

THE WANTOKNOW SERIES~
"VICTORY-MILLION" EDITION

The
STRANGE HISTORY
of
**WORLD OVER
SCHOOL**

by
**MONTAGUE
GOODMAN**



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FOREWORD

JUST as an astronomer may employ a few pebbles on the ground to depict to simple minds the mighty motions of the sun and stars, so have I sought to picture to my schoolboy friends, by means of scenes familiar in their daily lives, some of the mighty motions of God in His dealings with man throughout the ages. If to older and maturer minds whose schooldays lie far behind them, my doing so has belittled the greatness of the theme, my defence must be that, to a schoolboy, school life is by no means a little thing. It is in very fact to him *the World of School*, in which his first lessons must be learned, his early friendships formed, his boyhood temptations faced and his battle fought.

Again, if the theology involved is at times open to criticism, as well it may be, is it not true that even the greatest of allegories of necessity breaks down in this respect? And where John Bunyan fails who may hope to avoid stumbling?

A very rustic signpost may nevertheless point the way truly, and if perchance some erring schoolboy, reading my little book, should be led to faith in, and loyalty to, his absent King in the midst of the chaos and rebellion of Worldover, my simple allegory will not have been composed in vain.

So much to the critics. To you, my boy friends of the happy far-off camping days on the Scottish hills, I send my loving greetings. You will doubtless recognize some of your names (a trifle distorted) and will smile with me as memory recalls the fun and frolic of camp life.

Where are you all now? Taking your place, I doubt not, in the bitter struggle raging in "Worldover" in defence of all that is true and right and good and godly. Some of you, I hear, have endured the hardships of prison camps in the hands of the enemy, while some, alas! have laid down their lives for their country.

Wherever you are, God bless and keep you! Be you faithful unto death and your King will give you a Crown of Life!

MONTAGUE GOODMAN.

*Springfield House,
Davenant Road,
Oxford.*

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I. HOW IT BEGAN

SIESTA time in Camp had not so far proved an outstanding success. It was an innovation this year introduced by the orders of Docco (our Camp Doctor) in the interests of the general health of the Campers. For sixty boys under canvas in the Highlands of Scotland for fifteen days ought not, said Docco, to continue on the go at full pressure from early morning till late at night without some pause for rest. So it was decreed that for half an hour after the midday meal each day nobody should do anything beyond lying about and perhaps, if studiously inclined, reading a book.

But as few were of a literary turn of mind and all were full of vim, the first day's siesta had proved anything but restful.

"Can't you do something about it, Commie?" said Docco to me in my capacity as Camp Commandant; "the boys simply will not keep quiet, and they might as well play games as rag one another."

And so it came about that the expedient of yarn-spinning was resorted to, and that is how you must suppose that the story recorded in these chapters came to be told. Imagine then the scene. Three score schoolboys sprawling on the grass round "Commie's tent" (perched on a small hillock in a corner of the Camp irreverently termed "Mount Zion") mostly sucking sweets while they listened to the "chapter for the day" of Commie's Yarn. Readers of *Come to Tea With Me* will recognize several familiar figures among the boys, and there were others with whom they may make acquaintance later. Particularly noticeable in the group is a good-looking boy with keen eyes and a very wide-awake manner known to all as Curiosity Joe.

"Go ahead, Commie," cried Mike Smart, the Shrimp,

as I settled down among them, "tell us a yarn to send us to sleep according to Docco's orders!"

"And make it a long one, please," said Roger.

"How long, Dum?" I asked.

"Oh, long enough to last all the siestas in Camp," replied his twin brother "Dee."

"That depends on what sort of a story it's going to be," said the cautious Scot, Angus McDougall; "what's it about, Commie? We ought to have some idea first, you know."

"I rather thought a school story might do," I ventured.

"Oh, yes, I know, 'Eric, or Little by Little,'" jeered Peter Round. "I think we get enough of school in term-time; let's forget it in Camp, for mercy's sake!"

"All right, Hold-all," I answered, "only I thought you'd be interested in *The Strange History of Worldover School*, where so many extraordinary things happened that I doubt if I could finish it by the end of Camp."

"Where's Worldover School? *I've* never heard of it," queried Giles Green, half asleep as usual.

"All the world over, Sleepy," said I; "that's how it got its name."

"I say, it can't be everywhere, that's nonsense," objected Shanks (his real name was Hanks, only he had such long legs).

"Oh, let Commie begin! Go it, Commie!"

"Here beginneth the first chapter—"

"Shut up, you fellows," came from various quarters, and I began.

II. THE WONDERFUL SCHOOL

WORLDOVER SCHOOL was truly the most remarkable school all the world over. And the things that took place in it of which I am to tell you were so strange as to be almost beyond belief.

It was a magnificently planned and erected school in the most lovely country imaginable. Its Founder had taken great delight and had spared neither pains nor expense in preparing it in every way to suit its purpose, both for the learning and development of boys and for their material comfort and well-being. No one of its multitudes of scholars (and their number grew to be legion) could fail to be supremely happy, provided he were able to fit in with the scheme, and conform to the regulations of the school.

Everything was provided which would appeal to the most varied tastes and interests of boys of every age and inclination. There were classrooms and lecture halls, chemical laboratories, carpenters' shops, gymnasium, swimming bath, and even an observatory for the study of astronomy. There were fives-courts, tennis-courts, football, hockey and cricket grounds, a running-track, and a first-class golf-course. There were gardens for botanical study and cultivation, there were high rocky hills for climbers, lakes and streams for fishing and horses for hunting. There were wild tracts of country for shooting and there were long stretches of river for rowing.

In a central place in the grounds there rose a lovely school chapel as beautiful as a cathedral, which stood open at all times for those who wished to pray. Its magnificent organ was available to those boys who loved to play it, and a great school hall was adapted with every convenience for general school assemblies and for

school concerts, with all kinds of instruments provided.

Indeed, nothing was omitted by the Founder which would conduce to the joy and well-being of the scholars. The school was equipped with the most complete libraries in which any scholar could acquire, provided he took the pains, knowledge on any subject under the sun. The food was excellent and varied (at this Hold-all displayed added interest), with every kind of fruit and vegetable in its season growing in the orchard and grounds surrounding the school. All this was provided without any charge to the scholars whom the beneficent Founder selected and placed in the school.

"I say, Commie," interjected Roger the twin, "aren't you overdoing it a bit? You can't expect us to believe a school like that ever existed in this world. If it did we'd like to go to it, eh, Dee?"

"Wait a bit, Dum, there's more truth in my story than you may think. Let me go on to tell you about the Founder. As you may guess, He really was the most delightful school Patron imaginable, and had a heart full of affection for boys of all sorts. Moreover, all His plans and thoughts were in their sole interest with a desire that the scholars might be 'happy, healthy and wise,' and might grow into men of whom He could be justly proud when later on they became citizens of His great Kingdom. For I must tell you that in reality the Founder was a King who reigned over the mightiest Empire ever known, whose confines reached to the shores of Eternity. He ruled supreme and alone with myriad hosts who obeyed His every command. Even the stars in their courses harkened to His word, and all nature owned Him Lord. But His chief delight was with the school He had founded and with the scholars He had placed in it. For it was from them that He looked for those who should help Him rule His Empire in the years to come. This was indeed the main purpose of the school, and every detail of its varied functions

and activities was intended to conduce to this great end and object."

"I can smell a sermon in this story," murmured a big youth with a shock of fair hair named Broadbelt.

"I guessed that at once; it's one of Uncle Solomon's Parable Stories," returned Curiosity Joe; "jolly fine, I call them."

"That's all very well," replied the other under his voice, "only I wish your uncle didn't preach so much; he 'gets' me every time!"

"I suppose that's what he wants to do, but I like it," answered Joe.

"When you fellows have quite finished I'll proceed with my yarn," said I.

"Go on, Commie, let's hear what happened at the school," cried several. So I went on as follows:

"Now you must know that as all public schools in England are divided into Houses in which groups of boys live together their domestic lives, mingling with the other groups only for purposes of school or sport, so this great school was ordered after the same manner. Only since there were such legions of boys the Houses were of necessity very numerous and as School Houses are invariably designated by distinctive names, so these Houses bore names by which they became universally known, and of which their inmates were exceedingly proud. Time will not permit me to enumerate them all, but here are some of the more famous of them as they came later in my story to be known: Britannia House (the largest in the School), Germania House, Italia House, Muscovia House, Francia House, Hispania House, Helvetia House (one of the smallest), America House (a more recent foundation, but very large and populous), and Palestina House, one of the most ancient of them all.

"These houses vied with one another in friendly competition in all manner of sports. Each House had its

own colours and was immensely proud of its flag. All the Houses had their own private portions of the School Grounds of very varying extent, separated from the rest originally only by light fences and running streams, but subsequently, as you will hear, by high walls and strong gates. Boys from one House were free to visit others, and so a general friendly intercourse was maintained which conduced greatly to the well-being and success of the whole School.

