

A Different World

MY FIRST TERM AT MUNRO

The eighth of January 1957 was the day I came to Munro. To tell the truth, I am not sure if this was the day I arrived at Munro or the day I left home. You see, at the time I was living about one hundred and thirty miles away at Trinity Ville in St Thomas. Up to that time, as far as I am aware, the furthest distance my father had travelled in one day was seventy-five miles – the distance from Trinity Ville to his parent’s home at Ewarton in St Catherine. His friend and colleague Walter O’Meally, the Anglican Rector at Balaclava, had told him that the railway station at Balaclava was where the Munro boys came off the train. But there was no railway line in St Thomas; so my father decided that he would have to drive. His car, a 1952 Hillman Minx, had never gone faster than forty miles an hour. We had no idea whether it was capable of going faster than forty, because there was no road in Jamaica that we had travelled on so far that would allow us to go faster than forty. Forty, in fact, was the speed that he would briefly get up to as he speeded past the Ferry police station and Tom Cringle’s Cotton Tree, midway between Kingston and Spanish Town: the best stretch of road in Jamaica with the exception of the four-year old Queen’s Highway on the North Coast (at least, so we heard). Ferry was the only road where the wind made a whooshing sound as it blew past the open windows of the car. So my father decided that the trip to Munro had to be a two-day journey.

But perhaps I should start at the beginning. The beginning, you might suspect, is in Trinity Ville. Well, for the purpose of this story it is. And it starts sometime in the last few months of 1956. As was my custom when walking home from school after four o’clock each evening, I would stop at the post office to collect mail for my family: for my father really, because my mother’s mail ranked a distant second in volume to my father’s. Among the stack of mail that evening was a brown envelope with the familiar words “On Her Majesty’s Service” printed in all capital letters at the top. A return address indicated that it came from the Ministry of Education. I was a trusted courier and had never before interfered with my father’s mail; but that day was different. Indeed, I was looking forward to a letter from the Ministry of Education that might be of interest to me. So, although the envelope was addressed to my father, I decided to open it without waiting to finish the final quarter-mile of my walk home. So I did. The opening words read, “Your son Leroy has been awarded a scholarship to Munro College”.

My father didn’t seem upset by my indiscretion. Nor my mother, to whom my father usually read the contents of his correspondence in like manner to how he read the contents of the *Gleaner* each day. If anything my parents might have been more excited than I. As for me, I had never heard of Munro College before. I had always assumed that were I ever to go to high school it would be KC. For my father seemed to have two personal heroes among Jamaican personalities: Norman Manley and Bishop Percival Gibson. And P.W. Gibson was not only known as the founder of Kingston College but its headmaster for more than thirty years. Having digested the contents of the letter, my father’s first response as far as I can remember was, “Is an aristocratic school, you know!”

In the same batch of mail was a larger envelope. This one was from Munro. Within it were a School Prospectus and a copy of the 1956 edition of *The Munronian*. The year 1956 happened to be the centenary year of Munro’s founding and, between the Prospectus and the school magazine, we were quickly brought up to date on the basics of Munro’s history and present circumstances. The magazine had a photograph of that year’s Head Boy (Owen Morgan) and the

youngest boy at the school (Henriques of the Second Form). There was also a photograph of the dozen or so members of the teaching staff – one row standing and the other row seated, with the Headmaster Richard Roper front and centre. My father remarked how pleasant Mr Roper seemed; and informed us that he knew the family from St Mary and that he was aware that Mr Roper was a Christian “of the Wildish group”. His main interest, however, was the sole lady in the picture. Sitting at the extreme left, the caption identified her as Miss L. Jones. She was in fact Louise Jones, a former Elementary School teacher whom my father had known from the time he lived at Brown’s Hall in the hills of St Catherine some fifteen years earlier.

So, how come I was to go to Munro and not KC? I never asked. My mother seemed less surprised than my father. Recently I have developed a theory that I now have no means of validating.

In any event, why should a family in St Thomas-in-the-East be thinking of sending their child to a school either in Kingston or, more extraordinary still, St Elizabeth? The answer is simple. In those days there was no high school in St Thomas. Most people never thought about high school anyway. I certainly did not; until the day that Mrs Foster called me and informed me that I would have to attend her scholarship classes which she held sometimes in her classroom after school or sometimes at her home with two of her children and four or five other children. That had been the year before. Up till then two children each year from the parish of St Thomas were awarded scholarships to high school based on the results of scholarship examinations that all the hopeful young candidates from the parish travelled to Morant Bay to sit. That first year the successful candidates were two sisters from Bath. The following year, three of Mrs Foster’s pupils got scholarships: her two children Ray and Constance and I. It appears that the new government had somewhat increased the number of high school scholarships. But to take up these scholarships, pupils from St Thomas would have to leave the parish.

I have said that I never thought about going to high school until Mrs Foster’s intervention. And that is true. The first person of whom I was acquainted who went to high school was my sister Patsy. She was going to St Hugh’s and had to board with some people in Kingston. From time to time I would overhear my parents talking about how much they had to pay each month for her boarding and what they would need to do in order to continue to afford it. And now here was I, not only about to head off to high school, but to a boarding school somewhere on the far reaches of the western frontier.

The first thing we knew about St Elizabeth was that it was far. Very far. We also knew that Mrs Foster used to teach there at Top Hill School before she returned to her native St Thomas. We soon found out that not only did she know of Munro; but that her son Ray had gone up to Munro the previous year to try for the single scholarship that the school gave each year to a boy born in St Elizabeth. He didn’t get that Munro scholarship and was now about to enter Calabar.

For people in the east, St Elizabeth was a parish with very little water; a parish with frequent droughts. We heard that people in St Elizabeth had to build tanks to collect water and that, unlike the tank at Trinity Ville School, the St Elizabeth tanks were built as deep holes in the ground concreted over. Not knowing much about the varied geography of St Elizabeth, people in the east seemed to believe that St Elizabeth was a parish without rivers. How lucky for us at Trinity Ville that we had the Negro River flowing through: sometimes broad and calm, sometimes brown and rushing after the rains. At school whenever we read H.D. Carberry’s poem *The Song of a Blue Mountain Stream* we had no reason to doubt that he was talking about our Negro River. This river was the first place that I visited every morning to collect water for our home; water for drinking, water for cooking, water for washing. Several trips with my bucket each morning before

hurrying off to school a mile away to beat the nine o'clock bell. And on my final trip each morning I would take my bath and indulge myself in a few dives into the cold waters of the river.

We heard that the earth in St Elizabeth was red; so, to make laundering manageable, schoolgirls wore maroon coloured uniforms instead of the blue ones worn in the east. It was said that St Elizabeth people were poor but, now that bauxite had been discovered in that red earth, their prospects were beginning to brighten.

