, was in the atmosphere and spirit they found there. Boys in peril of growing up ever more narrow, stunted and one-sided were gradually able to go forward 'with head and heart reasonably at one.'

This is a great achievement and contribution to the world. Never has it been easier for young people, whose feelings have been denied natural response, to find a camouflage. The extension of knowledge and communication daily furnish more equipment to the mind, from which people (deprived in other ways) can construct an effective but one-sided self. Our deepest inadequacies will not have been removed if, having landed on the moon, we remain as far as ever from ourselves and from one another. Mr Lyward was no enemy to technological education, nor to specialists. But he saw their dangers and, within the boundaries of Finchden, met them. He thus helped the boys to develop a full whole personality, within which any special skill acquired later would only be a part.

One evening, I left Finchden to begin my book. As I drove away, mist was rising from the marshes, islanding Tenterden Church tower. The house looked tranquil and immune. The boys were going to bed. The windows blazed with light, and I heard Riff's gramophone. Narrow, built-up, the road to London resembled the beaten track which, for many, meant life. Out of sight, on the other side of the house, lay the marshes and wooded slopes which seemed as ever to be awaiting an explorer.

I thought of all the young lives saved; of those other insecure adolescents, of whose sentence or arrest I should probably read, who were neither more nor less dangerous than many who had lived at Finchden. I thought of the staff there, renouncing opportunities they made possible for the boys. And I thought of Mr Lyward. In most places the day's work had ended long ago, and most people had returned to homes pleasantly distant from factory or office. But even at this late hour a boy would probably insist on seeing him. Interviews had filled the day, but reports still had to be made out, replies sent to troubled parents and county councils. Tomorrow would bring a visit from some new young educational officer, who had taken the place of an old friend. All would have to be explained afresh, without tiredness or impatience.

I wondered if Mr Lyward would ever find time to give his story to the world himself, or if his work would be extended and passed on by other means. How great a healer is not only time but life! How patient and radiant a miracle! He had reminded me (and proved, in the world of speed and enmities) that this remains so. Stern, forbearing, courteous, light of touch; one of life's beloved teachers; one of the life-givers.

THE END