“Now, of course, no community of whatever size can continue long without a proper constitution and rules by which its members’ conduct is regulated, and the wise and beneficent Founder of Worldover School, recognizing this, prepared the most perfect and all-embracing Code of laws to meet the need. These He communicated to one of His professors named Moses, who was the original House-Master of Palestina House. He in turn put them into literary form and delivered them to his House, and of these they became the diligent and proud custodians, transcribing them and passing them on to the other Houses in due course.”

“I’m beginning to see the idea of this story,” remarked Ralph Thornton. “Something like ‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ only different, eh, Commie?”

“Perhaps you’re right, Rusty; shall I go on?” said I.

“Yes, and no more interruptions,” said a quiet voice behind me. It was the Camp Adjutant who had joined the group unnoticed. He was a typical Scottish laird, one Major Brisket, a universally popular figure in camp. “Come and squat here, Adj,” cried several boys, “and we’ll be as good as gold! Go ahead, Commie.”

“Well, I must tell you that the Founder of Worldover School did not take up His residence on the premises, for as King of the Great Empire of Universe (as I have already mentioned) He resided in His royal palace in Paradise Land, which was understood to be countless

leagues away from the school grounds. It was indeed an important part of His purpose that none of His scholars should see Him during their school career, but should learn of Him and His character by the things they saw around them in the school and by all the provision that His thought and care had lavished upon them and so might come to revere and even love Him for His goodness. But it was known throughout the school that every scholar on leaving the school would go to the Founder's Palace in Paradise Land and present his school report to Him, and that the Founder would praise and reward him according to his report, and appoint him his place in the Kingdom as his ability at school indicated.

"There were great and honourable posts awaiting them. Some would be rulers over cities and provinces, and some would have thrones and crowns, while others would have far lesser jobs. There was also a warning given that some might find no place in the Kingdom at all, but would meet with shame and disgrace as a result of their unworthy school career, and that in any case no favouritism would be displayed, but absolute justice would be shown. Such, then, was the famous Worldover School, and such was its great and kingly Founder.

"And now time's up, and off you go to Puddox, Ragger, and golf! A swimming party at four o'clock sharp at the pool!"

"That's better," commented Docco. "A *real* siesta at last!"

III. INTRODUCING A DRAGON

“At least that’s what Adam Primus always declared it was. Sometimes he called it a serpent, only he was sure it had feet and claws and was very horrible, and he was certain that he had seen it and it had talked to him. None of the boys in Worldover School believed him, however. They said he must have fallen asleep under the willow by the stream and dreamed it. But Adam Primus would have none of it, and as he was the senior boy in the school (indeed he was the first scholar on the Foundation) he was listened to with respect, even though the story he told was so strange as to be unbelievable. He declared that he was walking along by the riverside one day when there arose out of the swamp a Dragon which came after him, calling him by his name ! ”

Here I was interrupted by a scoffing laugh. It proceeded from a biggish boy lying on his back on the outskirts of the crowd of campers who had gathered to spend siesta time listening to my story.

“Well, Longstone, what’s the joke ? ” said I.

“Nothing, except you can’t kid us with dragons ! They don’t exist, and if they did they couldn’t speak ! ”

“And you a budding medico ! ” I retorted. “ Go to the London Zoo, you ignoramus, and you’ll see them walking about in all their ugliness in their cages. Anyhow, this Dragon was real enough to Adam Primus, as you shall hear if you’ll listen.”

“Fire away, Commie ; don’t pay any attention to Longstone, we *never* do,” said another camper, one Tim Drown by name ; “let’s hear what Mr. Dragon said.”

“That’s what all the School wanted to know, of course, but Adam refused to tell them publicly. However, he called together a group of his own special friends, mostly like himself, first-comers to the school, and in secret

conclave he revealed to them what this strange monster had said to him. Needless to say, it made a deep impression on all present and they agreed to keep it a profound secret for the present and to meet again next day to consider the matter further."

"What *did* the Dragon say, Uncle Solomon?" queried Curiosity Joe, unable to restrain his intense curiosity as usual.

"All in good time, Curiosity. Anyhow, the secret conclave met again and again, each time adding more trusted members to their numbers until at last most of the bigger boys were in the secret, and a spirit of excitement spread about the school. No one outside the conclave knew for certain what was brewing until at last the bombshell burst and the whole School was in revolt!"

"What *was* it the Dragon said, Commie?" urged Ian Stone—a Highland laddie.

"Well, I suppose I'd better tell you right away," said I.

"The Dragon told Adam Primus that the Founder was by no means the kind benefactor the School supposed, but a cruel tyrant whose one aim was to keep the boys in bondage to Him while at School and make them His slaves for ever; and that there was no glorious kingdom awaiting them and no rewards such as they had been told of. He said, moreover, that nothing terrible would happen to the School if it refused to obey the Founder, but on the contrary they would become once for all their own masters and free to do whatever they liked. He urged Adam Primus to head a general rebellion and promised him it would be completely successful and that the Founder would take no steps to recover the School or compel submission to His rule.

"Now the curious thing is that although the boys refused to believe in the existence of the Dragon, yet they lent a willing ear to all he had said! They talked it over and over until they began to believe it to be true.

They forgot all the benefits of the Founder and how freely these had been bestowed and how much happiness they had enjoyed in consequence. They talked of the Code of Laws as a tyrannical imposition on the school and of the Founder as a cruel oppressor who had imposed it on them. 'What right has He to give us commandments, anyway?' cried they. 'Why should we not do as we like? Life here is all rules, rules, rules!' "

"Same as at our school! Rotten, I call it!" remarked Andrew Bray; and a murmur of general assent greeted his complaint.

"At last," I continued, "they decided that it could be endured no longer, and that the school must fight for its liberty against the cruel Founder and the masters he had appointed to rule over them.

"They are all a hateful lot, anyway! Let's drive them out of the School and be free!" they cried.

"I must say the conspiracy was well planned and the secret well kept right up to the appointed day. Then one morning, when the whole School was assembled in the Great Hall with the masters all present, Adam Primus rose and cried, 'Worldover School! Fight for your liberty!' and pandemonium broke out. The masters fled before the boys, who came upon them armed with cricket stumps, hockey sticks, and every other weapon they could contrive. Never was such a scene in any school before or since."

"Wish it had been at our School!" interjected Shanks. "I'd have had my own back on old Wiggie for his impots!"

"In less than an hour it was all over. Every master had fled and the great gates of the School had been closed and barred against any possibility of their return. Worldover School was free! No more hateful lessons or impositions! All could do as they liked for evermore!"

"Burn the Code of Laws," cried someone, and a rush

was made for the central quadrangle where every copy of the Code of Laws that could be collected was soon added to a great bonfire, round which the boys danced and cheered with delight.

“The telephone wires had been cut as soon as the riot began, so that all communication with the Founder might be prevented, and the day ended with banquets and revellings in every house, with fireworks and not a little wild and riotous behaviour in celebration of ‘The Emancipation of Worldover School.’”

“And what did the Founder do, Commie?” asked David Breed.

“That you’ll learn at siesta time to-morrow, David, unless you’ve had enough of this highly improbable yarn!”

“Rather not,” cried several. “Chapter III to-morrow, please!”

“All right! Off you go; the sun is shining and the Treasure Hunt is due to begin.”

IV. THE GREAT REBELLION

CAMPING in the Highlands of Scotland is an uncertain business—uncertain that is, as regards the weather. One day you may be lying about on the heather in glorious sunshine and the next you may be wading in mud under torrents of relentless rain.

During lunch next day the weather broke in a most decided manner and, the day's programme being literally washed out, we all invaded an adjacent barn and composed ourselves on the warm dry straw-stack for siesta time, to be followed by an improvised sing-song.

“Come and sit with us, Commie,” cried a small group in one corner.

“And give us some more first-hand advice on how to run a school rebellion,” cheekily added young Rashley. “With a little more coaching I might try it on next term.”

“Take my advice and don't, Rashers. It doesn't always come off, and you'd live to regret it, I fear.”

“Well, now we're all ready to hear how it worked with the Worldoverites, so go ahead, please, Commie,” said Major Brisket. He was squatting in another corner with a crowd of campers hemming him in on all sides.

“Everything went surprisingly well at first,” I began. “In spite of many apprehensions, no word came of any action by the Founder to recover control of the School, and the boys settled down to enjoy themselves to the full. Of course, all thought of lessons or discipline was abandoned, and everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Hunting and fishing and boating and climbing and every kind of sport went on continuously ; the tuck-shops were raided and everything was delightful.

