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ALBERT GOODWIN

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Although written in 1961, Albert Goodwin's autobiography has a typically Victorian flavour. He was born in 1890 at Caverswell, Stoke, in the Potteries, where his father worked on sanitary ware. The memoir is unusual in giving so much space to his parents' and grandparents' lives, from which it appears that social conditions in the Potteries had not greatly advanced since those of the early nineteenth century described by Charles Shaw in 'When I Was A Child' (1903). Goodwin had no great love for his parents ('the most obnoxious people I had ever seen') but appreciated that they were responding to the harshness of the times. His memoir is valuable for its portrayal of working conditions and for Goodwin's account of his parents' marriage and his own birth, presumably second-hand.

The memoir was kindly brought to my notice by F.L. Harris, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University of Exeter.

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FOREWORD.

If, in reading this <sup>series</sup> of mine you are expecting to get some idea of how good it was to be alive, of junketings in pleasant places and a story of "love" and "happy ever after" please

put down the book for this is just a record of the life over 40 years of a ~~man~~ very ordinary mortal. Many times has he appeared in a Courtroom, been handed a Bible to hold in his Right Hand, and a sword in his Left from which he had to repeat "I swear I will tell the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth" and then I propose to do in all that follows. In many ~~cases~~ instances, I could use names, but as they have descendants still living, I do not care to cause them pain by taking away their many kind thought of their ancestors. I may appear a little bitter at times and I hope my readers will forgive me as my whole object is to place before them what happened to very ordinary mortals in the "good old days".

Arthur Gordon

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

~~Over the years~~

At the age of 41 memories of ones early days seem to become more vivid and the ability to recall the years that have passed can be done with a certain amount of ease, and it seems to me that though my life has been tough, with some smooth patches, on the whole I have been allowed to live in years of great change, both good and bad.

I was born in the Parish of Caversham which is on the City S.E. perimeter of the City of Stoke on Trent. At the time of my Birth in 1890 the seven Towns of the Potteries were each a separate entity, and Caversham Parish, or the part in which I arrived in this world, to wit East Vale was administered from Longton by the Town Council. The other five of the seven Towns were North to South Tunstall Burslem Hanley Stoke and Fenton.

I was the 2nd child of my working class parents, Benjamin & Caroline Goodwin (nee Bartledge) whose 1st child a Boy had died at the age of 4 months.

Looking back it would not be true to record that I realised my parents were two of the finest people who walked the earth, on the contrary I was of the firm opinion that they were the

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most obnoxious people I had ever seen and to expect any kind treatment from them was to expect the moon to fall out of the sky. But, I have since realized and very emphatically too, that they trying to fit me, ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>not</sup> able to live in a world that was harsh & hard to the children of the poorer classes.

My Father was the eldest legitimate son of his family, he being born 25 minutes before his Brother and therefore a twin. His Brothers and Sisters were fairly numerous as families were at that period being seven John, Polly, Sarah Ann David, Millicent and Hannah. William, born out of wedlock was sister to my Father. Several other children had died. My paternal Grandmother was a confirmed Drunkard and the family home in a terrace of Upper Hill St Longton was a very equalist place. Built on a hill, with 2. Water Sept to 14 houses, two privies to the same, and very little backyard as to as there was only the passage at the rear of the premises to provide entrance. The conditions pertaining can be quickly imagined. There were also 2 oak middens to 4 houses each. These hovels have now been demolished. Within 80 square yards of these houses there were 8 Beer or Public Houses & 2 off Licences so it will be

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easy to appreciate that my Grandmother had  
ample opportunity of indulging in her favorite  
recreation. Incidentally these "Folds" were open  
from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. I always ~~remember~~  
would show that some of them closed down  
even my Grandmother died. Her biggest  
problem at that period was money and she  
would resort to any method to obtain the same,  
and I shall give an example of this a little  
later. When ~~I was 3 years old~~ I can recall <sup>at</sup> ~~the~~  
at the age of 3 yrs, when my Father wanted  
to take me to see his Mother, (who was on her  
deathbed) I did not realize this but was told later,  
I objected to going because I was afraid  
of her and she did not "smell nice". Mother  
told me of this in later years. My paternal  
Grandfather had died before I was born from  
Asthma, or his Certificate said. And what  
of my maternal Grandparents. I never knew  
either of them. My Mother was the only  
child of her Father's second marriage, he  
having three children by his 1<sup>st</sup> Wife, Mary  
Elizabeth & Sam. The latter was bedridden at  
the age of 28 & being married with 2  
sons had to trust to his wife's earnings  
as a Decorating "Missis". It was said that  
she owed her advance to a good position  
because she had a great friend in the  
Decorating Manager but there was no doubt  
that <sup>even</sup> if people put the worst construction  
on this friendship this Aunt of mine did  
a wonderful job for which her children's

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success in after life more than repaid her for any sacrifice she had made.

