

1890 — 1960.

PORTRAIT OF A SCHOOL

THE SUNDERLAND HIGHER GRADE
SCHOOL.

BEDE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOL.

BEDE COLLEGIATE GIRLS' SCHOOL.

BEDE GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Portrait of a School.

Memoires and Impressions,

1880—1930.

" Post Tenebras Lux."

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Edited by JELSPETH R. SHEARER
and GRACE A. WOOD.

*Published under the auspices of the Guild of Old Bedians for
the Jubilee Celebrations of 1930.*

Portrait of a School . . .



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Foreword . . .

THIS *Portrait of a School* is offered by the Guild of Old Bedans as a record of the School's activities from its foundation, sixty years ago, to the present time. It is the fruit of much patient research and collaboration between E. R. Shearer, Senior French Mistress at the School from 1917—1943, and G. A. Wood, a distinguished Old Bedan, recently retired from the Vice-Principalship of Heckwille Training College, whose history she has written.

The Editors have collected and collated the information from early issues of *The Bedan* and from the letters of generations of Old Bedans. Six former mistresses, and no fewer than one hundred and seven old pupils, ranging from 1890—1949, provided "memories," grave and gay, to make the compilation possible. To them the Guild owes grateful thanks. An overflow of anecdotes so provided will be found in successive numbers of *The Old Bedan*. Thanks are also due to the late Mr. Theo. Blyth, a former Bede Master, for his willing help, and to the four Old Bedans who kindly made themselves responsible for the typing of the MSS.

The Editors much regret that they have been unable to give the names of Bedans, other than the pioneers, who have made a name for themselves in the wider world. They regret also the omission of the names of some of the mistresses who, in times past, have given devoted service to the School. Lack of space accounts for these omissions, but, for reasons which will be readily appreciated by Old Bedans, there are few references to the work of Miss Shearer herself, a defect that should be remedied. Quotations from their letters will, perhaps, best bring forward one who has tended always to remain in the background. We read of "Miss Shearer, who in spite of keeping our noses to the grindstone learning French verbs, regular and irregular, made us enjoy French, and introduced the delightful *Cercle Français*." Or again, "I

never had the courage at school to say how much I enjoyed the Upper VI French lessons, especially the poetry," and, "The sale of books of English poetry must have gone up in Sunderland after E.R.S. came"—and so on.

It is impossible in the short space available adequately to thank E. R. Shearer, and G. A. Wood, for their work as Editors, but we should like to assure them that the Guild of Old Bedans does appreciate their labours. Many Old Bedans also wish to express their gratitude for all the work that Miss Shearer has done for their Guild through all the years of its existence. They could not allow this book to go to press without paying this small tribute to one whose interest in them has been so vital.

AN OLD BEDAN.

February, 1930.



CHAPTER I

1890—1960.

BIRTHDAYS AND RE-UNIONS

As this brief account of the School's story forms part of the Jubilee Celebrations, it is fitting that we should take a peep at earlier birthdays.

What a thrill the School's Birthday provided for the pupils in early days and what happy memories for Staff and former Staff! Every year on April 28th it was kept, on the Monday if the date fell on a Saturday or Sunday. Cards of greeting came from old pupils and the weather seemed always to be fine. By eight o'clock girls were arriving to decorate the rooms, till School was a gay sight within and without.

Lessons went on in the morning, but the afternoon, so they tell us, was "given over to enjoyment." There were entertainments in Lower and Upper School, and the Head Mistress Miss Todd, contrived to be present at both: "without her the Birthday would have fallen very flat," is the verdict. In the hall songs and tales were heard and in the playground games played, comfortably and noisily. "You could run up to the Most August Personage in the School and say what you would and be sure of a smile." "Rumour says that She skipped more than sixty times," so they report. After cheers and the National Anthem the day ended for the girls.

Then visitors came, for the Head Mistress invited on the Birthday all former mistresses and they with the Staff of the day had tea and talk together. On the tenth birthday one young, new mistress at her first birthday party "thought what a lot of old, old ladies were present; I little thought that one day I should be one of these"—and, may we add, perhaps the best-loved of all. On the twelfth birthday one little girl exclaimed, of the School, "Goodness, how old she's getting!" while Violet Fisher of Standard V was also twelve years old that day. What a lovely birthday she had! And "Brother Bones," the School skeleton, wore a frock coat and silk hat; and one large flag was blown away for ever in a gale that night!

We do not know when birthday parties ceased. The 21st was mentioned at the last of the long series of joint Speech Days in 1911 with expressions of congratulation at the School's record and of regret that it had no fitting premises.

Of the 25th birthday the Girls' Bedan of 1913 says, "Very little, of course, was done to celebrate it," and continues to make reference to the note in the *Sunderland Echo* of that date which stated that over three thousand girls had been through the school, and paid tribute to Miss Todd, and to Miss Coburn, on their long connection with it.

The 50th Birthday found the School suffering its war-time evacuation at Richmond. Miss Shearer on evening duty with some twenty-five Bedans at Lennox House told them of it during their two-minute long "Break" and gave them a little Birthday present of sweets, which were divided out mathematically by the Head Prefect. Each girl ate one then and there—a humble if unorthodox toast to the School!

The 60th Birthday is being celebrated more worthily—a Commemoration Service, School Entertainments, an Old Bedan Dinner and this *Portrait*. It is good and right that April 28th should be remembered by Bedans past and present, and we are glad that from now on the day is to be commemorated as Founders' Day. Many schools have Founders' Day, how much more lovable is "The School's Birthday!" Many Happy Returns, Bede School!



It seems to us fitting also, in this preliminary chapter, to give some slight account of the origins of the Old Bedan organisation under whose auspices this *Portrait* is issued.

"Any school," writes one former pupil, "that welcomed news and visits from its old girls so honestly, and took such a warm, punctilious and personal interest in their doings could not fail to have loyal daughters." She then goes on to describe the Breaking-up Party organised by the Ex-7th in the '00's as a diversion after the South Kensington examinations, and continues, "The next year many who had been present felt it would be pleasant to have another party and to invite to it those of their fellows who had left. And so was born the first Re-union! By 1898 most of those with whom the idea had originated were numbered among the Ancients, but the old spirit still animated the Moderns and from that time the Re-union was a recognised institution."

For the School it became a half-holiday that due preparation might be made for the event. After morning school the partitions dividing the three main rooms were drawn aside and desks were made to fly along the corridor. Woe betide

any lingerer there! It was move or be moved! Next the rooms were decorated with flowers amidst much laughing competition, the fortunate classes boasting the skeleton or a certain famous crocodile in their possession having a great advantage. These favoured inhabitants always had a wonderful collection of garlands! Downstairs the boys and their staff cleared part of their building for a supper-room. Parents lent furniture and the Minister of Trinity Church, tables and benches. Mr. Meng catered for, and presided over, the supper. For entertainment there were plays, waxworks, charades, and, supremely, talk, with the final singing of *Auld Lang Syne* and cheers for the School and for Miss Todd, its famous Head Mistress. "Not half bad cheers, too, for girls," one pupil adds. Under the heading *A Stranger's First Impressions*, an old friend of the school writes, "Truly the calm at intervals is broken. One day we find ourselves besieged by whirlpools of desks and our ears deafened by unsorted noises. This tumult annually precedes the Girls' Re-union, but of this one must not speak unless one changes the title of these remarks for the Re-union is such a genial and sociable institution that one feels no longer a stranger."

After the reorganisation of the schools in 1903, when the partitions were replaced by walls, the Re-union had to seek elsewhere for its home. Several were held in Withrall's Rooms, but even there, increasing numbers created difficulties. In 1909 the *Old Bedou Girls' Association* was founded with Miss Beem, the Head Mistress as President, and Misses Coburn, Birchall and MacNair Vice-Presidents. It had 120 names on its roll and more than 100 members attended its first Re-union. For five years it prospered but ceased to meet during the First World War.

There is a record of a meeting in 1920 but no other notice appears until 1928 when the *Guild of Old Bedou* was founded and Re-unions were held once more in the School itself, in Room 37 in the old school and in more recent years in the Hall or Art Room of the new building. The principal feeling of a present Bedou at these gatherings is one of insignificance. It is not a galling feeling but a wholesome one. "We feel," says one, "veritable pygmies before all these mighty men of old."

And these same "mighty men," what of their feelings? Let us speak of her thoughts in the far-away nineties, and let us rejoice that one girl's ambitions were realised. "I must hope for the best; hope that one day in the future I may be raised to the honour of being a Bedou Teacher and may once more dwell peacefully within the shelter of the same old home."

CHAPTER II

1890 — 1905

“*PROVERBS, O PROMETHEUS*” - - - W. Whitman.

On April 28th, 1890, Sunderland's new Higher Grade School near the West Park was opened, with Miss Janet M. Todd as Head Mistress of the Girls' Department and Mr. G. T. Ferguson Head Master of the Boys'. In truth it was a fortunate School that had two such people to guide its destiny. The ideals of both Schools were alike; to foster sound scholarship, and above all "to encourage and influence an *esprit de corps* conducive to a healthy moral tone, good manners and high character." No history of one School is complete without that of the other, so none is attempted. We offer a sketch of the Girls' School only made up of memories and impressions.

On that April morning two hundred and sixty-one girls climbed the stairs to their new school, the boys being housed on the ground floor. "We were all delighted with the bright, sunny, new buildings," they comment. "I became a pupil on the first day when only the main block was in existence. Neither Mrs. Ball (Edith Wilson) nor I," says Mrs. Halliday (Miriam Richardson) can remember any opening ceremony; we were assembled and put into classes according to our ages, and were soon learning English, Arithmetic, Drawing, French, and, with the help of the skeleton, Hygiene."

Their only form of exercise was drill with clubs and dumb-bells since organised games were considered too rough for girls. Swimming and cycling are mentioned in early records; in 1900 for example Annie Jack won a prize in the Ladies' Swimming Gala. For gardening they beautified the school with window-boxes, and worked on the green patches in front until the trees grew too big. Mrs. Halliday does not seem to have lacked exercise, however, since, she continues, "Lena Thubron and I walked all the way to school from the bottom of Roker Avenue, trying to beat the horse-drawn trams, and carrying our skates to use on Mowbray Park Pond in the dinner-time during the cold winters when the milk we carried as part of our lunch was often frozen in the bottle."

The first girl to be enrolled was Ida Brewis, who proved to be "deservedly popular" and who brought honour to the school at the Ladies' Swimming Galas. "Very terrible, I found the entrance examination. Arithmetic was the main terror. I added up the money quite wrongly, subtracted

a larger sum from a smaller and then was confronted with a problem beginning: If a man . . . It was beyond me. However to temporise I copied out the statement. Why Miss Todd ever took me I cannot imagine!" So says Gretchen Kriener (Mrs. Steppat) yet here is her record: While yet barely an ex-pupil she published in 1899 a little volume of allegories, *Cloud Tapes*, went to Germany to learn German, studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew, gained a scholarship in the last, won for the first time by a woman, and gave School the credit for this because it had taught her to study for herself. She became an M.A. of Durham and graduated in Modern Languages in London with distinction; was English and Modern Languages Tutor at the Maria Grey Training College, published *Shakespeare in the Class Room*, and, as recently as 1943-44, *Scenes From the Old Testament and Scenes From the New Testament* for use in Schools. She was Guest of Honour at our first *Guild of Old Bedaws' Dinner* in 1934.

Other pupils on that first day in 1890 were Emma Graham, one of the best of many girls to go to France alone, knowing no one. She later taught French and took a post in Germany to learn German. There were Cicely Kidd, Kate Michinson, Isabel Nicholson, Charlotte Hedley, Jane Morton, Ethel Small, Beatrice Brewis, Ada and Ethel Ramsay, Maggie Rutherford, Jessie Jackson, Flo Stone (Mrs. Baylour) who trained as a nurse at Guy's Hospital, joined Q.A.I.M.N.S. and became matron of a large Tropical Diseases hospital. "I have been in many wars" she writes, "including the Irish Revolution and the Battle of Britain." There was Margaret Parton, mother of Hodge Robertson, Gabrielle Costigan (a little French girl) and Kate Coburn (Mrs. Johnson), the first of our graduates, and for many years a loyal and devoted mistress in the school. There was also Katie Smith, placed first in England for English in the First Class College of Preceptors' Examination, who held for many years a post in the Boys' School, The Newcastle College of Science (now King's College) sent her Botany Note-Book to the Educational Exhibition in London and we believe it was later shown at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. There was Annie Potts, too, who retired some years ago after being for long a Head Mistress in Sunderland. She tells us that there was "work in plenty in those days and very congenial it was, with ideal teachers. French and German, Science and Art were new worlds, English literature a delight. Miss Rhind and Miss Southby were patient teachers of German, and I owe Miss Todd and Miss Emma more than I can say."

And how could two young boys of that first day guess that at the same moment three entered the Girls' School their

future wives—Gertrude Lucas and Mary Gibbons? The latter's connection with the School is particularly interesting. She went as did her husband-to-be at the age of ten. Later she brought her little sister Gladys to be enrolled, soon another sister, Hilda, followed, and in 1917 her little daughter, Bessie Taylor, on her eighth birthday, while her son and her daughter-in-law, Mollie Adamswhite, are both Old Bedians. Not only that but in the course of her school life she helped to put together "Brother Bones," who figures so often along with the stuffed Crocodile in the annals of the Old School.

