



*Oxford Mail photograph*

HECTOR MUNRO CHADWICK

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1870-1947

**B**Y a singular and appropriate coincidence the birthplace of this great Anglo-Saxon scholar is situated in a parish adjoining that of Thornhill, Yorkshire, where are preserved no less than four of the relatively few runic inscriptions found in this country, not to mention a number of sculptured stones dating from Anglo-Saxon times. Son of the Reverend Edward Chadwick, he saw the light on 22 October 1870 in the vicarage of Thornhill Lees.

His father belonged to a family which traced its descent from John Chadwick of Chadwick Hall, Rochdale, who flourished in the later years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, a family related by marriage to the Chadwicks of Healey Hall. James, the father of Edward, was one of a number of sons of John Chadwick (1756-1837), all of whom were members of the firm of John Chadwick & Sons, flannel manufacturers, Rochdale. There was a branch of this concern in Edinburgh and it was there that James was in business during the earlier part of his life and where he married Sarah Murray, daughter of George Murray and Margaret Munro. There is a tradition in the family that Margaret Munro was a sister of General Sir Hector Munro, hero of Buxar and Pondicherry, whose names were borne by the eminently unsoldierly subject of these pages. Actually the relationship of Margaret to the General is not clear. But she had a daughter, Christian, a somewhat uncommon name, borne also by Sir Hector's sister. The occurrence of the double pairs of names, Christian Munro and Hector Munro, in two families from the same region is hardly likely to be fortuitous, and the fact that the name Hector Munro appears more than once in the Chadwick's family tree shows it to have been a traditional one and suggests that the story of his relationship with the General is not ill-founded.

After spending a number of years in Edinburgh, James Chadwick moved south with his large family to the main office of the firm in Rochdale.

Edward, father of the Professor and the seventh of James Chadwick's eight sons, was not in the family business, though he had an interest in it. He came up to St. John's College, Cambridge, and eventually took orders. Not long after he was

appointed curate of St. George's, Hulme, Manchester, where he met his future wife, Sarah Bates. Both her father's and her mother's family were business people of some consideration in Oldham. Her cousin, Captain Chadwick,<sup>1</sup> took part in the charge of the Light Brigade and, on his return from the Crimea in 1855, was given a public banquet in Oldham. Sarah's father retired early from business, apparently for reasons of health, and went to Manchester where he took to farming at Old Trafford, a locality which has somewhat changed its character since those days. His wife died young and a sister of Captain Chadwick came to take care of the eight children. Sarah Anne was the only daughter. Her father died on the day fixed for her marriage with Edward Chadwick—it was said of a broken heart at the thought of losing her—and the wedding was postponed. Edward and Sarah spent the first years of their married life at Bluepits, where he was then curate in charge and where Edward, their eldest son, was born.

Not long after his birth they moved to Thornhill Lees, Yorkshire, where Edward Chadwick senior became a close friend of one of the Bibbys, of the Bibby Line of steamships, who built him a church in the growing suburb of which he became Vicar. It was here that their three remaining children were born: Dora, Murray, and last of all Hector Munro. Their father ended his career as Rural Dean of Dewsbury. Both his elder sons, Edward and Murray, took orders. Edward, who had been a mathematical scholar of Jesus College, Cambridge, eventually became Rector of the chief church at St. Albans. Murray was at Trinity College, Cambridge. His interests were not academic, but he was very musical and had a gift for painting. He ended his career as Vicar of Athelney—another family link with Anglo-Saxon England. The only sister, Dora, seems to have been educated at home, probably by the curates.

Hector was by far the youngest of the family and the link between him and his sister was very close. 'She brought me up', he used to say, 'and taught me letters and Latin.' Their father was not a scholar but he was constantly urging his children to work at their books. He used to tell Hector that if he did not learn his Latin, a bear would come and carry him off. One of Chadwick's earliest memories was peering for the bear through a window by the vicarage's front door.

In 1882-3 Hector attended Bradford Grammar School. Although even at that age he enjoyed his work, he did not like

<sup>1</sup> Unrelated to the Chadwicks of Rochdale.

school life and made a daily practice of feigning sickness in order to stay at home. The year 1884 he spent at his father's house, where he was taught by his sister and the curates. But next year he went as a day-boy to Wakefield Grammar School, where the great Bentley had been educated, and he continued to attend there until the summer of 1889. A. H. Webster, a contemporary of his at Wakefield, writes of him:<sup>1</sup>

I only knew him for a few terms when I sat next to him in the 6th Classical. . . . He arrived just as school opened and left to catch his train as soon as afternoon school closed. Consequently he took no part in games and indeed showed little interest in them. He was very shy, but always approachable and willing to help any of us ordinary boys with any difficulty in our Latin; and often he could make clear some point that the best dictionary left obscure. His answer would always be given with a smile and without the least sign of condescension. . . . Of his personal appearance I well remember his hair was distinctly red, a colour usually associated with high temper. Chadwick was the mildest and quietest tempered boy imaginable. He might have been a passive resister and would have died at the stake with a smile on his face.

On reading this account of him as a boy, those who knew him in later life will realize that in many of its essential features Chadwick's character was already formed: the shyness, gentle manner, quiet tenacity, lack of condescension yet eagerness to help others in matters of learning. His lack of interest in games may be exaggerated. In his early graduate days he was so keen a player of lawn-tennis that the Fellows of his college used to tease him, warning him that he was in danger of becoming a man of one idea. Moreover, an account book, written in his hand and found among his papers, suggests that he was the treasurer of the school cricket club. Against this may be set the story of the visit to the vicarage of two young Harrovians. A discussion arose on the best way of spending a half-holiday. After the rival merits of different games had been duly weighed, the young Hector, who had hitherto abstained from comment, gravely observed, 'My favourite way of spending a half-holiday is fettleing my sister's hen-coop.' Sub-ironic self-depreciation, so integral a part of his humour, was clearly manifest in his boyhood!