Information gleaned from my mother and our neighbours in East Vale points to the fact that my Maternal Grandfather must have been a somewhat remarkable man. He was a "Looker to Ware" (Pottery) wife suffered from a Deafness and severe Chest Trouble. To alleviate the Breathing trouble he grew a Beard, so it was accepted at first time that this was a way of guarding the chest and throat & so make it easier to draw Breath. Whether this is so I have no means of knowing. He had been a good scholar at ~~school~~ and although he had left at the age of nine had got hold of all sorts of literature & was a great reader. Mother told me of his Sunday afternoons spent on the steps in his back yard reading where a lot of his fellows who could neither read nor write would sit around and listen to my Grandfather reading the Sunday Paper. (It was called Lloyd's News I believe) and explaining to them what was meant in his opinion. He was also a great Chapel poet, and at times took round the collection plate at the Primitive Methodist Chapel in the near vicinity. When he attended Chapel he wore a frock coat and top hat and mother often told me "how proud she felt walking along with him

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to Chapel on Sunday morning. Her words  
to me were "Albert I thought how jealous  
the other girls must be of me having such  
a grand papa". She died at the age  
of 113 from Diabetes & as his wife  
had died 4 yrs earlier my mother went  
to live with her mother's ~~mother~~ ~~Sister~~  
Sister at the age of seven. Her Half  
Bro & Sister were married.

My Father left school at the  
age of 11 and became employed as  
a mouldrunner (molders assistant) at Chapman's  
Pottery Factory. ~~His~~ wages for 55 1/2 hrs  
was 2/6 per week and if he carried out  
his duties satisfactorily, say perfectly, he  
got 2" for himself. Any excuse was  
sufficient to have the 2" or part of, deducted.  
When he was 14 he was "put down as an  
Apprentice Potter" & served seven years  
at this trade. Immediately he became 21  
and "out of his time" he was dismissed  
as he would have had to be paid  
Journeyman Rate. At this period this  
was common practice & it is only over  
recent years that it has been abolished  
through Trade Union activity. This was in  
1884. and after a week or two of  
unemployment he got a job at his trade  
at another factory. After 5 yrs he was  
expected to take over the management of the  
Clay Dept and on the strength of this  
he married. But at the end of 6 months

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The employers asked my father to cut the prices of almost the whole of the operatives & this he refused to do. He was asked to resign but would not do so and therefore the employers gave him a fortnight's salary in lieu of notice. As a married man whose wife was pregnant with her first child one can readily appreciate how much courage he had to have to take up such a stand. ~~The~~ Sanitary Fireclay had been improving over the years and with the advent of heavy clay workers brought into the district from Scotland there was a "boom" in these types of Sanitary appliances. The rapid expansion necessitated the recruitment of more workers and my father was fortunate to obtain a job in this comparatively new side of the Pottery Industry. Despite the heavy nature of the work my father stuck to it and was eventually recognised as a good man at his job. One can understand that this was a terrific change for him. To tackle the making of these heavy & rather (at that time) crude articles after years of handling the most delicate China was indeed a very radical change. He was given a job in the Urinal Top Dept and from accounts given to me in later



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life he must have been become a first class craftsman. These original Tops are not now made as other Techniques have made them unnecessary. Only one type of Top was made and it became necessary to model something fresh. A few years ago I saw a range of these old Tops on ~~Central~~ the ~~Calist~~ Rd Backpool Rly Station.

My father was approached and asked if he thought he could model a new type of Top which would be an improvement on the old Top. The great complaint against this old Top was that it held a lot of dirt and dust owing to the flamboyant style in which it had been modelled. He was given carte blanche for time and everything he needed. My mother often talked about this particular period and it seemed that in his endeavours to make a success of the enterprise everything had to be subordinated to help. Sculpture drawings, must have been scattered all over the home & nothing had to be touched or moved. What was done in the evening at home had to be done in clay at the works the next day. My father completed the top but as he also had to model a pillar & a joint to fit with it this became a rather upsetting time for my mother. Essentially everything was

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done and the result submitted to the  
Douris that he, who congratulated Father  
on the job and production, was  
ordered. The new shape sold well  
& my Father's wages were raised by  
a Shilling a day. He had now graduated  
to the well paid class from <sup>30</sup> 24/-  
per week to 36/- per week. My Father  
was "in the money". But this had not  
been accomplished without some friction  
hot at home as one would expect but  
at the works. A certain Joeman, who's  
Brother was the manager of the factory,  
took exception to my Father sitting  
down ~~at the~~ at times while he was on  
the modelling & when he chided ~~my~~ him  
for doing so my Father had to tell him  
that he "should sit down when he felt  
like it". The Joeman took umbrage at this  
& proceeded to threaten. Father at once  
went & saw the person who had given  
him "cette blame", reported the attitude of the  
Joeman and asked for instructions. He  
was immediately told the matter would be  
straightened out & went back to his SEAT  
Two days later the Joeman told my  
Father "that he would remember him".  
Such a kind person! But I shall show  
that it took 32 yrs for the Joeman  
to get his own back, long after  
my Father had died but nonetheless he  
did do so, and I was the target.