The truth is, we had made a previous visit to St Elizabeth: my father and I. That had been four years earlier. We went for a funeral. One of my father's fellow students at St Peter's College had gone to spend the summer holidays in the Rio Grande Valley of Portland. He had been enjoying the waters of the Rio Grande somewhere in the vicinity of Fellowship and, thrilled by this new experience, decided to take a dive into the river. But he struck his head against a rock and drowned. He was a young man from Rose Hall in St Elizabeth, his mother's only child. My father decided that he had to attend the funeral and took me along for company. It was a morning funeral at Rose Hall and so we had to leave Trinity Ville the day before. I remembered almost nothing of that journey except the stop in Mandeville for a snack, including a Pepsi that was too big for me to finish. I do remember us stopping at the big church at Lititz to ask directions. The roads in that section of St Elizabeth were dirt roads, but there were signposts at every intersection: fingerposts that pointed in each direction and told you how many miles to each district. That night we slept at someone's house at Nain and early the next morning made our way to Rose Hall for the funeral. The young deceased student McDonald was buried on the family's premises at Rose Hall. What I remember is the uncontrollable bawling of his inconsolable mother in the house. I also remember the cars of the clergymen in attendance: mostly long black American cars unlike my father's small blue British-made Hillman Minx.

I didn't know if Munro was anything like Lititz or Nain or Rose Hall. I imagined not; for the Prospectus had indicated that Munro was at the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains, 2561 feet above sea level (or maybe 2651).

Included in the envelope from the school was a Clothes List, setting out in detail the type of apparel, gear and laundry that we had to take with us and the numbers of each. There was one item that I didn't recognise: an Athletic Supporter. My father explained that this was not a sports fan, but a Jock Strap. He had to explain further what a Jock Strap was. Six pairs of short khaki pants with knee-high stockings like what the Boy Scouts wore on parade. My mother decided that she could not afford more than four. Two pairs of brown shoes. I had a pair of black shoes, but mostly wore them to church and on special occasions. It is not that I was unaccustomed to wearing shoes but, since none of the other boys except the teachers' sons wore shoes to school, I saw no need for me to do so. I now had to wear briefs which, I was told, was just another name for underpants. A bath robe was required; my mother explained that this was the man's equivalent of her dressing gown. A pair of swimming trunks. I knew what those were; they were always being advertised in the *Gleaner*. But I had never worn one. No one who bathed or swam in the Negro River – male or female, young or old – ever wore anything while doing so or saw the need to. I would need a sweater. I would need a blazer, which I was told was something like a jacket worn by high school boys. And I had to get a suit, like what the big men wore to church. There were also sheets and pillows, a blanket, napkins and a laundry bag. All these items had to be marked with my name. Apart from the Athletic Supporter, there were other sports items such as tennis shoes, games socks, running spikes, tennis racquet, football boots, hockey stick.

The Clothes List gave advice on where we could get these things: the sports items could be obtained at the school's Sports Shop; the cloth for the grey suit as well as Name Tapes could be

got at Nathan's on King Street in Kingston; the blazer and some other things were available at Hanna's at 33½ King Street (or was it 33 1/3?).

So, we had to plan at least one day of shopping in Kingston. My father thought he needed to explain to my mother that these fancy King Street stores had a one-price policy; they didn't entertain haggling. Clearly, he didn't want to be embarrassed. There were no Name Tapes at Nathan's; so my mother said she would have to make those herself. At Hanna's we met another couple who had with them a boy about my age but bigger in size with eyes of a remarkable grey-green tint; they seemed to be on the same mission as we. One of the items was in short supply: there was only one left. When the boy's mother hesitated in buying it because of what she regarded as its unreasonable price, my mother jumped in immediately and said that she would take it. The look she received from the other mother could have cut right through you.

We got the cloth for the suit at Nathan's; and there was a tailor in Trinity Ville whom my father considered to be competent enough to make the suit for me. My mother was a trained dressmaker and decided that she would make the other items: the khaki uniforms, the white shirts, the games shorts, the cricket pants. She had recently upgraded her hand-operated Singer sewing machine to an easier to use foot machine. The napkins and laundry bag she also decorated with some pretty embroidery.

Apart from the two Foster children and myself, my bigger brother Lloyd would also be leaving Trinity Ville to go to high school. He had successfully sat the entrance examination for KC and would be leaving for Kingston, where my parents had found a family with whom he would board. I visited the Foster home and saw Ray's green Calabar blazer emblazoned with the school crest hanging on the wall. I wondered if my navy blue Munro blazer would look as sharp once the Munro crest had been sewn on. The whole of Trinity Ville was excited. It was just before Christmas and the warm refrain of the Christmas carols, the bursting of balloons, the clap-clap-clap of toy pistols, the distant bang-bang-bang of squibs and fire-clappers, the quickened tempo of business in the market and shops, the white-washing of premises and the general atmosphere of busyness, joy and expectation seemed to mingle with the happiness and satisfaction of seeing so many of its children on the road to success in life. I had to go to Dr Gray for a medical examination: my first visit to a doctor's office. I needed a testimonial from Mr Pape, my Elementary School Headteacher. My father exclaimed how glowing was this epistle; quite unlike the exemplary scoldings and chastisements that I was accustomed to. I suppose the Headteacher didn't want to play Scrooge and spoil the celebratory spirit of the village. All of us got going-away gifts. The school had a gift-giving ceremony. In the midst of their congratulations, the teachers admonished us that at high school we were not likely to find teachers who would show a personal interest in the pupils like at Elementary School; so we had to be independent. At the Christmas pageant at church we also received gifts. People came to our home and gave my mother things that they thought I would need at my new boarding school: towels and toothbrushes and other stuff. Some gave money.

For me, this seemed like another part of the adventure of growing up. Adventure. That word had become a part of my vocabulary. It formed part of the title of several of the Enid Blyton and other books that I had recently been borrowing from the library. I had started thinking about girls and knew that there were none at Munro; but surely one could keep in touch through the post. I was not nervous about going away. In my short life I had already lived in at least seven different homes in three different parishes. Part of the time I had lived away from my parents. The only time that I cried was when we lived at my grandmother's house in Point Hill in St Catherine and my mother was leaving early the next morning to go to Kingston. My father had just given up his pharmacy career to become a parson and had left us to go to St Peter's College.

In his absence, I usually slept in my mother's bed. The night before my mother left, however, my grandmother removed me to her room and tucked me in on a soft bundle of cloth and rags in a corner. I protested: "I want to sleep in Mamma bed!" Over and over and over again. I kept on crying for what seemed to me to be the whole night. I would not be comforted. That was the only time that I could remember. Not long after that, Lloyd and I had to take a hazardous trip with our Uncle Zelly from Point Hill to Lluidas Vale; there we were to take the milk truck to go to Ewarton where we would stay with our other grandparents. We got up well before daylight, at about four o'clock in the before-day to walk the four or five miles to Lluidas Vale where we expected to get some form of transportation: if not the milk truck, there was sure to be some vehicle leaving Worthy Park sugar factory going towards Ewarton. We didn't follow the road; for most of the way to Lluidas Vale we took shortcuts through fields, following narrow hillside tracks in the darkness, trying to keep up with the dark outline of our uncle silhouetted against the starry skyline. The small district of Ivy, on the backroads midway between Ewarton and Mount Rosser, would be my real introduction to country life, with my grandfather's cane and yams and coffee and chocolate. And his bees. That had been such a change from Morant Bay, the scene of my earliest recollections. All of these movements had seemed like little adventures: new places, new landscapes, new rhythms of life, new people to meet, new friends. High school in St Elizabeth would be the biggest adventure so far.