The School seemed palatial to its first pupils. There were three main rooms, the two end ones being divided by curtains on either side of which a class was taught. These each had also a sliding partition separating them from the big middle room; when the partitions were drawn back a Hall was formed.

"We all paid fees of 10/6 a quarter," they report, "later reduced to 7/6 or 9d a week, paid weekly to our class mistresses." As grants were given only for Scientific Subjects, the public called the Upper School "the School of Science"; hence throughout the years until Bede School became one of the accepted new Secondary Schools both Heads laid great stress on the fact that the school offered "a general education of such a nature that pupils can take an interest in anything around them." Let a pupil speak for herself of the year 1892. "The first thing I remember about the Higher Grade School is being put into Standard V as a child of ten. . . . There I was taught first by Miss Abrahams and then by Miss Harbottle, friendly beings with very bright eyes. Of lessons, it is French by Miss Janet Todd, the Head Mistress, that comes back to me. Among other doings we played at Railway Journeys and Restaurants; hence about the first sentence I knew was *Gardez un verre d'eau pour les enfants*.

Next came Standard VI where Miss Marshall and Miss Dudgeon reigned. Only one lesson in this room stands out, that on spellings with Miss Todd. I can see her writing on the top left-hand corner of the board the word 'Fuchsia.' I can feel the quiet in the room now and hear the milk-cart rattling on the cobbles outside, as we all looked at that word. Next came a talk about the Botanist, and the addition of the letters 'ia.' I haven't spelt 'fuchsia' wrongly since.

"Then into Standard VII with Miss Reid and the first sight of test-tubes! With astonishment did I see two colourless liquids mix and form a white sediment during a Human

Physiology lesson by Miss Emma Todd. During these three years Mr. McCallum used to visit the School to give lessons in Tonic Sol-Fa, and Mr. T. W. Bryers, Secretary to the School Board, used to come and ask us to parse sentences, walking round the desks as we did so; Mr. Jarman, H.M.I., was a visitor too.

"After the Lower School came entrance to the Upper School for a five-year course. The Ex-7th Room, as it was called, was divided by a curtain and classes were held on both sides, sometimes two on one side. My year was taught English, French, Latin, Chemistry, Art and Singing by Miss Emma Todd; Botany by Miss Coburn, Physics by Miss Charlton, Mathematics and Hygiene by Miss Todd. Later Mr. Armstrong came for Art. On the staff also were Miss Graydon, Miss Soulsby and Miss Taylor.

"During these last five years we took the South Kensington Science and Art Examinations, elementary and advanced, in Chemistry, Hygiene, Magnetism and Electricity, Mathematics, Model Drawing, Freehand and Light and Shade, Perspective, and Practical, Plane and Solid Geometry. For these we went to the top story of the Town Hall. Finally came Senior Oxford or London Matriculation, or the Queen's Scholarship Examination according to needs." Pupils, we learn from other sources, were encouraged to try for one or more of these, many doing exceedingly well, but there was no compulsion.

The writer continues, "During these last years we had a certain amount of freedom. Miss Todd herself was available at any time to give help. Private study meant sitting on an umbrella stand in one of the cloakrooms. Indeed many lessons were given in the corridor, outside the Ex-7th room. At the end of the course we were ready for either an Arts or a Science degree course. Miss Todd's girls were among the first in the North to obtain degrees; among these early graduates, besides Kate Coburn in 1890, were M. Gertrude Wilson in 1897, Ethel Graydon, and Margaret Charlton in 1898 who were all appointed to the Staff of their old School."

In the early days prizes, provided by the School Staff and friends, were distributed in School or later sometimes in the Old Assembly Rooms. In 1898 and 1899, however, a conversation was held in the Victoria Hall. During the presentation of prizes, the entertainment and the speeches, visitors sat in the Dress Circle and pupils on the platform or in the body of the Hall. After refreshments had been enjoyed by visitors and scholars, people strolled about admiring the exhibited school work, such as drawings and dressed dolls,

or watched experiments in Physics and Chemistry being performed by pupils; Louisa Marsden's etching by the action of hydrofluoric acid attracted much attention. There was also on one occasion a Lantern-Exhibition of photographs of the school, Staff and pupils taken by the boys. Such evenings ended at 11 p.m. with *God Save the Queen*.

In 1898 the name of Bede was added to the School name making it the Sunderland Bede Higher Grade School. From that time the pupils became Bedans, whose proud motto was *Post Tenebras Lux*. With the object of fostering an *esprit de corps* "among scholars, parents and teachers both past and present" there appeared also in this year the school badge and with it the first *Bedan*, a joint magazine, product of the Boys' and the Girls' Schools, the first of a series continuing with one interval until 1911, and the source of much of the material given here.

About three years later a crisis developed threatening the existence of the Upper School. In 1906, after much discussion and many meetings, the Sunderland School Board to which the school owed its existence "dropped," says the *Bedan*, "quietly into the limbo of things past and gone." In its place the County Borough Council took over the School,

Frequent visitors addressed the School during those years. "I remember well a talk on Good Citizenship, at the end of which many of us signed a certificate promising among other things to tend a window-box of flowers if no garden could be made, and to refrain from dropping litter in the streets. It must have been impressive as I still bring home bits tickets in my handbag." Miss Todd herself was wont to address the school every Monday morning. Old pupils recall many of her topics, among them these: "You are not guilty because you are ignorant, but you are guilty if you are content to remain so," and, "Sow a thought, reap a word; sow a word, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

At the death of Queen Victoria, Miss Todd gave a historical survey of her life and reign, and again in the following March discussed the Census. Later the Literary, Debating and Musical Society with its discussions on topical events kept up this out-of-school interest.

In 1899 a school branch of the Sunderland Senior and Junior League of Good Citizenship was formed with seven companies each with a President and Secretary. In 1900 a Sunshine branch of it developed and many a gift went from

the Girls' School to the Civic Club for distribution. In 1904 we read that though the girls did not compete for the prizes offered by the League they sent in 290 gifts, including 72 dressed dolls, for the Christmas Distribution of Toys. Later when there was much distress in the town the school helped generously, doing, the *Bedan* says, "no more than its duty."

Nor did the School remain enclosed within its walls. Excursions were made to Tunstall Hill, Finchale Abbey, to Durham, even to the local chemical and lead works. And when Frank Benson brought his company to the old Avenue Theatre and schoolgirls were admitted for sixpence, "some of us," they record, "went to see six Shakespearean plays in a week!" At a very early stage, too, almost every pupil had a French correspondent, the basis of many international friendships. "School at this time," says one old pupil of 1892-1900, "was a bright, spotless place and a hive of industry. Discipline was strict and we were expected to work hard, but we were given much in return. If we didn't take advantage of what was offered there was no one to blame but ourselves. Hall to those pioneers!"

We cannot mention all the pupils of this era who achieved distinction, we can only name a few who in addition to those already noted seem to have been pioneers themselves. Ethel Hedley who went in 1898 to do tracing was the only girl in the North of England to hold a certificate in Machine Construction Drawing; in 1901 Alberta Farrow and Dorothy Ross were awarded Board of Education scholarships for a year's study in France. In the same year nine *Bedan* girls graduated: Constance Johnson, Irene Lloyd, Dorothy Ross and Muriel Watson in Arts; Stella Balfes, Diana Birchall, Kate Barnett, Norah March and Lily Wright in Science. (A much admired photograph of the last six in gowns and hoods hung in the Old School until it ceased to be "*Bedan*"). Norah March later headed the poll in Holborn in the London Municipal Elections, was Secretary to the National Council of Child Welfare and did much pioneer work in sex education until her last illness. Elizabeth Nid, M.B., B.Sc., in 1907 and M.D. and D.P.H. in 1909, was our first *Bedan* doctor, followed by Bessie Eaves, who took a higher place in the London Examination for M.B. than any other candidate. Nor should we omit our famous nurse, Dame Louisa Wilkinson, who as Louisa Lumsden was a *Bedan* in the years before the reorganisation of 1905. She was speaker at School's Speech Day in 1947. She was then Matron-in-Chief of Q.A.I.M.N.S., became shortly after that the Service's first Controller-Commandant and had the honour of being received by Queen Mary.

As Bedans we honour them, women pioneers in so many fields of work, yet the greatest honour brought to the School by those and many others was their amazing loyalty.



CHAPTER III

1905 — 1917

"... GREAT DAYS IN THE DISTANCE
ENCHANTED." *Harrow School Song.*

In 1905 the Bede Higher Grade School as such ceased to exist. Out of its ashes, phoenix-like, arose the Sunderland Bede Collegiate School. Mr. G.T. Ferguson was Head Master of the dual school, while Miss Janet Todd retained full jurisdiction over the girls. There was much heart-burning on the part of the girls' staff, and considerable opposition by parents, but in point of fact little difference ensued since Mr. Ferguson appeared even more rarely in the Girls' School than before, though all its business went to the Governors through him.

Girls already in the school were affected little. One recalls that the term "Standard" gave place to "Form," that walls replaced partitions in the main building and that a new laboratory was built for Physics. As before the girls remained on the upper floor of the main block, the boys on the lower.

Some idea of the new Bede Collegiate Girls' School may be gleaned from reminiscences of early pupils. In September, 1905, Miss Todd was at home to parents. The record of the interview of one small girl illustrates the procedure. She was thirteen years old, demure but determined. As, with her mother, she crossed the West Park and gazed upon the turreted, gabled red-brick building it seemed to them both a great venture to be embarked upon with trepidation. Mother joined other mothers in a classroom, hence the child whose sole idea of a teacher was a gentle old lady in a white cap and shawl by whose lap she had daily recited her lessons, faced alone the piercing eyes of her new Head Mistress. Miss Janet Todd was a striking figure, invigorating as the East wind that swept the long corridor, elegant in an Edwardian fashion, tall and slim, with stiffened lace on bone stays at her neck, and fine dark hair, scholarly, too, as befitted one of the early Newnham students, and austere in the tradition of Miss Buss and Miss Beale and the other pioneers of women's education. Staff and children feared her and adored. To the prospective pupil all was strange, the bare room, newly pink-washed, the flat-topped desk, the rapid questions. "Do you know your tables?" Of these at least she was certain, having recited them from two to twelve times each day from a special card. "Yes, Miss Todd," she replied. "I do know my tables." Like a rapier came the response, "How many pounds are there in

one stone?" That was not tables, that was weights and measures, of which she had made no such claim. "Eight," she faltered. The pause, filled with what early Teaching Method books called "the power of the eye," ended with the stricture, "I thought you said you *knew* your tables." The child remained silent. How defend herself from the monstrous accusation of lying! Hence no one was more surprised than she when some days later she found herself learning, with the rest of the school, the correct spelling of "Collegiate." How amazed she was at the pupils' raised hands when they wished to speak! How strange it seemed to listen instead of learning! How efficient were the other girls, how goddess-like the mistresses!

One of those same efficient, young women reports on these first days thus:

"I was a scholarship girl, graduating at the age of twelve from an old-fashioned elementary school ruled by a redoubtable Scottish Head Mistress with a very efficient cane. I had passed through Standard VI and was beginning to feel like one of the "big girls." The re-organisation of the new Bode School had evidently caused a mighty upheaval, as I remember that for the first three weeks we did not do a stroke of work. We were herded into class-rooms and left with an "old girl" to read *The Would-be-goods* or some such book to us. I learnt to crochet during this period. Occasionally a mistress would pop in and give us a list of books and implements that we had to buy, but that was all. On the first day the school was formally opened with a religious service, which was held in the next room to ours. (There was of course no assembly hall). The hymns were *O God, our help is ages past*, and *Now thank we all our God*. Whenever I hear this latter hymn it always calls up that scene to me. We did settle down to work at last, and I found everything very strange and exciting. I also discovered several things, such as, that I was now one of the little girls, and that the cane was unknown. Also, the mistresses (no longer "teachers") were more like human beings than those at my elementary school. Some even called us "dear." All this was rather demoralising, and I am afraid I wasted a good deal of time during my first year or two."

The School that drew such a diversity of pupils settled down gradually into a threefold division, a Preparatory Department, comprising Forms I, II and III; a Middle School of some seven forms, numbered from A. to G., with G. at the top, divided into the Lower and Upper Fourth, and an Upper School of Fifth and Sixth. Except on Speech Days this school of 300 to 350 girls never met as a whole. Since there

was no Hall there could no longer be a Morning Assembly, and since there was as yet no House System the Form was the unit. How then was the school held together in the close

Miss Todd was a disciplinarian. When she appeared, and life? The answer must be sought in the personality of Miss Todd, and in the influence of the annual Speech Day, bonds of unity that prevailed during the first years of its new she seemed ubiquitous, shoulders stiffened, lines straightened, the regulation hat, hard straw boater in summer, soft navy-blue cloth in winter, was pulled straight, boys' heads disappeared from the Physics Lab. windows, and the unwary fidgeted guiltily with hair escaping from the regulation pig-tail. It was not that she indulged in horrific punishment, it was rather some offended moralist in herself, terrifying in its wrath. Who that sat in Form G, room one sunny day can forget the thunder of, "Child, your ignorance is colossal!" or the vivid portrayal of the Cokemas that followed! And there was one, Charlotte, completely annihilated one day for the crime of attending a Sunday School Treat, and a Milly, who "picked her teeth," and Grace who had "spots on her face,"—each might have figured in a Cautionary Tale! Miss Todd's teaching, too, was proverbial. She believed that every graduate should be able to teach any subject up to matriculation standard and was prepared herself to do so. With the small, used Preparatory pupils she read *The Ancient Mariner*, and the bare class-room became an enchanted sea. To the Upper Fourth she taught the Italian version of *Sev, ye uoko borvone*, that it might be sung correctly. French Grammar she took with the Lower Fourth. There was a legend, too, of Domestic Science and tales of Miss Todd's demonstration of stove-blackening in the old Cookery Room, home for long of the Sixths.