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I suppose that now my father was a member of the highly paid working class he & my mother thought they could afford to start a family which they proceeded to do & hence the entry into this world of another poor mortal with additions at fairly regular intervals. It is essential for me to point out that the necessity for more improved sanitary appliances of every sort, and the tardy realization that it was important there should be a raising of the standards in matters of hygiene meant that those workers who were fortunate enough to be working in this side of the industry were fully employed. Yes, if you had been lucky enough to get in on the ground floor at this time you could now earn enough to make you feel you could "lash" out a bit, improve your home & even, if you were of a very saving nature, have a holiday at some seclusionous seaside resort. Of course, one had to find something to do in one's spare time, because the hours at the factory were only 4 am to 6 pm with 2 hrs for breakfast & 1 hr for dinner and 4 am till 1 pm on Sat. As we lived 4 miles from the factory this necessitated my father catching a train at 6.23 am and one back at 6.31<sup>PM</sup> these being between Longton and Stoke with a mile walk at each end. The fare was 1/- for a weekly ticket equal to a 1/2 per. mile, after 2 miles you were glad

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to walk as the seats were not too well cushioned. My father, thinking he had some spare time took on a Part Time ~~Business~~ Assurance Book with the Royal Oak Society, which later was merged with the Liverpool Victoria Legal Friendly Society & as he was also a collector of Dispensary for a local doctor he now had money coming in from 3 sources. He was also Hon Sec for the Pleasant Sunday afternoon at the Congregational Church in Caroline of Longton and Sick Visitor for the North Stafford Provident Society (still in existence and colloquially called the Old Church - Club) for whom he visited claimants to Sick Benefit at night after the hour (7pm) when they had to be at home or if caught not present their Benefit was stopped. My father really enjoyed this because he would, while collecting his various dues on Saturday afternoon call where the sick person lived and remind them that he hoped to see them when he called at so and so time on a certain date. The fee for visiting was 6" per visit & he had to go up to two miles miles for some of them & walk all the way. Where did I get all this information from you may well ask and my reply will be that my mother & father loved to impress me with what they had had to do for me especially if had worn my shoe prints out with

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various forms of playing such as kicking an empty tin along the street or playing marbles on my hands and knees. Both my parents were good at remaining latter being particularly good in a boastful manner in showing how clever he had been and what brains could do for people.

What of my mother? As I have recorded she was taken over by her Aunt, a dressmaker, for whom - no one had nothing but praise and often ~~she said to me~~ ~~in later life~~ she said to me "Albert she was too good for this world." Mother's Aunt had a Bradbury sewing machine & this gave her a very high status as a dressmaker. But when mother offered to give any assistance she thought she could her Aunt would be continually telling her "to you must be a child as long as you can" & get what pleasure you can out of life for you may have some hard times in face. A woman of thought! Mother left school when she was twelve and got a situation as servant with some people named Bridgwood who kept a shop on the corner of Ford St & Hope St East Vale. Mother, who died at the age of 73 always expressed the opinion that the good food she received while in service had fitted her to withstand the storms and

stresses of later life which to say the least sometimes required great courage & endurance. She also realised that the teaching she got in making cheap and nourishing meals was of the highest value when in the nature of things she had to provide for a young & growing family. She received 1/6 per week in money, slept at her own home had Breakfast Dinner Tea & Supper found for her but with the money she had to provide herself with everything for the job. Her Aunt looking after what I suppose it would be correct to call her Civilian Clothing. The 1/6 was raised by 6<sup>d</sup> per year so that when she left to get married she was earning 5/0 per week, so that there was not a great deal of money to be saved for a really magnificent Wedding. Her hours were 7 days per week from 7.30 am to 9.30 pm except Wednesday when she had from 6 pm to 9.30 pm completely free, but that night was Choir Practice night at the Congregational Chapel.

Courtship of my Parents

As I have previously recorded my Parents prior to marriage were members of a Chapel & were also Choristers. Mother must have been a fairly good singer because if there were any Soprano Solos.

to be given them then the on the hills of  
 the Special Services went the name  
 Caroline Bartledge Lohr & Mother was  
 very fond of telling how she finally  
 captured my father. He was walking  
 out with another young lady chorister  
 fairly steadily, but she had the  
 misfortune to catch a cold and father  
 I suppose, wishing to keep his hand  
 in, took my mother home from Choir  
 Practice. On the following Sunday the  
 Chorister having recovered took my  
 mother with the great aim of moving  
 in to negotiate a merger, I would  
 suggest but Caroline postponed the  
 idea that she had any designs ~~on~~  
~~them~~ on this poor specimen of humanity  
 concluding with the words "I don't  
 want your Bennie I wouldnt have  
 him as a gift!" ~~some~~ <sup>some</sup> months later  
 mother & father were married and  
 went to live with mother's Aunt. In  
 this consummation the Bridgwood family  
 were unconscious consumers. On Sunday  
 when they went to the Congregational Church  
 my mother went with them at night.  
 She returned to her job afterwards but  
 as the Bridgwoods were "big" "big"  
 people at the Chapel they had to discuss  
 with other high ups various things  
 such as finance, amount of collection, trend  
 of sermon etc. and so this gave my mother

✓ Father a chance to have a few words

When my father was sure that he was going to marry my mother he at once began to organize his life to that end.