Our plan was to leave Trinity Ville early in the morning the day before the first day of term at Munro. For trips to Kingston and further afield, my father liked to leave home no later than about five o'clock in the morning so that he could enjoy the cool breeze of the morning before the heat of the sun had had a chance to turn on the sweat and irritation. My mother would fix breakfast and coffee and pack a tin with sandwiches and biscuits and maybe a thermos with some more coffee to take along. My mother's youngest brother had not long before returned from St Vincent and Dominica and had gone to take up a job as an Agricultural Instructor at a place called Southfield in St Elizabeth, not far from Munro. We planned to stay overnight with Uncle Boysie and his family in Southfield, then go up to Munro the next morning. We hoped to reach St Elizabeth early enough that we could also visit Canon Emmanuel, one of my father's colleagues, who was the Anglican Rector for the St Mary's cure as well as chaplain at Munro and who lived nearby. So we set out, the three of us: my father and mother in the front, I in the back seat, and my two new grips packed with my new clothes in the trunk of the Hillman Minx.

Of the details of that trip there is not much that I remember. Certainly we had to drive through Kingston; the only way was via the Windward Road, the Parade and Spanish Town Road but there was no trouble with traffic. I have no recollection of St Catherine or Clarendon or Manchester. The St Elizabeth roads seemed little different from what I remembered from our previous visit. This time I took closer notice of the houses. Compared to St Thomas, there seemed rather more houses built of mortar and fewer of wood, only a few of concrete. The main difference was that there were quite a few with thatched roofs; and these thatched roofs were more neatly done than any I had seen before.

We got to Uncle Boysie's house sometime around midday or early afternoon. Shortly after, we set out up the hill towards Canon Emmanuel's house near the district of St Mary. My father introduced us to Canon Emmanuel and his wife. They were delighted to see us and to learn that I would be at Munro. Mrs Emmanuel remarked that at Munro I would be sure to be in regular contact with Miss Lucy Green, a prominent member of their church congregation. From the Emmanuels' verandah we could see the sea. You never saw the sea at Trinity Ville, unless you climbed to the top of Major Hill; the first time I did so was one day when Lloyd and I were looking for dry wood for cooking. After that, I went up there many times just to get a glimpse of the sea

in the distance somewhere between Morant Bay and Yallahs I suppose. The vista from Canon Emmanuel's verandah was something entirely new and breathtaking. The fields on the Pedro Plains below were laid out in neat geographic patterns with their boundaries delineated by what seemed to be merely the difference between cultivated and uncultivated plots. I had only seen this before in books showing pictures of the English countryside. To the left of this scene and almost jutting out into the sea was a low hill that Mrs Emmanuel told us was the Great Pedro Bluff. To the right was a large pond that reminded me of the Yallahs Ponds. Mrs Emmanuel said that there was a legend associated with this pond. There was supposedly a golden table that sometimes rose above the surface of the water and was visible to some people. I thought that the golden table was really to be found in the Rio Cobre. But it would not have been polite to tell her so. This was the vista that I would soon see from the long wall near the Headmaster's house at Munro, except that the Munro view was more extensive; the sea was more expansive and of a deeper blue and you could see further west: beyond Black River into the plains of Westmoreland.

We left Southfield after breakfast next morning on the final leg of our journey to Munro. Going up the hill now there were few houses to be seen; the roads were all unpaved, the surface varying between a hard red sheen, brown earth and white dusty limestone. Then we came to an asphalted section. About a mile and a half later we were at the school gate: Bottom Gate. We took a right turn. I took a deep breath as we drove up the entrance way, past the water tanks, past the willows, past the chapel going towards the Headmaster's house. It must have been not much later than eight o'clock. We climbed the stairs to the Headmaster's study and saw him in the company of two other people. They seemed to be in the process of fixing a kerosene lamp. The two people with Mr Roper were a young couple who had just joined the staff at Munro. The man was Donald Bogle, a Jamaican who had just returned from University in England along with his English wife Christine. He was to be History Master and one of the English Masters. There was no one else to be seen on the school grounds. I would soon understand the importance of the kerosene lamp. There was no public electricity supply at Munro at the time; a Delco plant supplied the school's electricity needs during the day, but was switched off at eleven o'clock each night. Anyone wishing to stay up after that hour had to have a kerosene lamp or, better still, a Tilley lantern.

We were warmly received by Mr Roper who, after completing the formalities, gave us information as to where to go next. The next stop was the school hospital to hand in my medical certificate and to be weighed and have my temperature taken. At twelve years old I weighed seventy-five pounds. The hospital at that time was at the top of the driveway up from Bottom Gate on the Epping Forest side across from the water tanks and the cricket field. It was a detached bungalow that also had living quarters for the School Nurse and one or two other occupants. One of these was Miss Jones, my parents' friend. They wasted little time filling in the details of the time between Brown's Hall, Trinity Ville and Munro. It turned out that she had with her a nephew named Foster who would be one of the new pupils at Munro. At least I would have some company before the other boys arrived in the afternoon.

Next stop was the dormitory to which I was assigned, to have my clothes checked off by the Matron Mrs Jervis and her assistant Miss Lucy Green. They did a careful inventory of my belongings, then took away my Clothes List and grips for safekeeping.

After my parents left, I think I had lunch with Foster probably at Miss Jones's apartment. Then we went off exploring while we waited for the other boys to arrive, including those coming from Kingston by train to Balaclava and thence by bus to Munro up the other side of the mountain from where I had come. During this time we met up with Stephen Whitmarsh-Knight, an English boy who was in my Form and whose father was the other English Master at the school. Our

peregrinations took us to a section of the Headmaster's garden, adjacent to the basement of a small building abutting Long Wall. Stephen had a green lime that he wanted to peel. For what reason, I couldn't tell. I was not used to peeling limes; we only used them to make lemonade and then would simply slice them in two. Foster had a pen-knife. I offered to peel the lime for Whitmarsh-Knight. I borrowed Foster's pen-knife and proceeded to peel the lime at one go without damaging the fruit and without breaking the peel: a full suit, as we would say. Whitmarsh-Knight expressed such amazement at my feat that you would have thought I had climbed Mount Everest with Hillary and Tensing.

I had been assigned to E Dormitory. E Dormitory was located on the upper floor of the Old Building in the wing closest to the chapel. It was next to the room occupied by Mr Parchment, the Sports Master; that was the room from which over thirty years earlier one of Munro's masters had mysteriously disappeared without a trace to this day. On the Old Building were also A Dormitory and B Dormitory, which were for younger boys like ourselves; and the Coke House and Farquharson House Senior Dormitories. In the New Building were the Calder House and Pearman House Senior Dormitories and Baby Dormitory. Baby Dormitory was the only one where the boys got hot cocoa at night before going to bed.

