"MY FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS".

An Autobiography

by

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Written March 1946.

TO "BILL" FERNYHOUGH
WITH GRATITUDE FOR ALL
HIS ENCOURAGEMENT.

D.M.

Life - with all its dreams,
Its hopes, its schemes.
Life - that could be sublime,
If peace were for all time.

D.M.

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March 3rd - 1946.

MY FIRST TWENTY-ONE YEARS.

INTRODUCTION.

My grandfather was born in 1873, in a little village outside the town of Vilna in Russia. At the age of nineteen he married my grandmother, who lived in a village nearby. They worked together on the land, for they were peasants, and that was their only means of livelihood. At that time life in Russia was not as it might have been. For both financially and politically it was in a chaotic state. The taxes were growing heavier day by day, and the people were becoming restless. As a diversion from the main state of affairs, the Czar used to, at regular intervals, send his Cossack Guards out on pogrons. Anti-semitism was then at its height, and the pogrons consisted or murdering, and raping the Jewish inhabitants of any village it might choose. My grandparents, being Jewish by religion found life impossible to live under such conditions. Things came to point, when my grandfather decided to immigrate to England. There, he was told, people could live as people, regardless of their religion. So the day came, when my grandfather and his young bride, along with a few scanty belongings set sail for their new world - England.

They landed at an East London dock, and as they hardly had any money, it was decided to live in the district. They starting raising a family and had seven children, the

second eldest being my father. By the time the last of the seven children were born, my father was already a young man in his late teens. A few years elapsed, and the first Great War came about. My father joined the Royal Flying Corps, and I am told even now by friends of his, that he made an impressive figure in his uniform. He met my mother on one of his first leaves, thus starting a courtship lasting three years. According to my mother's friends, my father was a lucky chap, for she had many fine qualities, but I should imagine her intelligence, refinement and good looks were what attracted my father mostly. They were married in August 1918, and a few weeks later armistice was declared. After two years of married life my father was presented with a baby girl. Another three years went by, and yet another baby girl was added to the family. My parents by this time very much wanted a son, they did not mind having one more girl, but both thought how nice it would have been, if it were a boy. So lo and behold in the year 1925, after seven years of married life, I was born. My parents had at last reached their goal - a son.

PART I.

CHILDHOOD TO YOUTH.

My earliest memories were of my school days. They were not very interesting, I am afraid, for not being a good scholar, I did not like school, or should I say, because of my dislike for school I was as a result not exactly brilliant? I longed for the time to come when I should at last leave school, and forever be rid of people who were trying to pound knowledge into one, which was quite frankly a hopeless job. The teachers then and now, have my sympathy, and I do hope for their sake that the pupils of to-day, are somewhat brighter than I was then.

I can remember three outstanding incidents that stopped my childhood from being totally uneventful.

At a very tender age, while playing in the back garden, I noticed a cat washing itself, and to me it appeared to be having a trying time. Even at that age I tried to act the good samaritan. So spying a barrel filled with water, I thought I would help to give it a good wash. After a little struggle I managed to capture the cat for the price of a few scratches, and popped it into the barrel. I hope you can appreciate how upset I was to learn that as a result of my supposed kindly gesture, the cat had drowned. My parents did not spank me as one might think, but sensibly explained to me the limitations of a cat.

My second escapade was concerned with my very first visit to a swimming bath. I was quite excited over the prospect, for seeing many of "Tarzan's" screen films, I visualised myself ploughing through the water, in the same style as this character of picture land. I was taken to the baths by the next door neighbour's son, who was a few years older than I. Apart from myself, he and his friends could all swim. In entering my cubile I undressed in great haste, in all eagerness to don my swimming costume. When the other lads were ready we went to the water's edge, and I enquired in rather a swaggering manner as to which end of the bath I should go in first. (I might have been Napoleon asking for new lands to conquer). It was pointed out quite clearly to me, that I should go in the shallow end, being as I was a non-swimmer. So off I tripped, scanned what I thought to be the shallow end - and jumped in. Now in all man built swimming pools it is customary to have one end about three feet in depth, graduating to about six feet, so that a person might be able to stand in the water at one point, and yet a foot further forward will take him out of his depth. Thus it came about that on entering the pool, to my horror I found the water closing over my head. It was apparent that I had miscalculated the distance. There beneath the water I saw many snaky legs wriggling about in a most frightening fashion. Spluttering and gurgling as I came to the surface, I tried to shout for

