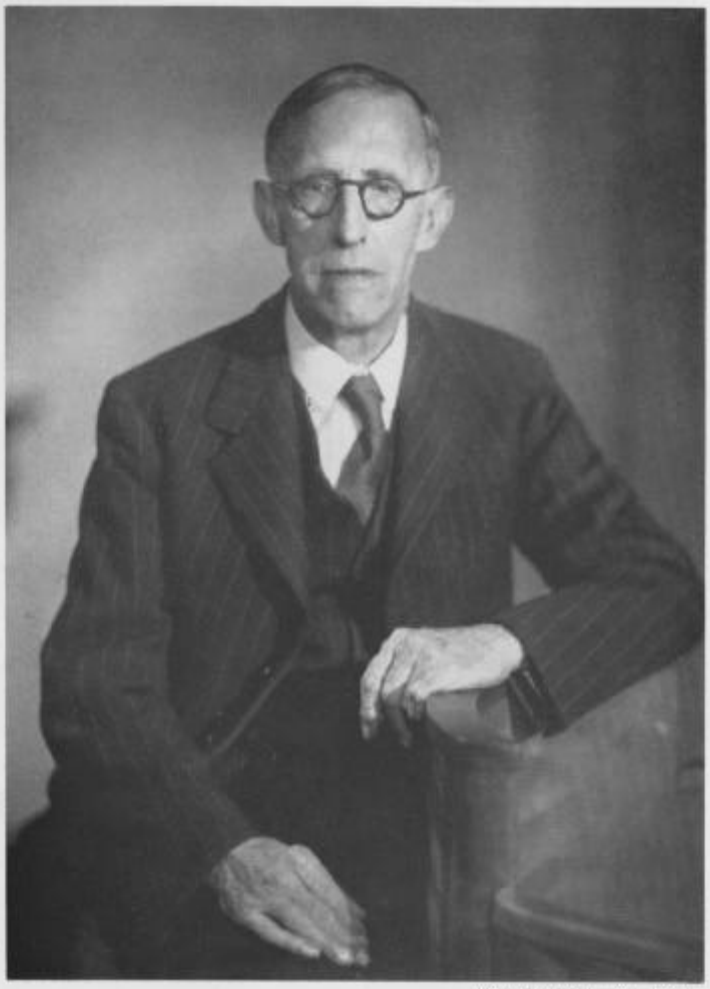
PLATE XXXVII



Photograph by Gilbert Adams, Wargrave

SIR FRANK STENTON

FRANK MERRY STENTON

1880–1967

PREFACE

IN writing this memoir of my husband I have received the ready help of many friends. His long life has meant that the close friends of his youth and even of his middle age are no longer available for consultation, but his mother's care to preserve her husband's diary and letters, to write a diary herself, to make Frank keep a diary for a year as a boy of 12, and to preserve his letters and postcards sent to her has given me a sound basis on which to build. I have concentrated on the facts of his life and on recording his writings as he published them. At the same time I have been preparing a volume of his collected papers for publication by the Clarendon Press, being careful to place them in order of date so that they will in some sense serve as companion to this memoir and indicate the development of his mind. One thing I should like to stress is the extraordinary breadth of his knowledge. The only other man I have ever heard talk like Frank, over as wide a range of subjects and as modestly and impressively, was Sir Herbert Thompson when he was staying in our house and Frank and he talked together far into the night. Frank could meet specialists in many fields on their own ground and could start off young people on researches in widely different periods and subjects. He often surprised Sir Lewis Namier by his knowledge of eighteenth-century literature. His memory was phenomenal and what he read he rarely forgot. A lonely boyhood, with books as his companions rather than young people, the consciousness that his father's memory went back far into the early part of the previous century, may have had something to do with this. He said himself that the fact that he lived in a 'soke' and the fact that his mother had taken possession of South Hill House, left her by her husband 'by copy of court roll', that his father had held courts leet in the name of the Archbishop of York had fired his imagination and made him want to learn the reason why. His father's head clerk, too, had done his best to make the past of Southwell a reality to him.