Her pupils believed that Miss Todd knew everything. Did they produce a form magazine, she must see all copies from the most learned to the famous *Olle Podesta* the first number of which she applauded highly, only to return the second with a devastating comment on its spelling. Had they fresh flowers in the class room she must comment on their arrangement and explain the Kyrle Society. Was paint water spilled in the corridor, she must herself interview the offending pail-bearers. Such omniscience was to be feared, but it bound them together. In Miss Todd her pupils found an abiding sense of security and of permanent values. They had no idea of her illness, hence to them her death during the summer holiday of 1908 was as if the very foundations had given.

If under Miss Todd's incisive rule we found ourselves a corporate community, that same body, old pupils write, became suddenly visible on one day of each year, and was surprisingly doubled by the presence of the boys. On three-hundred and sixty-four days of the year we were not supposed to know of the existence of the opposite sex, on the remaining day there they were, boys and masters, in all their glory, sharing platform and hall, prizes, cheers and speeches. How proud we were of the mistresses in their robes and hoods, how grand it was to sing as lustily as we could, *Beke Collegiate School for ever!* The day opened invariably with a speech from the Head Master, Mr. Ferguson, apologising for retaining his hat in our presence amidst the draughts of the Victoria Hall. A long morning session followed as places were allotted, bows and curtsies practised and final rehearsals staged. In the evening the massed parents from the Dress Circle and Gallery faced the Middle and Lower Schools assembled in tier above tier on the platform, and gazed down upon the mighty Fifts and Sixths in the Stalls. We became connoisseurs of speeches, weighing the Earl of Durham against Sir Henry Hadow and the local Aldermen. Nevertheless for us the highlight of the day was the play. How we cheered the neat sailor-browed sisters and cousins and aunts of that "right good Captain of the Pinacore," Vernon Brown! Latin orations, Horace's Odes, *La Loterie de Francfort*, whichever it was, we applauded our hardest and never quite forget. Most vividly of all we recollect the sense of being part of something bigger than ourselves, something linked with a far-distant scholar who had lived and taught on this same rough coast twelve hundred years earlier and whose name as Bedans we bore.

To give some idea of the school during those years it is best to begin with the new Preparatory Department. After a brief sojourn in the "Old Tin Tab," it came to rest in the new "Tin" building adjoining the Chemistry Lab. Strung along a single corridor were three rooms. Form I, presided over by Miss Bennett, occupied the farthest; in the middle was Form II with Miss Drever, and nearest the entrance Form III under Miss Wells. It was a little world apart where pupils were gently initiated into the ways of a big school. All the usual school subjects, including French, but excluding Latin, were taught by the Form-mistresses with the exception of Art. For this a visitor arrived. Gentle and much-loved Miss Cook from the wider world of the Art School taught small girls to lay on a wash with scrupulous evenness, and to paint green leaves and flowers. The general atmosphere is well remembered by an old pupil who, coming fresh from private lessons, was much intrigued by school punishments which never yet had fallen to her lot. On one occasion, anxious to share all

experience, she waited in the corridor until everyone had gone home and then deliberately committed the fearful crime of speaking, albeit to herself. Miss Drever on that occasion appeared likely to forget to ask for offenders, so she reminded her, and duly retired to her place to share the punishment of waiting once more until everyone had gone. It was so peaceful that no tears would come and she resigned herself to liking this new school, punishments as well! Another pupil tells how each day she escorted Miss Wells to school, and how that indomitable small mistress, so fiery in the class room, listened always to her chatter with a fine courtesy. It was Miss Wells, too, who each Friday evening assembled the whole Department in its corridor and without a word, threw back her head, and started the hymn *The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended*. Was she glad that the week's work was done? Perhaps so, but many one-time small girls are grateful for the memory of her fierce sincerity.

When a pupil passed from the Preparatory to the Middle School she left behind the safe world of the "Tin Tabs" and began life afresh in the main block. Each day she climbed the steep staircase in silence and with decorum, as the rules prescribed. At the Physics Lab. doorway the staircase turned south to debouch her into the long east-west main corridor. In silence she turned left to the cloak-room, found her peg, and, hair smoothed, and, if necessary, re-plaited, left by its opposite door to seek her Form Room. Opposite the cloakroom on the south side of the building were three big class-rooms, normally occupied by Lower Fourth's. At both ends a short corridor led to the five smaller class-rooms, each of which in turn would be Miss Todd's room. The first action of every Fourth-former was to ascertain which room for the year this was to be. Loud were the lamentations if the proximity to her class-room were great, louder but more secret the rejoicing if the whole east-west spread of the building separated them.

Each of the Fourth's seven forms comprised some thirty to thirty-five girls of an age range of thirteen to fifteen, each had its own Form Mistress and Form Room. The eighth room, being Miss Todd's, there was none left for a Staff Room. A small space of corridor on the east side was partitioned off and given the ominous name of Correcting Room, though books, not girls, were there corrected. It was so small that two-mistresses only could occupy it at once and Miss Ewart, pupil of the school 1896-97, later teacher in the Lower School, and in 1905 newly-created School Clerk, was accommodated with a desk in the long corridor, where she must have been forever tormented by easterly draughts.

Asked for their reminiscences most Belans of the 1906-11 period write of Fourth Form incidents. With remarkable unanimity they stress the dominance of two much-loved mistresses, Miss M. G. Wilson and Miss L. Hutchinson. "Brown Willy" and "Crutch." How many generations of schoolgirls pay tribute to them! After these the recurring names of Miss Coburn and Miss Birchall, twin deities of the Chemistry Lab, occur again and again, with affection and respect. With equal insistence the reminiscences make clear that it was not the school work, not even the newly-introduced games, not even the Christmas Parties and occasional outings to such places as Bede's Church at Jarrow, but the everyday life in the average Fourth form that mattered. It is difficult to recreate the atmosphere of those days, days in which school was supreme, unchallenged by cinema, wireless, or other distraction. We slept at home, they report, we spent Sunday at home; for the rest of the time it was school, with evenings of homework, and on Saturday games, the morning being spent marking the field, the afternoon at the game, the evening washing up, after the "Match Tea."

Lessons were accepted uncritically. It did not occur to us that they were meant to be interesting. From Oman's fat green *History of England*, Nesfield's Grammar, "Little Allen" (Latin), Chardonal (French) and 'Warwick' Shakespeare we did our lessons. At the end of the two years we emerged with a very good grounding in Latin Grammar, and some knowledge of Caesar, a fair French accent, a command of factors in Algebra, and a useful facility in turning staff notation into ton's solfa. English grammar we despised, preferring Latin, Shakespeare we loved. Romantic poetry was suspect. An old girl recalls Miss Manning, the gentle and charming teacher of English who turned out to our surprise to be a militant suffragette, but whose main job in our view was to deal with poetry. Keats was proscribed. She read to us, with appreciative comments, *Isabella* and *the Pot of Basil*. Silence deepened. Did Miss Manning think that at last these Northern barbarians were beginning to appreciate poetry? If so she was undecieved. When the voice ceased the class arose.

You don't mean she buried it? In a plant-pot? And watered it? She fared better with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Richard II*.

Science did not begin seriously until the Fifties. But for Fourth Forms the fortnightly session in the Physics Lab. was pure and wicked joy, whether presided over anxiously by our dear Miss Birchall, or benevolently by a golden-haired goddess, recently arrived and fresh from college, Miss H. M. Martin.

To the modern child it may sound dull, but judging by the reports, life to the Fourth Former was full of zest and of the dramatic clash of personality. A dull lesson like needlework might always be enlivened. Do you know what happens when without breaking a thread six girls change needles and continue sewing on small "specimens"? For those sober lessons, one writes (lessons on making fine tacks or gathering, stitching and setting into a four-inch band, not once but over and over again), we were enveloped in overalls. How easy it was therefore to play a confusing Family Coach to the bewilderment of innocent Staff! Alas, on one occasion just when the last change had been safely effected who should enter but Miss Wilson. She swept the room with a withering glance ("Sarcastic Mary"!) but said nothing. And we chafed for the rest of the term, parted from our dearest friends in the seats we had by accident acquired. That was typical of Miss Wilson's dealing with her forms, swift, dire, but just. It was she who instituted the rule of confession. Forbidden to speak to anyone during or between lessons she required us to confess every lapse to herself at 4.30 each day. And we did. With Spartan pride we acknowledged each crime; a few grim words, a page (or two) of history to write out, a page of Caesar to memorise and it was over. We usually escorted her home afterwards. The atmosphere was as healthy as the East wind that braced us. "School would be grand if there were no lessons," was the cry, "Let's do something." Strange things were done, too, with upturned waste-paper baskets, with ink and keys and rulers, with a certain small girl and the Cookery Room oven. And somehow all these small and silly things mattered intensely because the people who dealt with our sins had real standards, firm principles and a respect for law and order. Slowly as they coped with our stupidity, our idea of noise, our lawless happy-go-lucky idea of fun, used sternness out of all proportion, it seemed, to the offence, dealt out fitting retribution on saint and sinner with even-handed justice, we developed a respect for law just because it was the law whether it dealt with pig-tails or spoiled property, developed a fine sense of justice, and loyalty and came to reverence the courage that admits that all the many reasons for failure do not amount to an excuse.

Two stories from old pupils are to the point here. The first concerns a return home from hockey. Fawcett Street under repairs was studded with upright iron bars. A man attempting to board a passing tram was caught on one of them. The class, escorted by Miss Hutchinson, stopped and gasped. Shaking himself loose, falling, getting up again he raced after the tram and finally leapt aboard. To herself Miss Hutchinson

said, "Oh, if only I could teach them to do that!" That was turned over in many minds for the rest of the way, nor were we such fools as to think that it referred to catching trains.

The other story concerns a habit of Miss Wilson's. Our education,—that of Sparta rather than Athens,—was saved from narrowness by the sense we all had that in Miss Wilson were terms of a wider reference, that her sanctions were based on something more immutable even than the laws of Miss Todd. Though she never preached her form of the Faith it was impossible to be in her form and to be unconscious of religious verities. Ask any old "G" girl of 1907-8 what the 40th Chapter of Isaiah connotes: the end of a troubled day, wrath in the offing, thunder on the left, a Scripture lesson, and the brief command, "Get out your Bibles and learn the 40th Chapter of Isaiah." Did she know how often we learnt it? We doubt it, any more than she knew the security it brought to the sensitive with its reiterated, "Comfort ye!"

We needed comfort too, especially after examinations. It was Miss Todd's custom to give back corrected term examination papers herself. She would sail serenely into the classroom, set down the bundle of foolscap and wait. At her nod we sat, the mistress to our distress remained standing, Miss Todd having seated herself at the high desk. In a few words she made clear her approval or disapproval. We shrank, or expanded and nearly burst with joy if by chance the verdict was good and the mistress smiled. General errors were then corrected by a demonstration of teaching by Miss Todd. After this she returned to the high seat and bade us stand. With a decisive flap she turned over the mass of foolscap and with infinite contempt picked up the bottom paper. Sternly and thoroughly, she went through it, and finally fixing the owner with her keen eye she bade her come and take it. Fiery-red or sheet-white the victim came forward, retrieved her paper and retired to her place where she was free to sit and, behind the backs of her standing comrades, weep unseen. Inexorably through the pile Miss Todd went. The top few shivered in their conspicuous loneliness; it was better to be in the middle, since praise was never without criticism, and lest she grow collected, the top girl fared often as badly as the victim at the bottom. When at last it was over the girl nearest the door closed it silently upon the Head Mistress. Relax? Speak? "Get out your Bibles and learn the 40th Chapter of Isaiah." Didn't we need it? Dear Brown Willy, may she rest in peace, her warfare accomplished, her journeying done.

In 1905 there was no Games Field and no provision for Physical Training. At the end of each morning session the mistress taking the lesson gave the class, standing in the aisles, five minutes drill. As they had no space and she little knowledge of P.T., the results were often odd. The chief movements, writes one pupil, were arms up, down and sideways, and knees outward bend. Generally only the arm showing was drilled, and anyone behind the first two rows did knees outward bend to command but stayed down until the end of the exercise. Such P.T., however, was insufficient, so the Authorities obtained "Crocodile" walks to such places as Tunstall Hills. The leaders raced to the top to watch the rest of the form struggling up, says one who participated, but walked the return journey with decorum and in gentle step to arrive at school much too late for the time-table lesson,—yet no one had heard of the Go-slow principle then!