help, but no sooner did I open my mouth than I descended below again. In those brief seconds of struggling, I remembered being told that after going down three times a person will drown. So it came about just as I was on my third journey to Neptune's Kingdom, a hand shot out from the bank. I grabbed it frantically, and was hauled out of the swimming bath. I was in rather a sorry plight as was to be expected. When I finally regained my normal breathing, I gave my rescuer a good dressing down for not bringing me out sooner. Human nature was once more functioning ..... I have often wondered as to whether the experience of my first visit to a swimming bath was not an ironic sequel to my "cat incident"??

My final narrative deals with sports day at my school, which used to take place each year. My friends and I set ouet in the early morning for the local park where the sports was to be held. The day was free from any of the usual school work, and there was much excitement over the prospects of different races. As we walked through the park we came to some iron railings which barred us from the other side. There was a gate-way about two hundred yards further along, but all thought of walking that distance was out of our minds when we could climb over. I like the rest of my friends proceeded to climb. Having one leg over one side of the railings, and one leg over the other, I suddenly slipped and felt a sharp pain through my leg. I was unable to move at all, there I was perched on the railings like an apple on a stick. After much

shouting, one of the teachers came to my assistance and lifted me off. I felt terribly weak, and on close examination my trousers were found to be saturated with blood. One of the iron spikes had pierced my thigh when I had slipped. I was carried to the first aid room, and in due course an ambulance came and I was taken to the local hospital. There, a nurse inserted three stitches in my thigh. She commented that I was a credit to my school, for not making a sound in my pain. With that compliment I really felt on top of the world, and considered myself a hero. Due to exaggeration of my accident my mother arrived on the scene terribly overwrought, expecting to find me more dead than alive. She soon saw that things were not too bad, and was allowed to take me home. The days sport from my point of view was a complete failure, but since that time I have never climbed any more railings.

Do we our parents' children realise what we owe
To them the folks who've reared us, not so long ago
The sacrifices they have made, for us are truly great,
So listen all you offsprings, try and appreciate.
Think well before you do each deed,
Making sure you don't annoy,
And try and do the little things
That will to them bring joy.

At the age of about ten I heard a great deal of talk of a Hitler, and his persecution of the Jews. I was very much in the dark as to what it all implied. So I decided to ask my father to explain to me what it was about. He started by telling me that as Jews we were not very well liked by other

people. For through the history of mankind the Jew has been persecuted, ridiculed and humiliated. Back through the centuries, he has been the scape-goat for the ruling class of the country he lived in. Human nature, such as it is, has shewn that a subdued race by striving for its very existence goes further than a free nation. Thus as a result, in every Jew lies a certain amount of ambition. Also regarding Hitler's annihilation of so many people, although unbelievable in this modern age, in comparison to his real objective was a mere stepping-stone (His tone however, did not denote any menace in the stepping stone) Only too well do we now know, what that objective was - world domination. He concluded his little talk to me, by saying that where ever I went, and what ever company I should mix with, I must always set a good example. For if I should ever do any wrong, it would reflect on many innocent people of my religion.

LET US LIVE.

All through the ages we have been oppressed.
Hunted and hounded, and given no rest.
The reason being we are known as Jews,
And therefore cannot express our views.
But proud are we to bear our name,
That is renowned for courage and fame.
So people of the world unite,
As anti-semitism we must fight.

My father's words I remembered,and as yet have never forgotten them. I have always tried to live by the principle of "Do unto others as you would do unto yourself". The years rolled by, and at last the time came for my school

Career to end. I had reached the ripe old age of fourteen, and was eager to conquer the world that lay ahead of me.

My first place of employment was at a tailoring shop, and I did not find it at all interesting. So after a year I made up my mind to try my hand at another trade. I started at a Sheet Metal Company, and found the type of work suited me very well. After a few months, on September 3rd 1939, Great Britain was once against at war. My father joined me in my Sheet Metal job, for being above military age, he thought it was his duty to do some kind of war work.