On leaving school in 1889 he obtained a Cave Exhibition at Clare College, Cambridge, which was destined to become his

<sup>1</sup> *The Savilian* (The Wakefield Grammar School Magazine), Easter Term, 1947, p. 7 f.



home for many years. During that summer vacation he made a short trip to Scotland, Ulster, North Wales, and the Isle of Man, where he visited Tynwald Hill. That autumn he took his Little-Go and entered upon his life at Cambridge.

It was in his undergraduate days that he first visited the Continent, in company with his brother, Edward. They stayed at a pension in Innsbrück, the scene of one of his favourite stories: how he first came to visit Italy. He was sitting next to a young lady at dinner. Suddenly she addressed him, just as he was being proffered a pink blancmange. (Chadwick, on principle, always pronounced foreign languages as if they were English—'a pink blank mänge'.)

I was startled by her speaking to me and the spoon slipped from my hand and the blank mangle fell on to her lap. She was very nice about it. [Then, in darker tones] But she did not see the extent of the damage: we were sitting too close. It slid down the folds of her black silk dress like a glacier. I rushed to the smoking room where my brother and I had a council of war. There was only one thing for it: flight! And there was a train leaving for Verona early next morning.

His adventures on arriving there—his first glass of wine and subsequent attempts at counting the number of windows of the amphitheatre in an effort to steady himself—formed the close of a saga which loses much of its flavour to those who were not lucky enough to hear him tell it.

In 1890 he was elected to a scholarship at Clare and two years later he was placed in Class I, Division 3 in the first part of the Classical Tripos and took his B.A. Next year (1893) he obtained a First Class with distinction in Part II, Section E (Philology) of the same Tripos and was elected Fellow of his college. During the next year his first publication, 'The Origin of the Latin Perfect Formation in *-ui*', appeared in Bezzenger's *Beiträge zur Kunde der indo-germanischen Sprachen*.

It was about this time, when visiting his brother, Murray, that he chanced upon Paul Du Chaillu's *Viking Age*. It was this book which first quickened in him an interest in northern studies. Although Du Chaillu was an amateur and his book, published in 1889, is in many respects out of date, the width of its scope may well have helped to inspire Chadwick with that breadth of outlook which so characterized his work both as a writer and a teacher—for Du Chaillu was concerned with early northern civilization as a whole, though he lacked Chadwick's training in philology.

In the summer of 1895, Chadwick attended Streitberg's

lectures at the University of Fribourg. On his return to Cambridge he began teaching for what was then Section B of the old Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos and devoted the rest of his time to research in northern studies. In 1899 three works of his were published: 'Ablaut problems in the Indo-Germanic Verb' in *Indo-germanische Forschungen*, xi, 'Studies in Old English' in *Transactions of the Cambridge Philological Society*, iv, and his first book, *The Cult of Othin*, published by the Cambridge University Press. His 'Studies in Old English' was an important monograph which threw light upon 'the distinctive . . . dialects and the chronological sequence of the sound-changes which marked the early history of the language'.

In *The Cult of Othin* he examined the evidence for that cult in the north and among the Teutonic peoples of the Continent and reached the conclusion that, in both regions it was, in all essential features, the same. The final chapter is devoted to the date of the introduction of the cult and to this end the evidence of literary sources, philology, inscriptions, and archaeology was brought to bear. On reading *The Cult of Othin*, the student of his works cannot fail to recognize how here, in his first book, Chadwick's method of dealing with evidence, the all-embracing nature of his approach, is already fully manifest. In the year which saw the publication of these three contributions he became an M.A. and his Fellowship at Clare was renewed. From 1899 until 1919 he undertook the whole teaching of Section B of the Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos. In 1900 his two important papers, 'The Oak and the Thunder-God' and 'The Ancient Teutonic Priesthood', appeared in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* and in *Folk-Lore*. Three years later he was appointed Librarian to his college, a position which he held until 1911. He used to tell with much relish how the library was once visited by a man with his wife, who, after they had been shown its treasures, thrust a surreptitious sixpence into Chadwick's hand with the words, 'Do a bit of reading myself: I am the trainer of the Norwich City Football Club.'

*Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* appeared in 1905. Two years later he contributed chapter III, on 'Early National Poetry', to the first volume of the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, published by the Cambridge University Press. The same year (1907) also witnessed the publication of his book, *The Origins of the English Nation*. The writer wishes to thank Miss Dorothy Whitelock, Fellow of St. Hilda's College, Oxford, a distinguished authority on Anglo-Saxon history and a former pupil of

Chadwick's, for the following appreciation of the two books just mentioned.

In rather rapid succession, in 1905 and 1907, Professor Chadwick's two main contributions to Anglo-Saxon history appeared, and it may be of interest to recall what W. H. Stevenson said of the first of them, in a review that even in its detailed comment anticipated the verdict of later times. He writes: 'He shows full acquaintance with the materials, exact philological knowledge, great powers of combination, ingenuity in suggestion, and critical power, and he has in consequence placed many old problems in a new light.'<sup>1</sup> A considerable amount of *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* has become regarded as accepted fact, and underlies the work of subsequent scholars. His account of the social classes of Anglo-Saxon society has in all its main features held the day ever since, based as it is on a careful study of the monetary systems of the Anglo-Saxons, without which the full meaning could not be drawn from references to *wergeld*, *mund*, *borg* and other compensations. Not all the conclusions were new and revolutionary in 1905, but it seems fair to say that the various elements had never been fitted into so comprehensive a system, nor presented so as to win general acceptance. Authoritative, also, are the chapters on Anglo-Saxon officials, the earl, the sheriff and other reeves, and additions to previous knowledge occur in sections on the origin of our shires. His view that the hundred was not a primitive institution has been accepted, and his suggestion that there was a connection between the smallest jurisdictional area and the royal manors has received corroboration from later research. He was least happy with the borough, and his hypothesis that the shire system was temporarily superseded by a system of administration centred on the boroughs has not proved acceptable. Professor Chadwick's hypotheses were not, however, built on air, but in order to account for some puzzling feature in the evidence, and in more than one instance where scholarship has rejected his explanation the puzzle still remains unsolved. Far from being content with unsubstantiated conjecture, he devised the whole method and arrangement of *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* as a protest against the writing of Anglo-Saxon history from pre-conceived ideas—of the popular nature of government &c.—with a disregard or a perversion of the evidence. This is why he works back from later and better-evidenced periods to the remoter past. Here and there the effect is somewhat disconcerting, but he was often wont to say to his pupils: 'We must begin with what is known.'