Eventually in 1907 after much searching by Miss Todd and Miss Hutchinson, who were wont to take out their lunch and gaze at possible fields, grounds suitable for Hockey were found. The first playing field was at Whitburn whither two forms, some sixty girls, accompanied by Miss Hutchinson were transported as far as Sea Lane in a special tram for a whole afternoon each fortnight. No one, except Miss Hutchinson had ever seen the game played. An article in the *Bedean* of 1907 contains such pertinent advice as "right-halves . . . must not rush across and snatch the ball from their own left-halves," and "Don't let us rely solely on our enthusiasm." That last perhaps had the following story supplied by Minnie McMillan in view. She heads it, "How I brought Miss Hutchinson to her knees," and says:

"It happened on the school field at Whitburn. I, wearing long skirt and buttoned boots, was told to take the corner. The ball was placed, the players ranged along their respective lines, hushed expectancy filled the air and I took a mighty swipe. Far across the sky it flew—the ball of my hockey stick, the string snapping in the flight. Everyone shouted and roared. Miss Hutchinson sank to her knees, helpless with laughing.

"My first corner in my first game with my brand new stick! I almost blubbered!"

The first away match was played at Cleadon on December 21st, 1907, with the Cleadon Ladies (Junior). The names of this, Bede's first hockey team, should be recorded:—G. Simpson, M. McMillan, M. Baffle, A. Shaw, K. Wigzell, A. Gamblett, W. Scott, D. Thomas, E. Lax, B. Beasley, J. Parker.

The result is unknown! 1908 saw a new pitch, less ridgy, more secluded, at Timstall, but this was soon superseded by the field on Hylton Road where at last we possessed our own pavilion, where cricket was eventually played and in 1911 the first Sports Day held. By 1911 the Hockey Team was strong enough to take part in the Durham and Northumberland Schools League of the Hockey Shield. After beating Tynemouth 9-0, the Newcastle Church High School 2-1 on a replay, and the Newcastle Central High School 8-0, also on a replay, Beke remained the proud Shield-holder. This victory, duly recorded in the *Bedan* of 1912, occurred under the excellent captaincy of Thelma Henderson, and was due to the tireless coaching of Miss Hutchinson who gave up her Saturdays year in and year out to the building up, mostly from the Middle School, of a team that knew how to play the game in all senses of the word. Nor should the Field Week at Bardon Mill that she organised go unrecorded. The memory of Granny Boyle's Cottage, of long tramps in hill and valley remain vivid in the mind of the fortunate group who went.

After the Middle School came the Upper School, the Fifts and Sixths who dwelled aloof beyond the Chemistry Lab. The training of the Fourths in the first years of the Collegiate School being essentially ethical, Spartan and moral, the question of intellectual training arises. Measured by examination results, for instance, how far did such a practical foundation take the pupils? One set that went steadily through from 1906 confronted an external evaluation of their work in the Senior Oxford Examination of 1910. Out of the 10,000 odd candidates in the country they achieved the second place in Geography and the Bronze Medal, thanks to the tireless efforts of Miss Birchall, and the fourth place in English. The same set in J. Parker achieved the top place in the Post Office Examination. This group, however, passed into the Upper School after the death of Miss Todd when Miss Bece was Head and Miss Hughes and Miss Farquhar ruled Fifts and Sixths. This was a period of transition and hence typical neither of the former Upper School controlled by Miss Emma Todd nor of the later period. Hence we must take a step backwards in time.

Under Miss Emma the Sixth had been small, individual and secluded. First of all they took London Matriculation, and that Rabison passed, proceeded to University Entrance Scholarship, or the Intermediate Examination for the B.A. degree. Marjell Bruce, the first Hockey Captain, Mary Faichen and Madge Hodgson were the first to take this examination from School. Of them such comments as the following were proudly made on Speech Days: "Eight *Bedan* girls who went

went straight from Bede School to the University have this year taken their degrees." The small fry said "so that was what they did in their long skirts, with their hair up, all so learned—seeming behind their spectacles! But they themselves wrote grateful letters to Miss Todd for help and advice, and to Miss Emma also who from her Cookery Room cyrie directed and produced such plays as *The Sleeping Beauty* and *La Loterie de Fossefort*. Miss Emma also wrote articles for the *Befau* in a crisp and vivid English that reveals her acute, ironic mind. She left in 1887 to be married and Miss Boon who later succeeded Miss Todd as Head Mistress took her place, whereupon a new era began in the Upper School, to be followed, in the years after Miss Todd's death in 1888, by a period of transition in all departments. Hence the new Fifth-formers who started life in the Upper School in the room below the Cookery Room in the September of 1888, entered what was eventually a new period, one of ever-widening horizons and of a gentle discipline. Some changes came quickly, others more slowly. With the stabilising of the new régime they began to find that as a result of the relaxation of many rules, then fast becoming out of date, more responsibility was on their shoulders. The Sixth, too, began to play a greater part in School life, especially after the introduction of the Prefect System. Order Marks, that added up to Conduct Marks, provided a penny-in-the-slot punishment which broke the rigorous system of confession. If such marks tended to render rule-breaking a triviality in the eyes of the individual they, nevertheless, reinforced training in corporate responsibility by bringing shame upon the Form. Preoccupation with conduct and morals made way for other interests. It is significant that it was during these years that the Silver Lining Society was founded, training in social service being its purpose. Physical training sprang into life with the coming of the first Specialist and the use of the Y.M.C.A. Gymnasium. Intellectual and artistic interests were given more scope. Miss Boon herself read Tennyson with the Lower Fifths, whilst to one old pupil at least Miss M. L. V. Hughes will always be gratefully remembered as an interpreter of the poetry of Virgil, as Miss Bradshaw was of Spenser.

Some changes were dramatic and abrupt as was the passing of the gong and the sudden appearance of a Staff Room. Of the first this tale is told. "One day as I was standing in the corridor, Miss Boon said to me, 'Sound the gong, dear.' The sonorous booming of the gong served to remind each mistress of the change of lessons. Being naturally lacking in self-confidence I struck the gong with all the force I could muster, fearful of being unheard. Never again did I see the head of the stick, though I can still see Miss Boon's amazed expression. Henceforth we had a nice big bell."

Intending teachers who were Bersars left school at the end of their Upper Fifth year in order to do a year's Student-Teaching before going to College. They disappeared to their allotted schools from Monday to Thursday, to re-appear on Fridays. Without books, Form Mistress, Form Room or any abiding place they wandered miserably like Virgil's Shades. Other pupils had the advantage of a year in the Sixth under Miss Farquhar. Of her, one former pupil writes, "She had to a very high degree the gift of firing adolescent enthusiasm for Causes and directing what might have become personal devotion to herself to ideals of service and citizenship. I have always been, and still am, eternally grateful that I was privileged to know her."

It was Miss Farquhar's Sixth also that was allowed to bridge the ancient cleavage between Boys' and Girls' Schools. One old pupil after paying high tribute to Miss Hutchinson for the education in music that she received, adds that she remembers also a course on Composers taken by Mr. Jarman after school hours with a small group of both boys and girls, who studied the works of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert and learnt something of form in music. Another writes, "In those far-off days we had little connection with our neighbours, but one official contact was made, when under the careful chaperonage of Miss Farquhar the top girls were shepherded into the Boys' Debating Society. We felt duly proud of this privilege in spite of various satirical remarks from the lords of the Sixth." A new era had indeed begun!

At this point it is perhaps fitting that we should pay some tribute to Bede's first Head Mistress, Miss Janet M. Todd (Newnham College, Cambridge). Her former pupils delight to honour her memory, extolling her generosity, her magnanimity, her wisdom and above all her courage. She was a woman of outstanding personality, a gifted teacher, devoted to the cause of sound learning and an inspiring Head Mistress, unsparing of herself, and unfailing in her loyalty to her conception of the true function of the education of girls.

With her passing Bede's "Heroic Period" ended. Individualistic, Spartan, demanding fine scholarship and above all *esprit de corps*, rousing the adventurous to "high deeds in Hungary, for the honour of the School," it had inculcated supremely the Pagan Virtues—justice, fortitude, and loyalty. The new period under Miss Boon aimed rather at "a noble and gentle discipline" with service to the community and responsibility for others in the forefront. *Novi ubi, sed fosi* replaced the narrower *Esprit de corps*.

CHAPTER IV

1917 — 1920

" New Sun, Sea Tort."

Audre Lewis, audres vocans. Abrupt as the changes inseparably connected with the new regime might seem to be to those who had grown up with the old, it would have been an almost super-human task for anyone to carry on the school along the same lines and by the same methods as those on which Miss Todd had built it up. Sufficient if the results of the new methods maintained and developed the ideals of the founder.

" I went, aged seven, to my entrance examination. I was the only examiner and was asked to write a composition. My effort had no capitals, no full stops, not even a comma. Miss Lloyd read it aloud and collapsed, exhausted. I liked this 'examination' so much that I insisted on staying on there and then and on attending school daily until the next term when I officially became a Bodan—to remain so until I was eighteen." Thus speaks a new child of 1917. What does a new mistress find? A kindly Head Mistress, conscientious, loyal, friendly staff, Miss Farquhar, the senior mistress, never too busy to help anyone; prefects whose authority was respected by most of the school and who were held in awe as some kind of super-being by the little girls, one of whom still " goes hot all over to remember how she threw a snow-ball at the Senior Prefect, not knowing who she was;" she finds a school with amazingly good " tone," with happy pupils, producing work and play of a high standard in an atmosphere of security and stability, a school of few rules and these largely such as tended to produce courteous citizens with consideration for those with whom they came in contact. The sense of satisfaction, of personal responsibility and of freedom felt by Staff and pupils alike was quickened by Miss M. E. Boon's method of dealing with those under her. She put into practice her theory that having done one's best to choose the right person to do a piece of work one should leave her to use her own, in it. In this policy lay perhaps her greatest strength as a Head Mistress, and her trust had obviously justified itself abundantly.

The Lower School, consisting of girls aged from seven to ten or eleven, in the care of Miss Lloyd, Miss Arkle and Miss Bruce, lived in the Temporary Building, known also as the Tin Building, Tin Tabernacle or " Tin Tab." In the main building was housed the Upper School including the Student

Teachers who arrived every Friday as before. These were now, along with the Sixth Form, in charge of Miss Farquhar and felt they had a place in School life and a friend. A light-hearted Middle School inhabited whatever other rooms were available anywhere.

Every girl was expected to take before she left Form Upper V, the Oxford Local Senior Examination, or in later years, its equivalent, the Durham School Certificate Examination. In the Sixth Form a fairly wide course of study was planned for the majority, the rest worked for University Entrance or Scholarships. In 1919, the first three pupils gained the new Higher School Certificate of Durham University; for the next year or two, Bedans worked for that of Oxford. Later, Forms V and VI studied respectively for Durham School and Higher Certificates.

The names of a few mistresses are inseparably connected with the reminiscences that make up our chronicle, but how many other memories there are—Miss Stokes' beautiful work for scenery and dresses, the craft lessons the Sixth had "to keep us from being too bookish," Miss Dorothy and Miss Audrey Lodge's stories and help with games, "Granny" Mesnard's wide culture, "the enchanted garden of Miss Weddell's English Literature lessons," "dear old Daddy Bailes' infinite patience." Bedans remember this mistress who "made her subject live for me," that one "who made me feel one did one's best as a matter of course," that other "who taught me to think for myself, to be independent and to persevere until I had conquered any difficulty." "It is," says a Bedan of the period, "with real gratitude that I remember these things now and those who taught me" and another "the staff of this time was an exceptional team. Great emphasis was laid on work but an extremely happy and united atmosphere prevailed in the school in spite of a very poor building and few of the facilities present Bedans enjoy."

The inadequacies of School's material conditions were by now very evident, "the long, long trail to prayers, to art, to singing, a tram ride and then a climb to the hockey field, a hasty trip down town in the dinner hour to the swimming baths, across two parks to the gym hall and back again," yet by ingenuity we triumphed over our disabilities. "I remember breaking the ice on a bitter, frosty morning on the pond at the field to get the water in a leaking pail to mix the whitening in the old marker and then marking the field before the match at 10 a.m. No school we played had to do this and I wonder how much our almost invariable success in

matches had to do with this Spartan training." As for the school playground, it "seemed vast to a little second-former who saw older girls strolling sedately round, deep in adult conversation, but later she knew it for what it was—a mere 'dog biscuit' Miss Wells had called it—with a dangerous dip by the gate and the netball post." Yet on this undersized asphalt pitch we produced some of the finest school netball teams in the North, while in the absence of a School Hall it often served for plays and drill and dancing displays. At one of these one girl was the envy of the school, "not because I was the pianist but because the piano was placed in the Boys' corridor on that occasion. I was inundated with offers to turn over the music."

The Labs, had uses other than scientific. Amid the smells of the Chemistry Lab, we studied *Hersani* at a sink at one end while Middle III cooked at the other and in the Physics Lab, with its high stools and benches we ate our lunch before Netball practices, and had tea and talked French before the *Cercle* meetings.

Over the Art Room in Room 31 with its kitchen range "remote alike from Tin Tab, and Main Building, Form IIIa felt superior beings of a world between Juniors and Seniors": in the scullery behind it, which had once served as an Upper Sixth's Form Room, they helped to prepare for parties, and, there, later, one who came to Bede School aged sixteen had most of her lessons and studies. "Yet" she goes on "I think I learned more in those two years than ever before or since." But the greatest thrill Room 31 had to offer was the staircase, with "the glorious banisters on either side down which pairs of girls with inner arms intertwined slid to make a neat landing on the road, how often a mere yard from mistress or prefect."

A covered way, erected after inspectors had spent a week with us in appalling weather, led to the Tin Building "with its gloomy cloakroom where we had to button our coats and put on our gloves before going out to walk" never more than two abreast on the pavement, "with its lockers that we could hide in, its closed smoky stoves smelling richly, we thought, of burnt raspberry jam," with that dingiest of rooms once papered, in an effort to cheer it up, by Miss Parker and her form, and that other where a sentry could be so conveniently posted.