I owe gratitude to Dr. E. Smith, lately Registrar of Reading University, for reading and advising me about this memoir, particularly about my husband's time as Vice-Chancellor. I

owe thanks to Mr. D. Joshua Evans, J.P., for help about my husband's time at Llandovery College. Professor Whitelock has produced for me reviews of his work which I had never seen, and Dr. Slade has reminded me of things which I might well have forgotten until too late and very willingly brought me library books. Miss Mary Flower has looked up for me dates in his family history which I could not supply and Miss Ann Gooch of the Registrar's Department has looked up dates for me in the College and University records. My friend, Miss H. J. Deas, has read this memoir and made helpful suggestions. I am deeply indepted to Mr. Willcox, the secretary of the History of Parliament Trust, for so carefully abstracting for me the history of my husband's connection with the Trust and the History of Parliament from the voluminous records of that body. It was, I fear, a laborious task and I am grateful to him. Mr. Mullins's own letter about Frank is a most percipient document, the work of one whom Frank had come to regard with real affection as a friend. To Sir Goronwy Edwards and to Mr. Mullins my husband would wish me to convey his thanks for all they did to lighten the task of the Chairman through these long years and to help me with this account of his life.

I. FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

Frank Merry Stenton came of a family long settled in the Archbishop of York's soke of Southwell. A Nicholas Stenton was reeve of Southwell in the time of Philip and Mary.[1] Most of the Stentons appear to have been substantial farmers in these early days, living in Westhorpe, Southwell, or Halam, but some were more humble. A Goody Stenton sold a hive in Halam in 1710 and two years before had received an umbrella which cost a shilling.[2] When Rastall compiled his first History of Southwell he provided a very poor pedigree of the family from the Registers, and he found no one to mention earlier than Charles I's reign. But in the first surviving register of baptisms a number of a Richard Stenton's children are entered as baptized in the latter half of the sixteenth century: John on 6 June 1579, Richard and Thomas on 11 June 1582, and Catherine on 6 August 1587. Robert Stenton's son Thomas was baptized on

[1] The tombstone of Nicholas Stenton and Anne his wife beside the path leading to the minster church of Southwell from Westgate, was, like many others, turned on its face and covered with turf some years ago for reasons of economy of upkeep of the church yard.

[2] From the account roll *penes* Stenton, now at Whitley Park Farm.

3 March 1592. Richard Stenton's wife Joan was buried on 2 November 1592 and Robert on 14 February 1598. In that year Richard Stenton was brought up before the church court for not paying his tithes, but compounded for them after several failures to appear. His daughter Catherine was buried on 24 June 1603. On 7 July in that year, Elizabeth, wife of Richard Stenton, was buried. She may have been a second wife, but more probably is the wife of the Richard who was baptized in 1582. The entries appear to relate to a family already long established in Southwell. In 1787 Rastall described the Stentons as 'much the oldest family in the place and become, of late, one of the most opulent'.[1] The opulence was acquired by Francis Stenton, who, after doing well in Southwell and the neighbourhood as a builder and architect, went to London and prospered there also. When he retired from active work he went back to Southwell and built himself a fine house backing on Westgate with stables across the road. The house still stands, has been modernized, and is now known as Stenton House. Francis's fortune passed to his son, another Richard Stenton, enabling him to undertake the office of High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire in 1788. He was the great-grandfather of Frank Merry Stenton.

The High Sheriff and his sons had not learned the lesson which the feudal nobility of the Middle Ages and the squirearchy who succeeded them so well appreciated; that wealth is soon dissipated if each generation does not add to it. Richard Stenton himself was too convivial ever to meditate much about it. 'Commonly known in all the ale houses in Southwell as the jolly boy', wrote one local gentleman in his own copy of Rastall. His few surviving letters are full of the joys of shooting and the prowess of his dogs, particularly 'old Crusoe', who was 'like pin wire'. According to family tradition he was a strong supporter of the Southwell Oyster Club, which met regularly to feast at the Saracen's Head. His oyster knives and cloths are still in this house. After all, there was not much to do at Southwell except engage in field sports and the pleasures of the table. To his credit it may be noted that he bequeathed the interest on £150 to teach ten poor children to read, as is set out on his memorial stone on the inside of the Minster. Two of Richard's sons, Richard and Henry, joined the volunteers in the Napoleonic war and received commissions, Richard in the Yorkshire and Henry in the Nottinghamshire regiment. One or two

[1] William Dickinson Rastall, *A History of Southwell*, 1787, p. 478.

letters from Richard to his father survive. In one he asked for a draft of £230, but without much expectation of receiving it. In another he urged his father to be more liberal to Henry. He signed himself Richard Stenton, junior, Lieutenant, Yorkshire Regiment, sending his best love 'to you, my mother, Bob and Frank'. Nothing more can be found about Richard junior, or Bob, but after the war Frank was living at Leamington and hoping for an appointment in the army.