If, however, in this he was reacting from a manner of writing history of which Kemble had been the most brilliant exponent, he was in other respects very much in the line of descent from this great scholar, as appears more clearly from his book, *The Origin of the English Nation*. For he shared Kemble's versatility, and like him he believed in ignoring

<sup>1</sup> Review of *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xx (April 1905), 348.

no field of study that might yield even a fragment of evidence. In the stress he laid on archaeological evidence and on the sifting of later traditions he has had many successors, and the approach seems so natural to us now that it is well to note that the book was hailed by R. W. Chambers as remarkable for this very reason, and as 'a valuable example of the method which is now likely to lead us to the best results in the study of Old English philology and history'.<sup>1</sup> It was not to be expected that this book, like its predecessor, should be of primary importance for establishing fact; its main concern is with problems that can never receive a definitive answer. The evidence for answering them is fragmentary, contradictory and often capable of several interpretations. No two persons will agree entirely on the comparative importance of the various types of material. Professor Chadwick too confidently believed that they could be combined to give a definite answer, and in some places the reader's verdict is: 'Unproven.' But he is in a position to reach this verdict because the evidence has been fairly put before him. It would be a rash person who should attempt to consider matters such as the continental homeland of the English, the use of the names Saxon and Angle, the date of the invasion, without looking at the evidence assembled here.

In many branches progress has been made since *The Origin of the English Nation* was published; Professor Chadwick was fully aware that conclusions drawn from archaeological data must, in the unsatisfactory state of these studies, be considered tentative. The work of the English Place-Name Society has produced new material; and moreover he wrote before the appearance of Chambers' monumental edition of *Widsith*. It is remarkable how often Professor Chadwick's tentative conclusions have been shown to be in the right direction, and fruitful results have been forthcoming from approaches he suggested. To take only a few examples: he saw clearly the 'Jutish problem' and indicated that a study of Kentish land-tenure was necessary for its solution; he realized that further research into the vocabulary of Old English was the linguistic approach most likely to bear on the distinction between Angles and Saxons; by his interpretation of the element *ge* in place-names he glimpsed the importance of the ancient *regiones*, and by use of charter material he was able to add to what was then known of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, thus beginning work on material used with such striking effect by Sir Frank Stenton.

It is difficult to assess just how far subsequent scholars' work in the many fields covered by these books derives direction and inspiration from them; but, it would certainly be a mistake to relegate either work to the category of influential books that have been superseded. The steady advance and logical unfolding of a complicated argument afford the reader a keen aesthetic pleasure. Both books are full of penetrating criticism on individual sources: the student of the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>1</sup> Review of *The Origin of the English Nation*, *Mod. Lang. Rev.* iv (1908-9), 262.

Chronicle cannot afford to ignore chapter 2 of *The Origin*; anyone interested in genealogies must read chapter 9. In either book it is possible to find tucked away in a foot-note a conclusion that one has reached only after painful toil. And as new evidence comes to light, even the more speculative portions should be re-read; it may be they will help us to place the new factor in its true place.

Chadwick was appointed in 1910 to a University Lectureship in Scandinavian, a position which he held for two years. But on the death of Skeat, to whom he was the obvious successor, he was elected to the Elrington and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Cambridge and held the chair from 1912 until he reached the retiring age twenty-nine years later.

The year which witnessed his election to this chair also saw the publication of *The Heroic Age*. This book won for him a wider circle of readers: for the main theme, a comparison of early Teutonic poetry and tradition with the Homeric poems, renders it of importance to classical, as well as Anglo-Saxon and northern studies. Moreover, the approach to Greek Heroic poetry was one hitherto unexplored. The book falls into three parts and the chapters are interspersed with a number of essays dealing with Slavonic and Celtic Heroic poetry and traditions and their background—themes which were later to be studied in greater detail in *The Growth of Literature*. In defining his use of the term 'Heroic', Chadwick writes: 'I am not clear that the essential conditions requisite for a Heroic Age need involve more than may be conveniently summed up in the phrase "Mars and The Muses".'<sup>1</sup> Although a state of war is not a necessary condition even for the formation of a Heroic story, the societies in which such stories and poems arose were essentially martial and the protagonists were drawn from the aristocracy and with few exceptions famed for their courage.

The opening chapters (I to VIII) deal with the early poetry and traditions of the Teutonic peoples and relate to the age of the Teutonic Migrations, a period for which a considerable amount of external information is available. The distribution of the stories, the inter-relationship of the various versions, the antiquity of the poems, and the conditions under which they arose are treated in detail, together with the different elements of which they were composed, history, myth, and fiction; and the relative importance of those elements is discussed. In the next six chapters Greek Heroic poetry is treated on generally

<sup>1</sup> *The Heroic Age*, p. 440.

similar lines, although for the period here involved little external information exists. In the final part a number of characteristics common to Heroic poetry and story are discussed, resemblances which he ascribes to resemblances 'in the ages to which they relate and to which they ultimately owe their origin. The comparative study of Heroic poetry therefore involves the comparative study of "Heroic Ages"; and the problems which it presents are essentially problems of anthropology.'<sup>1</sup>

He shows that the characteristics exhibited by Heroic societies are in no sense primitive: both virtues and defects are not those of infancy but adolescence—of a youth, not fully mature, who has outgrown the ideas and the control of his unsophisticated parents and who has acquired a knowledge which places him in a position of superiority to his surroundings. The external influence of a superior civilization—for instance, that of Rome upon the Teutonic peoples and the Welsh—often played a part in this process.

The chief characteristic both of the Teutonic and Greek Heroic Ages is an emancipation, a revolt—social, political, and religious—from the bonds of tribal law. In the social and political spheres this is seen in the weakening of the ties of kindred and the growth of the bond of personal allegiance, in the rise of irresponsible kingship resting, not on a national basis, but purely on military prestige. While in religion chthonic and tribal cults were subordinated to 'the worship of a number of universally recognized and highly anthropomorphic deities, together with the belief in a common and distant land of souls'<sup>2</sup>—changes which he ascribes to a weakening in the force of religion. These observations are almost all applicable to the Gaulish Heroic Age and he finds similar analogies in the Heroic Ages of the Cumbrian Welsh and the Christian Serbians, though, at most, only to a very slight extent in that of the Mohammedan Serbians.