“But this halcyon condition of things did not continue. Quarrels led to fights, old hatreds and jealousies

were stirred, factions were formed and sides were taken, the strong oppressed the weak, and there were constant outbreaks of strife in all the Houses. There were, moreover, wicked boys in the school, who, being now without restraint, did many shameful things and taught others to do the same, so that the moral condition of the School grew rapidly worse until it became too shocking for it to be told.

“Moreover, the various Houses became violently hostile to one another, mainly owing to their unequal possessions. Romana House, for instance, had at one time large tracts of land and gardens and farms with orchards round them, while other less fortunate Houses had hardly sufficient for their needs. Then questions of boundaries arose which were hotly contested.

“At last these things grew so serious that each House began to build high walls against the others and to fortify them against attack. This in turn provoked the very attacks that were feared and great battles took place between the Houses, and in some cases between groups of Houses, leading to the seizing of the lands of defeated Houses by the winners who in turn would be defeated by some other House, suffering similar loss in consequence.”

“Mad,” I call it,” remarked a boy named Tasso, familiarly known as the Admiral. “Why couldn’t they all pull together?”

“Like your boatload on the Loch, yesterday, eh, Admiral? No one has ever discovered the answer to your profound inquiry. Of course, if they had not rebelled against the Founder they would have pulled together, as He intended they should, but they wanted to do as they liked, you see.”

“I shouldn’t think they liked it,” said Tony Wincott.

“Nobody ever does, Tony! No one who *does* what he *likes*, *likes* what he *does*! But let me go on with the story.

"One day there appeared among the boys of Palestina house a stranger of uncouth appearance who began to speak to them in bold and challenging terms about their rebellion against the Founder of the School. Indeed, his words were so full of fire and zeal that at first there were indications that he would win back the House to its former allegiance, but the ruling faction denounced him as a traitor to the cause and put the Tishbite (as he was called) in fear of his life. Then one day he mysteriously disappeared. No one could explain how, though one boy declared he saw him go up into the sky in a whirlwind. But few credited such a story as that.

"He was followed after an interval by another strange visitor, also to Palestina House. He was very different from the Tishbite and spoke such beautiful words that many listened entranced for a time. He told them that the Founder had a Son to Whom He had promised the whole of Worldover School, and that the Son would one day visit the school in the hope of winning it back to the Founder. But he again was opposed and rejected and at length went his way, but not before he had left his words in written form behind him. Others followed, and as each one went he, too, left a written record full of warnings and gracious promises about the future Coming One. In fact, all of them were Messengers sent by the Founder who employed this method rather than that of bringing His army and miserably destroying the School, which He might have done had He so wished.

"But it was all in vain. Though all Worldover School was in a pitiable plight and quite incapable of achieving peace or happiness, there was not one thought of surrender to the Founder, but constant hatred of His very name. Even so, there were in every house a few here and there who deplored their condition and looked wistfully for better days to come. Particularly was this so in Palestina House, where small groups of boys preserved and pondered the writings that the Messengers had left, and also the

code of Laws, some copies of which had not been burned. But they were weak and powerless and went in fear of persecution if they spoke a word in favour of the Founder, so nothing came of it."

"What I can't understand, Commie," said Tony Wincott, "is why on earth the Founder allowed the rebellion to go on. You tell us He was a King with lots of soldiers. Why didn't He come and defeat the rebels and take possession of the School again?"

"And prove the Dragon right after all, eh, Tony?" said I.

"How right?" asked Tim Drown.

"Well, the Dragon had said that the boys were enslaved by a cruel tyrant, hadn't he? Suppose the Founder did what Tony suggests, wouldn't it seem to the boys to be the act of a tyrant after all? You see, He wanted willing scholars, not frightened slaves, so rather than have recourse to force He devised another plan."

"And what was that?" queried several boys at once.

"Wait till to-morrow's siesta and you shall hear; now for the Sing-song."

The next moment the barn resounded with the Camp Nonsense Song :

*"My eyes are dim I cannot see,
I have not brought my specs with me!"*

V. THE NEW MASTER

“**N**OBODY knew how he got into Palestina House. He was just there one day beginning to teach in one of the classrooms. Had he interfered or tried to set the House in order or otherwise acted as schoolmaster he would not have been tolerated for a moment in the House. As it was, he just quietly talked to such boys as came round him to hear. The ruling clique of Chief Boys would have nothing to do with him, but the lesser members of the house, and particularly the younger boys, came to him and listened. And what he taught was so beautiful that others came, including a few from adjacent Houses, Grecia House and Syria House in particular, and most who heard him wanted more each day. He told them stories such as had never been told before, each with some wonderful hidden meaning in it that made his hearers very thoughtful and sometimes sad. He had not a harsh word for any of them. He did not condemn them for their rebellion or threaten them with dire penalties to come, though he did not fail to warn them at times. But he spoke about the Founder often and gave them such a picture of Him and of His kindness and goodwill toward them that made some of them secretly wish that they had not rebelled against Him.”

“Who was he, Commie?” asked Peter Round.

“Why, Hold-all, that was what everybody was asking but nobody could answer. Some said he was the Tishbite come back again, while others guessed that he was just another Messenger sent by the Founder to call them to surrender and warn them of judgment that would come on them if they didn’t. But he wasn’t like the Tishbite or any of the others who had come at all. He was so quiet and gentle and unhurried and patient, and above

all said such wonderful things that so reached their hearts and made them wish they were good that nobody had ever heard the like.

“There were indeed occasions when he suddenly changed for the moment his usual quiet and inoffensive demeanour. One was when he visited the beautiful School chapel and discovered what had happened there. Of course, you must know that in their present rebellious condition of mind the boys of Worldover School had completely abandoned all thought of attendance at chapel on Sundays or on week-days. More than that, however, they had begun making use of the sacred building for quite other purposes than those for which it was built and dedicated. They had moved the Tuck Shop there and put a ping-pong table in the place where the pews had been. Some even kept doves and other pets in the chancel. Now when the Teacher saw these things his eyes, usually so quiet, flashed with indignation. He strode into the chapel with a whip in his hand and drove the boys headlong from the building, overturning the Tuck Shop counter and the ping-pong table and many other things, and calling for the removal of the animals. It was the only time they ever saw him really angry, and the sight made the boldest among them tremble. Of course, it also made the Chief Boys mad with anger, and they held a special meeting among themselves to decide what to do with him.”

“Do you know, Commie,” remarked Ralph Thornton in his usual thoughtful way, “I begin to see who the Teacher you are telling us about really was.”

“I thought you would soon discover that, Rusty,” said I.

Rusty, with his red hair and freckled face, was a particular favourite of mine, if a Commandant is permitted to have favourites in Camp. But Ralph was the sort of boy I really like, full of sport and merriment, yet with an undercurrent of quiet thoughtfulness that told of deeper things within.

"Now I'd better tell you how the identity of the teacher came to be discovered by the School. There was a little group of a dozen boys who had attached themselves specially to him and had become his close friends all the while he was in Palestina House. Now one day he was sitting with this group down by the riverside talking about the Founder when suddenly one of them (he had *your* name, Peter !) called out, 'I have it ! I know who you are ! *You're the Founder's Son !*'

"'Oh, Peter,' replied the Teacher, 'I am glad you've found me out ! But you must keep the secret for the present. Don't tell anybody now.'

"So the great secret was kept for a while longer and the Teacher went on teaching, though the Chief Boys grew more and more hostile, but the rank and file heard him gladly. On one occasion they even gave him a surprising ovation, waving flags and scarves and shouting his praise all over the School playground until the Chief Boys threatened all kinds of penalties. But through it all the Teacher kept very meek and lowly, never raising his voice or quarrelling with his enemies, but answering their objections with such wisdom that they were quite silenced.

"There are many wonderful stories told of things that happened in Palestina House during the period of the Teacher's stay there which time will not permit my repeating to you now. They may be read, however, in the Records that were written about that time and which still survive. Some of the most beautiful relate to the individual boys with whom the Teacher came into contact. One outstanding case was that of a boy so wild and wicked, with such fits of rage and temper that all the boys called him mad. They tried to restrain him by tying him up, but it was all in vain, and at last he became so bad that he used to wander about the woods and hillsides without clothes and moaning wretchedly. He was often observed in the vicinity of

the swamps where, you will remember, Adam Primus had seen the Dragon before the Great rebellion. Indeed it was commonly said that the Dragon was largely responsible for the boy's condition, though the Chief Boys refused to believe in the existence of the Beast.

"Then one day the Teacher met this boy and in a moment all was changed and his astounded fellow-scholars found him sitting at the Teacher's feet clothed and in his right mind.

"Such incidents as this, and they were numerous and varied, brought the boys round him and he lost no opportunity of teaching them either in crowds or singly or when he had his own little group around him.

"He told them many things that they had never heard of before. He was very fond of talking of the Code of Laws and explaining its wonderful truth and depth and how holy and just and good it was. He would also take the writings that the various Messengers who had preceded him had left behind them, and would point to the promises of the Coming One.