One never-to-be-forgotten afternoon we thought all this had gone for ever. We returned to School to find the Temporary Building all confusion and disorder, the roof smouldering and firemen busy with hoses. The form at Games learnt—who knows how—that the Tin Tab, was on fire and came rushing back joyfully. Alas! our fire was a disappointment; the Tin Building was merely patched up and soon resumed its permanent temporariness, as did also the only room left to be mentioned, our Maid-of-all-Work. This was the sole space into which the whole School could be squeezed, so there we had Prayers and all other important assemblies. This ill-fit room had even served as an Art Room. There we sang, we acted, did drill and played dodge-ball, there we had parties and entertained ourselves on wet games days. In it took place our many plays, serious or frivolous, the rehearsals for Speech Days, the first meeting of the Guild of Old Bedans and its subsequent gatherings, including “that wonderful Open Night of the Singing Club.” Dear old Room 37. It has a special place in the hearts of Old Bedans!

One change did take place in the School accommodation in the last years of the period when we lost our neighbour, the Grange School. First, wire netting was substituted for the wall between us, giving tantalising glimpses of a green Eden. Next we were given the use of the tennis courts there and in our last year we went over to the house to drill and Form LVI lived in splendid isolation in a cold but pleasant room upstairs with Marmaduke and Frederick as mouse co-inhabitants. The courts had deteriorated and were of little use for tennis but what a lovely setting for *The Tempest* and other plays and for the 1929 Prefects' farewell party to the staff. Often the mistresses had entertained the prefects but this time “for a change, the mistresses thought out, under the supervision of the pupils, the answers to competitions or vied with each other in flipping paper fish over the grass. Do you remember how scientifically Miss Ewart flipped hers?”

These last joys, however, were yet to be. Meantime, our Newcomer heard stories of the past. She learnt how for a short time Mr. Ferguson had been Headmaster of both Boys' and Girls' Schools and how eventually the Education Authority had restored to the Girls' School the independence of its pioneer days. She was told of windfalls the School had had in 1912, of its first grant towards a Reference Library, a present of books for it from Mrs. Wallford Common (Miss Emma Todd) and a gift of £100 from Mr. and Mrs. Eustace Charlton to be used as a nucleus of a Loan and Scholarship Fund. In the meantime, by the wish of the donors, the

interest was used annually to provide prizes for essays. These prize-winning essays, she found, were amazingly good. Only since 1912, she discovered, had the Girls and the Boys had separate Bedans and Speech Days and there was much talk of a recent Cantata *Snow-white*. She heard how the Swimming Baths, with fresh water, had been reserved for Bede Girls for two hours after school-time once a week, heard of Geographical Exhibitions run by Miss Newton as interesting and novel Competitions, of a mistresses' cricket team and gym-class, and was brought back to 1917 with tales of Bedans' cheerful acceptance of war conditions.

Let them speak for themselves. "We hoped, on returning to school in September, 1914," they told her, "that German would be out of the curriculum, but it wasn't." New charities naturally claimed the attention of Bedans. "Girls and mistresses knitted, and my friend sold buns at play-time in aid of the D.L.L. Prisoners of War Fund in 1918." "I was a Student-Teacher then and we spent most of our Friday afternoons making pyjamas for wounded soldiers." "Did you ever rejoice when the knottiest problem was solved by a call to bombardment drill? This consisted of taking shelter among the pipes under the Chemistry Lab. floor. We found our way there by means of a trap-door and a step-ladder. One mistress still feels the horror she experienced and says the little girls were frightened, but we loved it. I can see Miss Parquhar, gowned, holding a storm lantern and coaxing the girls as they went down and Miss Hutchinson below firmly conducting *Where the bee sucks*. The boys also used the cellars, entering through their Chemistry Lab. They always arrived first and caught us by the ankles as we descended. Our nervousness was invariably, but wrongly, ascribed by the Staff to terror-shelling." Our second "Pank-hole" was the corridor of the Boys' School and more generally popular!

During the long period from 1917 until 1929 when we said goodbye to the Old Building, we saw the end of the war, the great influenza epidemic, Peace Celebrations, the passing of the Women's Franchise Bill, and we observed the first Armistice Day two minutes' silence. We had a fire, we inaugurated a School and several Form French Clubs, a German Club, a branch of the League of Nations Union, various Debating Societies, a Dramatic Society and made contact with the Boys' School by running a Prefects' party and later a Dance at which Miss Boon acted as hostess. We had a week's General Inspection, we nearly all cut our hair short, we adopted Our Baby, held two big bazaars and two auxiliary sales, saw the Loan and Scholarship Fund reach £1,000, and

make its first awards, sent a school party to Wembley Exhibition, went as a school annually to hear a French Lecture and once in the early morning to view the eclipse of the sun. In our time, a certain complete LIV became the first Bede School Guide, the first Bedan went alone into a French family on the exchange system and three others attended a course and enjoyed themselves privately at Boulogne, making practical use of their French studies. We had our first School Medical Inspection and we saw the foundation of the Guild of *Old Bedans*.

In these years, too, Mrs. Stagg presented a picture to be competed for by the Art classes, Alderman Nicholson, Miss Bruce and Miss Charlton presented the Netball, Hockey and Gymnastic Shields respectively, Mrs. Stansfield Richardson and Miss Boon the Singing Cups and Miss Lodge the Tennis Trophies. We went to four different halls for drill, none of them in the School buildings, we saw the successful development of the School's Netball, won the Netball and re-won the Hockey Northern Counties League Shields, saw the beginnings of tennis and held the first gymnastics competition.

Not the least exciting of the events of this period was the acquisition of our own School song, written for us in 1923, by Miss M. L. V. Hughes, our one-time classics mistress and set to music by Edgar Bainton. We saw the last of our "little girls" leave school after eleven years at "Bede." The Prefects of 1927 saw the Foundation Stone laid of the new Bede School and a few of us were privileged, as our schooldays ended, to visit the New Buildings which we had been promised every Speech Day and to which we had looked forward all our School lives.

Meantime, while our new mistress was meeting the unexpectedness of seven-year-old Bedans in class ("Please, may I put my tooth in the waste-paper basket?" or "Mother says you're a good teacher.") these small people were having new experiences too. To one, her first day at "Bede" was made memorable because a girl swallowed a pen-rib and how many could say, with another, "I shall never forget my new tunic—long to allow for growth, clean white blouse, navy coat! The crowning glory was my large coarse straw sailor hat, very uncomfortable with its tight elastic under my chin, but it carried the Bede badge with its motto and I wore it with pride. Even my spectacles were new for this great first day!"

These little ones were really a great asset to the School and delightful companions too, for they loved everything, from lessons to the plays their mistresses acted for them at parties: *Red-Riding-Hood*, *The Tinder-Box*, *Blue-Beard*!

There had been Christmas parties since School's earliest days, most often in fancy dress. "At my last party," says one Bedan, "The Senior Prefect won the prize as Polly Peachum. I thought her terribly daring! How well, too, I remember my first Speech Day. We wore white frocks—no coloured ribbons," said my form-mistress!—and black stockings and shoes, and we waited in the ante-room of the Victoria Hall or sat in our red plush seats, wild with excitement as we saw the mistresses enter in the glory of their gowns and coloured hoods. I belonged to the vast majority that sat in the tiered seats at the back of the platform and sang the choruses of the Cantatas, except the *Wind Piper* when I was chosen to be the lute boy who was left outside the hall; my solo was omitted—I had been cast for the part, I am told, because I 'had a pathetic face'!"

Another joy for the whole School was the Singing Cup Competition. At first, we heard each other by sitting with the Form Room doors open; later we all went to the Town Hall and listened and sang in the Reception Room. How we of the Upper Fifth practised *Happy Fair* at every possible opportunity, hoping to be the first winners of Mrs. Stansfield Richardson's Cup, but the Lower Fifts beat us with their really beautiful singing of *O, Mistress Mine*. Other memories of these days are of *Five Eyes*, sung with such effect by the Junior School and of the dismay of those four seconds who, after doing their utmost to balance the numerous sopranos, heard the adjudicator criticise them as "too heavy for the firsts." But we did not need the stimulus of Cups or Speech Days to enjoy singing. "Our lessons, the lovely unforgettable songs we learnt and Miss Ewart's accompaniment to them were a delight." As Miss Hutchinson and Miss Lloyd were always willing to help their less musical "Language" colleagues, the German-learning girls had a wonderful repertoire of German folk-songs, and, we are told, "I have never met anyone that learnt as many French songs as we did."

Organised games now played a much greater part than previously and most of the mistresses accompanied their Forms to the field "for a whole afternoon once a fortnight and coached them. And very well they did it too, while the ridges in the field helped us to keep our position in the game." The growth of the School's Hockey has already been described; let us bring its story up to date. Eight Bedans of this period have played for County First Elevens, some for many years in succession. Durham County has had a Bedan as Captain and another as Vice-Captain, while at one time three of its five Selectors were Bedans, one of whom has been a Selector for the North since 1947. For the South, one Bedan has played, and

for the North two have played and one been a reserve; two have represented England in a hockey tour of Australia and New Zealand and two have been reserves for England. It is interesting also to note that two Bedans of this time were the Founder Captains of the Hockey and Netball Teams of Sunderland Games Club.

While these ten Bedans, with several others who later served on County Second Elevens, were still playing on Form and School Hockey Teams, the Netball of the School was making its own history. Miss Arkle came to Bede School expecting "to give some help with games"; to her, "games" meant hockey and it was a great blow to be asked to help with netball. She "knew it as basket-ball and thought nothing of it." However, she became more and more interested in its possibilities, as did her pupils, and soon the School's netball was organised. Each form had one practice a week, before or after afternoon school, and by 1923 there was in existence an efficient form coaching system by members of the School Teams, the mistresses had a team which played matches, the Old Bedans were keen to form one and "Bede" had won the Netball League Shield. The School Teams, both hockey and netball, set a fine example of sportsmanship which was reflected in the inter form "Picture" and "Shield" matches however high excitement ran and however hopelessly out-classed a team was by its opponents. From them also, Bedans learnt also to be courteous and appreciative spectators.

Spurred on by Miss Trout's enthusiasm, girls had practised cricket in the evenings after school on the hockey field, a curious cricket pitch if ever there was one! Matches were played with Chester-le-Street, one of the few schools in the district that had a girls' cricket team. "As there were no buses and the train service via Gateshead was unsuitable, we went by a horse-drawn brake. Journey and match took up the greater part of a Saturday and formed quite an event." Cricket died as a school, though not as a form, game about 1917, while from 1922 onwards, tennis struggled, without school courts, but with fair success, to take its place. The annual Sports Day was an institution; Bedans remember slow bicycle races "on the ridge or in the furrow," the wonderful running of a future representative of England's hockey, the smartness of that Senior Prefect whose name amongst many others occurs most frequently in the reminiscences we have received—Edith Alexander, and for spectators "there was always a galaxy of Society in gay clothes present. Were these Councillors and their wives—or just our parents?"

We loved these physical activities but we enjoyed equally the many plays we read and acted, to each other, often to other forms or prefects, sometimes to the School. We had our *School Cercle français* too, open to Forms V. and VI, and the mistresses. In later years there were many Form French Clubs and a Reading Circle in the Sixth; thus "our form had a *Cercle* for five consecutive years. We had many other French interests too, an inter-form reading and recitation contest, our correspondents of course (we used to compare notes about their exciting gifts; mine once sent me a hat)" and in 1924, we published *Le Bedan français* consisting of some of the work entered for a successful *Bedan* competition and other original contributions in French. It was written out by obliging Bedans in beautiful script and laboriously duplicated.

Of the many other Magazines we mention only three: a Lower II's *Maggie* which ran for a whole year with good Editorials and with long exciting adventure stories by a regular contributor, "Wormy Pickles," a Sixth Form's two issues of a witty *Brighter Bedan*; each of which contained a clever *Interview* with a mistress, and, for a year or so, Miss Woodell's *Bedan Book*. Into this contributions rejected by the *Bedan* editors for lack of space were copied by the authoresses themselves and the book was passed round the Forms at a half-penny per night. These coppers went to the Silver Lining Fund.

The Silver Lining Society, with its annual School Self-Denial Week as a special effort, was run on lines that gave the girls regular weekly contact with the Children's Hospital it benefited. This they enjoyed and later how proud they were to see on their visits "The Bede Collegiate Girls' School Cot," whose occupant always received very special gifts! The end of the War brought another great interest for we adopted a baby, the son of a blinded soldier, sending money to St. Dunstan's for his maintenance. Surely never did Boy have such lordly birthday and Christmas presents!

"Great as was the School's interest in the little patients at the Hospital, we could know them only for a short time, but John was 'Our Baby,' all our school days, and indeed," says one of his many foster-mothers, "I still think of him as that and well recall the day Miss Boon held up his photograph in Room 87. I wonder if Bedans are still living such full happy lives."

Nor did efforts for the Silver Lining and the Baby absorb all our energies. We worked for a bazaar in 1920 with such goodwill that we raised £200 for the Devastated

Schools of France, over £83 for a Sunderland Charity, and from late sales, a reserve of some £30. The most interesting part of our work for this bazaar was our "Private Enterprise"; we could make, undertake, buy or sell, give or take orders for anything, provided transactions took place only after 4 p.m. in the room of the mistress responsible for it. Do you remember the wonderful half-Persian kitten with the "long pedigree," offered for sale at 12/6 and the notice that appeared below: "For sale: kitten, ordinary—price/—." How sorry we felt for the "kitten, ordinary."