This masterly book marks an epoch in the study of comparative literature, for in the anthropological approach to his subject Chadwick broke new ground. His former pupil, Dr. C. E. Wright, quoted by Dr. Telfer, Master of Selwyn, in his obituary of Chadwick in the *Cambridge Review*, writes of it as follows:

*The Heroic Age* was a synthesis of the results of his research in the two broad divisions of his work, the classical and the Anglo-Saxon (and Scandinavian); exhibiting a masterly handling of all the material then available. The line of his future studies was clearly foreshadowed in the emphasis he laid on the value of tradition, and in the Notes (as

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit., p. 442.

he modestly called them, though each was a masterly essay) on the Heroic poetry of the Slavonic and Celtic peoples. The long time-gap between this and *The Growth of Literature* is irrelevant. The latter was, one might say, inevitable and it was as carefully and consciously prepared for as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.<sup>1</sup>

Chadwick's election to the Professorship marks the beginning of a new phase in his academic career. Hitherto, his time had been divided between teaching and research; for the greater part of the next ten years it was almost entirely devoted to teaching, to university business and to the development of a School of studies. During this time he published nothing, apart from a short paper entitled 'Some German River-names', a philological study which has bearings on the early home of the Celtic peoples. It was his contribution to *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, 1913, to whose inspiring personality Chadwick owed not a little in the earlier part of his career.

Chadwick accepted his new and heavy burden without regret. The silence of these years was a loss to scholarship rather than to him personally: he believed that his teaching and direction of research-students was of greater value than his written work.

Though fostered in the schools of Classical and linguistic studies, Chadwick's interests embraced a wider field. He held that the scope of his School should cover not only the study of language and literature but of history and civilization; by civilization he meant institutions, religion, and archaeology.

The student may specialize in whatever direction he wishes, provided that he knows the languages, but he must at least have an opportunity of getting a comprehensive picture of the period he is studying and of conditions which are of course very different from those of modern civilization. We believe that it is only by such training that we may render services to learning approximating to those of German and other continental scholars who have hitherto been responsible for the greater part of the advance made in these subjects.<sup>2</sup>

The achievement of these aims was not attained without opposition. The history of his School's development falls into three stages.

Section B of the old Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Review*, 1 Feb. 1947, p. 248. In view of what Mrs. Chadwick has told me, I should hesitate to describe *The Heroic Age* as a conscious preparation for *The Growth of Literature*, the idea of which took shape much later (see below, p. 320 f).

<sup>2</sup> From a letter of Chadwick to the Vice-Chancellor, dated 2 Oct. 1926, printed in the *Cambridge University Reporter*, 1926-7, pp. 1069 ff.

came into being in 1894 and during the first year of its existence Sir Israel Gollancz and G. C. Macaulay taught for it; in 1895 they were joined by Chadwick who from 1899 onwards was solely responsible for the teaching. Skeat was then Elrington and Bosworth Professor, but his interests lay mainly in Middle English and he gave no teaching in Anglo-Saxon save for a paper in Section A (English) of the same Tripos. Section B was almost entirely limited to linguistic study and attracted but few students, though one of them was no less a person than Sir Allen Mawer. In 1907 regulations were passed of a tentative nature which widened the scope of the Section by the inclusion of a paper on Anglo-Saxon, Teutonic, and Viking Age history, tradition and mythology. But it was not until twelve years later, when the regulations drawn up by Chadwick and passed in 1917, came into force, that the scope of Section B was broadened and it became more or less the same section that it is to-day. Apart from the study of specified passages from Anglo-Saxon and Norse works the syllabus now included papers on the history, traditions, religion, literature, and archaeology—in short the general civilization—of the Anglo-Saxon, the continental Teutonic, the northern, and the Celtic peoples, and a paper on Early Britain. Philology became optional and, in its place, most of the students availed themselves of one or other of the alternative subjects. At first the teaching offered for Celtic studies was of a somewhat tentative nature. The death in 1920 of that eminent Celtic scholar, E. C. Quiggin, was a blow not only to Chadwick personally but to Celtic studies in Cambridge. Chadwick, who married in 1922, was at first aided by his wife who, for some years, taught the Irish language, while he himself undertook the teaching of Welsh and early Irish and Welsh history. It was not until the appointment of his old pupil, Kenneth Jackson (now Professor of Celtic at Edinburgh) that the staff was augmented by a lecturer in Celtic subjects.

But Chadwick's reforms were not limited to the broadening of his own Section: with the collaboration of his friends, Professor Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and Doctor H. F. Stewart, he simultaneously set about remodelling Section A (English studies) and indeed transforming the whole of the old Medieval and Modern Languages Tripos into the new Modern and Medieval Languages Tripos in which English became a more or less independent course consisting of the two sections mentioned above.

All through 1916 and 1917, he was busy drafting new regulations and, although they have suffered change since then, it is safe to affirm that



both these Triposes (*Modern and Medieval Languages and English*) are his creation; and the students of the modern humanities are as deeply indebted to him as students of antiquity, though for different causes and in different degree. He kept studiously in the background, but even the remarks which opened the discussion in the Senate House were founded upon notes supplied by him.<sup>1</sup>

The reformers met with considerable opposition from several quarters, among them from the English Association. In a letter to Stewart Quiller-Couch wrote:

Trouble is that everybody thinks he knows enough English to tender advice upon it. If this goes on, one of these days I'll buy a Slavonic dictionary and a match-lock for Chadwick, and we'll raise trouble in the Balkans.<sup>2</sup>

But in spite of opposition, this conjunction of three so remarkable and yet such different personalities proved too strong and their reforms were carried and came into force.

