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SIR WALTER WILSON GREG

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1875-1959

WALTER WILSON GREG was born on 9 July 1875, the only child of William Rathbone Greg by his second wife, Julia, second of the six daughters of the Right Hon. James Wilson.

Tradition connects my family with the clan Macgregor, but it can be traced no further than the village of Ochiltree in Ayrshire, whence a John Greg, born late in the seventeenth century, migrated to Ulster. My grandfather, Samuel Greg, came from Belfast and built his cotton mill at Style, Cheshire, some years before the French Revolution. My father was born in 1809, the same year as Tennyson and Darwin.<sup>1</sup>

Greg's surname and his Christian names recall memories of three eminent Victorians: his grandfather James Wilson who 'first evoked order out of the chaos of Indian finance' and who founded *The Economist* (1843) and in its early days wrote nearly all of it himself; Walter Bagehot its most distinguished editor, who had married Wilson's eldest daughter; and W. R. Greg. All three men appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, as do his uncles Robert Hyde Greg and Samuel Greg and his half-brother Percy Greg. Bagehot is a writer who can never drop out of sight, but the books of W. R. Greg, such as *Enigmas of Life* (18th ed., 1891, with a memoir by his wife) and the *Literary and Social Judgements* (4th ed., 1877) are now read only by historians of the Victorian scene. Yet for the son's sake we may note John Morley's verdict that no article of his ever showed a trace either of slipshod writing or of make-believe and perfunctory thinking, and Oliver Elton's that he could both write and think and that his English 'is better than easy, being efficient and well-trained'.<sup>2</sup> Wilson died in 1860, Bagehot in 1877, and W. R. Greg in 1881 at the age of seventy-two. Walter Greg had no recollections of Bagehot and few of his father. If these economists

<sup>1</sup> I quote here and elsewhere from some 'Biographical Notes' which I persuaded Greg to make early in 1948. He foresaw that they might some day serve for a memoir, as indeed they do. A limited number of copies are being printed in the Bibliography Room of the Bodleian Library for distribution among his family, a few of his friends, and the chief libraries upon which he depended.

<sup>2</sup> See Morley's tribute 'W. R. Greg: A Sketch' in *Macmillan's Magazine*, lviii (1883), reprinted in *Critical Miscellanies*, iii (1886); and Elton's *Survey 1830-1880*, i. 303.

had lived to exercise their influence over him as a young man, the current of his life might well have been changed. He grew up knowing that *The Economist* was a family newspaper and that he was designed some day to be its editor.

He was born at Park Lodge on Wimbledon Common, a house bought by his father in 1857 as being within easy riding distance of town. His father's death left his mother in rather straightened circumstances, the house was let, and for seven years mother and son led a nomadic existence in the more picturesque parts of Europe, returning to England only for brief periods to stay at Langport with his aunt, Walter Bagehot's widow, or elsewhere. No doubt this sort of education is unorthodox, and no doubt it has its advantages; his Greek and Latin may have suffered, but he acquired a taste for Switzerland and the mountains of south-eastern France, of northern Italy, and of Austria which he was to indulge again and again in later life. Also he acquired French from a French governess and later in this *hegira* German. Wintering at Davos in 1883-4 mother and son saw much of John Addington Symonds and his wife and daughters. Of all men he had known, he would say, Arthur Marshall and Symonds were those who struck him as having most of the 'prophetic' character. In keeping with his later work was a visit to a passion play in one of the hill villages above the Wörther See near Klagenfurt:

It was in Windisch, the local Slovene dialect, and none of us could understand a word, but it was impressive in its rude simplicity, especially the procession of actors (all village folk) and audience alike from the open barn that served as stage along the hillside to Calvary.

This was in 1886 or 1887, and in the summer of 1888—very late in life, for he was thirteen—he was sent to a preparatory school at Wixenford near Wokingham kept by E. Arnold. As we might expect, he was not happy there, and he disliked Arnold. But there he met G. M. Trevelyan whom he was to follow to Harrow and Trinity. At Harrow in 1889 he entered the 'small' house of E. W. Howson, 'an estimable man whom I tolerated, and to whom I probably owed much'. Later he moved to the house of the headmaster, J. E. C. Welldon, 'whom I detested, but for whose housemaster Searle I came to have great affection'. Some of his school reports have survived. If the form-master was being just who accused him of insufficient attention to detail, then the child was no father to the man. On the other hand a letter from Howson to Greg's mother shows a profound under-

standing of her son's character, a character already formed by the time of his eighteenth birthday. It had come to the headmaster's knowledge that the boy had been in London during the Eton and Harrow match without going to Lord's, so cutting himself off unnecessarily 'from the social feeling and life of the School'; and there was adverse comment in his school report. Howson begged the mother not to show it to her son:

In Walter's case considering his natural bent, character, and interests I candidly but in confidence do not endorse such criticism. . . . He is of course a boy out of the common, and not cast in the usual mould. He takes his own line and his own views and except to a few intimate friends is rather reticent and inaccessible. . . . It would be foolish and even wicked to try and remould a marked character like his.

With a consideration of the strong and weak points in a character of this kind this Victorian schoolmaster concludes a letter that does honour to an honourable profession.

After a year in the lower school he was able to go on the 'modern side', where his knowledge of French and German and an aptitude for geometry—'in algebra I never really mastered the binomial theorem'—sent him rocketing up through the shells and the remove to find a comfortable place under an easy-going master in the lower fifth.

I remained there the rest of my school life, so missing the stimulating but more exacting rule of E. E. Bowen. Games I hated: I had to play football, but cricket I successfully avoided, devoting the time to volunteering and rifle-shooting. Three years I went to Bisley in the school eight, but was never a dependable shot. I also fenced, sometimes with Winston Churchill. . . . The only school prize I ever won was for translation into German.

Volunteering he found so attractive that after leaving school he took a commission in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the East Kent Regiment, rising to be captain of the Lamberhurst company. But while he enjoyed the periods of training in camp, the duties interfered too much with other pursuits and he resigned in 1901.

He went up to Trinity in October 1894, managed to his surprise to pass the Little-Go, and at once started to read for the Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos, taking the sections of modern English and German. His career at Cambridge was not more distinguished than at Harrow. The freedom of university life went to his head, his work was 'sometimes intensive, more often superficial, and always desultory', and in 1897 the man

who was one day to be elected into an Honorary Fellowship at Trinity failed to take Honours and was allowed only the pass degree. 'It probably did me good.' The failure to take Honours debarred him from reading the Moral Sciences Tripos, which included Political Economy, but it was decided that he should stay up another year to study economics. In this way he came to know and to value Alfred Marshall. To prepare himself for a career in financial journalism he even spent a summer as a bank clerk at Kirkby Lonsdale and Lancaster. But it was already clear to him if not to his family that his interests lay elsewhere. Instead of joining the staff of *The Economist* he gladly embraced the alternative of becoming a trustee in the family interest, and in later years the responsibility of getting rid of one editor and appointing two others was to fall chiefly upon him. He remained a trustee till the property was sold in 1928, and at the time of his death he was still the largest individual shareholder. He never lost interest in the paper and was an occasional contributor—for the last time on 10 May 1947 with a letter on the tobacco duty.