E Dormitory was the smallest dormitory in the school. There were only five of us: myself, Jan Thiele, Michael Fischer, Joseph Lungwitz and Percy McConnell. We were all in the same Form. Apart from Lungwitz, the rest of us were new boys. Lungwitz was an American of Swiss descent, whose father was the manager of a sisal plantation in the north of Haiti that claimed to be the largest in the world and who used to fly Joe to Jamaica in his private plane. Thiele and Fischer were Dutch boys whose fathers worked with the Shell oil company in Aruba. McConnell came from Montego Bay; his father was the owner of Northshore Dairies Ice Cream company. He had a younger brother named William who was in the Baby Dormitory.

Lungwitz had a transistor radio: a Zenith, no more than six inches long by about four inches wide by about two inches deep, encased in brown leather and powered by flashlight batteries. This was the first time I was seeing a transistor radio. There were not many radios in Jamaica in those days. Those I had seen were usually big boxes no smaller than a foot and half wide by one foot high by a foot deep with well polished wooden surfaces to match the furniture in the house. They had names like Grundig and Telefunken and Philips and had pretty lights inside that glowed warmly when turned on and gave off a warm reassuring bass resonance. They were generally powered by a car battery, except for those in Kingston and the few other urban areas that had public electricity. Those at Trinity Ville usually had their antenna attached to a long bamboo pole fitted to the roof of the house. We didn't have a radio at home. When Archie Moore fought Rocky Marciano for the world heavyweight boxing title, my father and I had to go to Mr Marshall's house a mile away to listen to the fight. When my father heard that the Governor was about to announce the date of the General Elections, he sent me to Mr Empty's house to listen to his radio to ascertain the truth. However, everyday on my morning trips to the river, I would walk past a little shop that was always playing a radio. That was where I usually heard the advertisements for Special Amber Rum or Ovaltine and Jamaican calypsos like Take Me Back to Ethiopia or Banana Banana Banana or Night Food, one of those "lewd calypsos" that the Lord Bishop used to rail against. If I was running late with my morning chores I might hear "This is London calling" as the BBC news was about to begin. And I had a friend at Trinity Ville School who used to tell me about a programme he liked, called Luncheon Date, although he called it "lunch and date". The Elementary School had been given a radio by the government, but it was kept at the Headteacher's house. The big children would go over there once a week to listen to Lloyd Hall's programme Adventures in Music and Singing Together. For most people, though,

the closest they came to a radio was when we were playing England or Australia at cricket; then they would congregate at the nearest bar or shop to listen to the commentary. Lungwitz used his radio mostly to listen to “W.I.N.-Zee Radio, coming to you from Miami, Florida”. That station played all the latest Rock and Roll songs by Elvis Presley and Fats Domino.

The Dutch boy Fischer had a telescope. Some nights he would let me look through it at the moon and explained the features of the moon’s surface that were visible to us. And he showed me the constellation of Orion the Hunter with the three stars in a line that were supposed to be his belt.

My bed was next to McConnell’s. Many nights before falling asleep he would regale me with stories about the fortunes of Northshore Dairies or other business dealings of his father.

All of these boys were white. Most of them were foreigners. I never really thought about it at the time. But Fischer did. One day he took my arm, placed it alongside his, looked at them and said to me, “You are not really black. You just look tanned”. In Jamaica in those days, we had not yet accepted the American definition of race and colour as a strict dichotomy between black and white; if you have one drop of black blood you are black. We used a complex graduated scale of colour which, nevertheless, formed a hierarchy of shades in which black was at the bottom, white was at the top, and in the middle were various hues of brown: the lighter the more prestigious. I was accustomed to being regarded and regarding myself as in the middle category. My father’s father was the son of a white man and a lady who people described as a “Jew woman”; that would have made her either a mulatto or a quadroon. My grandfather then, by that quaint classification, would have been either a quadroon or an octoroon. He married a woman of a distinctly dark hue that indicated her African ancestry; but with hair whose texture led some people to surmise that she might have had some Taino Arawak lineage. My grandfather had brothers who were as black as the Tar Baby. My mother was of mixed ancestry, with the African strain predominating in the features of her brothers. Like most Jamaicans I had recognized that the higher up the colour ladder one found oneself, the more privileged one was likely to be. It did not take a giant step beyond that premise to suppose that, since high schools in Jamaica were rare and populated mostly by the better-off, one would find a higher proportion of white people within those gates than in the general Jamaican population. For me, the chief item of interest with the white boys was their hair: how easy it was to comb. While I spent an inordinately long time before the breakfast bell in the mornings untangling the knots in my hair and trying to get a perfect part down the left-hand side, they simply passed the comb through their hair twice or three times. The pressure of the bells eventually forced me to stop parting my hair and simply combing it straight back like many of the other boys.

At Munro we had a noticeable number of foreigners. Apart from the Dutch boys from Aruba and Curaçao, there were also boys from Colombia and Venezuela like Marín and Galán, Haitian boys like Assad and Vasquez, Bahamians like Alleyne and Gurth Archer, and at least one American at that time: Robert Burns from Tampa, Florida. Burns was perhaps the most interesting of these foreigners. His parents either owned or ran a circus in Florida; he was a naturalist for whom the Munro terrain was a godsend of lizards and snakes and black widow spiders. Without a doubt, however, the most famous of our foreigners was Prince Stefan Cantacuzino. He came to Munro from Venezuela, but was allegedly a scion of the family Cantacuzino or Cantacuzène who had provided the last king of Romania and, before that, Emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire in Constantinople. It was generally believed that he was the heir to the Romanian throne before the family was overthrown by the Communists. At Munro we called him Jelly Belly or Canta. He was the leading member of our Cadet Corps (WO2); and was the House Captain (Senior Prefect) of Coke House, the house to which I had been assigned.

Of Munro's one hundred and fifty-odd boys at the time, only four were not boarders at the school. These were the three Lloyd brothers Earl, Trevor and Errol and a boy named Levy. All of these boys were from St Ann and boarded with people near to the school.

The Form I had been assigned to was the Upper Third. The lowest Form was called Second Form and was, in fact, a preparatory Form. That was the Form that Miss Jones taught. She was their only teacher and taught all the subjects, as in an Elementary School. Most of the boys in Second Form were also in Baby Dormitory. Then came the Lower Third, the Upper Third, Lower Fourth, Upper Fourth, Fifth Form, Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth. By the end of that year the names of the Forms were to be changed: Second Form was discontinued; the Lower Third became First Form; Upper Third became Second Form; Lower Fourth became Third Form; Upper Fourth became Fourth Form. The Fifth Form, Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth retained their names.

In the Upper Third there were twenty-something boys. Apart from L.E. Cooke, the names I can remember are: Douglas Egerton Manley Welds, Horace Bryan Young, Lance Neita, Lloyd Nation, David Murray, Broadbent, Jean Assad, Michael Tinling, Francis Philip Eardley Russell, Percy McConnell, Michael Fischer, Alex Major, Jan Thiele, Joe Lungwitz, John deCarteret, Roy Lankester, Eugene Martin, David Dickson, François McGilchrist, Stephen Whitmarsh-Knight, Waldemar Rowe, Richard Butler and Norman Hugh.

