Charterhouse School
1823–1828

Charterhouse School, founded in 1611 on the grounds of a dissolved Carthusian monastery, was the school Lushington himself and his elder brother, Thomas, had attended, and the school of their father, the Reverend James Stephen Lushington, and of their mother's three most eminent brothers, the bishop of Elphin, the bishop of Bath and Wells, and Lord Chief Justice Ellenborough. Ellenborough had been buried in the school chapel just four years before his grandnephews Edmund and Henry arrived at the school.

At that time Charterhouse—along with Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, and Rugby—was one of the seven great public boarding schools. Its distinguished graduates had included Richard Crashaw; Richard Lovelace; Roger Williams (founder of Rhode Island); Isaac Barrow; Addison and Steele; John Wesley; William Blackstone; G. Manners Sutton, archbishop of Canterbury; and the current prime minister, Lord Liverpool. Among relatively recent graduates to become more prominent in the future were the historian George Grote and two future Cambridge mentors of Edmund and Henry, Connop Thirlwall (later bishop of St. Davids) and Julius Charles Hare.

Lushington had never considered any other public school for his three eldest sons. But significantly, the fourth son, Franklin (born 1823), would go instead to Rugby. Although Edmund and Henry, thoroughly prepared and extraordinar-
ily motivated, would rapidly rise to the top of the school, their years fell in
times of disenchantment for the school itself, as well as for their father.

When Lushington had considered sending the boys there as early as Easter-
time, 1822, his friend Clark, as a former Charterhouse teacher, was warmly and
bluntly opposed. He conceded that Charterhouse was probably no worse than
other public schools, but he “shd feel easier if a boy in whose welfare I feel
interest were at a school I was less acquainted with.” First, there was no assur­
ance that Edmund would find the salutary competition Lushington desired for
him. More likely he would be placed, “not according to his actual proficiency,”
but by some arbitrary formula involving age, and thus encounter even less
competition than at Dr. Bond’s. Emulation of boys in higher forms seldom
operated at all. If a lower-form boy was not old enough or strong enough “to
defend himself against the wanton & vexatious teasing & tyranny of the other
lower boys, without accusing them to the monitors, &c I can hardly conceive a
more miserable being.” And should he be “protected from this by becoming a
favourite of any of the large boys, it may be even worse. Do not let your
pure-minded little fellows go to that, or any such school, till they have acquired
the strength & determination of 12 or 13.” Their minds would, “surely enough,
be corrupted, more or less, in course of time. But let them not be put in the way
of it earlier than may be needful.”

During the 1820s all of the public schools were still what later historians have
called “unreformed.” But the setting of Charterhouse in an undesirable part of
London, nestling close to unsanitary Smithfield, the world’s largest cattle
market, was surely one of the worst. Furthermore, the school just then was
almost unbearably overcrowded. In 1818 the headmaster, Dr. John Russell, had
introduced the “Madras system” of student teachers, by which lower-form
boys were taught by other boys, some of whom may have known less Latin or
Greek than the fellow pupils they were nominally teaching. Lowered tuition
rates brought a rapid enrollment increase with no commensurate increase in
adult teachers—from 238 boys and 5 masters in 1818 to 477 and 8 in 1823, when
the Lushingtons arrived. The peak of 480 came in 1825. Then began a sharp
reaction: by 1829 enrollment had dwindled to 289, and by 1832, when Russell
resigned, 137 with 4 masters.1 The lowest point came in 1835, with only 99
boys.2 As Gerald S. Davies, the historian of the Charterhouse foundation, puts
it, “the British parent, not always a far-seeing judge in matters of education,
had got what he had asked for—a cheap education—and presently discovered
the value of the article.”3

But it was not only at Charterhouse that enrollments declined during the
1820s and 1830s. At a time when evangelical religion was spreading in England,
the public schools collectively had acquired a scandalous reputation. Eton saw a
drop from 627 in 1833 to 444 in 1835; Harrow from 295 in 1816 to 128 in 1828; Rugby from 300 in 1821 to 123 in 1827.  