Inglorious as his performance in the Tripos was, there were those among his teachers (Skeat, Verrall, Breul) and among his contemporaries (G. M. Trevelyan) who recognized his quality. His mother's friend Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, then staying with Sir George Trevelyan at Wallington, Northumberland, sent her a consolatory letter on 27 August 1897:

I am delighted to find that George Trevelyan the younger who is *most* remarkable speaks *very highly indeed* of Walter and says that his mischance was a pure accident resulting from the ill-organized condition of the School. The impression produced upon contemporaries and those a little older is of course the important thing. . . . I think that Walter's stumble will be a perfect blessing. He will now make Early English and all the rest of it a hobby and amusement—not the business of life.

But perhaps Grant Duff had never heard of Greg's undergraduate friend, R. B. McKerrow, for his future by far the most formative influence on his life. They had met on the rifle-range at Harrow but did not become intimate till Greg's second year at Trinity. Then they became inseparable and did much of their work together. That this duumvirate—with the accession of A. W. Pollard to become a triumvirate—were friends, 'a happy band of brothers', will not be a matter of indifference to the future historian of Shakespearian studies, as he passes to them

after narrating the enmities of Pope and Theobald, Steevens and Malone, Collier and Dyce, Furnivall and Halliwell-Phillipps.<sup>1</sup> McKerrow was two and a half years older and correspondingly more mature, and no doubt Greg profited not only from his scholarship but from his stability and sense of direction. Together they founded the Cambridge University English Society, and while it was shortlived it had some distinguished members. At the preliminary meeting in McKerrow's rooms on 29 May 1896 Skeat was elected President, Greg Secretary, and McKerrow one of the two committee men. Other members were Trevelyan, Gollancz, E. Magnússon, and 'that charming and wayward genius A. W. Verrall'. Among the visitors were G. E. Moore, F. M. Cornford, and the man who inspired many young bibliographers in those halcyon days before the First World War, Charles Sayle.<sup>2</sup> Seldom if ever has a literary society initiated by undergraduates laid such emphasis on scholarship, and perhaps by reason of the severity of its standards or because McKerrow left Cambridge in 1897 the Society's nineteenth meeting on 16 February 1898 was its last. Both McKerrow and Greg, however, had read papers which gave a foretaste of work they were to publish later, McKerrow on 'The so-called Classical Metres in Elizabethan Verse' and Greg on 'The Pastoral Drama on the Elizabethan Stage'.

Greg's paper was published in the *Cornhill* for August 1899, but his first appearance in print was in 1896—as poet in the *Spectator* (18 September) and as mountaineer in the *Alpine Journal* (November) with an account of the ascent of 'Piz Vadret by the N.W. Arête'. It is to be remarked that Greg and E. K. Chambers both wrote verses. *Verses by W. W. G.* was published at Cambridge by Macmillan and Bowes in 1900 [1901] in a small octavo pamphlet.<sup>3</sup>

Mountaineering was a taste which Greg indulged as long as he was able, and many vacations were spent in Switzerland and Italy, at first with his mother, then alone or with McKerrow,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 76 of the work mentioned below at p. 319, note 1. In the same year, 1942, G. M. Trevelyan wrote to Greg: 'I cannot help feeling that Shakespeare scholarship gained greatly by the fact that you and McKerrow were such personal friends. I often think of you and him in the room of the Great Court here together in the old days.'

<sup>2</sup> The minute-book preserved with careful husbandry by the secretary became, when turned back to front, the minute-book of the Malone Society.

<sup>3</sup> On Chambers's verses see *Proceedings*, 1956, xlii. 258, 282-3. The only verses of McKerrow I have seen are those on Joan of Arc (a set theme) for which he was awarded the Chancellor's Medal in 1895.

later with his wife, also a mountaineer. He was not deterred by a serious accident in 1893 climbing alone among the Coolins in Skye when he lay out for two nights before crawling back to shelter. He climbed also at Trinity. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, a friend and contemporary, who became one of the greatest English mountaineers of this century and wrote the classic *On High Hills*, also wrote *The Roof-Climber's Guide to Trinity. Containing a Practical Description of all Routes* (1899). Greg never climbed with the Trinity Alpine Club, but in a pencilled note in his copy of the last-named book he claims to have been 'one of the first to indulge in the sport, when I did the South side of Great Court, the Kitchen, Hall, and South side of Nevile's with H. A. Rose on the evening of the 1897 Jubilee'. Hugh Arthur Rose, fellow Harrovian and fellow roof-climber, whose presence at Trinity diverted Greg from Magdalen College, Oxford, was to become Chairman of the General Board of Control for Scotland.

While yet an undergraduate Greg was already discussing with McKerrow projects for editing Elizabethan drama and the textual methods to be used, and when he should have been writing essays on monetary theory he was collecting material for a bibliography of the drama. In 1898 he joined the Bibliographical Society, a momentous year for him and for the Society, and so began a forty years' friendship and association with its secretary, A. W. Pollard; and in the next year at the age of twenty-four he submitted to the Council a skeleton finding-list of English plays written before 1643 and published before 1700. It appeared in 1900, with the titles set out in full by another hand, and was followed by a list of masques and pageants in 1902. These were the Society's first important contributions to English studies. The lists were mere 'bibliography by enumeration', and they earned for the compiler a reputation for learning beyond his years. In the end he completed the descriptive bibliography of which these were the first-fruits. But he was 'sixty years on the job'.

In 1900 the lease of Park Lodge fell in and Greg and his mother returned after an absence of eighteen years. By this time

my mother had become reconciled to the idea that I was never to be a figure in public life like her father, her husband, and brother-in-law, or like her friends Lord Avebury, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, and R. H. Hutton of the *Spectator* (consoling herself with *The Grammarian's Funeral*); and I had given up all thought of economics, extension lecturing, or teaching abroad, and had settled down to the only life and study that appealed to me.

Fortunately for him and English scholarship he was able to follow his bent without the distraction of earning a living. He was fortunate too in his place of residence. Pollard was at hand in the British Museum, McKerrow was a constant reader there, at lunch in the Vienna Café nearby Moore Smith was often to be found, and Furnivall held court (in his tweed cap) at a neighbouring ABC. The Museum became the best centre for Elizabethan studies in the world, especially during the summer migration from America. And for relaxation there were—for Greg, McKerrow, and Frank Sidgwick and from 1904 till 1907—the Vedrenne-Barker productions at the Court and later at the Savoy. (Granville-Barker, one of Greg's heroes, he was to meet by chance when serving with the Friends' Ambulance Unit in France.) In July 1900 at the suggestion of Moore Smith he became sub-editor of the *Modern Language Quarterly* under Frank Heath, whom he succeeded as editor in 1903. But when the task became burdensome he resigned, so precipitating a crisis which led in 1905 to the founding of *The Modern Language Review*.

Among the many men to be found in the British Museum or its purlieus was that breezy Elizabethan scholar A. H. Bullen, precariously running his publisher's business from 47 Great Russell Street. With Bullen Greg published, but at his own expense, his *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (1906), a theme which he had touched on in his paper to the Cambridge English Society and which led to his spending a summer at Courmayeur at the head of the Val d'Aosta improving his Italian. He thought poorly of this book and he learned from it, so he told me, that he had no gift for writing literary history. Yet the book has the merit of convincing the reader that he had sought for, read, and understood all the relevant texts, and that his conclusions were solidly based on the evidence. So far there is no better book about English Renaissance pastoral, both poetry and drama, in its relations to Italian and French pastoral. He would have been surprised, but I think gratified, to learn that an American publisher has reprinted it. But Bullen was to do Greg a greater service than publishing this book, and Bullen's encouragement was as important to McKerrow as to Greg. He it was who suggested to McKerrow an edition of Thomas Nashe, one of the best editions of any English author, completed while the editor was still under forty. About the same time (1902) he suggested to Greg an edition of *Henslowe's Diary*, and he published the text in 1904, the commentary in



1908, and miscellaneous papers from the Alleyn collection at Dulwich (*Henslowe Papers*) in 1907. It was Greg's first major work as the Nashe was McKerrow's, and in the commentary he began to skip about 'the Serbonian bog of Elizabethan theatrical history' with an agility and a surefootedness only rivalled by E. K. Chambers.