Welds was a teacher's son from Claremont in St Ann. He was the boy I had met at Hanna's Store in Kingston. At ten years old, he was the youngest boy in the Form. He was also a very good pianist and organ player. H.C. Bryan Young was a teacher's son from Ocho Rios in St Ann. Lance Neita was a teacher's son from Four Paths in Clarendon. Nation was from Santa Cruz; he was the boy who had beaten Ray Foster for the Munro and Dickenson Scholarship the previous year; he was also good at most sports. David Murray was the son of a manager at Frome Sugar Estate in Westmoreland. Broadbent was the son of an optician in Kingston. Assad was from Haiti and, like most Haitians, was a talented footballer. Michael Leigh Scott Tinling was from St Mary; my father told me that during his time as a druggist at Port Maria he had known Michael's father Leigh Tinling quite well. Russell was from the Bahamas. In those days, no one said the Bahamas; the Bahamian boys all said they were from Nassau. Russell was tall for his age and the best athlete among us; he was my age yet was good enough to make the school's Class Three relay team. Alex Major was from Venezuela. deCarteret was the son of a doctor from Brown's Town in St Ann. Martin, Dickson and McGilchrist were from Kingston; so was Norman Hugh. Richard Butler lived at Reading near Montego Bay; he was originally from Boston, Massachusetts in the USA and prided himself on being a nephew of Leverett Saltonstall, Senior Senator from Massachusetts (John F. Kennedy was the Junior Senator).

Their ages ranged from ten to fourteen. Half of the lot were new boys; and a half of these new boys were scholarship boys. It was widely remarked how many scholarship boys had come in that year. In class, I sat beside Young and close to Neita. Young was also in Coke House. We sat at the same table for meals and did most things together. Nation and Murray had a reputation as the brightest boys in the Form. After our first few fortnightly Form Orders, Welds, Tinling and deCarteret were proving to be contenders for the crown.

There was no ragging of new boys at Munro while I was there, nor any organized system of initiation such as I am informed used to be the case at the Mico Teachers College or the School of Agriculture. What they had at Munro was a system of strict seniority. Each boy had to respect every boy in a Form higher than his own. A boy in the Lower Third could not enter the Upper Third form room without severe consequences. You could not even look into a form higher than your own and be caught. For example, the Upper Fourth was situated in a room midway between the tennis courts and the entrance to the dining room. The walkway under the Arches passed

right by their door. Any boy in a form below the Upper Fourth who wanted to walk from the chapel to the kitchen, could not walk under the Arches. He would either have to make a detour beside the steps leading upstairs the Old Building or go around by the tennis court side. If he tried to take a chance and walk under the Arches he was called into the Upper Fourth and given a few strokes with a ruler or other handy instrument. Prefects were normally selected by the Masters from among the Sixth Formers. They performed a supervisory role in the various dormitories, at meals, in the forms during evening prep, and in the school generally. They could give detentions. The detention system at that time consisted of writing a set number of tedious lines of some meaningless nonsense that the detention-giver chose to assign to the culprit; the number of lines varied according to the Form the miscreant was in and had to be completed within twenty-four hours. If unfinished, the detention was doubled; if still unfinished, the miscreant had to report to the Prefects' Room at a set time where, in the presence of a Senior Master, a few strokes of the cane were administered by one or two Prefects. Many boys preferred to get a caning than have to do a detention. I got my first detention from Cantacuzino. I didn't complete the assignment; it was doubled and redoubled; I still didn't finish it. Eventually I had to go to the Prefects' Room one break time where, under the supervision of my Housemaster, Mr Rugg, I was given three strokes by two of the Prefects. This happened more than once. Eventually, the Prefects realized that I was unlikely to complete this type of detention; so the next time I got a detention from Clinton Robertson he got me to come up to his dormitory on several successive afternoons and transcribe long passages with complex Latin and Greek terms from his Biology or Botany textbook. Housemasters also could administer caning for various offences. So could the Headmaster, but few issues ever reached his study.

Most of our Masters were from England. We didn't make any distinction between England, Scotland and Wales. As far as we were concerned, Scotland and Wales were provinces of England. There were older Masters like Mr Wiehen, the Second Master and French Master; Mr Newnham, Housemaster of Farquharson House and Latin Master; Mr Rugg, Housemaster of Coke House and Mathematics and Scripture Master; Mr Whitmarsh-Knight, Housemaster of Calder House and English Master. Then there were younger Masters like Mr Harle, the Chemistry Master; Mr Finn, the Physics Master; Mr Bogle, History and English Master; Mr South, Mathematics and Scout Master; Mr Barrett, Geography Master; and Mr Parchment, Sportsmaster. I think Mr Parchment might have been Pearman House Housemaster.

On the first day of classes for each subject, the responsible Master brought with him the books that we were to use for his class. Some books were new; most were used copies that in some cases had been in circulation at the school for as long as twenty years. Depending on the condition of these used books, he marked down the price; scratched out the old price; wrote in the new price; and entered it in a notebook. Some books, like the Shakespeare plays, were in good condition but had been in the system so long that we paid as little as sixpence for them. He also issued us with a new exercise book – with a strong cover and more pages than those exercise books that we used at Elementary School (those that had a picture of King George VI on the cover or of Queen Elizabeth II and her husband the Duke of Edinburgh).

I had no trouble with the classes. A lot of the content was already familiar to me, since at Trinity Ville I had already sat and passed the First Year of the three-stage Jamaica Local Examinations. We didn't do Algebra at Elementary School, but Mrs Foster had tried to introduce the subject to her small scholarship class. However, I didn't make much sense of it; I didn't understand what the x's and y's were all about. My most difficult subject was perhaps French. We did no foreign languages at Elementary School; but when she was home on holidays, I used to go through my sister's Spanish book and try to familiarize myself with some of the words and

expressions. I got to know the everyday greetings and could count up to twenty. But they didn't do Spanish at Munro; it was French. And the new boys in the Upper Third were really starting high school not in the first year but actually in the second. So when it was time for French, we were separated from the rest of the class and sent up to Mr Boland. One of my favourites among the Masters in the Upper Third was the new Master I had met on my first day in the Headmaster's study: Mr Bogle. He taught us History, but spent a lot of the time talking about current affairs. From time to time the class would line up for a Current Affairs quiz; when someone couldn't answer a question correctly, he would move to the bottom of the line while the one who answered correctly would move up in the line. At the first of these quizzes, McConnell and myself ended in the top two positions (I can't recall in what order). For our prize, Mr Bogle went to the Tuck Shop with us and bought us each a large bar of Cadbury's chocolate at ten pence ha'penny a bar.