The teaching for his new and much extended Section B rested almost entirely with Chadwick during the first years of its existence, and with it the supervising of an ever-increasing number of research-students. Apart from the aid already referred to which was given by his wife, his former pupils, Sir Cyril Fox, F.B.A., and F. L. Attenborough (Principal of University College, Leicester), gave some short courses between 1919 and 1926. But it was not until after the Royal Commission on the Universities, when the Faculty system came into being, that Chadwick acquired a permanent staff: two lecturers were appointed in 1926, one his old friend, Dame Bertha Phillpotts, D.B.E., who had recently resigned from being Mistress of Girton. The premature death of that rare and enchanting being in 1932 was felt keenly by her colleagues and robbed England of one of its outstanding Norse scholars. Further lecturers were appointed later and towards the close of his tenure of the chair Chadwick had four colleagues working with him in his department.

The addition of a purely literary second part to the English Tripos could only mean a decline in the number of Chadwick's pupils. For this, and for other reasons, in 1927 he moved with his Department into the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, where it remains to-day.

Chadwick's lectures were informal. They were usually given

<sup>1</sup> From a letter of H. F. Stewart in the *Cambridge Review*, 2 Feb. 1947.

<sup>2</sup> F. Brittain, *Arthur Quiller-Couch*, p. 89. In one of the public discussions Quiller-Couch said that he and Stewart were the babes in the wood, but Chadwick was the wicked uncle.

in his college rooms, which looked out on the broad sweep of lawn at the back of King's and over the river. Gowns were not worn; he sat at the head of his dining table, his students, men and women, around him. Even in the earlier days of his career, when the position of women in the University was not officially recognized, he treated them with the same consideration as his men students, always convinced of the important part they could and did play in learning. Whether men or women, his students met with the kindness and old-world courtesy which ever marked his bearing to his fellow humans and, more than that, they were treated as fellow scholars. For all his gentleness, his influence upon his pupils was a strong one. It was exerted unconsciously and sprang from his vitality and keen enjoyment in teaching. The breadth of approach, the instant grasp of essentials, the exhaustive handling of evidence which characterize his written work were equally manifest in Chadwick, the teacher. Yet his teaching had a rare quality, almost wholly lacking in his writings, a lightness of touch that made work appear amusing, an engrossing and delightful game. I doubt if he was really aware of this himself, yet it was a gift which played no little part in his hold upon the young.

But even more enriching than his lectures were his supervisions. When the present writer was an undergraduate, Chadwick would give long solitary sessions to his students. Once a week, at nine in the evening, one would repair to the small room lined with books to find 'Chadders' (as his students spoke of him) sitting in a rocking-chair, roasting his stockinged legs before a small gas fire. A vast jorum of tea was borne in, capped with a cosy of eider ducks' feathers, sent to him by an admirer in Iceland. A newcomer would be asked, 'How many cups do you take? Because the pot holds eight and I take seven.' And then, for close on three hours, he would impart the riches of his learning upon any problem which had been troubling one, mingling his observations with highly diverting anecdotes and occasionally falling off into a short but profound sleep. Few who had the privilege of these long evening sessions spent alone with him can fail to look back on them as the most formative experience in their education.

If one may venture to criticize so great a teacher, he erred at times by overestimating the capacity of a research student in suggesting subjects for him which were beyond his capability. Chadwick's modesty was perhaps responsible for this: he treated young post-graduates working under him as his intellectual peers.

Too often he has been described as 'a shy recluse'. Shy he certainly was; and the many claims on his time in themselves precluded his mixing in general society. Yet no one who knew him well could deny that he was essentially sociable: he delighted in the society of his chosen friends and of the young. It is true that if he had just cause to be disappointed in someone, he would dismiss him from his thoughts. Moreover, he was apt to regard criticism as hostility—but this only applied to criticism of his ideas on the development of his 'School', which did meet with opposition from the more conservative of his colleagues. Yet thanks to his tenacity, his persuasiveness and a sense of strategy not unworthy of the man whose names he bore, he overcame that opposition and, in his later years, he was able to look back on a band of men and women, former students of his, who had attained distinction in a wide field of subjects. At the time of his death some thirty of his pupils held university posts, not to speak of museum officials and librarians; while on his book-shelves he could number more than forty books written by those who had studied under him. As Miss Dorothy Whitelock has observed,

It was a remarkable achievement to add so enormously to knowledge by his own researches and to form so large a 'school' of workers, if that term can be applied to a body of archaeologists, anthropologists, Celticists as well as the Saxonists one would expect, linked together only by their reverence for a master to whose training they owe so much. It should be put on record that by his own writings and teaching he rescued English studies from a narrow pre-occupation with vowels and consonants.<sup>1</sup>

The final stage of Chadwick's academic career was a period in which, while continuing a still heavy programme of teaching, he turned his attention once again to written work. In a sense, this phase may be said to have begun with the return to Cambridge in 1919 of his former student, Miss Norah Kershaw, whom he married in 1922. It seemed to her more than a pity that his time was devoted solely to teaching, university business, and to directing the research of others, and she told him so. At first he was unwilling to begin writing again, for he felt that the work he was engaged in was of greater consequence. But she persisted in urging him to do so and eventually he agreed to write a book if she would collaborate with him.

It was their original intention to continue the line of research explored in *The Heroic Age* into the later Post-heroic period, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Savilian*, Easter Term, 1947, p. 6.

to undertake a comparative study of the literature, archaeology, and general civilization of the Viking Age with that of Greece in the time of Hesiod, Solon, Archilochus; in 1919 they began collecting literary, historical, and archaeological material to this end.

It was about this time that his collaborator chanced upon a passage in Layard's *Early Adventures in Persia, Susiana and Babylon* in which he vividly describes the effect of poetry upon Mehemet Taki Khan and his followers—'men who knew no pity and who were ready to take human life upon the smallest provocation'.<sup>1</sup>

It tells of a scene in the Khan's camp: the minstrel seated by his chief, chanting in a loud voice from the *Shah Nameh* and how his listeners would shout and yell, draw their swords, and challenge imaginary foes, or weep as they listened to the moving tale of the Khorsam and his mistress. 'Such was probably the effect', wrote Layard, 'of the Homeric ballads when recited or sung of old in the camps of the Greeks, or when they marched to combat.' It was this passage which fired Mrs. Chadwick; and to it the great design embodied in *The Growth of Literature* owes its birth. Their original scheme was vastly extended: archaeology was abandoned and a comparison of advanced oral traditions—'oral literature' was their term for it—was embarked upon.