He bought a new suit & kept it at mother's Aunt's so that he could go down early on Sunday & change from his working clothes to the Chapel looking a little respectable & do credit to the woman who was to be his wife.

He had previously done the same thing by going to a male friend's house and changing there for which he had to walk a distance of 12 miles. The reason for this was, that if he took anything home on which a few shillings could be obtained his mother would have pawned them and the ticket & had a most glorious orgy of drinking. It had happened so many times before and as there were 5 pawnshops within easy reach of Upper Hell the one can imagine how easy it was for his mother to get the needed money. The expression used by my father's family of "I've got what I stand up in" was simply the truth and nothing but.

### The Wedding

It will be realized that this was not reported in the Press for although it must have been a great day for my parents it was of little interest to the world.



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outside. There was no rehearsal as is the pattern in some cases today.

To purchase a ring, pay the fee, father gave his Bob's school & school (the reason for this will appear) was a big drain on the Exchequer and as this was in a poor state not a lot was left on which the couple had to live the next week. Of course my father might have had more had he refused to listen to the appeals of his younger Brothers and Sisters whom he had kept as discreetly as he possibly could, thereby giving him little chance to save. He was still a China Brewer & had not moved up at this time into the moneyed (Sanitary Brewer) class. That was later as recorded. Mother had been fitted out by her Aunt so that she was in the clear. No guests were expected as none had been invited, no best man, no Bridesmaids because as they were to be married at Haverswell Church they had to walk 3 miles each way. <sup>Yes</sup> walk! Sunday morning 7.30 saw the start ~~and~~ as they had to be at the Church for 9 a.m. When they got to the Church witnesses had to be found and my father prevailed upon the Kerge & he one. Mother went round the village got a woman as the other witness "if she could come along when she had washed her face & combed her hair" Eventually, the

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wedding took place and the return home began. Mother had got her "Bonney". One reacts of Champagne by the breakfast, caviare by the ton appearing at Weddings but these delicacies were all missing from my Parents Wedding Breakfast. The truth is that the meal consisted of 3 pairs of Kippers which my Mothers Aunt had procured cheaply on the Saturday just before they closed. One year later and just before the birth of their first child, named Roy, my Mothers Aunt died. As a house two doors away had become vacant my Parents decided to take up their residence there as they would have their own Tap over sink (made of sandstone) and own Privy, instead of sharing with 5 others. Also there was no gap between the house and the back kitchen which during inclement weather was a great advantage. In between the house my Parents left and the one at which they now lived was a freengrocers shop & only they and my parents shared the entry. It is important I note this because of the people in the shop I shall have quite a lot to tell.

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Birth

Eight months after the death of my Bro Percy I was born on April 19-1890 at 9:30 am and from what I learned later, weighed 7 lb 14 oz.

Arrangements made before birth were very involved as at this period induives for the poorer classes were conspicuous by their absence. & here was where the woman from the shop next door was the person of importance.

She had attended my Mother over her first child and had been "spoken to" by my Father as to my entry. He had notified the Doctor of the approximate time of my arrival so that should he be needed he could be there as soon as possible. ~~The~~ ~~young~~ ~~man~~ circumstances warranting the same. A Young man nearby had also been asked to be ready at any time to fetch the Doctor, if needed, because he was a good runner. Telephones were not so prevalent as today & "Shucks pony" always had to be used. What qualification had the "nurse" as she was always called, to take charge of a confinement. None! except that she had had four children herself, was a motherly person, and had by reason of attending so many confinements with various Doctors got a reputation for successful deliveries. She also found my money she was paid for her services very useful in bringing up her own growing family.

Her charges were 10/- for the first child and 6/6 for any other. But I must tell of the numerous times she did not charge anything or very little because the people were too poor to be able to pay. Others would pay on the Hire Purchase system of so much down & so much per week. It was also very often the case that she had to take with her things discarded by other people to those she had to attend because of the parlous conditions into which the new arrival was to enter. She was continually on the "leg" and was a woman who gave selfless service to humanity. If there is a judgment day I know where I shall find Nurse Lewis. Her ante-natal attendances were strictly adhered to and from her visits to my home to deliver various brothers & sisters I know that her great standby's were neatfoot and goose oil to be rubbed in back & front and so help the prospective mother. Whether it did so or not I have no knowledge but the method was "sworn by" at the particular time of which I write. Another ritual was for the pregnant woman to go about her household duties as usual but at every opportunity she must when sitting down put her feet up on another chair and so relieve the weight on the abdomen.