The work of preparing these was the foundation of what knowledge I have of Elizabethan palaeography and theatrical history. The one side brought me into touch with George Warner at the British Museum, whose ever ready help and cautious criticism were of inestimable value to a beginner; the other led to close association with E. K. Chambers.

In the opening years of this century, then, he was establishing himself as a palaeographer and as an authority on theatrical history, but also in many an article and review as the upholder, with Pollard and McKerrow, of new standards of accuracy and knowledge in the bibliographical analysis of Elizabethan texts. He was always a diligent and fearless reviewer, and in the two-hundred-odd reviews he wrote there are few that do not contribute to the subject in hand. As a reviewer he was just, though often severe. A good idea of his acuteness and of his standards while still a young man may be gathered from his reviews of the Clarendon Press's editions of Kyd, Lyly, and Greene and of the Cambridge University Press's Beaumont and Fletcher, all published between 1901 and 1906. Most severe of all is the review of Churton Collins's *Greene* in the *Modern Language Review* for April 1906. The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press are said to have hesitated before venturing to print it, and the publishers of *Greene* are said to have taken advice about improving the standards of their editors. 'It is high time', Greg observed in his review of the edition, 'that it should be understood that so long as we entrust our old authors to arm-chair editors who are content with second-hand knowledge of textual sources, so long will English scholarship in England afford undesirable amusement to the learned world.' But if he was often severe in blame, he was often generous in praise. We came to rely upon him for a just judgement of a book, and there is no one now who can speak with the same authority. An American scholar has recently paid him this tribute:

One did not dare print work that was not one's very best, simply because one knew that Greg would read it, regardless of whether he would comment on it or not. In many unknown ways that doubtless would have amused him, he set for us all standards that as a matter of

pride we had to try to meet. This is the kind of unconscious impress that a great man makes upon his world.<sup>1</sup>

Both he and McKerrow were contributors to the series of reprints of old plays launched by W. Bang of Louvain in 1904. Two years later the Malone Society was founded at the suggestion of A. W. Pollard, and of this Society Greg was general editor till 1939. For the last twenty years of his life he was president, and his successor as general editor can testify that he was almost as active after he changed office as before. Of the 108 volumes published between 1907 and 1957 there are few that did not profit in some way from his scrutiny and for many he was solely responsible. He has been rightly called the Atlas of the Society. My own friendship with him dates from 1919 when he asked me to collaborate with him in editing the first edition of *Every Man Out of his Humour*. 'Collaborate' is hardly the right word. It was he who identified for the first time the first edition and who drafted the introduction, and I remember how he overrode my protest that my name had no business to be mentioned on a level with his. His great gifts as a palaeographer and as a textual critic found most scope in the editions of manuscript plays, and the most famous of these was that of *Sir Thomas More*, three pages of which are believed to be in Shakespeare's hand. His is the first accurate transcript and the first in which the seven hands in the manuscript are properly distinguished and described. One apparently small bit of work has always astonished me by its excellence. The rules for the guidance of editors of the Society's reprints which he printed in 1909 could only have been drawn up by a master, so acutely do they anticipate the problems which arise in printing diplomatic reproductions of Elizabethan texts.

He was no great keeper of letters, unless indeed there was substance in them, when his practice was to bind, paste or tuck them into an appropriate book; but he kept a letter of 22 January 1904 from Aldis Wright, Vice Master, thanking him on behalf of the Council of Trinity for the 'admirable catalogue' of the Capell collection 'which you have compiled with such care'. (In 1909 he did the same service for Eton and its early editions of Shakespeare.) The Capell catalogue had important consequences, for he attributed to that and to his friendship with

<sup>1</sup> Fredson Bowers in *The Library*, September 1959, 5th series, xiv. 173, a number which also contains tributes by J. C. T. Oates, J. Dover Wilson, Alice Walker, Muriel St. Clare Byrne, and F. C. Francis.

Wright his appointment in 1907 as Librarian of Trinity, his one salaried academic post. 'I know that Henry Jackson, my only other friend on the College Council, had misgivings about the appointment.' The conditions were not arduous—two hours a day four days a week during term, week-ends at home, and rooms in Nevile's Court, one of two sets previously occupied by Lord Acton, in which he was succeeded by Eddington. Soon after returning to Cambridge he submitted his edition of Henslowe for the degree of Doctor in Letters and was presented by Jackson.

Pollard asked me whether the College expected its Librarian to be a doctor, or whether it was mere *hubris*. I replied that I wished to wipe out the disgrace of my first degree, so that it was perhaps as much *eidós* as *hubris*; which I think pleased him.

While his work remained chiefly in the Elizabethan field, he found some outlet for the medieval interests which both he and McKerrow had acquired from attending Gollancz's lectures while undergraduates. It was a stimulus to be in charge of one of the great collections of early manuscripts, and he completed a detailed description of Trinity's English manuscripts before 1500 which would probably have been printed but for the war and still remains in the Library. In 1913 he published facsimiles of twelve of its Early English manuscripts in the hope that it might be of use to such students of his college as might wish to begin the study of earlier English literature: for, without familiarity with the original texts 'I do not believe that the study can be profitably pursued'. Had he not been committed to his dramatic bibliography and to the general editorship of the Malone Society he might have devoted his life, though he was no philologist, to a study of the manuscript sources of English medieval literature. He planned an ambitious series of volumes—'I was always fond of planning ambitious schemes'—which would have described the actual manuscripts (estimated at 5,000) with particular attention to their bibliographical make-up, dealt with the individual works with reference to the manuscripts in which they were preserved and the relation of the texts, offered extracts of not more than fifty lines of every important work or collection, and concluded with an atlas of at least a hundred plates from the most nearly datable manuscripts as a basis for the study of English palaeography. In 1906 another ambitious scheme was suggested by Walter Raleigh writing on behalf of the Clarendon Press, a press with which he

was to establish the happiest relations. (This approach may be taken as evidence that the salutary shocks which Greg had given the Delegates and their Secretary were bearing fruit.<sup>1</sup>) The proposal was for a select corpus of early English drama in three fat volumes from the beginnings down to the appearance of the regular types in *Roister Doister* and *Gorboduc*.

The scheme never came to anything, but I did a lot of work on it, and some *parerga* saw the light. Towards the solution of certain problems I designed a series of studies to include editions of *The Assumption of the Virgin* from the so-called 'Ludus Coventriae', the *Antichrist* of the Chester cycle, *Christ and the Doctors* in parallel extracts from York, Chester, and Coventry, and an investigation of the very complex Vespasian manuscript. The first of these appeared in 1915, the second not for another twenty years; the third was included, also in 1935, in a collection of *Chester Play Studies* issued by the Malone Society; the fourth never was . . . written, though it presents perhaps the most fascinating puzzle of the lot. The *Antichrist* involved problems of textual criticism the principles of which were far from clear to me, however they might appear to others, and what was designed as a section of the introduction eventually grew into a small book, printed in 1927 as *The Calculus of Variants*. Another *parergon* was the series of lectures on 'Bibliographical and Textual Problems of the English Miracle Cycles' that I delivered as Sanders Reader in Bibliography at Cambridge in 1913 and that appeared in *The Library* the following year.