"Then at length he addressed a large crowd of the boys gathered to hear him, including many of the Chief Boys who had come to catch him in his speech, and this is what he said :

"'To-day those promises are fulfilled and I am come!'

"You can't think of the excitement caused in Palestina House at such words. The Chief Boys got together in great alarm and asked one another what this would lead to. If it went on, this Teacher who claimed to be the Founder's Son (which they refused for one moment to believe) would capture the House from them. It might even spread to the whole school and so the Founder might recover control again and they would be lost !

"So they decided once for all that the Teacher must go. They must get rid of him at all costs and that without delay. But how to do it was the problem. There were so many who seemed well disposed towards

him that any open attack on him might lead to a rising in his favour. They must employ cunning and act craftily. But it was by no means easy to decide on a plan.

“Just at the moment of their dilemma a way opened for them to achieve their desire, and that from a most unexpected quarter. But as this introduces the Dragon once more into the story I think what happened must be reserved for another chapter.”

“Oh, go on a bit, Commie ! What happened with the Dragon ? ”

“No, no, siesta time is over, and off you go.”

“I say, Commie,” said Tony Wincott, “how about another chapter to-night ? Round the Camp fire, eh, Commie ? ”

“Yes, that’s it ! ” cried several at once. “Hurrah for a camp-fire yarn ! ”

“Right,” I said, “a camp-fire yarn it shall be,” and the crowd scattered.

VI. THE TRAITOR

IT was a warm summer night and there was a harvest moon. The camp fire blazed away with a huge reserve of logs at hand to keep it going. The scene might almost have been mistaken for an encampment of Red Indians, for most of the boys had donned their pyjamas and were wrapped in blankets of varied hues. It had been a memorable day for the Camp, for we had been the guests of His Majesty the King at his castle at Balmoral, where we had been ingloriously defeated by the Royal Household at cricket on the lawn of that famous seat. Supper at the castle had been generous in both quantity and quality, and it was no wonder that after the day's excitement and festivities there was a general inclination manifested to lie about and watch the blazing logs rather than to rag one another. Even the talking soon died down, and presently Longstone voiced the general sentiment as he said, "Now, Commie, we're ready for the Dragon."

"And the Dragon," said I, "is ready for you. He always is, and he certainly was not behindhand on the occasion I am about to relate.

"Now you must know that among the twelve who formed the inner group around the Teacher there was one who was somewhat different from the rest. Not that Isca did not seem as keen and devoted to the Teacher as the others, but he did not appear quite so open and candid as they did—as though there were something at the back of his mind which he was keeping in reserve. And in fact there was, for he was really a very disappointed person. You see, he had thought all along that the Teacher would gather round him so many of the boys that at last he would be able to lead a revolt and so become Master of the House. In that event those who

had been his friends would no doubt share his glory. And when the ovation that I told you about at siesta to-day took place he thought the hour had come—and then nothing happened !

“ Now while he was in this disappointed and depressed frame of mind he happened to stroll down by the river-side just at the spot where Adam Primus had seen the Dragon long ago. And, lo and behold ! there was the brute wading ashore out of the ooze and mud in all his ugliness.

“ While Isca stood hesitating between fear and curiosity the Dragon called him by his name (as he had done Adam Primus) and soon the two were engaged in deep converse together. What the Dragon said and what inducements he held out will never be known, but by the time the interview was ended the wretched Isca found himself bound body and soul to the Dragon and pledged to do his commands. And those commands required that he should act the traitor to his friend the Teacher and compass his ruin.”

“ That’s what I call a cad,” remarked Tony Wincott. “ It’d take more than a dragon to make me do a thing like that.”

“ Don’t be too sure, Tony ; you may not have met this particular Dragon at close quarters yet, but he’s very dangerous, I assure you.

“ Well, just as the Chief Boys were puzzling their heads what to do to be rid of the Teacher, who should walk into their meeting but Isca himself with a new and crafty look in his face and a plan in his wicked brain all complete—for the Dragon had put it there. And so the plot was formed and agreed and Isca went his way.

“ That very evening the Teacher had invited the group to supper with him, and at the appointed hour they met in the selected place and ate and drank together while the Teacher talked.

"None who were present at that memorable feast ever forgot the things they heard from their loved Teacher there. First he said he had come to say good-bye, which made them very sad indeed. Then he told them of the deep conspiracy to cast him out of the School and that one of their number would prove a traitor to him. At this point Isca left the table while the others listened awestruck to hear what else the Teacher might say to them. What he told them was wonderful indeed. He revealed to them that he had come to Worldover School as a result of a covenant he had made with his Father the Founder whereby all the guilt and punishment of the Great Rebellion should be borne by him on the School's behalf, so that a full and free forgiveness should be available for every boy who would cease his rebellion and come over heart and soul on his side in the School.

"This was glorious news indeed! Moreover, the Teacher went on to promise that one day he would return to the School with a great host of his Father's Forces and that then he would be the undisputed Master of Worldover School for ever, and that those who had been faithful to him would be highly honoured and rewarded at his coming. Finally he said some tender words of farewell to them, asking them not to forget him, but to meet from time to time in his absence in the same way as they had that night, so as to keep him often in loving memory in anticipation of his return.

"This they all promised earnestly to do, and then the meeting broke up and they went out into the dark night.

"That same night the plot of the Chief Boys was carried out. From beginning to end it was a dreadful business, which I shall not attempt to describe in detail. Bitter hatred was displayed by the Chief Boys, which to one so gentle was hard indeed to explain (he himself

said, 'they hated me without a cause'), but all the shame and indignity they heaped upon him—even to the extent of spitting in his face—he bore so meekly that many of the onlookers wondered at the grace he showed his persecutors. But none that heard them will ever forget the cries of the boys of Palestina House (incited by their leaders), 'Away with him! Away with him!' as they ran upon him and thrust him forth without the walls with wounds in his hands and feet and side and then closed and sealed the gates upon him."

As I recounted this part of the story I could not but be sensible of a stillness that had fallen upon the fireside scene. A cloud obscured the moon, the fire burned low, and there was something in the faces I could discern in the red glow of embers that told of an understanding and appreciation of the words I spoke.

After a pause I continued :

"It was a sad group that secretly gathered in one of the classrooms after these events. Though they were his devoted friends they all felt they had miserably failed the Teacher in the hour of his trial. Indeed they had all forsaken him and fled at the first attack, and one of their number (that same Peter I told you of) had even denied all association with him, and that with oaths, for fear he might share his fate. As for the traitor Isca, he disappeared and was never seen again in Palestina House, or indeed anywhere else in Worldover School. And so behind closed doors they waited for three days, wondering what would happen to them next. Then all of a sudden, and without the door having been opened, to their great joy and wonder they saw the Teacher himself standing among them once more!

"He showed them his wounded hands and feet and talked in just his old sweet way. How their hearts burned within them as they listened while he explained the meaning of all that had happened and how it agreed

with the Writings of the Messengers. Then he gave them a great commission to fulfil for him. It was that they should go and tell of him in all the School of World-over, beginning at Palestina House. They must spread the good news of a free pardon to every rebel for his sake and a loving invitation to surrender to him and to begin a life of loyal service for him in Worldover School. They would be called upon no doubt to suffer as he had suffered, but secret help would be sent to them to enable them to endure. He further promised that, though unseen by them, he would be ever near them, watching over them with loving care. Then he raised his hands in blessing on them and disappeared, and they saw him no more."

I stopped my narrative at this point and there was silence around the camp fire. The moon was shining full once more and the scene was bathed with silver light. Only the crackling of the fire broke the stillness until Ralph Thornton said quietly, "But why did he go away, Commie?"

"I don't know all the reasons, Rusty," said I, "only he told them it was expedient for them that he should."

"But it was harder for them in his absence, wasn't it?" said Dum.

"Yes, but more blessed," I replied.

"Why more blessed?" asked Dee.

"Well," he said, "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed," which perhaps explains his absence, I think."

"And did he come back, Commie?" asked the Shrimp, who had been following every word of my story with his usual keenness.

"He hasn't come back yet, Shrimp, but we are expecting him soon," I answered, with as earnest a note in my voice as I could assume.

"Oh—I see; thank you, Commie."

It was Tasso who spoke, and a general murmur from

the crowd around the fire endorsed his thanks. And then, as the last embers of the fire were dying down, little groups began to make their way in the moonlight to their tents, and so to bed.

VII. THE COMPANY OF BROS.

THE midday meal in camp had been of a lively character, quite unseemly, in fact. Songs containing personal allusions (of an uncomplimentary nature) to various official personages in the camp were composed by certain bright lads, and sung with vigour. I, as Commandant, did not escape, nor did Major Brisket, the Adjutant, nor Archie Gorrock, the painstaking Quartermaster, but when prune stones began to fly I felt it time to intervene, and order was restored. It took some time to settle the campers down for siesta, and I wondered if my yarn would prove acceptable under the circumstances. So I waited a few moments before beginning.