A strong wooden Box, which had usually contained "Hudson Soap" or Tins of Salmon had to be procured & put on one side so that ~~it~~ it could be placed against the bottom bedrail & be a ~~for~~ purchase for the woman to press her feet against at the time of the delivery. The bedsteads made of steel & brass garnished in Black & Gold Paint with leather Bed & Pillows, Straw Mattresses were more a matter of chance than the rule. Nurse Lewis could adapt herself to any conditions and I must record we had the proper articles to ensure my safe arrival. A Bath Tin holding about 2 Gals of Water was also a most important item at these times and it was the nurse's job to borrow this from people who possessed one to use at a case where it was non-existent. What sort of a Uniform did Nurse Lewis wear? To be candid here! But for the anti-natal period she wore a black apron and for the delivery she wore a white one. In later years this was the sign to all and sundry (including myself) that there would be an increase in the Family. Oh! Yes! she carried a little black bag but that contained the baby or so we thought. And the preparation for the birth included the taking down of the bed from upstairs and re-erection in the "parlour". Preparation for a fire in the

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parlour grate must be made & plenty of candles (4<sup>th</sup> per dozen) must be got in so that there could be all the light necessary. The fire in the kitchen must be banked up for the night so that if the accouchment took place at an awkward time there would be plenty of hot water at a few minutes notice. This fire was the only means of heating and therefore a big iron kettle, if you had one (we had) placed on the top of the grate ready to pop on the fire at a moment's notice. If you did<sup>nt</sup> have a kettle, you borrowed one. All these things had to be done in the hope that the delivery would be normal & straightforward because if the doctor had to be called a bill would be presented & as it was a matter of a guinea, it became a matter of economic necessity to try and avoid this. My entry was a normal one except that I was told later I cried for 14 hrs non-stop and drove everybody up the wall. My source of sustenance was the natural one of the breast a method which seems to have dropped out of favour in recent years, if I am to believe several doctors to whom I have listened and also read. Why! I do not know for on any occasion that I have seen this natural feeding being carried out it has presented to me a marvellous picture of

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contentment on the faces of the two involved, the look of pride on the mother's face as she looks at her infant, the clutching hand of the child on its mother's breast and the look of contentment on the face of the baby make a picture that for sheer beauty cannot be surpassed by anything in this world. As I watch on the television screen the so-called "lower orders" usually with black skins feeding their babies in a natural manner it recalls to me the women of my younger days who were not too snobbish to give their offspring along with its natural sustenance ~~that~~ <sup>which</sup> made the child feel that it was wanted. In my opinion, as an old bachelor, for what it is worth the child realised in some exceptional way that he or she was part of his or her mother and that he or she must cling on to mother as something very precious. Today some mothers can expose their bodies as much as possible to earn a living or for notoriety but to be seen with a child at the breast, even though as in my younger with the breast discreetly covered so that only the nipple showed, is looked on with a very scornful eye and a curled lip. And so I arrived and ~~the~~ <sup>was</sup> very likely thought of by my parents as the light worker and the infant

who was going to raise their prestige to the heights. What a check they must have had in later years!!!

It was usual for the mother to remain in bed for 10 days or a fortnight after the birth, and she was very careful not to meet anyone for 3 weeks until she had been "churched." Even the rector or any other callers who had not been invited into the house had to be avoided. This was rigidly carried out and anyone who overstepped the bounds was a subject of scandalous gossip among the neighbours. The baby could be shown and praised (especially when the father was around and there was something to "wet the baby's head) but the mother had to suffer the pangs of Isolation. Why! I really don't know.

My mother was always looked after in re food as neighbours would slip in bringing various little dainties a lot of which my father had to eat. Whether the neighbours came out of kindness or curiosity I would not like to say but it is definitely true it was not the beauty of the child which attracted them.

Early Childhood and Schooldays.

~~Living with~~ I cannot recall much of the first few years of my life except being taken to Mrs. Price's manse house



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when my mother had any articles to big to be washing by hand. (She hadn't bought a mangle at this period. This was purchased in 1896.) This was a treat to be looked forward to as something to enjoy. I do not know if there is one of these implements in any museum but if there is it would well repay the time to go and look at this ponderous instrument. To sit on the box while the mangling was done was an experience that frightened me and yet thrilled me and if Mr. Mantilini had to turn the handle he has my deepest sympathy. Sheets, Blankets, and similar articles were hung on a line in the backyard until they were semi-dry. These big articles when they came out of the mangle were like sheets of hardboard & ~~when it is~~ it is easy to understand how useful this mangle house was to people who would have had to hang these things outside for a long time to get them decently dry especially in ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup> atmosphere of an industrial district where ~~the~~ smoke and smuts were tremendously in evidence. If the weather was wet one could keep big articles for weeks taking them out, bringing them in and getting dirtier than they ~~had~~ were before they had been washed.

And the charges. 7<sup>th</sup> per sheet & 2<sup>d</sup> Blanket  
 1/2 Bedcover because extra care had to  
 be taken not to crush the tassels on  
 same. Mrs. Price made a living but it  
 was hard work for a woman of 60. I  
 don't know whether she had a husband as  
 I never saw a man in the place. Mother  
 once told me that when she went to the  
 Ladies Addressors in her later years she  
 always thought of Mrs. Price's mangle house  
 because of the scandal she had to listen  
 to. Another thing I recall is being  
 taken by my father to see the Steam  
 Trams which he was expecting to be  
 scrapped for the introduction of Electric  
 Transport. I did see the trams despite  
 the smoke which surrounded them  
 the reason of the necessity to stop up at  
 the end of the line the terminus being  
 in the Market Place and the pulling  
 part having to be transferred on a loop  
 to the opposite end of <sup>the</sup> train for the  
 return journey. I cannot recall  
 having ridden on these. At the age of  
 3 1/2 we removed to the house in which my  
 mother had been born & it was here that  
 my Brother Harold was ~~born~~ brought into  
 the world. Nurse Lewis again attended  
 & no Dr. had to be called. Sentimental  
 reasons were given for the removal but  
 as I found out later the rent was 6<sup>d</sup> less  
 per week & Rate Assessment a little lower which