Little notice has been taken of *The Calculus of Variants*,<sup>2</sup> an examination of how far in treating the descent and variation of manuscripts formal rules may be substituted for the continuous application of reason. He would have denied that as logician or mathematician he was anything but an amateur, but it is very remarkable that he was able to read and discuss with interest and understanding 'difficult books, written largely in symbols' like Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On 17 April 1906, fresh from reading Greg's review of *Greene*, Henry Bradley wrote to the Secretary (Charles Cannan): 'I do not know Greg, and have not even any notion who or what he is, but he seems to know his ground splendidly. The Press ought to get him to do an edition of something.' (Privately communicated.)

<sup>2</sup> It is discussed with other works, from a philosophical angle, by John Mackie in 'Scientific Treatment in Textual Criticism', *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, August 1947, xxv, 53-80; and it is touched on in *Bulletin Bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne*, 1951, no. 3, pp. 83-90. See also W. W. G. in *Modern Philology*, 1931, xxviii, 401-4 and V. A. Dearing's respectful treatment in *A Manual of Textual Analysis* (1959).

<sup>3</sup> J. C. T. Oates citing C. D. Broad in *The Library*, 1959, 5th ser., xiv, 151.

When I confessed that I had not read his book, he was rather cross with me for suggesting that a knowledge of symbolic logic was necessary to its understanding, and it is true that the look of (say)  $(x)A'(AB) (CD) (EF)$  is the most forbidding thing about it. In this attempt 'to define unambiguously the notions required in textual criticism, and by the more rigorous methods of symbolic treatment to obviate some of the errors into which critics appear to have fallen' the extraordinary quality and acuteness of his mind are as apparent as anywhere else in his work.

Meantime, while the Bibliography of the drama sometimes receded from sight, it was never wholly lost to sight, and some of the discoveries which he made during the course of this work brought him to the notice of a far larger public than did his work on Henslowe, because they affected the work of the editors of Shakespeare and the financial interests of the collectors of Shakespeare. As far back as 1903 he had written a damaging review of Sidney Lee's introduction to the Oxford collotype facsimile of the First Folio. Lee at that time held almost a monopoly of the Shakespeare market in popular esteem, but Greg was never reluctant to disturb accepted reputations or views, and he questioned Lee's sweeping assertions about the piracies of Elizabethan printers and the characteristics of prompt copies and private transcripts. (If Lee was more often right than Greg allowed at the time, it was for the wrong reasons!) Pollard had told him that he would print the review if it was polite; this he refused to be, Pollard's curiosity was piqued, and the review appeared in *The Library* for 1903.

Pollard's own bibliographical work had hitherto been mainly concerned with foreign printing and book illustration, but his experience as a bibliographer and editor was at the service of Greg and McKerrow, both of whom thought of him as their friend and master.<sup>1</sup> His insistence that the bibliographer must have continually in his mind's eye the actual material manuscript from which the compositor was working inspired and encouraged them in their desire to extract from the available evidence the utmost information. In 1906 Pollard's attention was turned to Shakespeare, and one of the consequences was the writing of his exciting *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (1909),

<sup>1</sup> So causing Pollard to write to Greg on 13 August 1926: 'The main reason of this letter is to express my abashment (and pleasure) at your calling me your friend and *master*. Of course it makes me laugh, as you and McKerrow both not only know more than I do, but know it much more accurately.'

a landmark in the bibliographical study of Shakespearian texts. At this time so close was the co-operation of Pollard and Greg, so frequent their consultations, that disentanglement of the work of one from that of the other is not easy. This is suggested by the charming inscription in Greg's copy of *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*—'To W. W. Greg All here that's mine. A. W. P.'

What turned Pollard's attention to Shakespeare was the inspection of a volume, brought to him at the British Museum, of ten 'Shakespearian' quartos, two undated (the 'bad quartos' of 2 and 3 *Henry VI*) and the rest dated 1600, 1608, and 1619, and purporting to be published or printed by four different men.<sup>1</sup> In 1902 he had been brought a similar volume containing the same plays, and he could not believe the coincidence to be accidental. The solution he proposed was one which would not too much disturb accepted views, but which did not explain the identity of type in the imprints and their unusual brevity or why typographical peculiarities pointed to the press of William Jaggard after 1610 or why all these quartos of whatever date were printed on the same mixed stock of paper. In two articles in *The Library* for April and October 1908 'On Certain False Dates in Shakespearian Quartos' Greg proved that all ten plays were printed by Jaggard in 1619. The publisher, Thomas Pavier, was in fact attempting a collection without the authority of the players, a scurvy attempt as compared with the authorized collection of 1623, for with two exceptions the texts are corrupt or apocryphal. The conclusions Greg reached were (as Coventry Patmore said of the critical sayings of Goethe and Coleridge) 'demonstrable and irreversible'; in future no one could hold, for example, that the 'Roberts' quarto of *The Merchant of Venice* (1600=1619) was earlier than the quarto printed by Thomas Hayes (1600). Here was a notable victory for the 'new bibliography' and for Greg. His mother, who died in 1911, lived long enough to realize that if her son was not to become a public figure, he was yet to achieve fame, if a narrower fame. McKerrow wrote to her on 6 May 1908:

Everyone is delighted with Walter's article in the 'Library', really a most brilliant piece of work and one that must give him a permanent position among the foremost of Shakespearian scholars. I think Trinity should be proud of their librarian.

In 1913 he resigned his librarianship on his marriage to his

<sup>1</sup> I have told this story more fully in a chapter on 'Shakespeare and the "New Bibliography"' in *The Bibliographical Society 1892-1942: Studies in Retrospect* (1945), pp. 78-80, a chapter written in 1942.

cousin Elizabeth Gaskell, youngest daughter of his namesake Walter Greg of Lee Hall, Prestbury, Cheshire, a marriage which brought him great happiness. After a long honeymoon they settled at Park Lodge, and he resumed work seriously on his Bibliography. But not for long. When war broke out his first job was to drive a car for Scotland Yard, where his friend Frank Elliott was an assistant commissioner; then (1915) he served for a few months as a chauffeur with the Friends' Ambulance Unit in France; and finally he joined the staff of the War Trade Intelligence Department, being at first concerned with a publication called *Who's Who in War Trade* and later with a series of 'Peace Books' intended for use at the peace conference, of which he wrote the portion on the geography and communications of Tibet! During his convalescence from an attack of influenza and pleurisy early in 1917 he wrote the first of several articles on Hamlet's Ghost with its highly ingenious but subversive plea that the Ghost is a figment of Hamlet's brain. It led to a spirited controversy with Dover Wilson in which neither party changed his mind but both settled into a lasting friendship.