The head of the family in the next generation was Captain Henry Stenton, Frank Merry's grandfather. Letters from his father directed to him at Ramsgate Barracks show strong parental pride and affection. In October 1803 he urged Henry to 'be very frugal and saving as much as you can, but don't be mean. I shall be quite satisfied if you make your pay serve.' This Henry certainly did not do. In a postscript his father said, 'If you escape the ravages of war and come to old Southwell again I have got one of the finest whelps of old Becher's breed for you to shoot before as ever was bred.' In the following January his father wrote:

> Mr. Law desires his best compliments. We drank your health yesterday and in the course of the evening I got pretty Fresh. He desires me to say that he should be happy to hear of you being the first to kill the first Frenchman that dare to put is [*sic*] foot upon English ground. I nearly forgot to tell you that I shot a Dam'd Thumping Fox on Thursday last.

Richard Stenton Esq. is recorded as buried on 21 April 1806. His wife, Ann, survived him until 1813 and was buried on 25 February, aged 59. Their two impressive stone boxes stand side by side on the north side of the Minster near the old Grammar School.

Henry Stenton was appointed Adjutant in 1810 and commissioned as Major in 1813 and retired as Captain to live in Southwell. He had inherited both the Southwell house and other property there and the London property, but the necessity of paying his debts and providing for his sisters meant that the London property had to be sold. It was necessary for him to marry an heiress if possible, for the chance of profitable employment in the army was remote. In 1814 he married Elizabeth Judson Cawdron, daughter of John and Mary Cawdron of Bawtry. She was born at Bawtry on the 17th and baptized there on 19 September 1772, whereas Henry was born in 1782 and christened on 15 January. In 1815 she gave birth to Henry Cawdron, father of Frank Merry. It always gave her grandson

pleasure to reflect that his grandmother had been born before the French Revolution and before the open revolt of the American colonies.

Henry Stenton found life at Southwell extremely boring. His wife had been early orphaned and brought up in a strongly evangelical circle at Hull. She therefore had no sympathy with the gay society which her husband had enjoyed while in the army and for which he still yearned. She brought with her to the Southwell house not only some beautiful silver spoons and forks marked E.J.C., but also a considerable library of evangelical literature. Her husband was thought to be strikingly handsome. She was regarded as remarkable for strength of character rather than beauty. 'May he have his father's beauty and his mother's wit', was the wish of an old family friend at Henry Cawdron's christening party. There is little evidence as to whether Henry Cawdron inherited her 'wit'. He was strikingly like her in face. She lived to be 83, dying in 1855. Her husband had long before[1] blown out his brains under a yew-tree at the bottom of his garden, having first charged his son to get himself a trade or profession.

Henry Cawdron duly qualified as a solicitor, taking his examination in London in January 1838 following his father's death. He entered a full description of the day of the examination at Haw Court, where he and his fellow candidates met a paper with three preliminary questions and seventy-five legal ones, being fifteen in each branch. He did not attempt to answer any of the Equity questions, but confined himself 'to the other four branches of the law and answered about 56 out of 60. The Bankruptcy and Criminal questions were very stiff', but 'conveyancing and common law were easy enough. I thought as soon as I read the questions over that I should have a good chance of getting through.' He then proceeded to enter the questions into his diary. His anxiety was soon removed for on the next day

> at the hour appointed me seven o'clock in the evening I went to the Law incorporated Society's Hall in Chancery Lane to know the result of the examiners' deliberations upon my questions and answers.
>
> When I presented myself the secretary requested my name upon which he commenced searching for the name amongst his papers upon finding it he turned round to me and said 'Mr. Stenton, you have passed' and informed me that my certificate would be ready tomorrow

[1] In September 1837.

morning at eleven. Thus terminates my anxieties and uncertainties about my future fate in the law.