Though in a sense, as Dr. C. E. Wright has observed (see above, p. 315 f.), it was the logical, perhaps the inevitable, outcome of *The Heroic Age*, *The Growth of Literature* was a work far wider in range than the earlier book, for it embraces not only Teutonic and Greek Heroic poetry (the main themes of *The Heroic Age*) but the oral literature of many other peoples, ancient and modern: Heroic and Non-heroic poetry and saga, poetry and saga in relation to deities, antiquarian learning, gnostic, descriptive, and mantic poetry, poetry relating to unspecified individuals. Chapters are also devoted to Literature and Writing, Texts, Recitation, Composition, the Author, and Inspiration. Moreover, a number of essays and notes are included.

Volume I, which appeared in 1932, is concerned with the ancient oral literatures of Europe. Chadwick himself was responsible for its form, although nearly all the Irish material was collected by his wife who also contributed to other sections of the book. In Volume II (1936), Part I (on Russian oral literature) is her work; while he wrote the sections on Yugo-Slav oral poetry, early Indian and early Hebrew literature. Volume III

<sup>1</sup> Layard, *op. cit.*, vol. I (1887), p. 488.

(1940) was mainly the work of Mrs. Chadwick who wrote the first three sections (oral literature of the Tartars, Polynesia, and some African peoples). The concluding section, a masterly summary of the whole of this vast material, is the work of Chadwick himself.

This book is concerned with a stage of human development when 'a man's memory was his library'. Its aim is 'to trace if possible the operation of any general principles in the growth of literature' and the method adopted is 'a comparative study of the literary *genres* found in various countries and languages and in different periods of history'.<sup>1</sup>

This necessarily brief account of Chadwick's life and work is no place to embark upon a detailed criticism of so extensive a work and an arbitrary selection of certain points for comment would throw any estimate of the book out of focus. There are details with which one may disagree and views here and there which perhaps a more exhaustive reading of the works of modern scholars might have modified. But it would be ungenerous, not to say foolish, to cavil at this. As the authors themselves admit, had they not concentrated on the primary sources, the book would never have been completed. Rather one should marvel at the courage of a man of his years venturing on so huge an enterprise with but a single collaborator, and at their accomplishment of the task within fifteen years, despite the great inroads which teaching made upon his time—for during the period in which they were at work upon the book, Chadwick was giving something in the neighbourhood of 120 to 150 lectures a year. Yet in spite of this, his writing in this book is more lucid and easier to assimilate than in any of his earlier works.

The approach to their formidable comparative study might be described as an anthropological one. It seems paradoxical that in a man who devoted so much of his life to the study of literature, the aesthetic sense should be lacking or at all events repressed. Yet, although the authors are more concerned with the classification of literature than with its aesthetic value, the book is of absorbing interest. Even those whose interests lie in the aesthetic sphere could hardly fail to admire his sure grasp of the essentials of a problem, the clarity of his argument and, in the final summary, the breadth of his vision.

Certain types of literature are formulated, described in detail, and their distribution and interaction studied. From this, main

<sup>1</sup> The quotations are from the preface to the first volume of *The Growth of Literature*.

drifts in the general history of oral literature are observed: among them the encroachment on and the final supersession of the Heroic by Non-heroic elements, the relative parts played by the minstrel and the seer, the historical and purely speculative elements, the differences between 'maritime' and 'continental' literatures. Among the most stimulating chapters are those dealing with the author and with inspiration. Not the least of the services rendered to learning by this great book lies in its estimation of the relative value of different types of tradition when used as historical evidence—those which have their roots in history and those which are merely the fruit of philosophical or antiquarian speculation. Chadwick's almost pentecostal knowledge of tongues stood him in good stead: nearly all the languages of the many literatures studied in this book were known to one or other of its authors. If the term epoch-making may be applied to so large a synthesis, and one which broke so much new ground, *The Growth of Literature* may well be so described, and it should take its place in English scholarship along with such works as Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

After their marriage in 1922, the Chadwicks set up house in an old paper-mill on the outskirts of Cambridge, close to the Norman 'Leper Chapel' which they took under their care. They had a roomy garden defended by a high wall, and one entered the front door after crossing a bridge over the old mill-stream. Mrs. Chadwick shared his love of animals and the house was peopled with dogs and cats named after various personages in *Beowulf* and in Norse mythology. There was an aviary in the garden, near which in summer they would sit and write; while along the mill-stream ducks and geese could be seen drifting. Mrs. Chadwick had a collection of harps, and on these favoured guests were sometimes regaled by 'The March of the Men of Harlech', played with one finger by the Professor.

One evening, when they were living at the paper-mills, the present writer had occasion to visit him upon business. On being asked how he was, Chadwick replied: 'I have been having a terrible stiff time. One of my in-laws has died. It's like that, do you see.' Still unsuspecting of his preternatural gravity, I murmured my sympathy. 'It has involved me in a lot of legal correspondence,' he continued. 'Only this morning I received a letter from the lawyers which explains why I have not been feeling as well as I should be. It appears that I am a good deal older than I thought—you'd better not mention this or they will have me out of my chair. It appears I am just over a hundred.'

Then, with a blink and a perceptible quickening of *tempo*: 'My father and mother were married in 1857 and, according to this letter, I was not only present at the wedding but must have been twenty-one at the time, since I witnessed the marriage settlement.' As in his treatment of evidence, so in his humour, the approach was original, while in the unfolding nothing of significance was left unexplored.