The war over, he turned once more to the Bibliography. The Cambridge libraries he had exhausted during his residence there, and now he worked systematically through the collections in the British Museum, at South Kensington, and at Eton, and paid two long visits to Oxford. 'But I could not keep other irons out of the fire.' So many irons did he have in the fire that the surprising thing is not that the Bibliography was not completed till 1959 but that it was completed at all. The lists of his writings published in *The Library* for June 1945 and for March 1960 show the extraordinary activity of his mind and pen.<sup>1</sup> 'Pen' is to be taken literally, for he never used a typewriter, but sent all his manuscripts to the press in his own clear and beautiful script. Like his friend E. K. Chambers he was a fast drafter because he knew before he wrote exactly what he wanted to say and was not forced (like lesser mortals) to make the discovery during the process of writing. His 'foul papers' often looked like fair copies. The 'Biographical Notes' which I am so often using do not in thirty-three quarto pages contain a single erasure. What was not impeccable—and this may be a comfort to some—was his spelling of modern English.

To attempt in this place any detailed account of this vast

<sup>1</sup> Because of these lists I have been sparing in giving detailed references to his work.

output which continued without diminution of quality or quantity to the end of his long life and all of which has not yet been published is impossible. But we may consider some aspects of his work which have profoundly influenced current theory and practice. On the function of bibliography he had much to say. Before the early years of the century its importance was hardly recognized. Pollard was one of the pioneers, and McKerrow exercised great influence through a *Library* article (1913) and above all through his *Introduction to Bibliography* (1927).<sup>1</sup> Greg's first thoughts are in a paper entitled 'What is Bibliography?' (1912), and he also considered the subject in his two presidential addresses to the Bibliographical Society (1930, 1932) and in the Society's *Studies in Retrospect* (1945). But perhaps the finest statement of his views on the relations of bibliography and textual criticism is in the lecture on 'The Function of Bibliography in Literary Criticism illustrated in a Study of the Text of *King Lear*' delivered at Amsterdam in 1933. 'I think', Pollard wrote to him, 'that for weight of argument, conciseness, and the pleasure with which it can be read the lecture is your masterpiece. May you produce many more!'

He took a less conservative view than McKerrow. Like McKerrow he maintained that bibliography is the study of books as material objects irrespective of their contents with the purpose of ascertaining the exact circumstances and conditions in which they were produced, and that as in the case of the false-dated quartos or of the two issues of the quarto of *Troilus and Cressida* it could establish complete certainty where a non-bibliographical approach would fail. But he went on to extend its boundaries by insisting that manuscripts and the investigation of textual transmission fall within its province. That it was the duty of the critic to establish the genealogy of family relationships between all the extant manuscripts of a book with a view to arriving at the text of the original was a discovery of the nineteenth century; but that the same duty devolved upon the editor of a printed text not merely in establishing the relationships between the different editions of a work but in attempting to discover what sort of copy the printer had before him when he was setting up the type—this doctrine Greg had very much at heart. If the boundary between bibliography and textual criticism became a little uncertain at times, no harm was done: it was sufficient that there was a bridge, and a substantial bridge, between the two. It came to be recognized that analytical

<sup>1</sup> See Greg's obituary notice of him in *Proceedings*, xxvi, 1940.



bibliography was an essential preliminary to textual criticism, and he was delighted to know that at Oxford Herbert Davis, the Reader in Textual Criticism, presided over the Bibliography Room in the New Bodleian, 'welcome evidence, to me, of the recognition of the kinship of the two studies'.

Of the important part which he took in making it possible for us to know, as we did not know at the beginning of the century, the exact circumstances and conditions in which a particular book was produced, something must now be said. And we may begin with his work on printers and publishers. Of typography he knew more than most men, but he was no great expert, and when a printer needed to be identified or an ornament to be dated he was content to rely (as who is not?) upon the learning and generosity of F. S. Ferguson. Of the interpretation of typographical evidence the study of *The Variants in the First Quarto of 'King Lear'* (1940) shows him to have been a master. The most recent advances, however, especially the advances which concern the method of casting off and the distinctions between different compositors, these came from younger scholars like Fredson Bowers, Charlton Hinman, Alice Walker, all admirers of his who kept in touch with 'the master'; and although these advances invalidated here and there some of his latest work he welcomed them, and the more so because they were bibliographical advances of which a textual critic had often to take heed. The sound of younger generations knocking at the door was to him a pleasant and a cheerful noise.

In his later years he turned more and more to the history of publishing between 1557 when the Stationers' Company received its charter and 1640, in fact during the period covered by Edward Arber's *Transcript of the Stationers' Registers*. In 1930 he edited with Miss Eleanore Boswell (Lady Murrie) the records of the Company's Court (1576-1602) from Register B, records which Arber for some reason had not been allowed to print. These and the later records (1602-1640) edited by W. A. Jackson in 1957 tell us much about that underworld of stationers concerned with the 'baggage literature' of the age. Greg was never content merely to print records; he had always to interpret them. Some scraps of evidence from these records which had been printed by William Herbert in 1785-90 and which throw a lurid light on the publishers of *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Arden of Feversham* and their internecine warfare he interpreted in 'The Spanish Tragedy—A Leading Case?' (1925) and was to interpret more fully later (1949). During the Second World War,

when rare books became inaccessible and the Bibliography was stored away, he returned to these studies in earnest. In an open letter to me before his *Some Aspects and Problems of London Publishing between 1550 and 1650* (1956), the Lyell Lectures in Bibliography delivered at Oxford in Trinity Term 1955, he maintained that some chance remarks of mine throwing doubts on the significance of what the Stationers' Registers record set him off on a detailed study of the Registers themselves and such associated documents as were in print. However that may be, he spent two months in 1943 entering in the margins of Arber the Short-Title Catalogue numbers of the books identified in that work and considered that he had never spent time to better purpose. 'At the end of a couple of years or so I had accumulated material that filled close on a thousand pages of the appropriate foolscap.<sup>1</sup> These he digested and made use of in a paper on 'Entrance, Licence, and Publication' (1944) but above all in his Lyell Lectures, in which he considers the decrees and ordinances affecting the book trade, the stationers' records, licensing for the press, entrance and copyright, the interpretation of imprints, and so on. These topics, with much else, he also discussed in his book on *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History*, an admirably clear and authoritative exposition of the existing state of knowledge and opinion in 1955. In 1903 he had said, in the review of Sidney Lee, that 'it must be frankly confessed that we know very little about the old copyright regulations'. If this is now not true, we owe it to him as much as to any man. One mystery, indeed, has not been solved: why it is that so many works, often highly respectable, were never entered for copyright. His last thought on this problem was that we do not know.<sup>2</sup>

But this account of his work on early publishing conditions is not yet complete. The evening before he died he was at work on what he called *A Companion to Arber*, his manuscript of which is in eleven portfolios. Within the period covered by Arber's *Transcript* he gave transcripts, with interpretations, of documents not printed by Arber; a calendar both of the documents printed by Arber and those not printed; an account of all concerned with the licensing of books; an analysis under appropriate headings of such occasional notes in the Register as throw light on the organization, rules, and customs, of the printing and publishing business; and an index to the miscel-

<sup>1</sup> *Some Aspects*, p. v.

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliography of the English Drama*, iv (1959), clxv.

laneous information in Arber. In a draft preface he wrote that this sort of work was perhaps the only activity he was then capable of, but there is no sign of failing powers, and when the work is printed it will be found not unworthy of him; for it both advances and consolidates knowledge. It should be mentioned that without a generous grant for the purchase of books and photographs in the United States, offered to him in 1946 by the Rockefeller Foundation who wrote to ask him if it could in any way further his work, much of his later writing could not have been done.