The second bazaar was organised in 1923 by Old Bedans to raise the Loan and Scholarship Fund to which reference has been made earlier. School made its contribution in the form of work and money. "I bought sweets wholesale, and Nancy sold the most delicious coconut ice." Every form produced at least one entertainment varying according to the taste of its members. One of these, a pixie play, was chosen for presentation at the bazaar itself. As it ended some spirit escaping from the play bewitched the actors. They remained on their high, rickety platform motionless, gazing at the applauding audience, until at last, by a remarkable climbing feat their Form Mistress succeeded in seizing the nearest green pixie leg and broke the spell.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of this period was that all the School's interests—work, games, charities, competitions—were shared and enjoyed by every form and by almost each individual.

Does this account of one many-sided period of School Life show the beginnings of the growth of service to the community? And could the germ be found even in the young Lower School? Do you remember, "Little Mouse," "Chatterbox" and the rest, those wonderful meetings after a hurried lunch at form-room desks when we chatted and worked with our hands for the Silver Lining, calling each other only by our Secret Names, for were we not a Secret Society, *La Vita*, whose aim was to have good manners, to be helpful and to be loyal to each other and to the School?"

The older girls for their part were definitely encouraged to interest themselves in the world outside School. One of these tells us that her first introduction to social work was going to meet the Ropery girls at their Club with Miss Farquhar, whose informal Friday hour with Sixth and Students, whose own interest expressed practically in her work for the Guild of Help and other Welfare Organisations did much to prepare the girls for living not for themselves but for the community, in the world as they had done in School.

" This School was a happy friendly place with a soul of its own. It offered something a girl could love and afterwards look back on with affection."

Before we say good-bye to it, let us see it all again through the eyes of one of its pupils.

" I was at Bede School from April, 1918, to July, 1920, and seemed to remain in the lowest form for a very long time, since that was the period when the School was being reduced by the youngest form each year.

There must be many, many Bedans now who could not begin to imagine what it was like to be taught by Miss Arkle when you were only eight years old! To them I would say that she had an entrancing way of reading *Peter Pan* while you struggled with the intricacies of a magyar nightdress or with an overall of green easement cloth with cream facings. Nor could present Bedans believe that at one time the entrance examination consisted of having five or six small girls seated casually round tables in the Head Mistress's room trying to re-write their favourite fairy story in their best hand-writing and endeavouring to work out a few little sums involving shillings and pence under Miss Lloyd's supervision.

The day I began as a pupil of Bede School, the "Tin Building" caught fire during dinner-time and for a time at the age of seven and a half years, I, with the rest of the Lower School, attended the Technical College. With short legs dangling from high laboratory stools, we felt very lost and I think one of the good things of those times was the way in which the older girls in the school looked after the younger ones.

I wonder how many funny tales could be told about the halls we went to for gym. I can remember going first to the Park Hall, then to St. John's Methodist Church Hall,—this place always filled me with a very eerie feeling and I hated arriving there first. The third I remember was Bede Tower. Looking back, one realises how the Staff must have disliked escorting those straggling crocodiles backwards and forwards from school to Hall and coping with lost shoes and hair-ribbons and with Doris, always late because she could not button her long boots.

The high lights of those days were the Speech Days for it seemed to take a term to prepare the entertainment, whether it was a French Play, *Will o' the Wisp*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Manxue of the Shoe* or *The Walnut and the Carpenter* with its wonderful oyster and mermaid costumes. Remembering

them, one knows what a high standard was reached in those performances. How we loved those final rehearsals at the Victoria Hall, so gloomy in the morning light, and then how exciting at night as we sat in our white dresses, listening to the speeches and waiting for the usual request for a holiday the following day. And then "the show" began when the platform party withdrew to the Dress Circle.

How we resented it that one year when we had to combine the girls' and boys' Speech Days into one, and the opening song was conducted by Mr. Jarman instead of Miss Hutchinson!

I am convinced of the advantage of the continuity and stability of a long spell at one school. During my years at "Beck," there were very few changes on the Staff. Miss Wilson, to whom I had recited the 24th psalm at the age of seven and a half, taught me History when I took School Certificate, and what a success Miss Farquhar was as a Fourth Form mistress, when she suddenly left her accustomed Sixth Form to deal with us! Those of us in the teaching profession realise too how excellent was the teaching we received. Methods used then were little different from those extolled to-day. Geography was made to live, Miss Charlton's lessons were periods full of fascination and interest; games, songs, and plays were constantly a part of English and French lessons; sketching expeditions were quite a usual event; we had our little garden plots and tended them—not always too successfully, I fear—on land now part of Barnes Park.

What tolerance and understanding the Staff had! Perhaps not many would believe that once Miss Boon, opening the Sixth Form Room door, found the members of the form pursuing each other with ink-wells, and all she said with a twinkle was, "You naughty girls!" and closed the door discreetly; or again that Miss Ewart chuckled heartily when the Head Girl, victim of a practical joke, went to her full of apologies for troubling her about her "lost" purse; or that Miss Arkle, with a wicked light in her eye, apologised to a prefect for speaking on the stairs.

I left school the day the School left the old buildings and I still remember the feeling of sadness and strangeness that I felt that night.

CHAPTER V

1929 — 1934

" . . . FRESH WOODS AND PASTURES NEW,"—Milton.

Past the milestone by the footpath that said: "Sunderland, 1 mile," past the entrance to that avenue along which little Bedans had once run to cultivate their gardens, up a long hill, past the Children's Hospital and a white-washed farm-house, we walked, excitement in our hearts. What would life hold for us in the New Bede School?

We turned in at the gate. We had no eyes for the trees on the steep bank opposite, their leaves just beginning to show the tints of autumn, for the long road behind us stretching down to the town or the strip of vivid blue sea beyond with its white horses. For us on this September morning, there was only one thing worth looking at—this great building in its vast grounds. We hastened towards the door. The door? — But which door? — Suddenly we felt strange and lost . . . Then a well known voice said, "This way." . . . Inside, there was a familiar and comforting hub-hub of girls' voices; the strangeness vanished; we were all excitement again. Soon the whole School was assembled for Prayers for the first time in the Hall.

"I shall not easily forget that morning," says one who was present. "In the lofty hall sat row upon row of Bedans, the oak panelling making a good setting for the beautiful soft blue of their new uniform blouses. There was not a sound, not a movement. The Head Mistress entered. School rose. The new life had begun. The service was simple as ever, simple and memorable; then, as Miss Ewart played the first bars of the School Song, many besides myself felt a sudden catch in the throat as our thoughts turned back to the end of that long strange hot day in our Old Buildings; how subdued and moved we had been by that little farewell service and by the thought that "never again would Bedans sing their School Song there" . . . But what was this? "He looked forward, so sweet we." . . . Full and fervent the words and music rose, in a Hall worthy of them, up to those high windows afloat which a ray of sunshine fell . . ." After darkness—Light! . . . Filled, though only partly conscious of it, with a sense that here was a new chance, that here surely they could do great deeds, girls moved away to the rooms allotted to them.

What did they find in this new home? In the form rooms were comfortable chairs with rubber "shoes," desks fitted with book-rests. These were smaller than the old ones, and

the Upper School, "proud to keep our new rooms spotless and tidy, attached neatly to the backs of the chairs large bags of the new School blue to receive the overflow from the desks." The walls were painted in soft pleasing green, the windows large and easily manipulated. Windows opened into the corridor and the upper half of the door consisted of glass panes. The full significance of this did not dawn on Bedam at once. They soon discovered what interesting glimpses could be caught of passers-by in the corridor, but only later were they disconcerted to find that their pantomimic communications with a friend, while the mistress's back was turned, were visible from outside.

"What a blessing was the School Hall. "Prayers there," say the Bedams of 1929, "are very impressive," and they thank Miss Boon for allowing them "to enjoy a new privilege, impossible before, of dancing during Interval." It was a disappointment, especially to the Gymnastics Mistress Miss Ward, who had worked so hard under difficult conditions, that there was no gymnasium, but what an improvement nevertheless! She could now take a great number of the games periods herself, a quick change from slippers to gym. shoes was all the preparation needed for a drill lesson, and, soon, such apparatus as could be set up in the Hall added interest to the work and excitement to the annual Inter-form Competition.

We found ample well-fitted laboratories with a Form Lecture room and adequate storage space, a special music-room high up at the top of the School, well-equipped cookery, laundry and needle-work rooms with plenty of cupboards. Miss Lloyd had had in the Tin Tab a shelf or two of "Lower School Library," and there were in the old Senior School a few books in the Form Room cupboard, spasmodic Form Circulating Libraries, consisting of loans from girls and mistresses, French books sent monthly for a year or two from the Franco-Scottish Society's Library in Edinburgh, and in later days "the two small book-cases that contained the Sixth Form Reference Library." Now, though the shelves were still almost empty, we had a Library, where in its recesses, its deep windows and its silence, we sensed already something of the peace of the world of books.

We had material comfort too. Looking after our new School, there was an efficient and kindly caretaker, reminding our oldest mistresses of the first Bede caretaker, Mr. McInyre, in the way he could and would cope with unexpected difficulties. We shared with the Boys' School a dining-hall with its own kitchen premises behind, presided over by Miss Duan. More than one Bedam pays "tribute to her for her lemon pies

and Cornish pasties, in fact, her lovely dinners; she used to let us scrape the dish, too!" "At first," writes a pupil in 1889, "the idea of having no table-cloths appalled us, but when we saw the beautifully embroidered orange linen runners on the white-scrubbed tables, we were ashamed of our thoughts. School dinners were indeed a luxury to those of us who had been used to having a few sandwiches and a Thermos flask of coffee round the stove in the Tin Tab." After this meal, these "country girls" had miserable slate basins and cold water to wash by; now, they had hot water, adequate cloak-rooms and even changing-rooms. These were a merciful change from the hut on the Hylton Road Field which we cleaned ourselves and which, though a wonderful acquisition to the first hockey players, was quite inadequate to contain thirty Bedans straggling in the dark to remove shoes, find their possessions and come forth tidy for the long journey back to town. And what luxury to be able, just by taking a few steps, to blow away on one's own field, the cobwebs of *mensa, mensa, mensa*, of algebraic equations or of *What part of the verb is this?*

There were other joys outside besides the new hockey-pitch. There was that lovely tree saved by the mistresses' appeal when the other trees were cut down; beautiful gardens came into being round the school with beds of flowers and wide herbaceous borders in front (how disappointing when later most of the perennials were replaced by shrubs!) and more borders behind, a fascinating little fish-pond, grass tennis-courts in embryo, a stretch of rough ground with sloping banks of flowers that dipped down to a water-garden and secluded grassy corners, shut away by rambler roses where we could laze in sunny weather. Truly we had "come joyfully into our inheritance!"

With our usual well-planned time-table ready for us, we easily settled down to work. As time went on, we discovered the few flaws in the apparent perfection of our new surroundings, the disturbing roar of heavy lorries climbing the hill in second gear and the cruel cold of our lovely home. We missed the huge blazing form-room fires, inadequate as we knew them to be. We had also sustained a sentimental loss! Brother Bones had come with us, but "we note with regret," says Form Up.Vb of this date, "that our Crocodile no longer beams upon us from the cupboard top. Perchance he was considered too disreputable to accompany us, but we miss the sight of his broad tail above the piano and the occasional vision of those enormous jaws consuming our translations of Virgil."

Apart from this, everything seemed good to these Bedans, including their smart blue blouses. Several years earlier, a navy-blue blouse had been introduced for the Lower School while the white was retained by the Seniors. Members of the Sixth Form had the option of wearing navy blue dresses and in 1924 a metal brooch replaced the Prefects' "ribbon badges of the Suffragette colours." About then, the Forms, visited in turn by Bedan "mannequins" on whom various styles were tried, voted for the cap that is still used to-day, and the new blazer followed. As games colours, introduced about 1912, the school badge was worn in the form of a metal brooch, while the hockey team had for many years played its matches, dressed in moss-green tunics and white blouses. Later the netball team had adopted tussore blouses and green tunics. No girl, however good her play, was allowed to represent the school in both games and great was the rivalry between the teams. . . . Now, which was the prettier green? . . .

These tunics had had hard wear. Hence soon after we entered the new buildings, a new uniform was chosen for First Teams; its white blouses and blue tunics of the shade of the School blouse are still proudly worn to-day.

In our new conditions much more responsibility devolved upon the Prefects and the Lower Sixth girls carried out many of the more material duties, while to help them and to bring about the best in this best possible world, rules were tightened up. The windows overlooking the quadrangle tempted us to loiter and chat, the long straight corridors invited us to race and we were prone to turn the corners of the stairs at full speed. For the general safety, speaking was prohibited in these places except on the lowest corridor, running was forbidden on all three floors, for the basement had its own dangers in the form of swing doors, the glass of which broke at the impact of a Bedan, and in early days there were a few badly-cut wrists. Of Bede School in those transition years, an old Bedan writes "When my contemporaries and I committed misdemeanours that in many schools would scarcely have been noticed, they seemed—and I say this with no sense of our own virtue—energies to us, and I think back with pride to the high standard of work and of self-discipline expected of us."