“What’s the matter, Commie? Swallowed a prune stone?” asked a Manningbury boy appropriately named Ruder.

“I expect he’s shocked at our ungentlemanly behaviour at meals,” remarked Frank Laws, “and he’s waiting for us to apologise.”

“That would be too much to expect,” I retorted.
“I’m waiting for you to be quiet.”

They took the hint, and I began :

“To trace the history of Worldover School from the time of the Expulsion of the Teacher which I recounted last night till the present time would be too great a task for my telling or for your patience in hearing, so I must summarise the generations that followed in order to come to modern times.”

“But tell us first what happened to the group the Teacher left behind, Commie. It must have been a bit hot for them in Palestina House,” remarked Tony Wincott.

“It certainly was, Tony, and they could never have

stuck it but for something that occurred shortly after they last saw their beloved Teacher, and that completely changed everything."

"What was that, Commie?" asked Dum.

"It's hard to explain in my story, but one morning (it happened to be Whit Sunday), while they were together in the classroom where they used to meet, they all suddenly became full of the greatest joy and boldness, such as they had never known before. They began to shout and sing in such a way that the whole of Palestina House, with many from other Houses, came crowding round them in the playground to know what it was all about. Then one of their number stood up and told the crowd that the Teacher they had treated so shamefully was really none other than the Son of the Founder of the School, and that He was coming back one day to reward those who were on His side and were faithful to Him. What he said made a profound impression on many of the boys who heard him, with the result that the group found its numbers swollen rapidly and a strong Pro-Teacher Party came into existence. All those who joined it publicly repented of their share in the Great Rebellion and in the expulsion of the Teacher and pledged themselves to be wholly on His side in the school in future, and to do their best to recruit others.

"Now, of course, this roused the violent hostility of the Chief Boys, who did their utmost to crush the Party out of existence. They captured the Leaders and bullied them cruelly. One was driven violently out of the School gates with stones, and another, a big boy, one James Major, was also expelled. But nothing could daunt the remainder or stop other boys from joining them. Indeed, they became proud to suffer as the Teacher had, and more so as they came to understand His goodness and how that He had obtained a free forgiveness from the Founder (His Father) for all who

came on His side and were true to Him. They would meet together often to encourage one another and to remember Him whom they had come to love, and to plan how they could gain other boys on His side.

"Moreover, they utterly refused to share any more in the wild and wicked acts in which they had formerly indulged with other boys, and this made them increasingly unpopular."

"That must have taken some pluck," remarked Tim Drown. "It's not over-pleasant to be laughed at anywhere, especially at school."

"No, it's generally easier to go with the stream, and most do so. However, nothing they suffered seemed to alter either their determination or, most remarkable of all, their joy. They were indeed the only really happy people in the whole school."

"What about the boys in the other Houses, Commie?" asked Ian Stone. "Did they get to hear of it, and what did they do?"

"I was just coming to that, Ian, but first I must tell you of a notable capture of one of the Chief Boys. He was the bitterest opponent of them all and could not do enough to injure them and persecute the Party, and he continued his cruelties every day.

"Then suddenly he arrived one day at a gathering of the Party and declared himself one of them! They were frankly suspicious at first, but there was such an evident change in him, and he told such a remarkable story that they could not help but believe it and ended by welcoming him with joy into their midst."

"What was the story he told?" asked the Shrimp.

"Why, he declared that all of a sudden, while in the act of pursuing some boys who were of the Party, he was arrested by a great Voice challenging him from the sky. He was so startled, he said, that he fell to the

ground and then, looking up, he saw none other than the Teacher Himself with a blaze of light about Him ! He said the vision disappeared almost immediately, but not before he had been completely captured, so that he now wanted nothing better than to tell everyone in the whole school about the wonderful Teacher he had come to love. Indeed he lost no time in doing so, and became the pioneer in taking the Message to the other Houses in Worldover School."

"A sort of missionary, eh, Commie ?" interjected Ralph Thornton.

"That's it, Rusty, and a first-class one at that, so that in the course of time there were groups of the Party in several Houses all having a fairly rough time of it, yet filled with the greatest enthusiasm to witness for the Teacher and to win others to allegiance to Him. What wonderful little groups they were indeed ! Small in numbers, yet tremendously keen and happy, sometimes only two or three in a House and despised and persecuted by the rest of the boys, mainly because they would not conform to their lawless wicked ways, yet they stood loyal and firm and were altogether so cheery and even joyful that it is not surprising that they attracted recruits to their ranks almost daily. Indeed, some boys joined them at first just because they wanted to share their happiness, without any thought of loyalty to the Teacher or faith in Him as the King's Son, but they only endured for a while and soon fell away, becoming thereafter the chief enemies of those who remained faithful."

"What name did they go by, Commie ?" asked Andrew Bray.

"No official name, Andy ; indeed there was nothing formal or official about them at all. They were just like a family of brothers, and as they used to call one another 'Brother this' or 'Brother that' they came to be known (at first among themselves and afterwards

generally) as 'the Company of Bros.' and that's how we'll call them for the purposes of my story."

"I suppose there were some recognised leaders among them, weren't there?" asked Tasso the Admiral.

"Certainly there were, and these went from House to House throughout the School encouraging the Bros. wherever they found them. Some of the letters they wrote to the groups in different Houses have been preserved and succeeding generations of Bros. have found them of the greatest help and guidance on their way."

"All I can say," interjected Hanks at this point, jerking his long legs as he spoke, "is that I don't think the Bros. were a very sporting lot to go against the whole school like that. Personally, I've no use for cliques of any sort in a school. Prigs, I call them!"

"Yes, Shanks," I replied dryly, "that's just what the School thought, and they were highly unpopular in consequence. I see which side you'd have been on in Worldover School!"

"I don't care," he retorted. "Why couldn't they make the School better without taking sides against it?"

"Like Mr. Facing-both-ways in 'Pilgrim's Progress,' eh? It won't do and never did yet, Shanks. To look one way and row another may be all right on the river, but it won't work in life."

"But it wasn't their fault after all, was it, Commie?" interposed Ralph Thornton. "If people won't be friends with you, however friendly you may feel to them, where are you?"

"Precisely, Rusty. The truth is the enmity was primarily against the Teacher, and this made them hate His followers. Rebels never feel friendly towards their rejected King or his servants."

"What I can't understand is why the Teacher didn't come back as He promised and settle matters once for all," said Tony Wincott.

"A good many of His followers have been puzzled over that from the earliest days," I replied. "You'll find references to it here and there in the Letters of the Leaders. But siesta time is over and I must stop. You must wait for further developments till to-morrow."

VIII. THE DRAGON AGAIN

“**T**HERE can be no other explanation for it. It must have been the Dragon again.”

“Wait a bit, Commie; there are still some chaps at the tuck-shop and we all want to hear about that old Dragon.”

I waited, and soon the grass around me was dotted with boys sucking sweets and drinking ginger beer as though they had not just finished a large midday meal.

“All present and correct for siesta, so fire away, please, Commie,” said Ian Stone, as the last boy flung himself at my feet and offered me a bull’s-eye, which I politely declined.

“As I was saying,” I began again, “it must have been the Dragon behind the scenes. Indeed, I have reason to know it was. No one ever saw him, but he would prowl around the Houses at night and sow seeds of hatred and spite against the Company of Bros. in the minds of the boys as they slept. The result was an unreasoning rage and persecution which burst out in all the Houses at once and bade fair to stamp out the Bros. once and for all. It flamed most fiercely in Romana House, and as this was at that period the dominant House in Worldover School, it set the pace for all the rest. I could not describe all the cruel things that were done at that time. Anybody who was suspected of leanings towards the Teacher was called upon to renounce Him publicly on pain of being flogged and beaten and tortured with savage relentlessness. It was a terrible testing time for the Bros., and I am afraid many succumbed. But many more stood firm with martyr-like endurance until they were hurled out of the gates of Worldover School with oaths and maledictions.

"There are strange stories extant concerning those who suffered thus ; stories of glorious chariots and royal escorts receiving them outside the gates and driving them in triumph to the King's Palace where all the bells of Paradise Land rang them welcome. Of this one cannot speak too definitely, however, for the glimpses were but visionary and seen by few, but it was certainly believed by the Company of Bros. and made them all the bolder and more courageous in their stand.

"However, it was a gruelling time during which most of the original leading Bros. were cast out of the gates of Worldover School after suffering unheard-of cruelties. It was a most determined effort on the part of all the Houses in Worldover School to stamp out once for all the Company of Bros. and all it stood for. Every copy of the Ancient Code of Laws and all the Letters of the Leaders and other Records were confiscated and burnt, and an edict was pronounced that any boy found in possession of any such should be beaten and expelled from Worldover."