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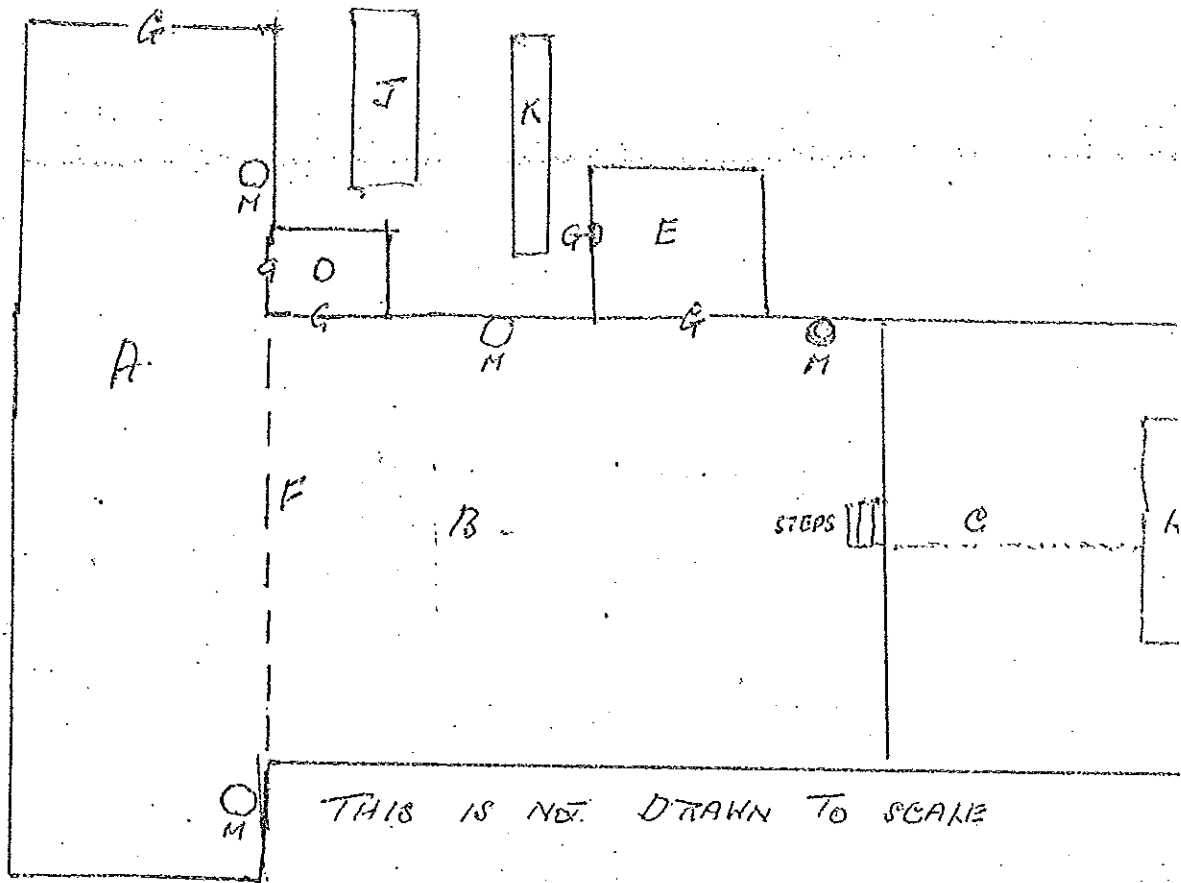
meant a smaller payment, <sup>and</sup> it may have been business instinct which caused the change.

There was not any such thing as Compounded Rent and the Rates had to be taken to Longton Town & paid there. The landlord was usually his own collector, as Estate Agents as we know them today were little in evidence. The entry of the Estate Agent was detrimental to the interests of the Tenant for as previously he (the tenant) could almost compel the landlord by forceful argument — and a threat or two — to give things the Agent always had his excuse for doing nothing by saying in so many words "I appreciate you want these things seeing to but the Landlord won't listen to my pleading."

Liar! At the age of 4 1/2 yrs my entry into school life was made possible as my father was a great friend of the husband of the Headmistress (This must have been the first time I had been used as a pawn in a diplomacy). This was the Church of England School, provided by the Ecclesiastical Authorities of Conerswall Church which was the Vicarate. At the East Vale Church which was also the School a Curate laboured there, and he did labour for if he had to get the people to his Church to sing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" he was flogging a dead horse. How could anyone expect the people to attend

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who, most likely would be wondering how they were going to exist until the next pay day, if someone was working that is, and if not working, I can leave that to the imagination. In any case, only a few people could have sung the hymns as many Jews could read. Here is a rough sketch to make for understanding and can be checked on by anyone interested as it is still in existence.