The most interesting of our Masters was Mr Boland. He was one of the older Masters, an Englishman who taught the new boys French, English and Art. But he didn't come to us for classes. We had to go to him. When we met him he was crippled from the waist down and was confined to a chair. We got to understand that there was a time when he used to walk around to his classes; but by the time that we got there he could not leave his chair without assistance. The nickname that he had received from the older boys and from Old Boys before our time was Bessie. They told us that he got this name because he was the best Master in the school. He occupied a suite of rooms on the upper floor of the New Building. In the back was his bedroom; in the middle was his office; and in front closest to the barbecue and tennis courts was a bigger room. The middle room was where we went for classes. The boys would sit on the floor not paying much attention while he led us in conjugating irregular French verbs and did drills with Definite and Indefinite Objects in a sing-song manner. He never gave detentions. Instead he had a short wooden club no more than ten inches to a foot long with a gnarled bump at one end: something like a short mace. He called it the Skull-cracker. Whenever he thought that a boy deserved to be punished he would tell him to stretch his head over the desk. Then with the little force left in his arms he would proceed to administer punishment by bringing the Skull-cracker down on the miscreant's head. Not much damage was done. In his office he had copies of English newspapers and magazines such as *The Daily Mirror*, *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Punch* which the boys were free to read. In fact his office was like a fully functional kiosk where you could purchase postage stamps, postcards, rolls of photographic film, sweets, stationery and similar necessities.

The outer room was a rather spacious hall. It was something like a Common Room and, except for the absence of ale, liquor and cigarettes, looked like what I imagined an English pub to be. There was a billiard table and a dart board available for use. If you preferred you could play cards; or you might simply want to engage in conversation with Mr Boland on any topic imaginable – from Einstein and Darwin to the Ituri of the Congo and Althea Gibson's performance at the Forest Hills tennis championships. In the evenings in the short interval between Games and dinner, the favourite thing that drew boys to Mr Boland's room, however, was the music. He had a record player that boys could use, either availing themselves of Mr Boland's small collection or playing their own records. There was one record that always seemed to be playing: Dean Martin singing "Volare". Snatches of song still go around in my head: "Volare, cantare... nel blu dipinto di blu". On top of everything, Mr Boland's office and Common Room were where you had the best view of the western horizon just before sunset.

Outside of class, I joined the Scout Troop. Along with Young I joined the Camera Club. Camera Club members could rent a camera and buy film and photographic paper from Mr Boland as well as the fixer and other chemicals required for developing the film. Then the basement of the little stone house beside Long Wall had facilities for developing the negative and printing the

photograph. I also signed up for tennis coaching lessons with George McLean, the American tennis coach who came down to Jamaica every winter to give lessons. And I enrolled for piano lessons. The piano teacher was a lady who was always complaining that I never did the practice exercises that she set me do between classes; and that my fingernails were dirty. The biggest problem for me was that piano lessons were during Games time. Something had to give. The piano lessons did.

From the first evening at school, every new boy had to get used to the bells and the meaning of each one, starting with the six o'clock bell in the morning which meant you could get out of bed, the six-thirty bell which meant you had to get out of bed whether you liked it or not, up to the eight-twenty bell at night which meant you had to get to bed. Boys in the Lower Fourth and up went to bed an hour later. The bells also dictated the routine for lining up for meals, starting with seven o'clock in the morning for breakfast to six-thirty in the evening for dinner. After breakfast, the next thing on the timetable was Chapel. That was where the Headmaster gave his first set of instructions, exhortations and notices for the day. The beautiful cut-stone chapel had a pipe organ that was played either by Mrs Whitmarsh-Knight or one of the boys. It was similar to the one my father used to play at Morant Bay, except that this one had a hand-operated pump instead of an electric pump. The Masters sat at the back of the chapel decked out in their graduate gowns. You had to be sure to have your shoes shined before Chapel in order to pass inspection by the Prefects at what seemed like a guard of honour on the way out of the chapel. If not, you had to rub them off on the back of your trousers or stockings or with a chapel cushion before filing out. The ringing of bells was the responsibility of the Prefect on duty each day, supervised by the Master on duty. Boys used to love to volunteer to ring the bell for the Prefect. The bell at Munro was not like the little hand bell that the teachers used at Trinity Ville School; it was more like the big bell that we used at Holy Trinity Church to summon the faithful to Sunday service or that was tolled to announce the passing of another soul or to signal the starting of a funeral. It was fitted inside a small belfry outside the Upper Fourth near to the tennis courts.

Meals were always served formally in the Dining Room. Boys sat by houses, three tables to a house. At the head of each table at breakfast and dinner sat a Prefect. At lunchtime, this seat was taken by a Master. Ladies (called Maids, although most of them were big women) brought in the fare from the kitchen on large trays laden with steaming tureens or bowls. The Head of Table would serve out the meat one plate at a time and pass it down to the bottom of the table. The boys would serve themselves with the rice and peas which usually accompanied the meat at lunch and dinner. At breakfast, we always got warm milk, some kind of porridge (my favourite was cornmeal), varying kinds of protein and bread (four slices for the junior table, five slices for the second table, seven slices for the senior table – six buttered, one unbuttered). Boys who had Milo or Ovaltine or coffee would bring it along to put with the milk; or if they had peanut butter or jam or both they would bring this along and be prepared to share out a little at a time to the many saucers that were sent their way from adjoining tables. These meals were preceded by Grace said by the Master on Duty: "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful". At lunch, the Headmaster took the place of the Master on Duty and sat at the Head Table with the Prefects on a raised platform. This was his second occasion for the day to address the boys. At the end of the meal there was also Grace: "For what we have received, we give Thee thanks, O Lord". Except for the stewed pork (purru) the meals were generally palatable, sometimes even good; and always in adequate portions. On Sundays, there was special breakfast with cornflakes and eggs. Once in a while, we got chicken; we would look forward to those days. Lunch and dinner were topped off with dessert. In between these formal meals, you could also get cocoa during the ten-thirty morning break; and jam and bread with belly-wash at tea time.

Bells also controlled the routine for classes. These were forty-minute sessions, going up to about three o'clock on a normal day. After lunch, boys below fourteen had to go to their dormitory for a half-hour Rest Period; it was optional for other boys. Wednesdays and Saturdays we had half-day school, ending at lunchtime. On Wednesday afternoons, some boys might choose to go to Mr Boland's place for music or billiards. Some boys would visit the various caves on the wide Munro lands; caves that the boys gave names like Hospital Cave, Palm Tree Cave or Hampton Cave (which was supposed to lead to Hampton; only no one had ever completed the journey). Many boys would prefer to go with a small group of friends on a "feast" in some quiet spot on the property such as Top Rock or Hillside field. Here they would bring stuff from their tuck boxes supplemented by purchases from the school's Tuck Shop and gorge themselves on food that was not a part of the regular menu and chat for an hour or so.

Wednesday afternoons or any break time, in fact, was always a good time to indulge in playing with the various toys that were in vogue from time to time. Gigs and kites I was accustomed to. At Trinity Ville boys not only played with gigs, they engaged in a kind of gig warfare – aiming to be accurate enough to use their gig to split another boy's gig while it was spinning on the ground. Trinity Ville was in a valley and so not a good place for kites; but when we were at Morant Bay I remembered my father making kites for us. I later found out that in his youth he was renowned for the variety and size of kites that he used to make at Ewarton. Munro, at the top of a mountain with constantly blowing winds was an ideal place for kites. I remember on one occasion a group of South American boys built a kite about six feet high and tethered it with long strong twine almost the size of small rope. They hoisted it in the air and anchored the string on to the bell tower near the tennis courts. The kite went up higher and higher until it looked like a small dot among the clouds. It stayed up for about three or four days; when it was eventually taken down the fabric used in its construction was soaking wet. Yoyos I had never seen before. I was fascinated by the intricate loops and turns that the boys could execute while transforming this simple wooden disc attached to a piece of string into a thing of beauty, a conjuring device; their dexterity approached an exhibition of dancing or rhythmic gymnastics. I was familiar with the concept of stilts; I had seen pictures of ultra-tall men dressed up atop stilts, but I had never actually seen stilts in real life. At Munro, simple wooden stilts were constructed by Laddie, an elderly former employee of the school who had been featured in *The Munronian* that I had received in the post. He sold these stilts to the boys for about one and six. It was remarkable to see boys walk on them up and down the stairs of the Baby Dormitory and even sometimes run atop them in mini-races.