The boys at Charterhouse were crammed with hardly breathing room into the homes of the schoolmasters. In one of the smaller houses, the Reverend Charles Rowland Dicken’s, thirty boys of all ages, including Thomas Mozley, future editor of the British Critic, “lived in the same room, down which ran two deal tables, from breakfast to bed-time, doing all our work there, however elbowed, jostled, dinned, distracted.”  

In 1821 the Reverend Robert Watkinson’s three-story house of 75 feet, 7 inches frontage and about 40 feet depth held 148 boys besides Watkinson’s own family and the servants. The Reverend William Henry Chapman’s house, evidently about the same size, had 144 boys. The crowding had somewhat eased before the Lushingtons came in 1823. Three additional houses had permitted a limit of 100 boys to a house, but still four times the standard of later nineteenth-century schools.  

Edmund and Henry landed in Chapman’s house, presumably with 98 other boys. Lushington was soon writing that “their rapid progress has given them some consideration & induced some stout fellows, who at first compelled them . . . to do their exercises—to request their assistance as a favour.” Luckily they had “for one of their protectors” a robust cousin called William “Bull” Lushington, son of Lushington’s half-brother. They seemed “pleased with the school, though shocked with the swearing & hardly being permitted to say their prayers by their bedside.” Lushington was disgusted with the living conditions—a broken window, and no fire, in cold weather. By mid-March both boys were home with whooping cough. Lushington was convinced that they had not received “reasonable attention,” and now Edmund was dangerously ill. By month’s end the entire Lushington brood of ten children had whooping cough, often fatal to English children.  

Lushington felt reluctant to return the boys to such a place, although “their progress . . . while there was astonishing.” In two months Henry, not yet eleven, was in the fourth form (innovatively, under Russell the forms ran from a low of twelfth to the high of first), and Edmund had already been “removed from the fourth to be praepositus [student teacher] to the 9th—the regular step to be removed into the 3d or 2d.” But Lushington was sure that the moral education was bad, and wished he could find “a proper person” for tutoring such boys “on reasonable terms.” He was determined to keep the two together. Henry, “though quick & clever,” was “very little inclined to exert himself except for play & mischief,” and “much more liable to be misled by other boys.” It was important “not to loosen the tie which we have over his conduct in his devoted admiration & love of his brother.”  

Fortunately the parents could oversee the boys’ moral education because the
school permitted them to go home almost every weekend. After “rather an unpleasant conference with Chapman about the entire neglect” of Edmund’s cough, Lushington had tried unsuccessfully to get the boys removed to another house. But in a later conversation, Chapman appeared to be “an excellent man—& has assured me of his unremitting attention in the future to the state of their health.”

In the absence of greater contrary evidence, it seems fair play to suppose that Mr. Chapman, like most functionaries around institutions, was a reasonable enough approximation to “an excellent,” or at least a well-intentioned, man. In 1827 he was promoted to second master. But the unrepaired window in a dank-cold London February is not reassuring. The man was, after all, accepting boarding fees for a house packed with boys in a period of high childhood mortality. The extremely minor but popular versifier Martin Farquhar Tupper, a boy of our period whose autobiography recklessly denounces every aspect of the school, immoderately accused the “seven clergyman masters” of reaping “fortunes by neglecting five hundred boys,” and singled out Chapman as one of the most “ignorant old parsons” on the generally undistinguished staff. But Chapman, it seems, was taken off by the pen of a much greater old boy than any Tupper, being most probably Thackeray’s model for “Mr. Chip, the second master,” in the tale “Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry.” As a boy Frank had gone to “Slaughter House School, near Smithfield, London,” where nobody in authority did anything to stop a savage fistfight between him and the overgrown bully, Biggs, lasting for 102 rounds. After the usual Wednesday boiled beef supper (“boiled child we used to call it . . . in our elegant, jocular way”), on the evening when everybody, Mr. Chip included, knew the fight would occur, Chip called Berry up to his study. The other boys were disappointed, thinking “he was going to prevent the fight; but no such thing.” “The Rev. Edward Chip” merely “took Berry into his study, and poured him out two glasses of port-wine, which he made him take with a biscuit, and patted him on the back and went off. I have no doubt he was longing, like all of us, to see the battle; but etiquette, you know, forbade.”