- A - INFANT SCH
- B - BIG SCH
- C - CHANCEL
- D - TEACHERS ROOM
- E - CHAIRS
- F - PARTITION
- G - ENTRANCES

- H - ALTAR
- J - GIRLS LAY
- K - BOYS "
- M - STOVES

DOTTED LINE IN CHANCEL  
2 CLASSES BOYS WHO SHEWED  
PROMISE.

The infant school had 3 classes Babies 2<sup>nd</sup> Class & 1<sup>st</sup> class from which the child proceeded to the big school as it was termed where classes were called standards. The Headmistress taught the 1<sup>st</sup> class a young teacher the 2<sup>nd</sup> & the Infant Babies class was usually looked after by a pupil teacher (so called). This pupil teacher was often a girl who had reached leaving age & her parents had asked the Headmaster (of whom more later) to let her get a little experience on the teaching side as they thought she might like to take up teaching as a vocation. These girls were usually children of little shopkeepers or coal yard owners or what have you & <sup>was</sup> were, or thought they were the Lord's Anointed. Usually they were often pillars of the Church or the Wesleyan Chapel. <sup>My parents' money</sup> My <sup>parents' money</sup> ~~parents' money~~ prevented me from mentioning names or perhaps I am afraid of someone's vengeance. All these 3 classes being in one room it needs no stretch of imagination to picture the chaos when new infants <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ taken in. By the very nature of things these infants who had always had their mothers haunchy were now out on their own and at every opportunity exercised their lungs in spates of crying and this made the job of teaching the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup> class a task for giants. At times nature took its usual course & <sup>some</sup> had to be led to the lavatory where some very nasty operations had to be carried out.

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Also it must be appreciated that at this period bloomers had not become the fashion and with the open drawers the chance of keeping a mistake very quiet was down to zero. I feel that I must take off my hat to the Headmistress & her two young teachers for the way they managed to get any sort of grounding into their children & so prepare them for entry into the Big School. And I suppose they were not overpaid. The main object of the Infant School was to teach the Alphabet, simple arithmetic, spelling small words so that when passed to Standard one they had some small smattering of knowledge. As classes were usually 60 or 70 strong it was more of a "hit & miss" as to whether a child even got hold of those elementary factors. The Infant School was separated from the Big School by a wooden Partition (see 4). The reason for this being that as the School ~~was the school~~ was also a Church, this Partition could be removed & make room for more worshippers on a particular day such as Easter, Harvest and Children's Day. How often this was done I cannot say because I never went at all. ~~As~~ Having given some idea of the Building itself let us look at the facilities enjoyed by these Infants. Seated on long wooden forms which held 8 in comfort more often 12 had to use them, depending on what year the procreation of children had reached

a high level. At each end of the form were iron supports & bolted to these supports was a back rest 6" wide a table like front about 12 inch slightly sloped and a seat about 12 inches wide. The seat was so badly worn in places that it was away for the child, naturally not always sitting still, to get a splinter in the leg. These forms were often cast offs from the Big School where the wear and tear on them had been extremely heavy, owing to the necessity of keeping the children in during playtime in wet weather. I would add that there was not a great rush to go into school because the conditions were not too pleasant. The playground was ash covered ~~permanently~~ obtained from the gas works or factories who used coal boilers, and if you were running and slipped, well, it was fast to bad and if in slipping you tore your trousers, knickers or shorts which Mummy prepared you got clouted, so that when you did fall it was always Tom, Dads, or Jerry who had pushed you. I have played football in the school yard during playtime and when we have returned to class, we, the players, sat with wiping our hands across our faces to remove sweat & the dust kicked up we looked like walking "ham bugs". Ham Bugs were tiffens made with Black & White stripes and were a great delicacy to us.

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The playground was enclosed by a wooden fence about 7ft high & must not be climbed on or dire punishment was the result. Outside the fence on two sides were allotments, piggeries, pigeon coops. The entrance to the yard was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> side and the opposite side to the entrance the 4<sup>th</sup> side of the oblong were fields which stretched for miles. It was via these fields my Parents made their way for their marriage ceremony at Sawerswell. But if you went through these fields and stopped off a very clearly marked path was laid out for you for if you were an adult they would summon you for trespass and as the lessees of these fields were various farmers they could bring a lot of things against you. If you were a youngster a different technique was applied. He would either catch you himself or send his dog after you and the car would frighten you so much that you would stand still and be caught easily. Then you would receive a hitting and I can still bring this little punishment back. OOH! If it rained when one was on the way to school the Cloakroom; being totally inadequate at the best of times, was overloaded with coats, caps, umbrellas, of three children who happened to possess them. These things were hung on hooks, nails where hooks had fallen off & been stolen.