Turn next to the consequences of his insistence that the bibliographer must establish relationships between the different editions of a work and attempt to discover the sort of copy which lay behind the original edition. Of his skill in the former task one early example (1905) may be cited. Which is the earlier of two editions of *The Elder Brother*, both dated 1637? The Cambridge editors of Beaumont and Fletcher could not tell, but Greg found the proof in one reading. In Q1 an improperly adjusted space-lead had produced a mark before the word *young* which the compositor of Q2 mistook for an apostrophe, 'young. The economy of the proof shows the workman's confidence in his tools. In his *Bibliography*, of course, the ordering of the editions and the distinctions between editions, issues, and variants receive constant attention.

In these matters proof is usually attainable. But what of the attempt to estimate the nature of the manuscript handed to the printer? A few non-dramatic manuscripts used by a printer have survived, of which the most interesting is Harington's autograph of his *Orlando Furioso* xiv-xlvi, from which the first edition was printed in 1591. Greg gave an all-too-brief study of it in 1925, in which he inquired how far the printer departed from the spellings and punctuation of the author. But all dramatic manuscripts used by a printer have perished, and speculations on the nature of original dramatic copy are necessarily based on circumstantial evidence. Greg saw that if we were ever to get beyond Lee's glib statements about prompt copies and private transcripts, we must study the extant remains. We must not only examine the printed texts themselves for the evidence they may yield in stage-directions, textual corruption, mislineations, &c., but we must ask ourselves what sorts of printed texts the extant dramatic manuscripts would have supplied if they had been put into print. And side by side with this work we must explore the nature of Elizabethan handwriting in general and

in particular the hands of authors and playhouse scribes. So he set about the task of making the evidence available to all with characteristic pains and skill. Two types of theatrical manuscript he had printed and discussed in his *Henslowe Papers*—players' parts and theatrical 'plots' or skeleton outlines marking exits and entrances and properties scene by scene for use behind the stage. For the Malone Society he began to edit or inspire a series of editions of manuscript plays, whether prompt copies like *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (1910) or the anomalous *Sir Thomas More* (1911) which may never have reached the stage or 'foul papers' as in *Bonduca* (1951) or private transcripts as in *The Witch* (1950). A major work is the substantial *Dramatic Documents<sup>1</sup> from the Elizabethan Playhouses* (1931) giving full descriptive accounts, with facsimiles, of the scanty remains of 'plots' and actors' parts, and of the more plentiful prompt copies and manuscripts of similar kinds. Another is *English Literary Autographs 1550 to 1650* (1925-32) with facsimiles, transcriptions, and comment on the hands of dramatists, poets, prosewriters, scholars, and archaeologists, done in collaboration with McKerrow, Pollard, J. P. Gilson, and Hilary Jenkinson. Thanks in part to these works, attempts to identify the hands of dramatists and playhouse scribes have met with striking successes.

He saw that where print and manuscript might be brought together for purposes of comparison and control the amount of speculation necessary would be reduced. With this in mind he made his comparison of the *Orlando* manuscript with the printed edition, and with this in mind he analysed the corrections which Massinger had written in copies of some of his plays (1923, 1924). His most elaborate contribution of the sort was his *Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements: 'The Battle of Alcazar' and 'Orlando Furioso'* (1922),<sup>2</sup> written at a time when speculation was rife about the nature of what Pollard had called 'bad quartos', that is, texts marred by memorial transmission. For both quartos there is manuscript control, for the *Battle* a 'plot' and for *Orlando* the player's part of Orlando. Greg showed that not all 'bad quartos' have the same origin or history, for while both these texts are shortened versions Peele's play is a simple case of abridgement done no doubt for a provincial tour, whereas Greene's is marred by dictation from the imperfect memories of the actors. He emphasized too the necessity of examining the

<sup>1</sup> He maintained that it should have been called *Theatrical Documents*.

<sup>2</sup> He presented this work to members of the Malone Society.

non-Shakespearian 'bad quartos' if the Shakespearian ones were to be seen in their proper light.

Many pages of his Clark lectures on *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (1942; 3rd edition, 1954) and of his book on the First Folio are devoted to attempts to identify the nature of the manuscripts which served as copy for Shakespeare's plays. It must be confessed that so far these attempts have not always met with the success hoped for. McKerrow was sceptical of reaching any conclusions about the play manuscripts used in printing that could be more than *probably* correct at best, and in his last years Greg, I think, came near to sharing the same opinion. The elaboration of hypotheses concerning the nature of the copy from which some of Dekker's plays were printed forced him to ask the question: 'Is it that our hopes of being able to infer from the features of a printed text the nature of the manuscript that served as copy are fated to vanish like a dream?'<sup>1</sup> Here is the power of turning upon oneself which Arnold admired in Burke and took to be a sign of greatness. Yet he would not have absolved the bibliographer and textual critic from the duty of *trying* to identify the nature and history of the printer's copy. One of the leading principles of the 'new bibliography' was, as he put it in his 'Principles of Emendation in Shakespeare' delivered before this Academy in 1928, that 'no emendation can or ought to be considered *in vacuo*, but criticism must always proceed in relation to what we know, or what we may surmise, respecting the history of the text'. A critic who proposes several emendations in a text should be sure that they do not involve contradictory theories of its origin. He may not treat textual variants as 'literary counters in a guessing game, quite apart from the sources whence they are derived'.

At the same time he was far from supposing that textual criticism could be reduced to a set of mechanical rules. He quarrelled with a principle which McKerrow had stated in his edition of Nashe and thirty-five years later in his *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare* (1939), that where an editor is satisfied that a later edition contains variants some of which are likely to be the work of the author then *all* those variants must be accepted, saving obvious blunders and misprints. This principle Greg attacked again and again, first in his obituary notice of McKerrow in our *Proceedings* (1940), and last (at my request) in a note on the text of *The Unfortunate Traveller* in a supplement

<sup>1</sup> See the review, published posthumously, in *The Review of English Studies*, November 1959, x. 415.

to the 1958 reprint of *Nashe*. McKerrow was actuated by a desire to avoid the eclecticism of nineteenth-century editors, but in reacting against their aberrations was led to formulate a doctrine that evaded the responsibility of individual judgement. Greg loved adventure in textual criticism as in mountaineering, though in both he liked to be sure of what hazards he was running, and to leave as little as possible to chance and as much as possible to knowledge, experience, skill, and (if the metaphor may be pushed so far) illumination. To see him at his most daring we may consult his reconstruction of Jonson's *Masque of Gipsies*, published by the Academy in 1952. Many an editor might prefer to run away from a masque that was performed in three different versions and preserved in five independent texts; but not Greg. His edition is a manifesto to conservative editors. Not for nothing did he hail as master A. W. Pollard, 'that master of the art of concealing incendiary ideas under a cloak of respectable conservatism'.<sup>1</sup> The difference was that he cared nothing for respectable conservatism.