Now in my opinion, there is a definite bridge dividing father and son from knowing each other really well. However, I worked with my father for about four years, during which time I had come to know him intimately. I have always been pleased that we were together for those few years, as the bridge was crossed, and we have since been firm friends. I think my feelings were aptly expressed in a few lines of verse I sent him on his last birthday.

I'm a lucky boy, indeed I am,
To have a Dad like you,
So wise and kind in your person,
A gentleman right through.

PART 2.

MY SISTERS AND THEIR AFFECT ON ME.

I have always longed for a brother older than myself or as a consolation. I would not mind one younger. But alas I have neither. However, I have two sisters who are as different in looks as they are in nature. My elder sister, whose name is Marie, is five years my senior, and the type usually referred to whose 'bark is worse than her bite'. She gives most people the impression of being a tough character. But in reality she is sensitive in nature, and kind hearted. With her dark hair and delicate features, she is indeed a very good looking girl.

As a sister I would have no other,
And am proud to be known as your brother.
So may your life be full of laughter,
And keep you happy for ever after.

My other sister is two years' older than I, we call her Rose, but whose full title is really Rosina. A few words can describe part of her character, sweet, lovable, and understanding. If I have any secrets or problems I wish to confide to anyone, she is the person I go to. Her looks are such that I never tire of gazing at her face, and when she smiles there is a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, which I find most attractive.

Here's to my sister, the sweetest Rose,
Full of loveliness from her head to her toes
A prince is not good enough
A king -- who knows??
For no one is worthy
of my sweet sister Rose

To both my sisters I owe much in regard to their educating me, and showing me many paths of interest to follow. Both are well read, and most intelligent. They can converse about any subject, and can hold their own on politics.

I have always considered myself fortunate in living with two of the feminine sex under the same roof, for it has given me an incite as to how females naturally act. As result, I have always shown girls every respect, and consideration knowing them to be without a doubt - human beings.

PART 3.

BLITZCRIEG.

It was twelve months after war had been declared in the year 1940 that Hitler started his 'Blitzcrieg' on London and other large cities in England. By his constant bombings, his hope lay in shattering the people's morale, bringing Britain to her knees, and thus have a quick victory.

Day and night the sirens shrieked their warnings, and the women and children hurried to the shelter, wondering what the next few hours held in store. Life in the shelter was rather grim. With children running up and down, the constant chattering of the people it was impossible to have any rest. After spending a night in this bedlam, I did not feel very energetic the following morning when I had to prepare myself for a hard day's work. However the situation came to a climax when my Dad and I decided to sneak into our house unbeknowing to my mother and sisters, Who, had they known, would I am afraid skinned us alive. I think I would prefer the bombs to the fury of their tongues. My dear reader must not get the impression that we were brave, having no fear of the bombs. But with not having suffieient sleep my Dad and I were near the point of exhaustion, not caring for the consequences, just as long as we could lie in a bed and obtain a decent few hours sleep. The air-raids continued, and at times were on for periods of twelve hours. My parents decided to invite a few friends round each evening and stay in the house. With a

small crowd it gave us confidence, and took our minds off the bombing outside. I still can recall the look on each of our faces, and the deathly hush as an aeroplane passed overhead. One could almost feel the room vibrate from the beatings of the hearts. At times we used to console ourselves that the aeroplane above was probably one of our night fighters. But with the sound of a piercing whistle followed by a loud bang, it proved that we could be wrong. Time passed and my family and I like most people learned to become used to this existence. Not daring to make plans for the future, just thanking the Lord each time I saw the sun rise, and my kin folk arrive home safe each evening, from the day's battle. Round about this period, a popular slogan was repeatedly heard. 'London can take it'. I'm afraid London did not have any alternative other than to take it. Still there was much to be said for the spirit of the people, their courage and fortitude, without which, Britain would have surely been in bondage.

Lest we forget.