and as they were usually hung close a block on each other with no heat to dry them it can be realized that they were much wetter when we came to feet them on again. I am still amazed at the ~~fact~~<sup>many</sup> who did not contract pneumonia and die off. A cold became part of your everyday life as even if you had been able to dry your outer garments your feet were usually very wet either by having them rained on or not having the necessary proper footwear to keep the wet out. The latter affected the majority of the scholars for you will have guessed that few of the children were the sons and daughters of wealthy parents. I was one of the lucky ones and had always had good footwear as my father being in the moneyed class (sic) could afford to buy for me 2 pairs of boots one for school on the other for Best. At 2/11 per pair school heavies with big nails and 3/11 per pair for Best having light soles & softer leathers. These latter got me in lots of trouble as I will record later. Some of the scholars rather envied me with these 2 pairs of boots but if their ~~parents~~<sup>parents</sup> could have a pair given to them by one of the philanthropic upper class of a size that fitted them (the lad) apposamility they would boast to me and others from whom they had come, who had worn them, and what wonderful & miraculously made Boots they were. And all for nothing.

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This did not happen often but sometimes recourse to the second hand shops would produce a pair of boots that would fit our Jack or Polly once at the price of 6<sup>d</sup> or even 4<sup>d</sup> these would be a godsend but they must only be worn for frost or in inclement weather. Clogs were worn by some of the boys and at 10<sup>d</sup> per pair were a fair return for the money but you had to keep them tipped and these tips were 3<sup>d</sup> per set for 2 soles & heels and special nails 2<sup>d</sup> per dozen. The girls would not have anything to do with clogs at any price preferring to wear Buttoned or Elastic sided Boots even if they did lie in the wet. I have since found out that many of the female sex are prepared to suffer the tortures of the damned for the sake of appearance & fashion. Hereabouts I feel I must mention that great asset, The Slate. The piece of very thin slate was enclosed in a wooden frame and according to size & extras on it cost 1<sup>d</sup> (very small) to 4<sup>d</sup> (very large). If it had lines on one side they cost an extra 1<sup>d</sup> and if the first six letters of the alphabet were grooved in on the top line a penny more. If you got one of the best the overall cost was sixpence but few of us had these. On purchasing a slate someone usually gave father bosed holes with a heated poker in the top and bottom bar of the frame and from there a piece of string,

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a leather lace or even a piece of string  
 if your mother had broken hers and  
 saved the piece was passed through  
 the holes & knotted in such a way that  
 a big loop was formed through which  
 you put one arm to your head and  
 so carried the slate on your back. That  
 left your hands free for any other  
 job you wished to do with them and  
 also you never left it behind. For extra  
 safety against risk by theft you got  
 your father to burn your initials in the  
 side of the wooden frame but even then  
 they went. Pencils for writing on the slate  
 were bought in packets of 6 for 2" and ~~there~~  
 it was a very exciting job buying a packet.  
 A long box 6 inches by 1 inch &  $\frac{1}{2}$  in deep.  
 was covered by various scenes of children  
 on horseback, children on a boat, on a gondola  
 with ~~some~~ background to match. On the bottom  
 of the picture in very small print was "made in  
 Germany". So sharpen these pencils was a  
 work of art for should you press too  
 heavily they were easily broken & often  
 you would find yourself with 4 or 5 small  
 pieces. So find a good step to  
 sharpen them on and having found it  
 you told your schoolmates, <sup>every</sup> many times have  
 I been clouted by indignant housewives  
 who, because they had a nice stone step  
 became the mark for my pencil sharpening and  
 as I was dirtying the step she had only stepstone

earlier in the day. The white step was a must for the housewives and great judgements were pronounced on the ability to keep your step up to the 1st standard of whiteness. By spitting on the step (there were other ways of wetting it which must be passed at) rubbing the pencil backwards & forwards with a turning motion one could get a very fine print but oh! the grey mark on that step and as my mother objected to it being done on her you always knew when she was not very friendly with someone as she often directed me where would be a good place to sharpen my pencil. Plates were not a necessity until you reached Standard one in the Big School and from then onwards to leaving it was your greatest asset. It is true that some lead pencil & pen and ink work was done but that did not become some of your equipment until Standard 3, 4 & 5 if you reached that pinnacle. As I left the School at the age of 10 (I will tell you why later) I had already got into the habit of using pencil, pen and ink and this stood me in good stead on my joining the Queensbury Higher Elementary a Council School where I <sup>just</sup> had to have a Plate not pay school pence. Yes! pay school pence! What a game this was. If you did not take your school pence

on Monday morning you were sent home to fetch it and this gave us the opportunity to have fun and games because even if some of us already had the 1<sup>st</sup> up to Standard 3 and 2<sup>nd</sup> up to all standards above we still had to say we had forgotten it so much as those who were "shy" of the effort.

This practice was a great secret among <sup>a</sup> some of us as we did not wish anyone to see the game away. On return (perhaps an hour later depending on the exercise we could think up e.g. mother was out, mother had ill. job change etc & lots of others, (we were fertile liars) we were given a stroke of the cane on each hand if we had the money, and 3 cuts on each hand if we hadn't the money. To those who had had it off their parents spent it on hidden it to "blow it in" on some kind of orgy it was placed against them as owing & added to the Debt every time they did not pay. In later years when the school was closed some of those who had paid the school fees regularly got a refund. For some reason or other I did not get anything.