Soon after their marriage, Chadwick, who had hitherto viewed motoring with an almost superstitious apprehension, was induced by his wife to have a car. Mrs. Chadwick drove, and in it they would not only take students to see archaeological sites in the vicinity, but would make long tours together, visiting many early monuments in this country, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. One of these trips led to their buying a house at Vowchurch in the Golden Valley on the borders of Herefordshire and Wales in which they spent a considerable part of their vacations. It was here that he began a work on *Early Wales and the Saxon Penetration of the West*. The book was laid aside in 1940: his sense of the past was too keen, his love of this country so strong, that he found it more than he could bear to write of an earlier invasion from the same quarter and by people of the same race as that which then threatened to engulf his native land. Only a few chapters were drafted, but the project had entailed a close field-survey of the Border and his tracing on foot many of the parish boundaries. As Dr. C. E. Wright observes:

One feature of his genius, which all those who travelled with him over the country-side noted particularly, was his amazing eye for natural features and for their importance in determining the course of history—earthworks, barrows, camps, trackways and Roman roads were not just isolated objects of antiquarian interest, but essential elements in a great pattern.<sup>1</sup>

This gift is nowhere more apparent in his published writings than in his last book, *Early Scotland*.

When the war came in 1939, the Chadwicks, not without regret, moved from the paper-mills to Adams Road, which became his home for the rest of his life. Pleasant though it was, the new house never bore the imprint of his personality as clearly as did the old mill which they had quitted.

The Second World War deprived the University of many of its younger lecturers. The greater part of the teaching for his own department (*Anglo-Saxon and Kindred Studies*) fell once more

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Review*, 1946-7, p. 248, quoted in Dr. Telfer's obituary.

upon Chadwick. In 1941, on attaining the age limit, he retired from the chair, but at the request of the university authorities, continued teaching as head of the Department. This did not prevent him from continuing his own writing and research. His contribution, 'Who was he?' in the issue of *Antiquity* (xiv, 1940, 76-87) devoted to the find at Sutton Hoo, throws light on the early kings of East Anglia. To his mind Redwald was the most likely person for whom the great monument might have been made—a view somewhat at variance with the numismatic evidence which suggests a slightly later date.

A short book, *The Study of Anglo-Saxon*, appeared in 1941. Its main purpose was to indicate the scope which that study has to offer. Here, as in the Preface to volume I of *The Growth of Literature*, he argued that the interest and value of this subject is greatly increased by combining it with kindred studies (see above, p. 317). In the last chapter, after tracing the growth of Anglo-Saxon studies, he turned to the future and pleaded that they should not be treated merely as an adjunct to English or be limited solely to language and literature; they should be given, like Classics, full scope for their various interests and an independent position among the courses in Honours. Moreover, he believed that the principles which he advocated for his own subject should be extended to the study of foreign peoples, an idea which he had developed at greater length in *The Nationalities of Europe*.

Both in *The Study of Anglo-Saxon* and in an article 'Why compulsory Philology?', which appeared in *The Universities Quarterly* for 1946 (pp. 58-63), he states the case against the teaching of philology as a compulsory subject. The latter was written at the request of the National Union of Students which had passed a resolution against the teaching of compulsory philology for students of languages at the universities. Even those who disagree with Chadwick's view can hardly fail to be struck with the manner in which he, a man of seventy-five years, was still able to enter into the students' point of view. He held that philology appealed to a very small number and, while believing that students who were interested in the subject should have an opportunity of studying it, he regarded it as best suited for post-graduate work. This has led some to believe that he had grown to dislike philology. Nothing could be further from the truth: his last two books bear witness to his constant use of it as a favourite and delicate instrument.

*The Nationalities of Europe* appeared in 1945. This book, in a



sense, may be regarded as his war work. His purpose in writing it was

to call attention to the need for more knowledge, not only of national movements—their characteristics and causes and the ideologies associated with them—but also, and more especially, for more knowledge of the nationalities themselves. I believe that the mistakes made by British policy in the past have been due in the main to ignorance of foreign peoples, including non-British peoples within the Empire.<sup>1</sup>

As a means of overcoming this ignorance, he suggests that a government-sponsored Institute of Imperial and Foreign Studies should be established to provide courses on the languages, history, records, and antiquities of the different countries—subjects which are essential to the true understanding of the culture of any nation. A scheme for this is outlined at the end of the book. The book itself is a general survey. He traces the different nationalities from their beginnings down to and including the Second World War. Much attention is given to the German philosophy of domination, to its origin, development, and disastrous consequences. The book reflects a mellow, progressive, yet realistic outlook. In the chapters on the formation of the linguistic map of Europe and the prehistoric foundations of claims to domination, Chadwick is in his own element; here his handling of the linguistic evidence is brilliant: for example, his arguments for locating the early home of the Celts in the north-west German-Netherlandic area, a region farther to the north than is admitted by many scholars. His interpretation of the archaeological evidence in the light of linguistic study, though at times unorthodox, is none the less arresting. While the book can hardly fail to elicit the interest of the general reader, for those entering upon a diplomatic career or the foreign branch of the civil service it should prove indispensable.

There remains but to mention his posthumous book, *Early Scotland: The Picts, the Scots and the Welsh of Southern Scotland*, published in 1949 by the Cambridge University Press. Here once again, as his wife writes in her admirable introduction,

his chief contribution lies in synthesis. Linguistic problems, both philological and textual, were his special field . . . . But the writer of the present book was also keenly interested in the prehistory of Europe as a whole, and more especially in the archaeology of the British Isles. He realized that the historian and philologist must work in close co-operation with the field-worker, and he has not hesitated to make use of recent archaeological work where it could be seen to be relevant to the historical

<sup>1</sup> *The Nationalities of Europe*, p. vii.

records. It may perhaps be added . . . that his studies were always closely bound up with his personal life. To work on the history of Scotland gave him keen personal pleasure. Descended from an old Highland family, he turned to Scotland whenever opportunity offered as to the home of his ancestors, and the work of his later years, both on Scotland and Wales, was inspired by an almost romantic love of the Celtic West.<sup>1</sup>