Deathly bombs rain over London town
Killing and destroying,
But the people's morale is still the same
To the Germans it's most annoying,
But let us not forget the dead, and those
Who have suffered pain,
As it is up to us the living, to see they
Died not in vain,
So let us get together, and all our head unite,
And make this world a better place,
By seeing the wrongs put right.

PART 4.

MY DEFERMENT.

Months rolled into years, and the war still continued. The Allies were suffering heavy defeats, and at times the position looked critical. At my job everyone was working as hard as they could to get the utmost production. We worked eleven hours a day, six days a week. After a day's work, I was completely tired out, and was content to just have my supper go to bed, and prepare myself for the morrow's onslaught. A few weeks previous to my eighteenth birthday I had a medical examination for the army. Having passed "A.1" I was expecting my papers for Military Service at any time. So it was much to my surprise when I received a year's deferment. It seemed that the particular job I was engaged on was considered essential. Therefore it was necessary to keep me at my place of employment for a little longer. It was during my deferment that I found my friends dwindling, owing to them joining the forces. The week-ends failed to hold any attraction for me and was just so many more hours of boredom. The other boys in the neighbourhood were rather younger than I, and so had different interests. In preference to going with them, and being further bored, I took up the lone wolf character!

With so much spare time on my hands during the week-end, I started reading. The types of books I like to read are "The Citadel", "Rebecca" and "Gone with the Wind". Stories that portray human emotions, and the bitter-sweet of life. I

have always been very fond of reading, for I find it invaluable for gaining knowledge. On any subject you will find the equivalent book. The born traveller, unable to visit the different countries he dreams of with some imagination can do so through the leaves of a book. Even the sadistical person, who lacks courage to murder, pours through the "Monthly Murder Magazines" - so all tastes are catered for.

"A person who does not read,
has no advantage over those who cannot read".

While visiting some friends, I was introduced to a boy whose name was Ronnie. I learned he was about nine months younger than I, and was waiting for his calling up papers for military service. He had black hair brushed well back, and a dark complexion. He was slim in build, and his looks rather reminded me of the screen actor Tyrone Power. We became very friendly, and started going out together. He and I had many things in common, and we quickly became firm friends. It was exactly a year after knowing my new friend that I wrote a few lines of verse commemorating our anniversary.

I have'nt known you very long
It is but just a year,
But throughout these past twelve months
Our friendships been sincere.
I hope that in the future
When we become old and grey
We will be still the closest friends
As what we are this day.

PART 5.

MY LIFE AS A BEVIN BOY.

The war was in its third year and already the tide was turning in favour of the Allies. The initiative had been taken, and we were advancing. At the end of twelve months my deferment expired.

I awoke on the morning of March 19th 1944 realising that the fortunes of war was about to bring me to a new life, that never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine I should lead. The life of a miner. I had been conscripted into the pits. (hence forth to be termed as a Bevin Boy) and had to go to Doncaster, Yorkshire for a month's training. The prospect of working seven and a half hours down a mine was not at all appealing. Neither did it have the glamour that youth invariably seeks in war-time. But I made up my mind to make the best of it, and at least see what it was all about. On arriving at Euston station I, and a good many other boys, who were in the same position as myself were met by a reception committee. They then proceeded to give us instructions regarding arrangements for travelling, and also billets that were to be provided for us at our destination. As I entered the train, I must confess I felt very sorry for myself. For not ever being away from home before I was dazed to think that for the first time in my life I was on my own, in this new adventure. The journey to Doncaster was uneventful, except for making the acquaintance of another boy, whose name was Kenneth Heath. He was rather quiet

and reserved so I decided to keep with him. We finally arrived at Doncaster, and were greeted by a heavy downfall of rain, which did not put us in the best of spirits. Buses were waiting for us outside the station, and drove us to the billeting centre. During the short drive, I tried to have a glimpse at the surrounding neighbourhood. The little I did see, was not at all impressive. For having come from the big city (London) this town appeared in comparison rather dull. When we arrived at the billeting centre addresses were given to us along with a short talk to the effect that they were to be our new homes for the period of our stay in the district. When I reached the address I was given, I was rather surprised to see that it was just like any other house. I had expected a tumble down stone cottage, and the interior to be sadly neglected. As I entered my new home I found in reality it was spotlessly clean. I was welcomed by a Mrs. Sayers, who I judged to be in her early thirties. Mrs. Sayers told me that her husband worked in the local pit. Also she added, I should not be alarmed if he came in drunk at the week-end, as he would not in any way annoy me. When I heard that, I began to get scared. I visualised a husky miner coming home one evening, and to start knocking me from one end of Doncaster to the other. However things were not as bad as that. When I did meet Mr. Sayers he appeared a very decent chap, and as long as I was living there I was always on friendly terms with him.