The next morning he acquired his 'certificate which was signed by Pierce Thomas le Blanc a prothonotary and two lawyers of extensive practice, Martineau and Teesdale, the latter has the largest business of anyone in London'. He spent the rest of the afternoon preparing the affidavits to which he had to swear before a judge in chambers, which he finished at 5 o'clock, when he went to the Saracen's Head and booked a seat on the Rockingham coach for the next afternoon. On the following day, being Saturday, 27 January, he went to Westminster Hall at 10 o'clock and waited half an hour until the judge appeared when the officer of the court immediately proceeded to swear the newly examined men in. 'We took the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and also that I did not believe in the authority of the pope, after which we all went to another passage and subscribed the roll and received my papers and there the forms and ceremonies ended.'[1] He set off at half past four by the commercial for Southwell. He reached Newark at a quarter to eight on the Sunday morning, evidently driving all night, and found his man awaiting him, who presumably drove him home to Southwell which he reached at a quarter to nine. The Victorians were tough men for instead of resting after so arduous a journey he attended church twice that day.

As might be expected Henry Cawdron's career as a solicitor was not marked by any outstanding events, but was a steady record of a strongly conservative and virtuous member of the Church of England. He entered the old firm of solicitors which had always managed the Archbishop of York's affairs at Southwell, and in time became its head. He went round the various manors which made up the soke of Southwell, holding courts in the old way, although some of the courts leet in which business had become little more than a formality he closed because he wished to spare the Archbishop the expense of the necessary hospitality of the court. Frank always regarded that as a mistake on his father's part. Although Frank was not old enough when his father died to hear about his work in the ancient courts from his father's lips, he was able to talk to the man who for many years was his father's head clerk and went about the manors with him. Patchett knew as much as anyone about the way the business was done in the courts held both at

[1] The grammar is that of the diarist.

the Southwell office and in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire manors belonging to the Archbishop. He was also well skilled in the work of enclosing open fields and had very little sympathy with the unfortunate men who through shiftlessness and incompetence drank their compensation and could not continue to farm even the little land they received. Patchett also gave to Frank a number of very interesting records picked up in the course of business or acquired on the death of a noted Newark collector, Corny Brown. One is a battered account roll of the manor of Halam found in an old chimney and relating to the early eighteenth-century affairs of the children who were the heirs of the property at the time. Although he did not know it, Patchett was helping to train the future historian of the Danelaw with his talk of forgotten customs and old laws. Frank's father himself had no particular interest in the past, but was a strong conservative and in order to be able to get an extra vote in Bassetlaw wapentake bought several strips of open field at Eakring, a possession which gave the historian and teacher great pleasure.[1] Only a couple of years before his death, when he was selling the last of his land in the county, he agreed to sell also the Eakring strips, only to find that the evidence of his ownership of them had been lost in the office, so that he in consequence could no longer claim to be their holder or receive the modest amount of rent which they had brought in hitherto.

Frank's father became a leader in the little community of Southwell, prominent in furthering all good causes, such as the subscription list for the victims of the failure of Wild's Bank, or a mining disaster in the Nottingham and Derby coal pits. He gave penny readings, visited condemned prisoners, and met every challenge as it appeared. It was largely due to his influence that the railway was extended from Mansfield to Southwell and that Smith's Bank, now the National Provincial, opened a branch there. His mother's influence made him a strong evangelical, so that when the Minster clergy took to preaching in surplices he headed the subscription list with £500[2]

[1] Until the Second World War Eakring was unenclosed and the strips farmed in the old way. The finding of oil under them marked the beginning of the change. Now the strips have disappeared and the great field is ploughed by tractor.