"I should think that was about the finish of the Bros.," remarked Rashleigh.

"Well, Rashers, it really did seem that the end had come and that all the Teacher's work would fall to the ground and perish. Indeed, the Chief Boys at the School openly boasted of their success and exulted in their triumph.

"The faithful few went in peril of discovery, which would mean the end of their lives at Worldover. They met in secret and encouraged one another to stand true at all costs. Those who suffered were comforted by the others, and the members of the Company found themselves drawn together in such a bond of brotherly love as they had never known before. One day, as some of the Bros. were met together in their private meeting-place (it was a cave in the hillside with a secret entrance), the talk turned on one who was perhaps the most

honoured and loved of all the leading Bros. of the Company. He had been captured and shut up on an island in the middle of the School Lake, and no one knew what would become of him. How they longed to see him again and how they loved to read the letter he had written them so full of wise and loving counsel.

“ Now while they were talking thus the door opened, and who should enter but the beloved Bro. John himself, the very subject of their talk. After recounting his escape from the island, he related a most wonderful experience that had come to him while he was a prisoner there. He told them how one Sunday morning as he sat alone thinking of the Teacher and His words suddenly he had seen Him standing there before him in all His kingly glory. They had spent a wonderful hour together, and the Teacher had talked with him, and Bro. John told them that the Teacher had sent messages to the Companies of Bros. in the various Houses, full of encouragement and cheer, and particularly this great promise :

“ *Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.*”

“ Needless to say, such words as these, together with the coming of Bro. John, put new life and new boldness into the Company of Bros.

“ Moreover, the way in which they bore their sufferings and did not retaliate or seek to revenge themselves, made a vast impression on many boys in Worldover ; so much so that soon quite a number of new recruits joined the Company, counting it an honour to share their sufferings.”

“ Then didn’t they get stamped out after all ? ” asked Mike Smart the Shrimp.

“ No, Shrimp, they didn’t. The fact is, the campaign against them achieved the opposite effect. They became bolder and more valiant the more they suffered, and for every Bro. who was driven out of Worldover several new recruits joined the Company.”

"I wonder what the old Dragon thought of that!" said Peter Round. "He must have felt a bit sold! I don't think much of his strategy!"

"No, Holdall, he had to confess he had completely failed. But he was by no means daunted and soon had recourse to a very different device of a peculiarly diabolical character which he was convinced would succeed at last."

"What was that, Commie?" asked several boys at once.

"That you shall hear to-morrow. It's time now for a bathe in the pool in the woods."

"I hope we shan't meet the Dragon there," remarked the Shrimp, and they went off laughing happily.

IX. THE DRAGON IN DISGUISE

SUNDAYS in Camp are, of course, different from other days, yet they are by no means dull days. The village church found its accommodation taxed by the sudden influx of Campers in their Sunday attire, and some of the sober Scottish worshippers were inclined to be shocked at their hearty singing of the hymns. Commie in the pulpit was a change, too, but the villagers had taken the Camp to their hearts and gave us all a warm welcome. The afternoon siesta time was devoted to letters home and then a tramp over the hills till tea. At one point we called a halt and spread ourselves in the heather for a rest. No sooner had we done so than Major Brisket remarked, "What's the latest news of Worldover School, Commie?" which evoked cries from all quarters, "Go ahead, Commie! Produce the Dragon! Let's hear his latest wicked wiles and woeful ways! I bet he gets foiled again!" and other similar ejaculations. So I prepared to take up once more the history of Worldover School.

"This chapter's not going to be an easy one to tell, but I will do my best," I began. "The Dragon lay low for a time and you must imagine some generations of Worldoverites have come and gone before we hear of him again. In the meantime the Company of Bros. continued and spread among the new generations even more than it had done at first. Indeed, such headway was made that quite strong Companies existed in most of the Houses and their influence was felt more and more in the School. There had been less open persecution of late and some of the leading Worldoverites had declared themselves openly on the side of the Bros. This was the opportunity for which the Dragon had long been waiting and he was not slow to take

it. Transforming himself for the occasion into an angel of light——”

“Some transformation!” remarked Ian Stone.

“Yes, Ian, but unfortunately not an uncommon disguise for the Dragon to adopt. As I was saying, transforming himself into an angel of light, the Dragon appeared one day to the Head Boy of Romana House (then the leading House of the School) and told him that so far from persecuting the Company of Bros. any further, he should adopt their beliefs, which should be made the official religion of the School! Strangely enough, the idea took on and quickly spread throughout the School, with the result that all of a sudden the Company of Bros., instead of being hated and despised, found themselves the most popular institution in the School, with all the Worldoverites tumbling over themselves to join them! Soon the great majority of the School had professed themselves Bros., and the simple Companies of faithful followers of the Teacher found their ranks embarrassingly swelled by all sorts of boys eager to be recognised as members.”

“But, Commie, they weren’t real Bros. after all, were they? I think I am beginning to see the Dragon’s dodge,” remarked Ralph Thornton.

“No, Rusty, that’s just where the snag came in and where the Dragon triumphed, at any rate for a time, as we shall see.”

“I don’t see that at all,” remarked Arnold Hanks. “The Bros., as you call them, had it all their own way now and could do as they liked. It was a jolly sight better than being persecuted, anyway.”

“So many of them thought at first, Shanks, and so indeed it seemed. Everyone was on their side and their popularity was unbounded. But they soon found things to be far less satisfactory than appeared. To begin with, the simple happy gatherings of the Bros. quickly gave place to something much more imposing. The Chief

Bros. took control of affairs and new rules and regulations were introduced which could not be found in the Ancient Code of Laws or in the Leader's Letters, which had hitherto been the sole guides of the Company. Then the beautiful Church which, you remember, had been abandoned after the great Revolt, was restored and decorated and reopened with great pomp as the central gathering place of the Company of Bros. in its enlarged and reconstructed state. Officers and dignitaries were appointed of varying ranks and importance and there was much quarrelling and competition for the best posts. There was not one thought of bringing the Teacher back or of surrendering Worldover School to the rightful control of the Founder, nor did all this new show of devotion make any difference to the conduct or, indeed, to the lawlessness, of the School."

"But weren't there still some true Bros. among them, and what did they do?" asked Broadbelt.

"What could they do? They seemed just lost in the crowd and at first tried to make the best of the new conditions. At length, however, they found it impossible and so began in little groups to meet together in the old happy way without regard to the Official Company. This was soon brought to the ears of the Chief Bros., however, and a decree was made forbidding any Companies to exist save the Official one and fixing heavy penalties for disobedience."

"That meant persecution again, I suppose?" remarked Tim Drown.

"Yes, Tim, it did, and far worse and more bitter than under the old conditions. You can't imagine how the true Bros. suffered. They were harried and hunted and tortured beyond belief. It is the darkest chapter in the history of Worldover and lasted longer than all the persecutions that had preceded it. The heroism of many of the Bros. in these sad days forms the noblest record in the annals of the school."

"But didn't the persecutors profess to be followers of the Teacher, Commie?" asked Frank Rashley.
"How could they do such things in His name?"

"Nobody can answer that, Rashers. It is one of the mysteries of history—Bros. torturing Bros. in the name of Him they both claimed as their Teacher; but one thing is clear—the Dragon was exulting in it all and secretly urging on the persecutors."

"And what happened in the end to the true Bros.?" asked Tony Wincott.

"Ah; that must form another chapter, Tony. Back to Camp for tea!"

X. THE GREAT BUST-UP

“ **T**HE worst thing about Camp is that it ends too soon,” remarked Andrew Bray, as we settled down for the siesta on the last day of our holiday. “ Yes, and there are lots of things I want to know about that precious School of yours, Commie,” added Broadbelt.

“ Such as ? ” I inquired.

“ Well, how could any school go on without masters who set the lessons, or weren’t there any ? Pretty chaotic, I should think, on the whole ! ”

“ You’re right, Broadbelt, it was chaotic and there weren’t any regular lessons or classes at all. However, a good many of the boys were naturally clever and studious, and the school was well equipped so that those who wanted to study were able to do so and made extraordinary advances in learning. As time went on, all manner of inventions were discovered of which the various houses were not slow to take advantage. As you may imagine, though, since no master was in control, very bad use was made of some of the knowledge gained, with most disastrous consequences, as you shall hear. And, worse than that, all the subjects of learning for which the school was founded were utterly abandoned and held in contempt.”

“ What subjects were they, Commie ? ” asked Tasso the Admiral.

“ Well, I’m afraid they’re still considered old-fashioned, if not altogether out of date. One was the Art of Unselfishness and another the practice of parental Obedience. Others were charity, humility, kindness, peaceableness, the cultivation of a forgiving spirit and brotherly love.”