At first we found it hard to know on which of these corridors or staircases we were, but as we were all affected in the same way we merely laughed about it together. Every year, however, since then small Bedans have lost their bearings and many will sympathise with Nancy who, "after twenty minutes wandering rejoined her form covered with confusion," or Joan who "stood lost outside the Head Mistress's door and asked the way to the Art Room."

But we must turn our attention to events. A month after our arrival, the two Bede Schools were officially opened by Sir Charles Trevelyan, the Minister for Education. A new Bedan of the year remembers "the awe with which I gazed on all the robes and hoods, the terrific pride I felt as a small eleven-year old standing in a big marquee singing *Jovansless* with all my heart and the reverence with which our School Song was sung." "Sir Charles Trevelyan" the Bedan says, "asked that the money which would have been spent on a golden key for him should be expended on books for the two Schools' libraries." This was the first of many presents made to this new school of ours.

We already had two coveted prizes, the Janet Todd Memorial Prize instituted as a tribute to School's great Head Mistress and that presented by the parents of Margaret Mallen who died just as she ended her year as a well-loved Senior Prefect. *The Guild of Old Bedans* had offered yearly prizes for some competition in the Bedan; shortly after it was the donor of an annual school prize, while the first of many gifts to provide awards for a certain number of years was that of Mr. and Mrs. Youll whose three daughters were all Bedans. Mrs. Marley presented a most beautiful silver competition cup for Needlework, Miss Ward gave us Department Girdles matching our blouses in colour and two Upper Sixth Forms caps for Sports and for Junior Hockey respectively.

Then there were gifts to the School itself. Under Miss Arkle's guidance, girls made sets of table-mats and runners for the dining-room, under Miss Elliot's they beautified the bare end wall of the sewing-room with a frieze "which only Lower V₂ of 1929 had the privilege of making"; Miss Neilson was the inspirer of a piano cover of blended blues and violets. "Is that beautiful felt cover still in existence?" asks a Bedan, one of whose "greatest pleasures at Bede School was playing that lovely grand piano." We had a piano-stool worthy of the Hall from a Lower Sixth Form, and many books from mistresses and girls as parting gifts, from Forms and later from Houses, and from Mrs. Stansfield Richardson in commemoration of Miss Farquhar's long association with the School. As they left us Miss Farquhar, Miss Wilson and Miss Boon gave us pictures, *The Guild of Old Bedans* presented a grandfather clock for the Hall, and with the surplus of the money subscribed, a block and the first five hundred copies of a book-plate for the Library.

This brings us to the next great event of that first term, on November 8th and 9th, the Old Bedans' Week-End which was

arranged to coincide with the School's private celebration of its entry into the new buildings. "I can remember," says a Bedan of the time, "the Friday morning assembly which was attended by many past Bedans, pleased to profit by Miss Boon's invitation, and in the evening a great number of members of the Guild were present at an entertainment given by the school-girls. On the Saturday morning a Netball and a Hockey match were played between School and Guild, and in the afternoon, proceedings opened with a reception at 3.30. Miss Boon received the guests of whom there were about a hundred and fifty, among them the Chief Education Officer, some of the Governors of the School and several former members of the Staff."

Every girl in the School had some small part to play: the Lower Fifth Forms "were pleased to supply the flowers to decorate the rooms and to sing the song which had won them the Singing Cup. The younger Bedans had made the programmes while the girls of Forms VI and Upper V acted as hostesses, providing the tea and entertaining the visitors." "We tongue-tied damsels," says one of these, "were thrust into the arms of a totally unknown Old Bedan and requested to show her round . . . but tea and conversation loosened our tongues."

After tea the rest of the pupils arrived. "I was impressed," says one, "by the number present who had had some part in the past in my education. I had always thought of these as 'old' and it was a shock to me to find they had been Bedans too. Greetings were read from guests unable to come in person and I was greatly interested in Miss Boon's story of the School, the presentation of the clock and a joint entertainment by School and Old Bedans at which I remember Tableaux, Greek myths represented in dance, songs and some good one-act plays."

"To old Bedans," says *The Bedan*, "the week-end meant meeting old friends again and talking over old times, and though it is the Old School that is full of recollections for them, yet the New School did its share in bringing back memories." . . . "Do you remember," they said, "the day the games hut dece shat and imprisoned the whole form inside? . . . the thrill of going back the morning after the fire to collect our possessions from the chaos? . . . that square inch of unused space in your rough notebook that Miss Ewart never failed to find?" and so on. "The occasion was interesting for present Bedans," the writer continues, "in that we learnt much about the school in former days and it was exciting actually to meet people we had hitherto known solely by

name. Finally the week-end brought together all Bedans, and this sense of unity was especially felt during the singing of the School Song at the beginning and at the end of the week-end. It was sung with special fervour because of the welcome presence in our midst of Miss M. L. V. Hughes who wrote the words. It was the desire to have a permanent link with the School that led the Old Bedans to make their present of a clock. Many people waited at the end of the concert to hear its three sets of chimes and to look at the inscription, "A Gift to the School from the Guild of Old Bedans."

To visit us in our new home came our oldest friends among the Governors, Alderman Nicholson the Chairman, Mrs. Nicholson, Mrs. Gordon Bell, and Mrs. Stanfield Richardson. We knew that they had a very real interest in our conditions and our doings as one or other of them came regularly to Singing and Gymnastics Competitions, to Sports Days, to Finals of our Netball Shield matches and to Old Bedan parties and dinners as well as to visit us unofficially. Later, an Old Bedan herself became Chairman of the Governors, Mrs. Hedley (Nellie Blacklock) and in 1936, Katherine Malen, the first Chairman of the Guild of Old Bedans was elected to the governing body to represent the Guild. She was, alas, our last as well as our first representative, as Mrs. Hedley was the first and the last Lady Chairman of our Governors, for about 1945, a new Secondary Schools Sub-Committee took the place of the former Governors.

The story of the next few years is one of a quiet, well-regulated life of work, including a General Inspection, of play with pleasant enterprises and interests whose origins have already been described. Not that we had nothing new! School Tennis was developed and Rounders taught, but these, unlike the earlier school games, came to their prime in natural conditions. Very different from the long skirts of our pioneers was our drill attire in the later years. "I remember the horror of my grandmother and my aunt when I proudly told them that we were to do gymnastics without stockings and tunics." Gymnastic displays and the School Sports gained by being held at the School itself. The out-of-door folk-dancing at these was accompanied once by our "string band," five or six Bedan violinists, and once by some twelve "tin whistles." Those who played these remember their adventures when sent to practise at the bottom of the School grounds, and those who heard their playing remember how pleasing it was and how suitable for the occasion. Two of these "Tootlers," both exceptional pianists, who came to Bede School in 1929, were later the first pupils chosen to play

to the School in the Hall before Prayers. One of these had her "first never-to-be-forgotten taste of Bach Oratorio at a beautiful and moving Nativity Play" in which the whole school took some part and which was produced by Miss Hutchinson, Miss Lloyd and Miss Elliot. The other as a small girl in the room under the Music Room was "thrilled at hearing the older pupils singing *Music when soft voices die*" and was herself later one of three Bedans who sang this song in three parts at a French Holiday School concert, secretly proud to show the other schools that "Bede" could sing!

Although money collections were now amalgamated into a School Charities Fund and each year we gave help to more and more worthy causes, we continued to give our personal and most enthusiastic support to the "Silver Lining" and "Our Baby"; we collected eggs and carried them to the Hospital in clothes baskets, we sewed and decorated little garments, we dressed dolls. These were bought, as were also John's Christmas and birthday gifts, out of the proceeds of "the 1d. and 2d. bars of all kinds of chocolate, unimaginable to Bedans of to-day," which we still sold under Miss Wilson's charge, as we had done to sweeten the milkless intervals and dinner-less lunch-times of our earlier days. One year "the organisers of the charity, invited to visit Form Lower Va. found every girl sitting with at least one doll in her arms, supplied and dressed by herself and ready for some poor child's Christmas." In 1935, "Our Baby" became sixteen years of age and we had to say goodbye to him. After careful consideration we then adopted Grindon Convalescent Home and visited it several times, but with the outbreak of war the Home was emptied and so we lost another of our personal contacts.

Most of the old "School Societies" meetings were revived once the spectacular doings of the first term were over. The School French Club became Form Clubs, the Reading Circle continued, as did the Branches of the National Savings Association and the League of Nations Union, merging later into the Modern Events Club. In 1931, a School Drama Club was formed and a Chemical Research Society which grew into a Science Society and many girls became Associate Members of the Geographical Association. A much-enjoyed annual outing was that by specially hired buses to Newcastle to see the French Players. During holidays, a few girls visited or were visited by their French correspondents, while each year School Camps and French holiday schools claimed a number of Bedans.

The greatest change in the organisation of the school in this period was the introduction of the House System. It was Miss Boon who had the inspiration of using the letters of the word BEDANS as initials of the house names and these also we owe to her: Ben, Esk, Drom, Avon, Ness, Strath. From the School register, six lists were made out, a name being added to each in turn. Miss Boon chose the first House Mistresses, Misses Hutchinson, Shearer, Wilson, Arkle, Harris and Birchall. These drew by lot their Houses, their House colleagues, their list of girls and the colour of their House badge! The general rules by which the Houses would be worked had been well considered beforehand. We had a complete change of methods of discipline and House Life began. Mistresses and girls were all enthusiastic and profited by this new opportunity to show individual House initiative. The variety of enterprises and of meetings was remarkable. "These were always pleasant occasions. All class distinctions faded out and third-formers and the exalted Sixth levelled; all were just members of the House, working for it and relaxing together." Houses were in healthy competition in everything connected with School Life, including work, conduct, social interests and even Gymnastics and Singing. The *Guild of Old Bedans* gave a picture for the House which made most progress in the year; later, the Chief Education Officer, Mr. Reed, presented a large cup for the best House record, and other trophies followed. Our first joint enterprise was a Bazaar to raise money to be "devoted to the Library and the School Activities."

"As young Bedans," say girls whose "Bede" life began with the new School, "we were full of wonder; later—a much happier state—we just enjoyed everything, our pride in our new badges, our Sixth Form English lessons, the intimate feeling of the French Circle, that gymnastic display which ended in a Tableau by the whole School on the field when the separate Houses, each wearing its own colour, formed the word BEDANS. It must have been impressive."

A twelve-year-old Bedan of 1920 has memories of both Schools. She recalls "the trap-door of Room 07 down which we dared each other to go. I went, and was caught by Miss Lodge as I returned and conducted via Miss Ewart to Miss Boon. I remember Mr. Bailes' little room where we were sent when even he could not stand us any longer, lovely stair rails to slide down, mysterious doors to peep through to the Boys' School, the older girls and mistresses being very much moved at the thought of leaving the Main School and Tin Tab for ever, and one mistress saying she would never be as happy at the New School as she had been at the old, and I

think she never was. I had watched the New School being built and longed for it to be opened, but I too felt uncertainty as we gathered in the Old School Yard and the door was officially closed for the last time."

"To me," she goes on, "the New School was a wonderful place which never failed to make me feel satisfied to be a Bedan. What excitement as we assembled in the Hall, sat on the tip-up seats and heard to which room we were to go, and what disappointment to find we were next to the Common Room! I recall how a member of the First Team began at 9 a.m. to turn one of the old green tunics, and had it ready for wear at the match at four o'clock, and how when Miss Stirk tripped, spilling over herself a jar full of pond-life we had just collected from the water garden, she said as we helped her to her feet, "Don't mind me, get the specimens!" Later I found myself in Miss Shearer's House which did much to improve my behaviour and I remember House parties and Teas (4d each!) which were always enjoyed, my last year at school, the best of all, and playing in Miss Hutchinson's "band" at that Sports Day when our house won the sports cup to put alongside the hockey and rounders and needle-work trophies, and I remember my last day at School when I thought I should never be happy again.

These years were in the main a fulfilment of a school life of which the previous periods had been the preparation. There had been a few changes of mistresses, and Mr. Bailey's sudden death in 1911 was a great blow and sorrow; but there had been for long a large section of the Staff that Bedans looked on as theirs for ever, that they "still look on as Beck School." Now, however, the links in the long chain of the life of School were being gradually broken. Miss Farquhar's retirement in 1909, followed less than four years later by her death, was the first great break in the family life: then came Miss Wilson's retirement in 1913 and Miss Boon's long illness. During Miss Boon's absence Miss Hutchinson who had been our Senior Mistress since Miss Farquhar's retirement acted as Head Mistress, at first unofficially and then officially. A born leader, she had the trust and love and loyal service of girls and mistresses. Miss Boon could have had no worries about the condition of the school during her absence and must have been pleased to find us so united on her return. On our part we were glad that she was able to come back to finish her work, as she had meant to, in July, 1904, and we gave her a great welcome. We were sorry to say goodbye to her but our regret was tempered by the knowledge that it was best for her, and, more fortunate than our predecessors of 1908, we were prepared gradually for the change.

Every department, every activity that had grown out of the School's being, was running smoothly, with no fuss or noise, for with all our busy-ness, we had had leisure to think — "to stand and stare." "My main impression of my school-days," we read, "is enjoyment of everything, lessons, examinations, even "fines" and detention, mainly because of the interest shown by the Staff and the feeling that, no matter how small a part you yourself played in the affairs of the School, you 'belonged.'"