[2] His name comes second in the list after that of Mrs. Heathcote, who gave £2,000 from the profits of the local school for young ladies at the top of Burgage Hill.

for the building of an evangelical church in Westhorpe. Holy Trinity Church was the work of a Roman Catholic architect, despite the views of the subscribers, and its spire makes a real contribution to the beauty of Southwell as one approaches it down the hill from the south. He was a strong Conservative and canvassed both by speeches and letters to the local papers for the Conservative candidates in the Newark division, once receiving a deluge of soot from a supporter of the opposite side. Before he retired he had gone some way to restore the Stenton fortunes, for in those days the Southwell office had no rival for the legal business of the town and the country round. He invested in land, mainly in Southwell itself, Westhorpe, and Halloughton, so that he became a farmer as well as a lawyer. He purchased South Hill House, its grounds, and the cottage adjacent to it, where the man who farmed his land lived in 1855.[1] He enjoyed country sports as his ancestors had done and bought an interest in fishing in the Greet[2] and some isolated fields which were surrounded by the property of a notable preserver of game.

In 1852, when Henry Cawdron was 36, he married Frances Cooke, sister of the Southwell surgeon and daughter of a man of the same profession. According to the 1851 census she was 34, but when she married she seems to have deducted a year or so, for her marriage certificate gives her age as 30. She bore a son and a daughter and died at the age of 55 in 1873. The son, Richard Henry, followed his father into the law and became a partner in the Southwell office, but he had little strength of character and made what his friends regarded as an unfortunate marriage with a very beautiful girl from a tobacconist's shop in Retford. Henry Cawdron's daughter, Kate Fanny, was educated at Mrs. Heathcote's school for young ladies at the top of Burgage Hill and became a surprisingly good artist in water colours. She has left a number of attractive pictures of Southwell Minster, which hang at Whitley Park Farm, a charming unfinished self-portrait of a young girl, and a set of white china dessert plates, each painted with a different design, which she gave as a wedding present to her father and his second wife.

[1] Sold with his land to the Nottinghamshire County Council for the new County Agricultural College by my husband and now used as a hostel for women students. The cottage has been pulled down to make room for a required new building.

[2] Still held by Frank when we were married by the third life in the lease, i.e. that of the Vicar of Stanford in the Vale, Berks.

She married Alexander, one of the several sons of the Revd. Thomas Coats Cane, J.P., one of the canons residentiary of Southwell, who built Brackenhurst on the opposite side of the road to South Hill with a wide view over the vale of Trent across Newark to the ridge on which Lincoln stands. It is now the County Agricultural College, but little land went with the house and Frank was forced to sell his land to the south of Southwell to make up enough to support the work of the students. Kate Fanny at first refused to marry Alec Cane, letting him go off to his post as engineer in Shanghai alone, but in 1884 she changed her mind and followed him abroad to marry him there.

In 1879 Henry Cawdron retired, having provided for the future of the firm by taking in a young and reliable man as partner, A. T. Metcalfe, so that the firm became Stenton, Stenton and Metcalfe. It soon became, on the death of Richard Henry at the age of 36 in 1889, and remained until very recently, Stenton and Metcalfe. Mr. Metcalfe belonged to an old Retford family and was, like the senior partner, a strong evangelical. He lived throughout his long life at Southwell in the house in the centre of the town, which is now entirely occupied by the office. Henry Cawdron's retirement was followed at once by his marriage to a young woman of 30, Elizabeth Merry, described in her marriage certificate as daughter of Thomas Merry, Esq., gentleman, of the Watt Pitts, Honily, Warwickshire. They were married in London in July and set up house at Hope Cottage, Crown Hill, Upper Norwood, in order to be near the amenities of the Crystal Palace. They furnished the house anew from top to bottom, for they left the Southwell house with all its contents as it stood to Richard Henry and his wife. All that they took away was a favourite armchair and an elegant escritoire given to Henry Cawdron by the Duke of Newcastle in recognition of his efforts in one of the Newark elections.

Despite the disparity in their ages Henry and his wife were deeply in love and remained so during their brief married life of eight years. Their only child, Frank Merry, was born on 17 May 1880 at Hope Cottage. The birth was a difficult one and the doctor asked which he should save, mother or child, for he did not think that both could live. Henry unhesitatingly demanded that the doctor should preserve his wife, but fortunately both survived. It was fortunate, too, that Frank was born in London and not Southwell, for he was born with a club-foot and in 1880 the operation for club-foot was not performed as a

matter of course, nor was it always successful. Frank was operated on before he was a year old in December 1880 and a sinew was cut so that his left ankle had to be supported with irons until he was 13 and his left leg and hip never properly developed. When overtired he always had a barely perceptible limp and when he hurt his right knee, as he did once late in life, he was hard put to it to get about at all.