“ Rummy things to learn at school,” muttered Hanks. “ They don’t teach them at ours ! ”

“ No, Shanks, as I said, they’ve gone very much out

of fashion—almost as much so as the Ten Commandments ! Yet the Founder thought them so important that He established the School largely that they and some others like them might be learned thoroughly by the scholars.

“ But if this story is going to end before Camp breaks up to-morrow I must hurry on to a conclusion. And now you must imagine a great many generations of boys to have come and gone through Worldover School since the events I recounted yesterday. In fact we must come down to what are known as ‘ modern times.’ ”

“ Things had by no means gone well with Worldover School in the meantime. The various Houses had long since abandoned all pretence of friendliness and had been constantly in conflict with each other. The famous Romana House had disappeared ; Grecia House and Egypta House and several others had become greatly diminished in consequence of these conflicts, and the whole map of Worldover School had changed. New Houses had been formed, some of them very notable in size and importance—you will remember I named them at the beginning of my story. Britannia House at the time I am now describing had become the largest and most important of them all and its inmates were inordinately proud of its comparative greatness in the School.”

At this point one of the boys—I think it was David Breed—struck up “ Rule Britannia ! ” which was taken up heartily by the whole Camp. “ Britons never, never, *never* shall be slaves ! ” they sang, and then gave three cheers for Old England. “ And Scotland ! ” shouted the Scots present while I waited patiently to proceed.

“ Is this a siesta or a sing-song ? ” I inquired.

“ Sorry, Commie, but we really couldn’t help it—we’ve finished now,” said David.

“ Well, as I was saying before the concert, new Houses formed themselves, and these proved as bitter in rivalry

and hatred to each other as the former ones, and with the aid of the inventions I told you of (which were for the most part destructive in character), they became far more perilous to one another than ever. At length a terrible conflict burst out in which most of the Houses became involved. It was known in the School ever after as the Great Bust-Up. Cruel and bloodthirsty it was beyond words. Great numbers of the most promising boys ended their Worldover careers in its course, and the Houses were battered and smashed and much misery was endured everywhere. Some Houses actually tried to starve others out and nearly succeeded in doing so."

"But what was the use of it all, Commie? Sheer madness, I call it," said Tim Drown.

"Well, nobody was a penny the better for it and nothing was achieved in the end save ruin and destruction such as the School had never known in all its previous history. It really is a wonder that Worldover survived at all."

"And did they come to see the folly of it all afterwards?" asked Longstone.

"Some of them did, and tried to get the Houses to enter into a sort of League and Covenant never to molest each other any more."

"That was a better idea," said Curiosity Joe. "How did it work?"

"Splendidly," said I, "until the next quarrel, when it didn't work at all. But now I must tell you of the strangest developments that took place in some of the Houses of Worldover School shortly after the end of the Great Bust-Up. Taking advantage of the chaotic conditions, one upstart boy in each of several houses suddenly seized control of his House and proceeded to rule it according to his undisputed will, forcing all the boys to obey him without question."

"Heil, Hitler!" "Viva, il Duce!" cried one or two boys together amid general laughter.

"You may laugh," said I, "but it was anything but a laughing matter. These Dictators, as they called themselves, became so daring and ambitious that all the Houses around got alarmed and built walls and fortifications and made feverish preparations to defend themselves."

"And what about the Company of Bros. in those days?" asked Major Brisket.

"I was coming to that, Adj.," I replied. "The Official Company had by this time got strangely mixed up into sections more or less rivalling one another, but they had so dwindled of late that the vast majority of the boys took little notice of or concern for them."

"But there were still some true Bros., weren't there?" It was Curiosity Joe who asked the question.

"Yes, Curiosity, there were indeed. More of them, I think, than ever, but they had a hard time of it in some of the Houses. In Muscovia House, for instance, they had to endure untold persecution as they did in Germania House, where they were increasingly unpopular. In the meantime the Dictators had started seizing some of the smaller Houses and threatening others to such an extent that it seemed inevitable that there would be a fresh 'Bust-Up' even worse than the one before. The boys had learned how to fly in the air recently, and this made the old fortifications of the Houses of little use. Then other boys had been at work in the 'Labs.' and had discovered poison gases, so all the Houses had to start digging holes in the ground to hide in, and gas-masks had to be prepared. Every day things got worse and worse, and all the boys lived in daily fear and apprehension."

Here, Docco looked across at me with his watch in his hand.

"Oh, dear, siesta time is over, and Docco is relentless," said I.

"But it's our last day and you *must* tell us how the story ended," cried several of the boys in chorus.

"I'm afraid I can't do that," I said, "because, you see, the story *hasn't* ended yet! The School is still going on and so is the Rebellion! But I'll tell you what I can do if you like."

"What's that, Commie?"

"I'll tell you how it *will* end."

"How can you do that, I should like to know?" said Hanks.

"Because it's all recorded beforehand in the ancient writings of Worldover School," I replied. "But it'll take too long just now. What about a final Camp-fire Talk to-night?"

"Hurrah!" they cheered vociferously. "And a sausage supper, too?" suggested Peter Round.

"Yes, Hold-all, sausages and all. Now then, off you go for the Annual International Ragger Match—England *v.* Scotland—get ready, Scots, for a good licking," and with cheers and boos they scattered for the fray.

XI. THE RETURN OF THE TEACHER

IT was a perfect evening after a hot, sunny day. The boys had shown some skill, coupled with enthusiasm, in the making of the camp fire, and a huge collection of logs and bracken had been gathered to ensure its continuance well into the night. As soon as dusk began to give place to dark, a match was applied and flames quickly roared aloft, illuminating the whole camp, to say nothing of the faces of three score merry boys dancing round it. Then sausages had to be fried and eaten with what relish only those who have shared a sausage supper in camp can know, so that it was some time before they showed the least disposition for anything so prosaic as story-telling ; but at length as the bonfire settled down to a steady glow the boys, too, settled down around it among the heather of the hillside ; and I saw that if ever my story were to be brought to a conclusion now was the time.

“Before Commie begins his yarn to-night I want to tell him from the camp that his efforts to entertain us at siesta every day have been jolly well appreciated.” It was David Breed who spoke, and his remarks were greeted with general applause.

“That was very nice of you, and very encouraging for me,” I replied, not a little gratified. “I was afraid I might have rather bored you with my long-drawn-out yarn. But since you’re still interested I can’t do better than fulfil my promise and tell you how the history of Worldover School ends. I promise you it will be strange and unexpected in the extreme, and some of you will think I am drawing the long bow. I can only say in defence that it is all recorded in the ancient writings of Worldover School, and these have never once been found incorrect in the smallest particular.”

"Go ahead, Commie, we're ready for anything after the highly improbable story you've told us so far," said Tony Wincott.

"Truth is stranger than fiction, you know," said I, "so get ready to hear things which are strange but true. And in order to keep the main structure of my story I shall tell the future of Worldover School as though it were already past.

"I left the School at siesta to-day in a state of alarm and feverish preparation for a grand conflagration infinitely worse than the famous Great Bust-Up ! Well, things got worse and worse, and developed at length into a combination of many of the Houses, forming a kind of federation of such great power as to threaten the domination of the whole of Worldover. It was just at this juncture that the Dragon became active again, and his activity took an entirely different character from that of former days. Instead of lying in hiding and effecting his designs behind the scenes, he suddenly emerged into the open, terrifying the whole School with his fierceness and ugliness, and asserting his diabolical will unchecked by any.

"Now I must tell you that there had recently arisen in the School a boy of most extraordinary genius and will power, such as had never been displayed even by the dictators, of whom I have already told you. This extraordinary boy had the equally extraordinary foreign-sounding name of 'Antichristos,' and it was soon discovered that he was in league with the Dragon, from whom he derived much of his power. This Antichristos seized control of the Federation of Houses and speedily became a sort of universal Dictator in Worldover School, which he ruled with unrelenting harshness and cruelty so that the state of the School became almost unendurable and the boys groaned under his tyranny."

"Why didn't they chuck him out?" asked Archie Gorrock. "They must have been a lot of mugs."

"You forget the Dragon," said I. "They couldn't chuck *him* out, and he was supporting Antichristos with all his power.

"Another thing that was happening about this time had to do with the ancient Palestina House."

"Oh," said Ralph Thornton, "the Jews! This is going to be interesting."

"Yes, the most interesting House in Worldover and the most unfortunate. Palestina House had for a long time become derelict and its members had been dispersed among the other Houses where they were universally hated."

"I don't wonder," remarked Hanks. "I loathe the sight of them."

"But, lately they had been returning to their own House, which they were busy restoring and refurnishing, hoping to resume their former prestige as the Chief House (as it was the oldest) in Worldover."