The most important part of the day as far as most boys were concerned came after the four o'clock tea-time. This was Games. Participation in Games was compulsory for all boys up to and including the Upper Fourth. For Fifth and Sixth Formers it was optional. Boys would gather by the Sports Shop for the Sportsmaster to tell them what each group was to be involved in each day, depending I suppose on the availability of fields. Football was the most popular sport; January was not part of the regular football season, but boys could play football if they wished. Until I came to Munro, I had never seen a game of football. When we said "play ball" in Trinity Ville, you could be certain that we were talking about cricket. I had borrowed a book from the library that explained the rules of the game of football and had pictures of the layout of a football field. I had actually seen a football once: A boy who had started going to St George's College had brought home a football and taken it to the Rectory Lawn, which was the popular ball ground for the boys and young men in Trinity Ville. But we had no clue how to play the game. Between twenty and thirty boys all chased after the ball at the same time, each one trying to get in a kick. It was pure confusion.

At the Sports Shop I took just about everything that was on the Clothes List: spikes, games socks, tennis racquet, hockey stick, jock strap.

On the first regular school day the Sportsmaster decided that he would send the new boys on a run. It was the shortest cross-country course he could have chosen. We had to run to the end of the asphalt. This was where the asphalted section of the road ended on the way to Southfield. I was lagging behind the pack, suffering from severe stitch. Behind us were two Sixth Formers, Millar and Mike Elliot, holding switches that they had broken off twigs at the side of the road and shouting "Run boy, run" as they applied the encouragement to those of us who were not as fit as they (which was not saying much). I can't remember getting stitches again during my years at Munro. In fact, in spite of my small size I was quite good at athletics; in my first term I ran on the Coke House Class Three relay team. I also got to like football, more for the rough and tumble of it than for the skill. Games also got us sufficiently warm to be able to endure the cold showers without much trouble. Of course, you had to be sure to leave the field in time to run up the hill, take a shower and get to the dining room in time for dinner. As a result, record times for showering were regularly broken.

Apart from the after-tea games, each Form also had a scheduled Gym period in the middle of the day for physical training exercises. There was also a Games period, which was a double-period one day scheduled just before or after the mid-morning break. During this period, Mr Parchment would teach us the rudiments of particular sports and let us take part in a mini-game. He usually ended the session about ten minutes before the bell, so that we would have enough time to rush to the shower and change off in time for our next classroom period. On one of these days while rushing into the showers, I apparently slipped on the slick concrete surface and hit my head. The next thing I remember, I was sitting on a long bench with several boys standing around me speaking in animated tones. It seems I had blacked out. They reported the accident to the Headmaster, who was quite concerned that I might have had concussion. Mr Roper decided to take me in his car, a white Zephyr station wagon, to Mandeville for consultation at the Hargreaves Hospital. In spite of the quality of the roads, he drove pretty fast and we made good time going through places like Lititz and Watson's Hill and up Spur Tree Hill.

Dinner each day started at six-thirty and ended at seven. After that came Prep. I learned that Prep was another name for what other schools called Home Work; but since we lived at school, all work was home work. So Prep was clearly a more fitting name. Boys in the Upper Third and below had a half-hour period of prep each evening. The other Forms had three half-hour periods. Prep was supervised by a Prefect. In the first few weeks of term, the School Nurse would go from Form to Form escorted by the Prefect on Duty to take the boys' temperatures. One evening, prep in the Upper Third was being supervised by Cantacuzino. I was hard at work concentrating on my book when I felt as if someone was shaking my desk. Clearly annoyed, I looked up and saw that the blackboard also was shaking; so was everything else in the room. The boys jumped to their feet. We realized that it was an earthquake. Most of the boys rushed out of the room. McGilchrist dived out the window on the side towards the dining room and the Coke House balcony; he skinned his knees quite badly. Cantacuzino tried to climb through the other window on the tennis court side but was too big to pass through. He got stuck in the window. We later learned that this was the most severe earthquake that Jamaica had experienced since the destruction of Kingston fifty years before. It most affected the western side of the island. Munro suffered no noticeable damage; but several churches in St James and other western parishes were completely destroyed.

On Saturdays, we had classes in the morning. But after lunchtime you were free to do whatever you liked. Mrs Jervis opened her little Tuck Shop on Wednesday and Saturday

afternoons in a little room near to the kitchen entrance; you had to line up by a window for service. This was the main activity that most boys spent their pocket money on. This and Andy the barber; I think he also came on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The boys had to pay by cheque. The School Prospectus had advised that boys should bring no more than three pounds to school as pocket money. I think my father gave me a pound. Boys had to give in this pocket money to their respective Housemaster; in return he would issue them with a cheque book, a different colour for each house – yellow for Coke, blue for Farquharson, red for Calder, green for Pearman. For the barber you would write a cheque: Pay to Andy one shilling and six pence for haircut. Sixth Formers, however, were allowed to keep cash and to go outside the school gates a few times a week to make purchases at one of the local shops. My father never had a cheque book for himself; he always used cash whether for himself or for the church.

Saturday afternoons were spent in much the same way as Wednesday afternoons. There might also be a hockey match or a tennis match to watch; sometimes a school match, sometimes a house match (senior or junior). For tennis, the girls from Hampton sometimes came over to play. We looked forward to the evening after dinner. That was when we usually had a movie in the Gym; we had to carry our own benches and chairs from our Form Room. Instead of the movie it might be a slide show. Or a concert put on by the boys and the Masters. Occasionally it could be a musical recital by a professional opera singer; in that event we would have to pay.

On Sundays we got to stay in bed an hour later than usual. We also had to wear our grey suits and school tie. After breakfast was Chapel. There we sang several hymns that we had practised the day before. The sermon was given by an invited preacher. Canon Emmanuel came once a month. We preferred Sundays with Canon Emmanuel. He didn't climb the pulpit for his sermon; he stood between the choir and the congregation. His sermons were not long and the older boys knew them by heart; sometimes they would finish a word for him. He had about three or four sermons that he used in rotation. The boys' favourite was probably the one where the woman had diabetes. Canon would say, "She had dia..." and the boys would fill in: "rhea".