The fictional Chip, of course, is not identical with the irretrievably dead Chapman. But practice at the unreformed public schools did relieve the masters from interfering very much with the boys’ corporate personal lives. Tupper charged that the masters “practically ignored everything out of School, much as a captain knows nothing of his company off duty.” Frank Berry, though improbably, might have been killed—or his face permanently disfigured, like Thackeray’s own in a Charterhouse fight—but the system was larger than Chip. One can easily imagine Chip, giver of port and biscuits and pats on the back, gravely assuring an agitated parent of his future “unremitting attention”
to his two sons’ health before disappearing, as in Thackeray, “to his duties in the under-school, whither all we little boys followed him.”

Back at Hanwell, while slowly recovering from whooping cough, Edmund was not idle. He worked at verse translations and kept a journal of his reading between 21 March and 7 April logging 7,308 lines of Greek and 676 of Latin. In late April the boys returned to the school, Lushington having decided to “try at least how they stand the summer campaign.” By June, if not earlier, both were functioning as praepositii under Russell’s “Madras system.”

One can find very few good words for that system. True, Davies, though he declared it generally a failure, conceded that it “had a very real success with the boy of real ability”—such, in short, as the Lushingtons were. Boys like them could clarify and reinforce what they knew by attempting to explain it to others. But for the average or below-average boy “it proved, as it was bound to prove, a complete failure.”

Gordon N. Ray, Thackeray’s biographer, wrote that it is “perhaps too much to say” that the classical languages at Charterhouse “were taught at all.”

One story often repeated in later years concerned the undersized praepositus whose unruly nominal pupils deposited him under the desk to get him out of the way. It is tempting to speculate, but quite impossible to establish, that this boy might have been Henry Lushington. Thomas Mozley, unable to teach satisfactorily, having begun the Greek alphabet only two years before, was compelled to spend “a whole year” doing nothing besides teaching and paper work, although “the unfortunate and guiltless form” under him “had the largest share of the punishment.” Expected to teach the Iliad, he happily discovered among his “pupils” a “very nice” boy named William Dobson, future headmaster of Cheltenham College (and lifelong friend of the Lushingtons), who sat beside him and coached him “every word, every aorist, every elision, every dialectic difference,” all of which Mozley dutifully conveyed to the class. Mozley moved into the higher forms while Dobson unfairly remained far behind.

Various accounts, as Ray points out, substantially differ concerning the mechanics of the system: Davies says that “a ‘poz,’ as he was familiarly called, was chosen from among the boys in the top half of the second form and set . . . above each of the lower forms”; H. G. Liddell, that “the praepositus was selected from the form to be taught and elevated to the form above after six weeks of service”; and H. W. Phillott, that “all praepositii were taken from the fourth form.” We recall that before his illness Edmund, then in the fourth form, had been made praepositus to the ninth, “the regular step,” according to his father, for promotion into the third or second. This account seems more-or-less compatible with both Phillott and with Mozley’s assertion that a boy “had to teach a form satisfactorily for at least six weeks if he would rise from the fourth form.
to the third," although Lushington appeared to think it possible for Edmund to be advanced after his teaching stint directly into the second. Mozley, however, said that promotion from the third to the second required another stint of teaching, and the step from second to first entailed another. Paradoxically, all of the differing accounts may be correct: Russell, under pressure from parents and diminished enrollment, could have tinkered with details of the system from year to year until finally, as one old graduate recalled years later, "the forms were amalgamated and in nearly every case each had its own master."

In a hastily written letter to his father on 26 June ("I have been so much occupied with various concerns that I could not spare a single moment, as it was necessary to spend a short time at play"), Edmund reported that "Harry [Henry] is praepositus to the 10th f in a week will be made praep to the 9th," and then would be promoted to the third. Edmund himself was "praep to the 6th and in 3 weeks shall be put up into the 5th, & then I shall be an upper fellow." (In writing "the 5th" for the form he would attain, Edmund was joining other nonconformist Charterhouse boys in reverting to the conventional public school designations for the "fifth" and "sixth" forms instead of Russell's innovative "second" and "first"; Edmund, of course, already in Russell's "third," was well above his "fifth.")