From February 1885 until near her husband's death in 1887 Elizabeth Stenton kept up a full diary recording the daily routine of the little household; the weather, the health of the individual members, the meals she gave them, her husband's doings, Frank's daily lessons given by her, generally in the afternoon, the books she read, the sewing she did, the doings of Mary Ann, Frank's nurse, of Hannah, the general maid, of Salmon, the gardener, and the occasional helpers employed. From his frequent visits to the Crystal Palace her husband generally brought her little presents of a book, sweets, flowers, or a warm shawl for herself, her mother, or 'Aunt Mary'. The diary was an invaluable *confidente*, for after the departure of Katie to Shanghai she had no friends near at hand. She was living in a place where neither she nor her husband had any roots. Her friends were at Southwell, at Gornal, and her old home, the Watt Pitts. She kept up a close correspondence with them. From Southwell came hampers of game in season, of chicken, eggs, butter, cream, fruit and early vegetables, asparagus, peas, and beans. Even 'pig cheer' and pots of jam seem to have reached Norwood in good condition. To her mother and Aunt Mary, Elizabeth sent game, chicken, legs of lamb, and an occasional duck or brace of partridges and piece of bacon. She was evidently an excellent and a generous housekeeper. The hampers were sent back to be refilled for return.

Henry Cawdron began to go downhill in 1885 and Elizabeth was clearly anxious that a small child in the household should not be troublesome to her husband. On 3 October she 'could not help having a little cry. I feel very miserable about Henry and Frank, the former will not try to understand the latter.' She did all she could to make Frank's presence easy for her husband to bear. When the house was being done up she even sent Frank to Southwell in charge of Mary Ann and in the late summer she took him to Scarborough for a holiday herself. Unfortunately as soon as a day was fixed for return, both from Southwell and from Scarborough, Frank fell ill so that coming home had to be postponed. The Scarborough holiday lasted as

a result almost a month and Henry was glad to see her home. Frank was a delicate little boy, who tended to get what his mother described in her diary as 'weezy' if he went out in the damp or wind or cold, so that he had to have a fire in his bedroom and a steam kettle. A good deal of pressure was exerted on him to 'be a good little boy'. A charming letter from his half-sister in Shanghai, full of very attractive drawings, survives addressed to 'My dear little Pilette', which she closes, 'I hope my Pilette is a good quiet little boy now that Father is so sick and that he tries to be a comfort to his mother.' It was hardly necessary to exhort Frank to quietness and virtue. His mother constantly notes in her diary that Frank is 'such a good little boy' or 'a regular darling'. That he 'sang the hymns in church sweetly' on Easter Sunday 1885. Very rarely she had to criticize his behaviour; on 20 March she 'spoke to him about his naughty temper'; on 28 April he was 'so careless and inattentive during lessons that I had to whip him when lessons were over'; on 28 April he 'did not behave well in Evans and Williams shop', and on 13 November 'he was very tiresome in the way he held his pen', but these are the only occasions that there is in this diary any criticism of Frank, who after all was only 5.

In 1886 the lease of Hope Cottage was running out and the tenant of South Hill House, Sir Edward Hay, had inherited property in Scotland, so that the house was free for Mr. and Mrs. Stenton to go to, 'and what a change that will be' wrote Elizabeth in her diary on 26 September. On 7 October she recorded that Mr. and Mrs. Patchett were in London, presumably to help in the move, that Hannah had left her service, and that a Mrs. Lane of Newark was trying to get her servants for South Hill. She made no further entry until 8 March 1887, when she recorded that her husband had died on Sunday, 6 March, after intense suffering and was to be buried the next day. Katie had got back to England barely a week before her father died, for her own husband, Alec Cane, had died in Shanghai after a sadly brief married life. Mary Ann's father had died in the previous autumn so that her mother could be at South Hill to help Mrs. Stenton and Mary Ann. 'Frank', wrote his mother, 'is a very good little boy. . . . I fear I shall not have very much money on which to live. I think about £100 a year. If my darling were here I should not mind.'