After Chapel there was a time-tabled Reading period. You had to go to your Form and read a book; any book. The Hardy Boys mystery books were very popular. Alternatively, you could go to the Form under Baby Dormitory and listen to Mr Wiehen read a story or a chapter from a Sherlock Holmes book; apparently he had been doing so for many years. At the end of the hour he would write the date at the spot in the book where he had stopped. There was a time when he changed this routine and read Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*; I wasn't sure if he was reading from an English translation or from the French original and translating as he read. Boys of all ages would go to these readings – from the little boys in Baby Dormitory to Prefects in the Upper Sixth. Mr Wiehen was the Second Master. He was an Englishman who taught French; he had been at Munro for several decades. He lived near the school. In the mornings he would walk down to the school through Top Gate with his short-legged floppy-eared dogs trying to keep up with him. The older boys called him "Daddy Binks" and had a special night (called Binks Night) when they would go to dinner in short pants in imitation of his favourite mode of dress.

Sunday night dinner was followed by a mandatory Letter Writing period. This was a one-hour period when the boys had to go to their Form and write a letter home to their parents. After the contents of my letters got scantier and scantier, my father decided that he would not reply every week; in fact he turned the responsibility of replying over to my mother. After a while, I started to skip writing some weeks.

During that first term I caught the mumps. At least, I was so diagnosed by the School Nurse. However, I felt none of the symptoms. Nevertheless, I had to go into quarantine at the

School Hospital for two or three weeks. There were no more than a half dozen of us in that quarantined group at the Hospital: apart from myself, there were Jean Assad and David Murray (both of the Upper Third) and Richard Jones. This Jones was the youngest of a set of several Jones brothers from Portland. He had a brother named Ken who later became a Minister in the first Jamaican government after Independence. Another of his brothers was Evan Jones, the author of the popular poem “The Song of the Banana Man” and later a renowned television documentary producer including a series on slavery in the West Indies. Richard Jones was our Head Prefect; the previous year he had won a cattle-judging competition in England. The little boys liked him because he was not overbearing nor obsessed with his position of seniority: he was not puffed up. For most of this quarantine period I had a great time: we would read books or magazines, play games like cards or Monopoly, or play a game with the crutches where one of us would stand against the wall and another would run at him with a pair of crutches pointing forward like a lance as if to strike him in his chest then at the last moment parting the crutches and hitting the wall instead; the objective would be to see how long the intended victim would keep his nerve. Most of the time though was filled with telling jokes and stories.

One day during this quarantine period, David Murray’s mother came to visit him. She brought snacks and other goodies for him including lemonade; she was very kind and offered me some. The lemonade was clear in colour. I had never seen lemonade that colour before; the lemonade I was accustomed to was brown in colour. I found out that Mrs Murray’s lemonade had that clear colour because she used white sugar to make it. At home, we never used white sugar (“granulated sugar” we called it) except for baking; for everything else we only used brown sugar.

A few days before the end of the planned quarantine period, I did feel the expected symptoms of mumps: my jaws became swollen and hurtful. This only lasted a few days. The day I was discharged, I had to go and stand in the sun in the hospital garden for about a half an hour; I suppose this was intended to disinfect me.

As the term drew to a close, the boys became more and more excited. One of the first signs of the impending End of Term was that our grips (the foreigners called them suitcases) were put out on the barbecue near the tennis courts to sun. This no doubt was another disinfecting operation similar to mine at the hospital. Then after the final class, some boys broke out chanting: “No more Latin, no more French, no more sitting on the damn hard bench!” At Chapel on the last morning, the hymn chosen was Hymn 333 Part 2: “Lord dismiss us with Thy blessing, Thanks for mercies past receive; Pardon all their faults confessing; Time that’s lost may all retrieve ... Those returning, those returning, Make more faithful than before”.

I was glad to be back in Trinity Ville. But things were not the same as before. I went to look for my former teachers. I should have been happy to see my old friends again. Then I realised that I really only had friends at school; and I would no longer be at school with them. For the last three months I had been wearing shoes seven days a week. It seemed absurd for me to stop wearing shoes now just because I was back home. I wanted to go to the river. I now had my Jantzen swim trunks that I had never had the chance to put on at Munro: should I wear it to the river or should I go *au naturel* as before? I really wanted to break in the Jantzen; but to be the only one at the river thus clad would look strange. When walking in the street it seemed to me as if I had a different bearing compared to my Elementary School days. I was now a high-school boy and perhaps I was affecting a high school walk. Some years before, my mother had introduced me to *The Pilgrim’s Progress*; in John Bunyan’s book there had been a character named Mister Worldly-Wiseman who epitomized The Sin of Pride. Was I a victim of the sin of pride to want to wear my brown shoes through the streets? Or would I not be indulging in the sin of pride to

deliberately go barefoot, when I had shoes to wear and was more comfortable in shoes than walking barefoot on the rough stones and hot asphalt? It seemed I could no longer fit in.

Meanwhile, my departure to boarding school had changed things at home. Before leaving for high school, my brother Lloyd and myself were the ones my parents depended on to provide the home with water and wood as well as to look after the hog and the goat. Now that we were no longer there, it was difficult for them to continue living in a house without running water and electricity. So they asked the Bishop to find another cure for my father. The deed had been done. The next time I returned home it would not be to Trinity Ville but to St Margaret's Bay in Portland. There, they said, the Rectory had running water and electricity with a fridge and an oil stove instead of the wood-burning stove that we used at Trinity Ville. In addition, St Margaret's Bay was on the railway line only about six miles from Port Antonio. That meant that Lloyd could move from KC to Titchfield and go by train each day. Plus the school fees at Titchfield were lower than at KC.

A few days after my return home we received my first School Report. In spite of my weeks in the hospital, I had not done too badly academically: I was in the top third of the class. Accompanying the Report was the school bill. All those things I had taken at the Sports Shop plus the piano lessons plus the tennis coaching had to be paid for; plus, of course, the Hargreaves Hospital bill. My father was dumbfounded. The bill came to about half of his monthly salary. He tried to recoup some of the money by selling the tennis racquet to my cousin. He also wrote the Chief Minister outlining the situation and suggesting to him that he give some consideration to giving scholarship winners some assistance with respect to clothing and incidental expenses related to their schooling. Shortly thereafter the government announced that there would be an annual allocation to the parents of scholarship winners to take care of clothing and books.

The first chapter of my Munro life had come to a close. My father had said that Munro was an aristocratic school. By that, I think he meant that it was a school for the rich. Mr Bogle was to teach us, however, that Aristocracy is not leadership by the rich or government by the rich but government by the best. Government by the rich is Plutocracy. Munro did try to make itself a school of the best; that was the meaning after all of its motto "A city set on a hill cannot be hid". Everyone seemed to know of the school's noble aspirations; but only the rich had the means to take advantage of the school's culture of excellence. There seemed to be an on-going struggle between the school's aristocratic intentions and its plutocratic reality. In his classification of forms of government Aristotle also mentioned another form – one called Democracy: government by the people. Perhaps a greater dose of democracy would strengthen the school in its struggle to ensure the triumph of aristocracy over plutocracy. Should this come to pass, perhaps the young democracy then in the process of taking root in Jamaica would become imbued with enough of the aristocratic ideals to keep it from descending into the rule of the mob, as Aristotle feared.

But all this would become clear in the course of time.