The irrepressible Henry, in the same packet, wrote, "I am very glad, as I dare say you are that little Edmund is now an upper fellow." Henry himself liked "being Praepositus to the 10th Form very well, & shall be glad when I get into the 3rd. They have sometimes very long exercises in the 3rd Form, such as parse 5½ of Greek, & to translate them which was the one we had last night." (Were the praepositii required to do some of the exercises of the next form up, or had Henry merely been sitting in with some third formers during study time?) On 28 July Henry reported that he was "at the top of the 3rd division" of the third form, "there being 3 divisions in the form, & the last by far the largest." Edmund was again teaching as "Praep to the 5th form in school; afterwards he will be Praep into the fourth, & then put into the first. By the time he is put up, I shall, I hope, be Praep for the 2nd." (Presumably, Henry meant that he hoped soon to complete third form and become a praepositus in line for promotion to second form.) The third form were doing Antigone and Horace "on most days."

At Hanwell terrible grief struck the family that summer, not once but twice. In mid-July the eldest daughter, Sophia (born 1814), had died from a croup condition, which Lushington thought might have been a relapse from the whooping cough the boys had brought from Charterhouse. After the parents had called "our apothecary," Sophia seemed to improve, but the throat inflammation passed to the trachea causing death "in a few hours." To avoid risk of contagion, Edmund and Henry were not called back from school. About a
week later, Mary Anne (born 1818) died of the same malady “after suffering which it is horrible to think of.” On medical advice the family fled to Broadstairs with the six surviving younger children (three of them slightly affected), not even stopping for the second funeral.

Mr. Chapman, Lushington wrote to Clark, had been “equally kind and judicious” in telling Edmund and Henry about the deaths. Chapman in a “long conversation” with the boys’ Aunt Catherine “had expressed his delight that notwithstanding their extraordinary & sudden elevation in the school” the boys had “conducted themselves with so much good-humour & want of affectation that no envy or jealousy was excited.”

Lushington, however, from a letter of Edmund’s, knew something that the benignly neglectful Chapman did not. Edmund, recently promoted at the early age of twelve to the first form and already pressing for first place in the examinations, had enraged some of the “big” first-formers by “doing 12 stanzas of alcaics & being so high in them; but they excused me as it was the 1st time.” As one boy explained, “they were in a rage only because I did so many, not because I was so high in them & that they will let me do them well, if I do not do so many.” They tore some stanzas from his copybook, later giving them back with permission to hand them in, “but said the next time I did so many I would be bumped. I hope however I shall be high in them & that is all I now care about.”

We may wonder if Thackeray, only six months younger than Edmund, but still mired in the seventh or sixth form, remembered this very incident a quarter-century later when he described his young Pendennis: “If he was distinguished for anything it was for verse-writing; but was his enthusiasm ever so great, it stopped when he had composed the number of lines demanded by the regulations (unlike young Swettenham, for instance, who . . . would bring up a hundred dreary hexameters to the master after a half holiday . . . ).” The name “Swettenham” reaches the ear with an invidiously disquieting suggestion of “Lushington.” Or if Thackeray did not recall exactly this story, had Edmund acquired a reputation among his older and huskier form-mates for that sort of thing?

To his father the incident indicated again “the want of more active superintendence.” Also he entertained misgivings about scholastic standards where any boys, even his, could be promoted so rapidly. He was convinced that Henry, now at age eleven in second form (fifth under the older system), was not so good a scholar as Clark, years before, had been in the old fourth.