The month's training was like being at school again. We

were allotted to a few separate classes, and the teachers were all men with a good many years mining experience. The School was to give us a little idea of what to expect down a mine. We had theory of mining in the morning, and practical training in the afternoon. Also by way of toughening up, we had gymnastics, boxing and football. It was really enjoyable, with so many young boys together, the day did not pass without a laugh. The week-ends saw us all congregated at the local town hall, that was used as a dance hall. Just before my months training was over Whitsun came about. There was much talk of going home for a few days and everyone was very excited over the prospect.

I do not think I could quite describe my feelings on my arrival in London again. It seemed, I had been away for four years instead of just four weeks. I was greeted by my family with all manner of questions. True to maternal form my mother wanted to know if I had sufficient to eat. The few days slipped by, and once again I was ready to return to Doncaster. It took a day or two to acclimatize myself once again to a Bevin Boy's life. At last my training was over, and I received a notice saying I was to be employed at a colliery in Newcastle-under-Lyme,Staffordshire.

After a whole day's travelling, by way of Manchester and Sheffield, we arrived at Stoke-on-Trent. There, as before, addresses were given to us for billets. The majority of boys were to live in a hostel, but I was rather pleased to be in a private house. The address of my new residence was in Newcastle. All tired out after my long journey, I made the acquaintance of

my new landlady. Neither she, or the environment of the house impressed me. The different rooms seemed to be swarming with many other boys, and in my opinion the place was hopelessly overcrowded. On retiring to bed, I was still less impressed when I noticed that a boy who was sharing the same room as myself, take off his shoes, and jacket, and without further ado go to bed. I decided then, that at first opportunity I should find a new home. The following day after my shift's work was over, I went about trying to find another billet. After doing a great deal of walking about, I was fortunate enough to find a place to live. It was certainly a different atmosphere to my previous billet. Mr. & Mrs. Frances were a doupled in their middle fifties, and had an only son of seventeen, who was attending the Newcastle High School. They did all they could to make me comfortable, and I was very happy living there.

I found that working in a modern colliery was a great deal different from the months training we had had. For previously my only contact with a miner had been through the leaves of a book, and the films on the screen. And in reality was to me just an "individual" who each day went down a "hole" and brought to the surface the necessity of life - coal. I must admit that seeing coal in the grate was something I took for granted. Never realising the hazardous and trying ordeals, which made that coal filled grate possible. Only too well do I now know the appalling conditions under which the miner has to earn his daily bread. After working side by side with him for the past two years, I have come to understand him, and appreciate his sincerity, and simplicity.

I do not think I shall ever regret the experience I have had. As it has brought home to me so many truths, that I should never had understood before.

In the past the miner has always been treated as the underdog, never being given the consideration he deserves. The time has arrived to make the lives of these people - who are the very nerve-centre of Britain more bearable.

The Miner.

Down the shaft he quickly descends,
To his place of work.
There his back he often bends
There is not a job he'll shirk
With body covered with sweat and grime
He carries on all day.
Looking forward to the time
When he'll be on his way.

But there are moments, when dangers near,
And death seems to be the fate.
But in him there's no selfish fear,
He'll do "out" to save his mate.

In person he is a humble chap,
Not wanting much in life,
A square deal for his wife and kids
And an end to all his strife.