The book opens with two somewhat formidable chapters on 'The Kingdom of the Picts' and 'The Value of the Sources'. Not the least important contribution arising from them is his thesis that the *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots* were derived from two original chronicles based upon two independent oral traditions: in one the Gaelic element is deeply embedded; in the other the forms are in a language virtually identical with Welsh, a language which he calls 'Welsh-Pictish'. The significance of this emerges in the following chapters; while not denying the existence of pre-Celtic, even pre-Indo-European linguistic elements, of which we know nothing, Chadwick holds that both Gaelic and 'Welsh-Pictish' were spoken by the Picts. He holds no brief for the current view that the Gaelic language was introduced into Scotland at a relatively late date by the Dalriadic Scots from Ireland, rather he regards it as having first reached Scotland in the Late Bronze Age through a movement from the north-west German-Netherlandic area which he believes to have affected the whole of the British Isles.<sup>2</sup> In this he is in agreement with Mahr and Crawford, though not with the majority of archaeologists. 'Welsh-Pictish', he believes, reached Scotland later, with the La Tène invasion from overseas (Childe's Abernethy Complex). The new-comers were responsible, among other innovations, for the introduction of forts of the *muris gallicus* type; their primary areas of settlement were in the east-coast regions, whence they spread over a considerable part of Scotland. Although believing that the Gaelic element reasserted itself in certain areas, Chadwick claims that 'Welsh-Pictish' was spoken in Scotland for a thousand years and it has left numerous traces of itself in place-names over a large area of that country.

The distribution of the vitrified forts<sup>3</sup> on the one hand and of

<sup>1</sup> Loc. cit., p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. too *The Nationalities of Europe*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup> The vitrified forts are in reality *muri gallici* which have undergone the action of fire. Chadwick regards both as 'Welsh-Pictish' monuments and believes that the firing of the former was due to hostile action, since the *muri gallici* which have not undergone the action of fire only occur in the primary area of his 'Welsh-Pictish' settlement, i.e. in the East.

the brochs on the other lead him to believe them to be the monuments of two contemporary and hostile cultures.<sup>1</sup> But, as he himself admits, this view awaits the confirmation of further excavation. In the chapter on the Irish Picts the broch-builders are equated with the Fomorians of early Irish tradition who appear to have been Cruithni (here the 'Gaelic-Picts' of Scotland) or their dependants on the west coast and western isles of Scotland. Chapters follow on the Dalriadic Kingdom and the Kingdoms of the northern Britons, the latter being perhaps the most interesting part of this arresting book. Chapter VII was never finished, and as Mrs. Chadwick observes, perhaps the greatest loss was the section projected for it upon the earliest history of Christianity in Scotland, on which he held original and valuable views.

Three features in this book are striking: his interpretation of the evidence as seen against the background of physical geography, his estimate of the varying values of different types of tradition as historical evidence and his deductions based upon linguistic study, both philological and textual. But more striking still is the fact that, despite his advancing years, in this, his last book, his intellectual powers show no trace of crystallization; his imagination remained fresh and his brilliance in the handling of evidence undimmed.

Chadwick was a man who neither sought nor expected honours; recognition came to him. He received the following Honorary Degrees: D.Litt., Durham (1914); LL.D., St. Andrews (1919); D.Litt., Oxford (1943). He was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 1925 and Honorary Member of Sweden's *Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet*, Lund, in 1928; while in 1941 he became an Honorary Fellow of his own college, Clare.

On the election in 1945 of his old pupil and friend Bruce Dickins to the Elrington and Bosworth Professorship, he relinquished his teaching, satisfied that the electors had chosen a scholar of distinction to succeed him.

In the February of 1946 he fell ill and for a few days his life was in danger. But he recovered and soon resumed writing. During the summer and autumn of that year he was well enough to work in his garden. Up to the evening on which his last illness set in, he was wonderfully alert both mentally and physically, and when the blow fell, it fell suddenly. An operation became imperative and he was hurried to a nursing-home.

<sup>1</sup> For a recent but different view on the brochs see Sir Lindsay Scott, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 1947, 1 ff.

Although at first he showed signs of making a recovery, complications set in. All through his last illness he was urging his doctor to let him go home, as he was anxious to finish his book on *Early Scotland*. But the strain proved too great and on the morning of 2 January 1947, the day on which they had decided to move him, he died in his sleep. He did not live to see the publication of the *Festschrift* which his former students had written in his honour, but he knew that it was in course of preparation under the editorship of Sir Cyril Fox and Professor Bruce Dickins.

It is fitting that many distinguished scholars, men and women, should thus testify to his genius as a teacher, for it was this sphere of his work which he himself set most store by. Some may believe that his services to learning might have been greater still had he limited his research purely to Anglo-Saxon studies—a view, perhaps, more narrow than just. His life's work was a harmonious, if unusual, development: from Classics he passed through a phase of philological research to the study of early history, literature, religion, archaeology, and tradition. Not the least of his many achievements was to reveal how 'the darkness of the Dark Ages' could be illumined by tradition when scientifically used and in his formulation and fearless application of a technique which, outside the range of purely classical scholarship, he did so much to extend and perfect. His views on archaeological matters may at times have been unorthodox, but they were always alive and provocative, while not infrequently they revealed deep insight. As a philologist his contribution lay in the realm of 'practical' rather than 'asterisk' philology. His power of synthesis, based as it was upon learning deep and wide, stood out like a beacon in this age of ever-increasing specialization.

His friends will always remember the stocky figure in shaggy green tweeds, the old Norfolk jacket, belt unbuttoned, out at elbows; the heavy boots yet delicate almost tripping gait; his inseparable companion a battered, wheezy pipe, swathed in adhesive tape. Nor will they forget the gentle voice, the comfortable north-country manner of speech, the fine cliff-like brow and the large brown eyes, kindly, yet to the end so piercingly bright.

The richness and rare variety of endowments, not only of the scholar but of the man—his faculty of at once penetrating to the core of things, his quiet yet inflexible tenacity, his gentleness, shyness, delicate courtesy, the humour, dry, ironic, yet not

unmingled with a sense of mischief and self-deprecating buffoonery—all these qualities combined to make him an utterly unique being and will keep his memory green to all who were fortunate enough to know him. For those who were not his written work and, it is to be hoped, the School which he laboured so unsparingly to found will remain his monument.

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The writer wishes to express his gratitude to Mrs. N. K. Chadwick for much help in the preparation of this Memorial. He also wishes to thank Miss Dorothy Chadwick for certain information about the family history.

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