As a first-former, Edmund was now directly under Dr. Russell, where Henry soon would join him. At the height of the enrollment boom, even Russell’s esteemed first form was grossly overcrowded. Davies “humbly” wondered “how anything got taught or learnt in that vast assembly.” But Russell
worked deliberately, a few lines in a day, demanding first a literal word-by-word translation, then attempting to elicit an idiomatic English rendering that he would "criticize with unsparing dissection."21

In 1823, although headmaster for twelve years, Russell was still only thirty-six. Himself a gold medalist from the Charterhouse of his predecessor, Matthew Raine, he had gone up to Christ's Church, Oxford, taken B.A. and M.A., and returned as a master. When Raine died, the school's governors suspended the rules to allow the appointment of a headmaster under twenty-seven.22 Two portraits of Russell at the present Charterhouse School (removed in 1872 to a spacious site near Godalming, Surrey) seem, at least to a predisposed eye, to depict a rigidly imperious countenance. History, influenced by the later writings of articulate unscholarly boys like Tupper and Thackeray, has not been kind to him. Davies calls him "a man of exceptional vigour and capacity, a born reformer, and possessed of imagination and of original ideas," but he ventures mildly that "perhaps he may have lacked something of that intimate knowledge of the human boy," without which no headmaster can succeed.23 Other writers are blunter: "pompous and unsympathetic," "heavy-handed sarcasm," "clumsy witticisms," "merciless" to "diffident or incompetent students," "despotically drilled into passive servility and pedantic scholarship."24 Insensitivity, a trait he evidently exercised, is hard to forgive in a teacher. Thackeray, in Pendennis, takes him off to the brink of infernal immortality:

"Pendennis, sir," he said, "your idleness is incorrigible and your stupidity beyond example. You are a disgrace to your school, and to your family, and I have no doubt will prove so in after-life to your country. If that vice, sir, which is described to us as the root of all evil, be really what moralists have represented, (and I have no doubt of the correctness of their opinion,) for what a prodigious quantity of future crime and wickedness are you, unhappy boy, laying the seed! Miserable trifler! A boy who construes δε and, instead of δε but, at sixteen years of age, is guilty not merely of folly, and ignorance, and dullness inconceivable, but of crime, of deadly crime, of filial ingratitude, which I tremble to contemplate. A boy, sir, who does not learn his Greek play cheats the parent who spends money for his education. A boy who cheats his parent is not very far from robbing or forging upon his neighbour. A man who forges on his neighbour pays the penalty of his crime at the gallows. And it is not such a one that I pity, (for he will be deservedly cut off;) but his maddened and heart-broken parents, who are driven to a premature grave by his crimes, or, if they live, drag on a wretched and dishonoured old age. Go on, sir, and I warn you that the very next mistake that you make shall subject you to the punishment of the rod."
Who's that laughing? What ill-conditioned boy is there that dares to laugh?” shouted the Doctor.\textsuperscript{25}

Tupper, less talented, did not imitate Russell’s invective, but provided a dampening surfeit of his own. Russell allegedly had “worked so” upon Tupper’s “over-sensitive nature to force” him “beyond his powers” that he became and remained a stammerer “until past middle life.” He claimed to have seen the “irate” Russell “smashing a child’s head between two books in his shoulder-of-mutton hand till the nose bled”—and to have heard “the Reverend Doctor’s terrible sentence” commanding his boy head-monitor to punish another boy’s “slight fault of idleness or ignorance” with eighteen strokes, “most severely,” from “five-feet bunches of birch armed with buds as sharp as thorns, renewed after six strokes for fresh excoriation!” The boy Tupper had grimly determined “to commit justifiable homicide” upon any person who ever tried to flog him so; and later had vowed to “desert the Church of England” if Russell ever was “made a Bishop (happily he was not).”\textsuperscript{26}

But if even the Devil is accorded his advocate, should controversial headmasters alone be deprived? Ray declares that however Russell may have failed boys like Thackeray, “he was a very successful instructor with boys of precise, retentive minds, who had been well grounded in the classics by earlier preparation.”\textsuperscript{27} Furthermore, he believed, passionately, in the efficaciousness of the imbalanced educational tradition he had inherited, Greek and Latin and virtually nothing else. Himself shaped and nurtured by it, he was taxing his nerves, almost giving his life, to perpetuate it. He was frustrated and disillusioned by the near impossibility of broadly dispensing it, boys as always being individuals. He drove himself, as Mozley remembered, almost to the point of no endurance, throwing his “tremendous energy of voice, look, and manner” into getting and holding the attention of “a hundred and twenty boys single-handed an hour and a half before breakfast, three hours after, and two hours in the afternoon, and then looking over the frequent translations, verses, and themes,” until finally, “soon after my time he almost sank under the long-continued strain.”\textsuperscript{28}