The local inhabitants were most sympathetic towards us Bevin boys, and thought we had had a raw deal. But quite honestly I found I could not agree with them. Admitted, the work was very hard, and not being used to it made it less bearable. The atmosphere was not healthy, and danger was always very near. Still this was war, and I did not expect any garden of roses, there was a job to do, the quicker tackled the sooner over. We Bevin Boys at the most would work in the mines about four years,

whereas the miner has to spend his entire life in such an existence. I found my sympathy whole heartedly lay in his direction. My thoughts took me further to the men fighting out in Burma. I have always had a deep admiration for them. Their sufferings, and endurance in carrying on a fight, on such a foul battle field was beyond my comprehension. I have often tried to imagine myself amongst them. If I were - this is how I would see it.

Burma Boy.

Oh how I yearn for the old homestead,
To see it just once more.
And how I yearn for my feather bed,
To forget about the war.

I'm sick of living in Jungle Heat,
It's driving me insane.
With mosquitoes for companions,
Amid the monsoon rain.

I'm tired of patrolling , into the lion's den
Where wits verse wits.
And the fight goes on,
Against the little yellow men.

Marching in the mud and sludge
Pestered by the flies
Occasionally a shot rings out
- Another comrade dies!

Such is the life, of us Burma Boys,
But we are out to pay our debt.
Think of us you folks at home,
Remember - and never forget.

PART 6.

MY JOURNEY TO STOKE.

After living with the 'Franceses' for about eight months, Mrs. Frances was taken dangerously ill. As result I had to find a new home, as it was impossible for her to look after me in her condition. I was terribly upset at the thought of leaving them, for during my stay I had been very happy indeed. So it came about that I found myself living with Mr. and Mrs. Fernyhough. They were in their late thirties, and had two children, both girls. Everything was done by them to make me comfortable and happy. I think the reason for my contentment at being away from home, was largely due to their kindness and consideration that they shewed towards me. Mr. Fernyhough was a miner by trade, and worked at the local pit, as I did. We both worked on the same shift, all nights, which made things very convenient.

I used to visit my family in London at regular intervals. On one occasion after I had been home for a few days, I was preparing myself for a return journey to Stoke. It was on the morning of February 9th 1946, that I arrived at Euston station. However, owing to the recent heavy fall of rain, there were many parts of the North country under water, which consequently led to utter confusion in the train service. After making many enquiries, and running up and down different platforms, I at last found a train travelling direct to Stoke. I considered myself rather fortunate, but was annoyed at an hour's wait ahead of me, before it would finally pull out. I wandered through the

corridor of the train, in what I thought was a vain effort to find a seat. But my luck was not completely out, for I found a compartment with only one passenger in it. He was a R.A.F. air-gunner, who I judged to be in his early twenties. I sat down in a corner seat, and started to read my newspaper. However time passed by and it was not long before the compartment I was in, was completely full. The train at last with a groan, and a devilish noise slowly nosed her way out of Euston Station.

The countryside appeared to me like a huge lake, owing to the recent rain fall. And the train I was in seemed to be travelling on top of the water. At a quick glance it looked rather uncanny, but nevertheless picturesque. I looked round at my fellow-passengers and found opposite me was sitting a sailor, and by his side a rather middle aged lady, who was in the uniform of some war-time charity organisation. Next to the lady was sitting the young air-gunner who I mentioned previously. Sitting by my side was a civilian, and by him a soldier in the S.E.A.C. (Southern East Asia Command) forces. It struck me, that each of my fellow-passengers were representatives of the great force that brought about the peace. For not forgetting myself, although a mere Bevin Boy (Utility Miner) it made me feel good to think that I was part of that great force. Such were my travelling companions.

Slowly conversation started after cigarettes were duly handed round. Although I was reading my newspaper I could not help over-hearing the soldier talking to the sailor. He was

saying how he and his unit were really 'mad' when they landed on a Japanese held island and found no one to fight. It appeared the navy had been bombarding the island previously, and had, as result wiped out the Jap troops of occupation. He seemed to be blaming the poor sailor, and held him personally responsible for having all the fun. I could not help but smile behind my newspaper, and think to myself that the soldier was truly a symbol of England.