In this survey of a great man's work I have left till last the mention of his two finest works, his *Doctor Faustus* and the Bibliography so often referred to. Although he profoundly altered editorial procedure he never himself edited a play of Shakespeare with introduction, established text, and commentary. True, he published a text of the 'bad quarto' of *The Merry Wives* (1910) and even tested the theory of memorial transmission by seeing how much he could remember of *John Bull's Other Island* after four visits. Also he wrote introductions to the twelve *Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles* already published (1939-59) and even to eleven of the quartos yet to be published! But properly speaking these and most of the other texts for which he was responsible are not editions. The only editions of plays which he did are those of *The Elder Brother* and *The Faithful Shepherdess* done for Bullen's Variorum edition of Beaumont and Fletcher (1905, 1908), of *The Sad Shepherd* for Bang's *Materialien* (1905), and of *Respublica* (1952) for the Early English Text Society, on the Council of which he once served. His *Respublica*, while it would do credit to most men, is not creditable to him. He had not that command of classical and especially Renaissance learning and of English popular writing which makes McKerrow's *Nashe* so outstandingly good, and he was too dependent on the *Oxford English Dictionary*. With the parallel-text edition of *Marlowe's 'Doctor Faustus' 1604-1616* (1950) the case is altered. He was at

<sup>1</sup> 'The Function of Bibliography', p. 6.

pains to explain that it is not a critical edition in the sense of reconstructing the original text<sup>1</sup> or supplying a complete exegetical commentary, yet his commentary is not wholly limited to the justification of text, and on questions of date, authorship, and text he gave information that any future editor must consider. He turned to the play because it fascinated him and because the relationship between the two substantive texts of 1604 and 1616 was the chief unsolved problem of Elizabethan bibliography. As always he approached the problem without *parti pris*, letting the facts force the solution upon him. He thought himself that it was the best piece of work he had done, and with that in mind inscribed it 'To my wife who has made my work possible'. He was right in that the work called forth *all* his powers and *all* his learning and experience, as the Bibliography did not. In the tact with which he separates the gold of Marlowe from the dross of his collaborator he shows that sense of his author's style without which a textual critic is but a poor cripple. So too in the essay on 'The Damnation of Faustus' (1946), an essay which, as Miss Helen Gardner has said,<sup>2</sup> recovers 'the full horror and beauty' of the scene in which Faustus embraces Helen.

This edition may one day be superseded, though it can never be ignored. His *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration* can never be superseded, though it will be corrected and supplemented. In four handsome large-quarto volumes, published respectively in 1939(1940), 1951, 1957 and 1959, he gave full descriptive bibliographies of all printed dramatic works together with much valuable information of a miscellaneous kind. To the sorrow of his many friends and admirers in America he never crossed the Atlantic, and for his knowledge of the great collections in the United States he depended upon reports, always unstintingly offered by men and women eager to repay something of the debt which they owed to him. The long Introduction in volume IV in which he explains the scope and limits of the work and gives a justification of its method is very characteristic. 'Sixty years on a job' he says here, but we have seen how many other 'jobs' he turned to. He felt no complacency, he tells us, about the manner of the work's execution, and

<sup>1</sup> In a separate publication (1950) he supplied a conjectural reconstruction in modern spelling of the play as he supposed it to have been first produced, an excellent example of his adventurous scholarship. This is a text to be recommended to the notice of all producers of the play.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays and Studies* of the English Association, 1948, p. 33.

I here admit that I can hear the caustic critic who ever sits like a familiar imp at my elbow maintaining that my problem in writing this introduction has been threefold: first to discover what in fact I have done, next why I did it, and lastly how best it may be defended.

Yet the points that established themselves in this work without consideration must be very few indeed. The system of collation, for example, he arrived at after long years of trial and error and many a talk with Pollard and McKerrow, and it is a system that has come to be accepted as the most precise and economical possible. This and other matters he explains with unfailing clarity and acuteness and a pertinacity of logic which allows and accounts for every possible peculiarity that may arise. He did not live to see the publication of this last volume and to 'take his bow', but long before the end of the performance he had heard the applause of all lovers of the great period in English drama.

In 1942, at the end of a history of the 'new bibliography' from the beginning of the century, particularly as it related to the work of Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> I added an epilogue, repeated below, in which I claimed Greg as the hero of the whole movement. If what I wrote then was true how much truer is it now when all or almost all his harvest is gathered in. He was blessed with long life, good health, and a mind always at concert pitch; and in the annals of scholarship there can be few men who have put a life of 'leisure' to better use.

The movement of which this chapter has given an outline is one in which many men and women on both sides of the Atlantic have played their part, but if the writer's point of view is accepted, and if one man is to be chosen as the hero, then it is clear who that man is. . . . Again and again he has published work which has directed the development of Elizabethan textual studies in the way they should go. The timeliness of his publications is to be remarked as well as their quality. Perhaps he did not always realize how timely they were and sometimes worked by instinct—yet 'instinct is a great matter'—but often he worked deliberately with a sense of direction that enabled him to see how knowledge was best to be advanced. Nor are his achievements to be judged merely from the tale of his books and articles, for this would be to omit his personal influence and his reviews. A company of younger scholars at home and abroad is glad to acknowledge the value of his advice and assistance, and as a reviewer he has worked for forty years 'without envious malignity or superstitious veneration' to raise the standards of English scholarship. If the reviews of his later years lack something of the severity of his early ones, they still expose the errors of sciolists, but with a mellowed animosity; while to be praised by him is counted

<sup>1</sup> See p. 319 above, note 1.



praise indeed. He has never been tempted to overrate the importance of the studies in which he has employed himself. As Johnson said: 'They involve neither property nor liberty: nor favour the interest of sect or party.' But to these studies he has brought exceptional qualities of mind and a patience that does not flag. A distinguished contemporary has praised his friend for the pertinacity which will not neglect to follow up the slightest trace of evidence and an integrity which constantly refuses to rate evidence at more than it is logically worth.<sup>1</sup> As do men of science, he has worked by analysis and synthesis, combining a minute vision for significant detail with a power of erecting hypotheses that fit and interpret the available evidence; and whether in analysis or synthesis he has worked with caution yet without timidity, and with a daring that does not pass into temerity. His fault is that since he wrote on the pastoral many years ago he has neglected a gift for writing literary history for work that has less popular appeal yet is perhaps more likely to endure.

There is little to record of his life between the wars except the births of his two sons and his daughter. In 1932 he accepted an honorary lectureship in Bibliography at University College, London, and when he faced a class for the first time found that his difficulty was not to know what to say or how to say it but to stop. In the summer of 1939 he went with his family to Switzerland by car, a mode of travel the pleasures of which he had not before experienced. They drove back through a mobilizing France reaching home in the last days of August.

Park Lodge had become too large and too expensive to keep up, and it was sold. They rented a small house, Standlands, in the village of River between Petworth and Midhurst in the downland of Sussex. The fine library at Park Lodge which he had been collecting for over forty years had to be sold,<sup>2</sup> and in the hurry he parted with some books the want of which he was to regret. But he minded the loss less than many men, and soon built up a useful working library. The sale of his books led to a belief that he was dead; his name was removed from the electoral roll at Cambridge and only restored when he turned up at Trinity and confronted the Registry in Hall.

In the spring of 1946 they left Standlands, at first reluctantly, and bought Tanners Knap, a larger house in the same village where there was more room for his books. His study was on the first floor and his desk next to the window, and in summer the house-martins in the caves were busy with their nests or their young a yard from his head. The view looking north-west over

<sup>1</sup> E. K. Chambers in *The Modern Language Review*, 1933, xxviii. 96.

<sup>2</sup> See Hodgson's Sale Catalogues for 1941, nos. 2, 3, 4, and (lots 104-8) 6a.

the valley to Lodsworth and Blackdown, the highest point in Sussex, was as peaceful as any England can now offer. I reminded him of what Aubrey had said of Walter Raleigh's study in Durham House and its view of the Thames as it sweeps round from Westminster, a prospect 'pleasant perhaps as any in the world, and which not only refreshes the eyesight but cheers the spirits, and . . . enlarges an ingenious man's thoughts'. But of course he had been just as ingenious at Park Lodge.