For the rare few boys equipped and disposed to meet him, Russell had great wealth to offer. The Lushingtons, especially Edmund, must from the first have brought him joy. And there were some others, despite the ineptness of his lower-school system. In the superb 1832 Classical Tripos group at Cambridge, three of the top five would be Russell’s boys—Senior Classic, Edmund Lushington; third, William Dobson; fifth, George Stovin Venables, in a quintet rounded out by no lesser future luminaries than Richard Shilleto (second) and William Hepworth Thompson (fourth).

Russell was remembered for speaking “with a peculiarly distinct and syllabic utterance, and making a great point of it that every one in his form should do
Edmund, in turn, was remembered to the end of his life for his own distinctive enunciation, “a certain peculiarity of utterance, that made the words seem to come from him reluctantly, producing an effect, not of hesitation, but of deliberate choice, which made his language more impressive.”

By the end of February 1824, Edmund had attained fourth place in the school, and Henry was in the second form, though temporarily in last place because of “a bad exercise.” But Henry was causing his father to worry: “This dear fellow who is a delightful boy & of whose success as a lawyer I should predict with more confidence even than of Edmund’s” had most unfortunately developed “an ardent wish to be a sailor.” Knowing how opposed his father was, he had tried for several months to “subdue” the yearning, “but hitherto in vain.” He “could not help shedding tears” when he thought of not going to sea. By July he had sufficiently repressed his nautical dreams to rise to second place in the select group (the “Emeriti”) between second and first forms.

In April, Lushington gratified his long-felt ambition to become a member of the Royal Society: “Though not a man of science I love it & going there may bring me in contact with early friends & revive old associations which are upon the whole gratifying though somewhat melancholy.” In July he retired from the Colonial Board of Audit, a demanding position that had been wearing him down, and at fifty-eight felt himself at last “comparatively at liberty with every adequate blessing of fortune & with leisure to watch over and assist in the education of my dear boys.”

By December he was again worrying about what to do next with Edmund. Though not yet fourteen, he was first in the school and would probably be captain after the examinations. At what age would it be advisable to send him up to Cambridge? By the following summer, Lushington had evidently consulted at least one Cambridge don, the ineffable professor of modern history William Smyth, who advised him to place Edmund in “a French Boarding-house” to perfect his command of the French language. George Philips, M.P., Lushington’s wealthy cotton manufacturer brother-in-law, was intrigued with the idea. Why not send the boy to Geneva, where “by attending the College” he could also improve himself in “science, & general literature” while being introduced “into the most intelligent society”? A family could no doubt be located where he would “meet only with educated, & active minded men of unostentatious character.” Lord Landsdowne, Philips asserted, had “spent some time, as a young man at Geneva, & I have no doubt derived advantage from his residence there. I do not know any place where I should prefer passing some months myself.” No doubt the pragmatic Philips would have been delighted by any unharmful arrangement that would have reduced his nephew’s fixation upon Greek and rendered him generally more like the urbane Lord Lansdowne. But another old friend of Philips, no less a personage than the
humorist clergyman Sydney Smith, reluctantly advised that Edmund stay at Charterhouse, further perfecting his classical languages, to “ensure high academick honours to him which he thinks (however absurd some may consider it) are important means of success in the profession of the law.” Charterhouse School, quite predictably, won.