CHAPTER VI

1934 — 1939

" WE ARE THE PILGRIMS, MASTER, WE SHALL GO
 " ALWAYS A LITTLE FURTHER . . . " *Flecker.*

In September, 1934, the new Head Mistress, Miss W. J. E. Moul, took over Bede Girls' School.

Accustomed to a full if unostentatious school life, and knowing that life to have sound, deep roots, the older girls and the mistresses looked forward with enthusiasm to seeing it grow stronger and wider, while yet keeping its own character, and we waited eagerly, if in the Northern way silently, to play our part. Perhaps a school, with everything in outstandingly good order does not give much scope to a new Head Mistress overflowing with energy. Certain it is that our new Head Mistress found our tempo much too slow, and hence began immediately to set her own pace.

A programme appeared in the corridor, showing some " events " for nearly every day. To us who had been accustomed to announce such things only after we had prepared for them, it seemed strange indeed to see that on such and such a day, there would be, say, a play, while as yet no part had been cast, no dress made! Had we been too thorough? It was strange too to be called away suddenly from work to listen to some announcement or lecture, to be left so often in hall or in class-rooms while all our mistresses disappeared to some staff meeting.

The very young Bedians liked the excitement, accepting it as another of the wonders of their new school, the older ones gradually adjusted themselves to the ever-changing conditions of this rather hectic life.

" Activities are," we were told, " as important to a school as lessons." With this axiom, mistresses and girls were in full agreement, but whereas we had been wont to develop our interests from within and let them grow outwards, now our activities were appointed for us. With the multiplicity of these and the continual minor demands made upon us, it was inevitable that something should suffer for lack of time and space. As these activities often encroached on their evenings, House meetings became of necessity more restricted, while our cherished LVI play, though ready for production, was crowded out. The lovely Nativity Play referred to so

often almost tenderly in the notes we have received as "one of the finest things Bede School ever produced" survived, but only until 1933.

The Modern Events Club, however, flourished; a Sketch Club was founded and a Classical Society. Two suggestions mooted but "left for the new Head Mistress to settle for herself" were quickly carried out. Within two weeks, School had a Careers Mistress and before half-term a formal meeting of parents with the Staff had been held. Other meetings followed and soon a Parent-Teacher Association was founded, a successful organisation which has been, and is, much appreciated by the parents and is more than generous to the Head Mistress and girls of Bede School.

The other main events of these pre-war years were the visit of some of the Seniors to the Glasgow Exhibition, the whole school's journey to Durham to see the ceremonies commemorating the 1200th anniversary of the death of Bede, the annual outing to the French Play, produced from 1933 onwards in Sunderland, the winning for three years in succession of one of the big prizes offered to schools by the French Government through the paper, *La France*, and the interchange of one of our mistresses with an American. "Mathematics with an American accent," says a Bedan, "seemed somehow more human." School parties visited Holland, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, and Belgium. These journeys provided a great opportunity and were much enjoyed. For some there was the privilege of attending International Camps and Conferences; one girl writes appreciatively of her holiday in London as one of a party of eight Bedans sent to the Empire Rally of Youth in 1937. International correspondence, since about 1934 a feature of the School's language work, was now, as it were, nationalised. At some time during these years Bedans began again to have swimming lessons, for which they visited the Public Baths in summer, during school hours, and at last we got our longed-for gymnasium. We ceased to buy text-books; these were thenceforward lent by the School, and we all began the official drinking of milk.

To Bedans who had known the old Speech Days, those in the new School "seemed somewhat dull," but those who had known no others found them "almost as much fun as a party." We find recurring in their reminiscences, especially of their first year at School, the old awe of the young Bedan for that wonderful being, the preceding year's Head Girl "who kept re-appearing on the platform to receive some prize or trophy."

Meantime the *Guild of Old Bedans* with its wide and varied interests bound together past and present Bedans in unbroken friendship and helped to keep alive the best traditions of the School.

But serious changes were coming. The first blow fell in 1967 when Miss Ewart left us—that most punctiliously faithful of School Clerks, that invariably helpful and perfect accompanist, who was herself a Bedan and unspurring of herself in her service to her School. (We were fortunate in that her successor was the understanding and patient Miss Gibbons). In the next year we lost Miss Hutchinson, our well-loved “Crutch,” an apt nickname indeed for one who was the prop of School’s every enterprise, on whom every one of us depended. No Bedan, mistress or Head Mistress but brought to her problems of all kinds to solve, from hockey to morals, and never did her sympathetic hearing and wise advice fail. And what she did in the background, Bedans could guess at and mistresses knew. Miss Birchall succeeded her as Senior Mistress, but a year later she too retired, a distinguished pupil of Bede School, a loyal Bedan and another loved member of staff. Their going meant for them release from ever-increasing strain, but for us the loss of friends who were School’s own. May they all have many more and happy years of retirement, secure in the knowledge that what they gave to School can never be taken away from it, secure also in the gratitude and affection of all old Bedans.

Bede School itself was the next to move. One Sunday morning in September 1969 found Bedan girls waiting, with knapsacks and gas-masks, at Richmond Station to be delivered to their war-time homes.

For the next year Bedans and mistresses alike accepted the often amazing and sometimes amusing conditions imposed on them and did their best, as of old, with what they had. “There was no school in Richmond big enough to house us. We worked, studied, played, knitted, made bandages and had nightmarish inspections of gas-masks in eleven or more different places, with two or three forms housed in some of them. A typical Town Hall time-table was: “Forms III, Activities (i.e. sewing and knitting) in the Court; Form IIb, English in the Magistrates’ Room; Form IVc, Chemistry in the Dock.” The whole truth of the evacuation period could be told only by the School Staff. We quote from Bedans who dwell chiefly on the later period when, as more and more girls returned home, there was more accommodation, conditions became easier and it was possible to have greater

outlet for the energies of those who remained, such as the town Musical Society, gardening, socials and a fortnightly School dance.

"First impressions," one states, "were not favourable." Along with a number of others, I arrived in the village of Aldborough St. John with nowhere to go. Eventually we were all found homes and thanks to the three mistresses who accompanied us there, we soon had many activities organised.

When school finally began, we had a long muddy walk to the village every morning and then travelled by bus to Richmond, and we had to leave school at 3.30 p.m. as only at that time could we have a bus back. If we forgot a gas-mask and had to go home for it, that was the end of school for that day. Every evening we tried to cope with homework by the light of an inadequate oil lamp and then packed a lunch which we ate the next day in the Y.M.C.A. Rooms at Richmond. One outstanding memory is that of our first air-raid warning. It occurred one Monday morning during our weekly assembly in the Town Hall, and the first hymn contained the line *Live this day now as 'thou' thy last!*

Later, two of us who were Sixth-Formers were moved into Richmond and after that those old enough to appreciate it spent an enjoyable year. There were, of course, many drawbacks, but there was an atmosphere in the School at Richmond that had never, in my day, been present in Sunderland. The Sixth Form was an entity instead of two separate years at daggers drawn and the Upper Fifts were our firm friends. The amazing thing about life in Richmond was that, considering the conditions, we got through so much work and that to a great extent things were normal: we played games against other schools and latterly even provided refreshments for our guests.

I often wonder now how the Staff managed to teach in between acting as billeting officers and nursemaids. The older girls who were evacuated would like to pay tribute, too, to those Richmond people who did so much for our welfare, and to all our hostesses who made the best of the situation and tried to make us feel at home." She adds, "Looking back, I do feel that at Bede School we were given opportunity to use our own judgment and to acquire a sense of responsibility. We were always guided by a very helpful staff and I know my own year would like to say a special "thank you" to our Form Mistress who gave us invaluable help during two difficult years in the Sixth."

Meantime, in Sunderland, the school's covered way was turned into air-raid shelters, and in March, 1940, the Boys' building was opened for those Bedons, girls and boys, who had either never left Sunderland or who had returned to it. To Miss Arkle, one of the first mistresses to be sent back from Richmond, and to Miss E. V. Clark was given the initial task of organising the girls' part of the school, which from then, with increases of staff, until September, 1940, was housed upstairs with the boys below as of old, and with an Acting-Head-Master in charge of both.

In a calm friendly atmosphere, work and examinations went on normally, interrupted, but not seriously, by war episodes. During the usual summer holiday period, boys and girls attended school for half the day, though not for lessons. Various occupations took the place of these: games and matches, reading, music, gardening, handwork. The weather was fine and no one missed the more orthodox holiday. These months formed a pleasant interlude.

In the autumn of 1940, the School, back in Sunderland resumed as normal a course as possible but also took its place in the Fight for Freedom. It added its quota to the National Economy, for in several forms every girl was a saver, and special efforts like Wings for Victory Work and Salvage Drives had great success. Many Bedons learnt to "dig for Victory" in their school allotments and in still greater numbers they became members of the A.V.F. to aid the Forces of the Fighting French.

Signs of war were all around, shelters in the basement, stirrup-pumps and pails of water and sand in the corridors, black-out curtains at the windows; and the Staff became fire-watchers. In the evenings, the G.T.C. drilled on the Hockey field and had instruction in Cookery and First Aid. Occasionally lessons were interrupted for air-raid practice, and less frequently a genuine air-raid compelled us to spend a bleak period under the dim lanterns of the shelters.

Meanwhile the ordinary life of the School continued. Girl Guide Companies were formed, Sports Day was a big event always anticipated with eagerness, Speech Days were resumed in 1940. Christmas parties with their festoons of decorations and greenery provided happy afternoons and offered the best of the wartime cakes. In spite of black-out and air-raids the School managed to produce an opera, *Diño and Escor*, and the Classics pupils held their yearly *Saturalia*, the most varied of all school parties, with amuse-

ing Latin translations of well-known songs and such entertaining items as a parody of *Itma* and the *Hokey-Cokey* danced to a Latin version of the usual words.

No line divides these war-time activities from their post-war counter-parts. Collections for Charities continued uninterrupted in their generosity during and after the war. In 1945 came the Victory Celebrations, a pleasant day when parents helped the staff to make for each Form a happy tea-party and the Sixth Form gave an entertainment to the School. *The Dayspring from on High*, presented by the Music and Art departments, was a pleasing and original interpretation of the Christmas story, while the Dramatic Society showed itself once more successfully at work by producing *Quality Street* in 1948 and later, along with the Junior and Senior Choirs, *The Three Christmas Roses*. The formation of a branch of the Student Christian Movement, the Junior Christian Club, and the week-end conferences held by these suggest the importance given to "Divinity" as a subject in the Grammar School.

Houses were revived in 1948 but soon gave way to a School Parliament where matters of importance and interest to the School are discussed by the Head Mistress, members of Staff and the class representatives who take decisions back to their Forms. Through all these years, Games have been played with typical Bedan success, colours and deportment girdles striven for with the old enthusiasm, School societies which had survived in modified form during the war resumed their wider activities, inviting outside lecturers and organising excursions. The old Bedans' Loan and Scholarship Fund too, has continued every year its excellent work.

One by one, reminders of war vanished, stirrup-pumps, sand, black-out curtains, protective window-net. On the removal of the last, an amazed and delighted mistress beheld for the first time our view of the sea! Last of all (after months of hammering) the air-raid shelters were demolished.

One week early in 1947, Sunderland was visited by a severe snow-storm and Bede Girls' School by H.M.F.'s. In spite of lack of transport, half the girls and all the staff turned up for the ordeal. After this visit, lighting in class-rooms was improved and temporary draught-screens provided in the lab. corridor. In 1948, the School was redecorated.

Meantime, the country's interest in other lands, quickened by its people's extensive war service abroad, was reflected in School. Foreign travel by groups and individuals was

resumed with visits to Switzerland and France. Thanks to the P.T.A., Sixth-Formers were also enabled to visit, in London and in Edinburgh, Conferences of young people from all over the world, whilst young folk from abroad have been welcomed to the homes of Bedans.

The P.T.A. is a real fairy god-mother to the School. Prizes are offered, gifts made by their Grant-in-Aid Fund, fees for outside lecturers paid and instruments bought for the School Orchestra. Among its services to Bedans are the sale of P.T. uniforms and catering at many School functions: kind fathers act as M.C.'s and mothers as chaperones at "Bede" dances. The well-known Sunderland advertisement, "Express your wishes; we fulfil them" might well be the motto of the Bede School Parent-Teacher Association, whose Chairman this year is its President, Miss Moor.

These years have brought, they have, alas, also taken away. In quick succession, School lost every remaining mistress of that happy band that had come with it to its new home. There is now a new Bede School indeed, but we see it from too close quarters to appraise it at its true value.

It reflects, we know, the great changes that have taken and are taking place in the world of Education. In 1963, the first of the 100 per cent. "special place" holders took the School Certificate Examination with good results. The growth of the School has crowded the building uncomfortably and rendered necessary a Junior and a Senior Speech Day. With the wider scope of the *Schools' Meal Service* and the *With Supply to Schools*, "Bede" dining-hall has been enlarged and improved and a new one added. In April, 1945, Bede Collegiate School became Bede Grammar School, thereby exchanging its distinctive name for one more general. As a result of the trend throughout the country, the Sixth Form is very large and there are new regulations for Student Teachers. We are now looking forward to a changed Examination system, since 1950 will see the last of School and Higher School Certificates and 1961 the introduction of the General Certificate of Education. And after that . . . who knows?

But, may Bedans of all time remember the past that made the present possible for them, and may they worthily—

"Toll for the ages yet to be!"