We journeyed on, and conversation arose between the civilian and the sailor. The sailor was going home, and had just been demobbed after six years' service. The ribbons on his chest denoted he had seen action in many parts of the world. They, the sailor and civilian, became very friendly indeed, for the civvy was an ex-officer of a Corvette, so they had many things in common. At this point, I must frankly admit I held no interest at all in my newspaper, but was quite content to listen. They started swopping stories, which I found very interesting indeed, and I thought of what a thrilling book might be written if all those stories could be compiled. All this time the R.A.F. chap was quiet, maybe his experiences had not been so thrilling. On the other hand tragedy usually makes a man silent. Whatever it was, I shall never know.

During a lull in the conversation I started thinking of what these men had endured. Of the many horrible sights they have seen, and will never forget till their dying day. Of the lucky ones who would at last be able to go home, and also of the thousands who were

not so lucky and would never see home. A deep admiration grew within me for these great men, who we owe so very much to. With a screech of the brakes, the train came to a halt - we had at last arrived at Stoke.

PART 7.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

I found that living in Newcastle-under-Lyme was very pleasant, the local people as well as being friendly, were hospitable too. The town itself was rather pleasing. There was a freshness about the atmosphere, that many of the industrial towns round about lacked. As in many small towns in England, scope is very limited for the youth leaving school. An average boy on reaching the age of fourteen, goes for employment either to the pit, or the brick yard. A girl usually follows the line of a mill hand, or a pot bank worker. The system of the country is such, that regardless of their capabilities the inhabitants of the town thrust their sons and daughters into these dead-end jobs. However, I do not hold them responsible. Due to large families and lack of financial support they have no altemative. But by this method some of the finest brains in the land are lain to waste. If the State would sanction an adequate financial allowance to the families of promising youngsters, so they can continue their schooling, the country in the future years would reap the benefit. My social life was not exactly exciting and my amusements consisted of the usual things - dancing and pictures. So after living in the district for about a year, I decided to join a war-workers club. I have always been an ardent supporter of clubs. For to my mind it is a place where youth can congregate and relax. Also I do believe the atmosphere, and spirit reflects to the advantage later on in life. It was a grand opportunity

to meet people. I took that opportunity and made many friends, whose friendship I shall always remember. I might add that when the time comes for me to leave Newcastle, I shall have very pleasant memories to look back on.

A Spot in the Midlands.

There will always be a spot in the Midlands,
That will forever be dear to me,
For the friends I've made, and the times I've had
Will bring many á memory.

Little did I dream of contentment,
When I first came to this Midland Town,
But the hospitality shown, to me alone,
Was really hard to be found.

It was the speech that I found rather disturbing
At times I felt quite ill at ease,
"Wonna" for won't "Donna" for don't,
At last I have learn't Japanese!

When the day arrives for departure,
I can say I have had a grand time
In that little spot in the Midlands
Newcastle-under-Lyme.

PART 8.

FINIS.

In a few weeks' time I shall be twenty-one years of age. Fate has been kind to me during these years. For it has always been my principle to judge people individually, regardless of race discrimination, for the fundamentals of the human being, are not the creed of the person as it is their character and integrity. In all walks of life so much happiness can be given by our fellow men, if a small consideration was shown to each other. The word brotherhood would then, not merely be on expression, but the password to a better standard of living.

In this present era, when war seems to monopolise all thought, it is distressing to think that this so called civilisation lacks closer relationship between the people of all countries. After five and a half years of war, of bloodshed and misery, it seems unbelievable that at last the world is once again at peace. But the great question is how long can that peace be maintained, a matter of ten to twenty years is not sufficient.

The future depends on us, the little people, the little people who together, can make perpetual peace be realised. I do hope the Utopia, I so often dream about will one day materialise.

I look forward to the coming years not asking much from life, helping my fellow man, when it is in my power to do so.

Expecting little - and in consequence receiving much.

MY DREAM.

I dreamed a dream of the land of peace,
Where all God's children were one.
There they lived despite colour or creed,
Under the face of the sun.
Each man worked and did his share
They were happy and contented.
War and greed were unheard of things,
And was by all, resented.
But I awoke and opened my eyes to stark reality
This earth of ours where man hates man, and is full
of jealousy.
I only hope that some day soon,
My dream will come about.
A paradise would this world be,
Of that I have no doubt.