After Clark’s death in April 1825 ended Lushington’s confiding letters, we have little further record of the Charterhouse years. Both boys wrote on 18 December 1824, attempting to cheer the ailing Clark. Edmund, as he always would, found small talk difficult on paper. He duly reported that he and Henry were now in the “Sixth Form” (Russell’s first form), modestly refrained from mentioning that he was himself at the top of the school, told about his father’s shepherd who, when riding a Shetland pony, “looks as if he would outweigh him; he is, thus mounted, the drollest figure imaginable”; hoped Clark was “perfectly well,” and then desperately confessed, “I have now I am afraid nothing more to say.” By comparison Henry’s letter seems almost effortless:

My dear Mr Clarke [sic]: As Papa is very anxious to hear from you, and Edmund is now working at a most terrific Problem, I take the liberty of sending you a few lines. I am afraid I shall not be able to say anything to amuse you, except so far as you may be interested respecting what is now going on at the Charterhouse. The name of the orator this year is Berdmore, grandson of your quondom Schoolmaster. He is a little short fellow with red hair, so that his grandfather might say of him, as he did of Dr. Heathcote, “Fine child, just such a boy as I was.” He has a tremendous voice, and thunders out the oration with the greatest emphasis. Papa was very anxious to go to hear him, but could not. The best news is, that Russell in endeavouring to Macadamize our green, has made a lake of it, and we are in the most imminent danger of being swept away like Pharaoh and all his host. I am, dear Mr Clark, Your affectionate friend, HL

The Charterhouse lists show that Edmund remained for two-and-a-half more years, until 1827, and that Henry stayed a year after Edmund left. Edmund is listed as school captain for 1825, 1826, and 1827. Henry was captain in 1828. In verse competitions Edmund won silver medals all three years for translations of poems in Greek, and one for English verse in 1827. Henry won a silver medal for Latin verse in 1827 and in Greek verse in 1828, and a gold medal in 1828 for Latin verse.

During Henry’s final year, being for the first time separated from Edmund, he developed a close friendship with a scholarly older boy, George Stovin Venables (born 1810), himself newly separated that year from his own elder brother, Richard Lister Venables, who had gone up from Charterhouse to
Cambridge. For both boys, until Henry’s early death with Venables among those at his bedside in Paris in 1855, this association would be the closest attachment outside their own families; and Venables’s intimacy with the Lushington brothers and sisters would long outlast Henry’s death. The daily journals Venables kept from 1839 to 1883, when he retired from the leadership of the Parliamentary Bar, are indispensable sources for the history of the Lushington family.

It would be instructive to know how Russell kept an ambitious, work-obsessed boy like Edmund profitably occupied during his nearly three years in first form at the top of the school. Were the assignments varied from year to year to keep such first-form holdovers on fresh materials? Mozley, who finished in 1825, the year Edmund became captain, said that Russell himself, feeling the need of more variety, once devoted a term to the rapid, uncritical reading of the *Odyssey*, and another time invited some of the first form to a private class in Thocritus. What, specifically, were the responsibilities of a school captain under Russell? Edmund’s anonymous obituary sketch in the *Athenaeum* (22 July 1893) would state that being “delicate in physique” and having risen to “the top of the school at a phenomenally early age,” he “was exposed to more than the common share of difficulty in maintaining his authority as captain.” Mozley, mentioning no names, wrote that in the ferment that was Charterhouse in those years, “boys were arriving at all ages; ... ‘taking places’ over one another’s heads, and rising in a year to the top of the school.” In such circumstances, whether “very big fellows or very little ... they might be equally unfit to make a good use of personal authority.”

Three testimonials of 1838, supporting Edmund for the Greek professorship at Glasgow University, touch upon the captain’s duties. Edmund’s great-uncle, the bishop of Bath and Wells, wrote that the post trained him “in the habit of superintending of the education of Boys, of various habits, & dispositions,” including many considerably “older than himself, at a time of life indeed, when a few years difference in age, constitutes in general the chief test & standard of superiority.” William Dobson, Edmund’s Charterhouse contemporary, stated generally that Edmund’s “position in the school rendered him constantly liable to be called on to instruct the higher boys in such subjects as they happened to be occupied with from time to time.” Russell himself was even less specific, saying only that “the post of captain, under the system which I had adopted, was one that required continued activity and vigilance, and I never found him wanting at the head of his class.”