"And what about the Company of Bros. through all this, Commie?" asked Tim Drown; "they couldn't have been very popular with Antichristos!"

"Indeed they were not. He vented his utmost spleen against them so that their sufferings at this time were beyond anything in all their previous history, and yet through it all they were buoyed up with hope and joy as never before."

"Why was that, Commie?" asked Mike the Shrimp.

"Chiefly because of something the Teacher had said in the old days, when He was with them beforehand, that the things that were now occurring in Worldover would surely happen, and He had added, 'When ye see these things come to pass, lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh!' So through all the terror of these dark days, when Antichristos and the Dragon reigned supreme in Worldover School, the Bros. held together with courage and hope and 'so much the more as they saw the Day approaching.' "

"What was that, Commie?" asked Tony Wincott.

"The day when the Teacher Himself would return as He had promised, Tony. And now I have to tell you of the most astonishing thing that ever occurred in all the history of Worldover. It happened all of a sudden, 'in the twinkling of an eye,' as the ancient writings describe it. It was nothing more nor less than the *complete disappearance from Worldover School of every one of the Bros. in a moment of time!* Needless to say, this created the greatest sensation imaginable. Every House was in turmoil and for a time chaos reigned, for the Bros. had been among the most useful boys in the school and had had a remarkably steady influence, and now they were gone. Where and how nobody could explain. It was full of mystery and most disquieting. There wasn't one Bro. to be found anywhere!"

"But where *had* they gone so suddenly?" asked Ian Stone. "Had they vanished into thin air?"

"Almost that, Ian, for the fact is, the Teacher had come for them in fulfilment of His promise and they had all gone to meet Him in the sky!"

"I say, Commie, *really*! You can't expect us to swallow that, you know," protested David Breed. "Such things as that simply couldn't happen!"

"I don't know that I did expect you to believe it, David," I replied, "but you'll find it fully set out in the ancient writings, and I can't alter the records, can I? The *fact* of the disappearance of the Bros. is explicitly recorded, though the time and manner of it is, I admit, not so clear. For instance, some think it happened openly, not in secret. But as to their actually going to meet the Teacher in the air, I have no difficulty in accepting the history as it stands. To think a thing couldn't happen because its like has never occurred before would be the height of folly, especially in these days of miracles such as radio and flying, for instance. Such things as *those*, your grandfather would have said, simply *couldn't*

happen ! But I must hurry on to the end of my story. The restoration of Palestina House had greatly roused the wrath of the Dragon and of Antichristos, with the result that they brought a mighty host drawn from all the other Houses and laid siege to Palestina House with the object of blotting it out of existence once for all, and they would undoubtedly have succeeded in their design, for Palestina House was besieged for so long that it was on the point of being starved into surrender when another event as sudden and as strange and unexpected as the disappearance of the Bros. occurred."

"If it was stranger than that," remarked Broadbelt, "it must have been some shock ! "

"It was indeed, for what I have to record was none other than the return of the whole Company of Bros. every one of them from the very beginning, accompanying the Teacher Himself ! "

XII. THE REBELLION ENDS

“**I**t was a great army indeed gathered at the gates of Worldover School demanding instant admission. It all occurred early one morning, the whole School being awakened suddenly by a great trumpet sounding long and loud and a mighty voice that cried, ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in !’

“As the boys rushed to the main entrance of Worldover School they saw the gates swing open of themselves and there entered the Teacher whom they ‘had cast out with scorn and hatred and reviling through those very gates generations before. But how different He appeared from the meek and lowly Teacher of those other days ! He was seated on a white horse, ‘crowned with many crowns’ as He rode through the gates, ‘conquering and to conquer.’ His eyes were like a flame of fire and at the sight of Him all the hosts of Antichristos fled in terror, calling upon the rocks and the mountains to fall on them and hide them from His face. And all the mighty Company of Bros. sang His praises and hailed Him King of kings and Lord of lords. Antichristos himself was captured and driven forth for ever from Worldover School and the Great Rebellion was brought at long last to a complete and final end.”

“And what about the Dragon ? What became of him ? ” asked several boys at once.

“Ah ! the old Dragon ! ” said I ; “his reign was brought to an end, too. He was taken in the swamps to which he had retreated and was bound with a great chain and imprisoned in a cave for a thousand terms. And now order reigned in Worldover School and with it infinite peace and content throughout that millennium of terms. All the instruments of destruction that had been invented were transformed into instruments of

usefulness, the walls between the Houses were pulled down and righteousness and peace prevailed under the rule of the Founder's Son in all His glory."

"And what happened to the Bros., Commie?" asked Major Brisket.

"Ah, that's one of the best parts of my story," I replied. "The Founder's Son held a great reception in the School Hall shortly after He had assumed control of Worldover, and called before Him all the Bros. in turn by name. Those who had suffered shame and expulsion for His sake and those who had been faithful to Him heard Him say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' It was wonderful to see all the famous Bros. of the earliest days, Bro. Peter, Bro. Paul, the beloved Bro. John and thousands of others all back again in Worldover sharing in the triumph of the Founder's Son. Many had positions of authority appointed to them and other rewards were given to great and small alike. Indeed, some of the smallest were honoured most, for the first were last and the last first. And some who were most greatly honoured were surprised to find themselves recognized at all and asked the Founder's Son when it was they had earned recognition. It was a wonderful time and all agreed that the sufferings of those former times were not to be compared with the glory that had now been revealed to them."

There was quite a hush over the scene around the fire as I recounted this part of my story. I paused for a moment, moved by the sight of the upturned faces of the crowd around me, illuminated by the ruddy light of the fire which glowed warm and bright, while a host of stars shone overhead.

"And is that the end of the story?" said someone in the dark.

"Not quite the end," said I. "There's one more scene to recount. It occurred after the thousand terms

were over and it has to do with the Dragon again. Somehow or other he appears to have regained his freedom, but happily only for a short time."

"What did he do?" queried the Shrimp.

"He at once called a rebellion and stirred up all those boys who were only rendering forced obedience to the new rule to join him in a last attempt to recapture Worldover. But the rebellion was doomed to failure from the start. A terrible battle took place, when the Dragon was utterly defeated and all his followers were cast out of Worldover 'into the blackness of darkness for ever.'"

"And the Dragon?" said a boy.

"The Dragon at last met his final doom. He was cast into a bottomless pit."

"But, Commie, if it were really bottomless he would never stop falling," said Tasso.

"He never *did* stop falling, Admiral. Down, down, down he went and still goes down for ever and ever."

"Ugh! what a horrible fate," said Tony Wincott.
"Like some dreadful nightmare."

"It was indeed, but one richly deserved," said I.

"And now my last word, for it's getting late and we strike camp at six to-morrow morning" (groans from several quarters). "I must tell you of the joyful day when the Founder Himself arrived and took over His School, joining it to His Palace in Paradise Land, which after all proved to be close at hand, and so Worldover and Paradise became one, and every member of the one was a member of the other, and all was bliss and joy in both for ever and ever and ever."

I ceased, and there ensued a great silence, broken only by the crackling of the logs on the camp fire. Nobody seemed to want to move. It was the last hour of the camp, as it were, and all seemed to feel it to be so. Presently, however, a boy stirred and I saw a pair of

long legs stride over the boys as their owner made his way to the front.

It was our old friend Shanks, as we called him. "Commie," he began, then after an awkward pause began again. "Commie, you remember the Sunday I came to tea with you, and you told me the story of 'The Last Lamp'? Well, you fellows" (he was addressing the Camp now), "I thought I started that evening, but it wasn't much of a success. Now to-night I've decided all afresh and I'm going to be a true Bro. for ever."

Then he sat down with a very red but very determined face. That began it. Who will ever forget what followed round the camp fire that night? Boy after boy came forward to tell how Christ the Saviour had met him and claimed him during Camp, some at that very fireside, and how they longed to be true Bros. Some spoke freely, others could do no more than blurt out, "Commie, I want to be a Bro.!" "And me, too!" "And me!" added Mike the Shrimp. So it went on while the stars looked down, and One above the stars "saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied."

It seemed quite natural for us all to pray together as the fire burnt low, and equally natural for us to join hands round its embers and sing the Camp Doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Alleluia!"

Then tired, but very happy, we turned in for our last sleep in camp.

* * * * *

The Royal Scot, laden with Campers and kit, moved slowly out of the station, leaving me and one or two others on the platform waving them farewell. "Good-bye, Commie," they yelled. "Good-bye, Bros.," I shouted. "Good-bye, Big Bro.!" came back to me

from the fast receding train. " GOOD-BYE—GOOD-BYE—Good-bye-ee-ee ! "

And they were gone !

* * * * *

It all happened years ago. Where are they now ? I hear from some of them at times and meet them unexpectedly in strange places. For they are in the glorious Company of Bros. spread abroad in many lands all the wide Worldover.

PATERNOSTER