In later years he worked in the mornings and between tea and dinner. When he wrote his letters I do not know. His answers came so promptly that his correspondents were seldom free from debt. There were certain fixed habits. One was the nine-o'clock news, and it was advisable not to come down to breakfast till 9.10. Another was *The Times* cross-word, and truth to tell he did not excel at it. For the theatre in his London days he had a passion. In his Sussex days he was one of the most constant attendants at Saturday Night Theatre the B.B.C. can have had; plays good, bad, or indifferent he listened to them all; but he never discussed them. When he was not reading tougher books, he relaxed over a detective novel, especially if by Dorothy Sayers or Michael Innes. His favourites (e.g. *Hamlet Revenge*) he read again and again, and submitted them to the same kind of scrutiny he gave to the variants in the first quarto of *King Lear*. In the late nineteen-forties he stayed several times in Merton, and surprised some of the Fellows by his nightly addiction to rummy and liar dice in the rooms of H. W. Garrod, then the College Casinò.

There is (as Samuel Smiles said) 'a place for everything, and everything in its place'. His desk never seemed untidy. Rows of his own books and bound articles faced him on the shelves attached to his desk, and beneath them were many drawers and niches each with its special variety of paper, pencils, and what-not. There was a niche for a little notebook labelled 'Wise Saws', one of which was Henry Bradley's 'A hypothesis ought to be a one-storied building only'. Under the window to his left stood the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but for Arber he had to take three paces to the rear. In whatever he did—whether carving the Christmas turkey or wrapping and sealing a parcel—there was a touch of elegance. Miss St. Clare Byrne in her admirable portrait<sup>1</sup> recalls 'the casual elegance of his personal appearance, so correctly informal in dress, so individually distinguished, carrying off without any trace of affectation the gold-rimmed magni-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 315 above, note 1.

fyng-glass on its watered-silk ribbon and the handsome heavy seal ring . . . a challenging combination of the fastidious and the robust'. Of his handwriting I have already spoken. I should have said his handwritings, for he had two, one known to his correspondents and one used for transcription, adopted, I suppose, because it enabled him to keep his eye on the document. Both were beautifully neat and elegant, sign of an inner accuracy. In his style, a model for all bibliographers and textual critics, he aimed first at expressing his meaning as exactly and as lucidly as possible. 'If one achieves that one is half way towards good writing. But even in a mathematical formula there may be and should be a quality of elegance, which is something beyond mere comprehensibility and correctness.'<sup>1</sup>

If he could be severe with others, he was very severe with himself. Some scholars have been known to defend their views long after they are tenable, but not Greg. True, he stuck to the view that the first quarto of *Lear* was reported by stenography as long as he could, but in the end he abandoned it 'cheerfully'. In his *Bibliography* he dated a play (no. 89) 1587 although the date in the imprint followed the legal reckoning: 'I don't know how I came to overlook this—or rather I know only too well—sheer incompetence.' On another occasion—I am mentioning one of the very few disputes when I was left in possession of the field—he argued that at *Lear* II. iv. 136

I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope  
You less know how to value her desert  
Than she to scant her duty

Shakespeare was making Regan say exactly the opposite of what he meant her to say. Six weeks later came the postcard 'You were right. The meaning is "Little as she [Goneril] knows how to scant her duty, you know even less how to value her desert"'. I must have been very dense.'

In his youth unusually handsome, he was still in old age an impressive figure. Redoubtable in print he was sometimes so in person, and when angered by pretence or arrogance or slipshod writing or thinking his aspect made a man realize that the reading of the second quarto of *Hamlet* (III. iii. 5)

The terms of our estate may not endure  
Hazard so neer's as doth hourly grow  
Out of his brows

<sup>1</sup> A letter of 1 June 1946 kindly communicated by Professor Geoffrey Tillotson.

was in no need of emendation. But the many visitors who enjoyed his and Lady Greg's generous hospitality do not think of him so, but of his courtesy and the pains he took to be of service to them. To a Canadian scholar, F. M. Salter, who shared Greg's interest in the Chester plays, he represented not only exact and far-reaching scholarship, and not only hospitality 'and a helping hand to the stranger within the gates, but Magnanimity, the last and greatest of the Twelve Moral Virtues'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps he always remained (in Howson's words) rather reticent and inaccessible except to his intimate friends, but of these he had many, both men and women, both old and young. They knew they had for life a faithful and affectionate friend.

His services to scholarship earned him many honours. He became a Fellow of this Academy in 1928 and Gold Medallist of the Bibliographical Society in 1935. Oxford gave him an honorary doctorate (D.Litt.) in 1932: 'I was particularly pleased to find myself in company with de Sitter, the Leiden mathematician, whose cosmographical theories fascinated me.' His other honorary doctorate was from Edinburgh (LL.D.) in 1945, a university where his father had studied more than a century earlier. In 1944 he was elected to honorary membership of the Elizabethan Club of Yale University and in 1945 became a foreign member of the American Philosophical Society, 'a flattering link with a country where I have so many patient correspondents'. He had for many years enjoyed honorary membership of the Modern Language Association of America: it pleased him that he was elected in succession to Henry Bradley, for he thought of Bradley as one of the greatest of bibliographers and regretted that so little of his bibliographical work was included in the *Collected Papers* of 1928. It is natural that much as he valued these distinctions the one he valued most was his election to an Honorary Fellowship at Trinity in 1941, renewing as it did the ties with his old college. In 1950 he was knighted 'for services to the study of English Literature'.

When he came to fourscore years his strength was neither labour nor sorrow. I still found it difficult to keep pace with him as we walked from the Academy to the Athenæum or the Museum, the more so, perhaps, because he seemed indifferent to traffic. Early in 1947, owing to some sudden jerk, he lost the sight of one eye through detachment of the retina, but as before he continued to work without spectacles, so suggesting that

<sup>1</sup> *Mediaeval Drama in Chester* (1955), p. vii.

secretary hand and black letter are sovereign exercise for the eyes. He spent his eightieth birthday with his wife, his children and 'in-laws', and his six grandchildren, and told them that he continued to think instinctively of old age as of something in the future rather than in the present. He spoke of his exceptionally fortunate life, blessed as he was with the companionship of his wife and growing family; and of that life, he said, the last ten years had certainly been the happiest and most contented and, he thought, the most fruitful.

Death is not a thing to be feared or regretted if it comes in the fullness of time. . . . In the ordinary way I think of death calmly and almost with indifference, and when in the end the fell sergeant does make his strict arrest, I hope I shall 'come along quiet' and without too much reluctance.

The first hint he gave me that his health was failing was when we said good-bye in the summer of 1957. When I returned after a long absence abroad and was about to visit him at Tanners Knap in December 1958, he sent me a letter—'because it is easier, and perhaps less embarrassing, to write than to say it'—warning me that I should find he had aged a good deal since we met. Mere living had begun to absorb more and more time and energy, and while he was happy and content, still finding plenty to interest him and as active as ever at his work, he had begun to feel that life was rather a burden and that he would not be altogether sorry to lay it down. At the same time he felt his general health to be good: 'I cannot look for any speedy release from service.' But his days of service were nearly over. On 4 March 1959 death came for him, as he wished, quietly and suddenly: *felix non vitae tantum claritate, sed etiam opportunitate mortis.*

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