Russell, by then six years out of his headmastership, went on to detail his admiration of Edmund:

He was always the same: industry was habitual with him: he was not
content with the ordinary routine of school work, but was always improving himself to the utmost of his power; and the exercises which he wrote from day to day, never failed to deserve praise. The prizes which he gained were numerous in every kind of composition: in Greek composition . . . none . . . could compete with him; and while the soundness of his critical scholarship was far beyond the average of schoolboy attainments, his memory . . . enable[d] him to cite or refer to almost any passage in authors whom he had read, and his taste was equal to his memory. Since he left me, I have watched his progress with affectionate interest, and have still found him ever the same, making the most of every opportunity of improvement, and increasing his fame with unvaried success.

Poor Russell, reliving the disturbing years when his greatest apparent success had begun to turn into his greatest failure, could well sigh for the stability of one thing, one boy sculptored after his own heart, who had been always and "ever the same"!

Edmund in his turn might or might not have felt so laudatory of Russell. Certainly Henry would not. Henry too had won prizes, including a gold medal, something Edmund had not; and he too had been the school's captain. But Henry had the heart of a libertarian, an exposèr of injustices, inequities, and abusers of authority; and he could not condone Russell's overbearing treatment of so many of his boys. Venables thought Henry was never quite fair to Russell: "He retained through life a strong sense of the harsh and unsympathetic system." Venables could never "induce him to share my own appreciation of the intellectual benefits, derived by himself and many others, from the most logical and masculine of teachers." Henry would have been "happier, if not better taught, under a master who had resembled the Dr. Arnold of popular tradition."

Henry himself, while captain of the school, wrote in February 1828:

Russell is turned out of his house, which is about to be pulled down, and a much better one built; he now occupies a brace of rooms where he can hardly stretch himself. However, though his lodgings are diminished, his spirit is increased; he is more ferocious than ever, and shows strong symptoms of magisterial insanity.

After Henry left the school, his brother Tom remained. Tom, or "Tod" as the family called him, was earnest and openhearted, admirably able to express his feelings and ideas, but he evidently had little calling for classical scholarship. Perhaps the Charterhouse masters, at a time of general frustration, felt personally affronted by a Lushington who did not match their stereotype of a Lushington. Henry felt they were persecuting Tom. He indignantly wrote his father in early November 1828, tactfully soliciting "more attention than the opinion of a
boy of 16 is likely to deserve." Tod’s "unfortunate situation at C.H." ought not to be "considered a proof of innate idleness," not while "every tendency to exertion, every wish for distinction, were damped by what I could readily call persevering spite and malice, and to which no easier name can be given than that of capricious injustice." What boy so maltreated could "be expected to surpass in industry others who met with no such chilling opposition?" The school had "thwarted Tod where he ought to have succeeded neither once nor twice." An "organized system of persecution seems to have been carried on against him, both by R1 and his subordinates." Russell himself had said of Tom that "he 'would not spare him as long as he was under him'." Henry would be happy to have Tod come up to Cambridge with him next year, and would do all that he could to help him succeed.

If I could exert myself for my own advantage—and I have shown that it was not quite out of my power to do so—should I not be much more ready, much more eager, in the pursuit, when on my steadiness depended in great measure the future prospects of one so dear to all of us? All this I leave to your impartial consideration.

Henry complained to a friend that one of Tod’s Charterhouse instructors seemed "to have taken a lesson in cruelty from Smithfield, and to have almost outdone his masters in the art of barbarity."

So the last word we have from one of our boys concerning the school where they had distinguished themselves is rather in the strain of Tupper and Thackeray. Tod, instead of to Cambridge, went on to Haileybury College to prepare for the Indian Civil Service. He would die off the coast of Ceylon in the summer of 1858 while attempting to return to England. When the youngest Lushington boy, Franklin, was ready for public school in 1835, it was Henry who took the lead in persuading their father to put him under Thomas Arnold at Rugby. And so it would occur that the long association of the Lushingtons with the unreformed Charterhouse was terminated in favor of the public school that had begun in the English mind to exemplify reform.