It was a sad story which Mrs. Stenton had told in this diary, but Frank's early years at Norwood were by no means

uniformly gloomy. As an old man he remembered how much he enjoyed seeing trains at the Norwood High Level station and travelling in them to London to visit Whiteley's shop. All his life pleasure in seeing trains and travelling in them persisted. He remembered, too, his walks with Mary Ann round the Crystal Palace, singing hymns with her in the Mission chapel—particularly 'Nothing but leaves, the Spirit grieves over a wasted life.' Mary Ann always pointed the moral to his half-brother's life, nothing much wrong, but without achievement. He remembered the chilly feeling of the mackintosh which buttoned him into his push chair and the euphonious phrases on the boards advertising houses for sale or to let by Messrs. 'Debenham, Tewson and Freebody'. But sadder memories of youth lived on too, notably the cleaning out of one of the farm carts to convey his father's body to be buried in Halloughton Churchyard.

The next document which survives from these early days is Frank's first letter, a birthday letter to Katie, then living at Clifton, dated 2 September 1887, 'My dear Katie I wish you a happy birthday and hope you will like my present. Miss Cane sends her love to you. The Ridleys are well the Coopers are very poorly With love your Pilette.' In June 1888 Mrs. Stenton wrote briefly in her diary to record her mother's death at the Watt Pitts on the morning of 22 March. She was buried at Honily and her daughter was with her for a month before she died. This absence from home was the occasion of the next two letters from Frank:

South Hill House, Southwell 16 March 1888. Dear Mother We aried safely last night and had a very pleasant jurney. We saw a lot of ennjens, and aried at St Pankras very puncual. We traveld from Nottingham to Ketering alone and then two gentlemen got in. We aried at Mr Ernsts at twenty minuts to twelv. Pussy is qite well and is sleeping in your chir. I send you the tis of trians. I hope Granny is a little beter. With love your son Frank.

Mr. Ernst was the London bootmaker employed while the family lived at Norwood. Mary Ann had probably taken Frank to London to get new boots. A briefer note survives from a few days later: 'South Hill, Southwell, March 29th 1888. Dear Mother We rode to Southwell this morning. We went to Mrs Elstons to tea a week last Tuesday.'[1] Frank started going to the Grammar School on 9 May. His own memories of his

[1] No signature. The spelling of these letters is that of the writer.

school-days is of going to school when it was fine only and his first school report bears this out. 'Am very sorry Master Frank was absent the great part of the Ex^{n} as he would most likely have been in the prize list. J. W.'

The next time it is possible to look closely into the daily life of Frank and his mother is between 22 May 1892 and 31 May 1893, when he was guided into keeping a diary himself. It is planned on the lines on which Mrs. Stenton had kept her diary in the eighties. The weather, the health of the diarist and his mother, the people who visit them, and the visits they themselves pay. Food is less important, but the text on which the vicar of Bleasby preached on a Sunday morning at Halloughton and who preached and on what text in the Minster in the evening, are recorded; occupations and holidays are all noted. There is no indication that Frank is going to school at all. Instead Mr. Dixon came once a week from Lincoln to teach him the piano and the violin; Mr. Salt came up from Southwell once, later twice, a week to teach him arithmetic and drawing; and Dixon Patchett came up at 8.30 once a week to teach him Latin. Hannah has rejoined the household and Mary Ann plays as important a part as ever. The weekly bills for about ten months come to about £141 odd, so that the widow's portion was more than Mrs. Stenton had feared. This does not seem to include clothes or Frank's lessons. His mother has had the morning room fitted up as a museum for him and all his friends and the servants united to find him curios to put in it. He was delighted to acquire Col. S. Thorburn's *A Guide to the Coins of Great Britain and Ireland* on 15 July 'and spent the evening arranging my coins according to the book'. Frank Walker, son of Mrs. Stenton's old friend, who appears in her earlier diary, is by this time old enough to pay visits himself. He was eight years older than Frank. When he came the diary was always shelved until his departure. Among all the things Frank recorded this year, it is not at once easy to distinguish between what gave him pleasure and what he thought he ought to put in. Each morning brought its 'work' for him and each afternoon 'reading'. The enormous amount of gardening they did was a burden, but South Hill garden was a large, clay slope facing south, surrounded on all three sides by ancient forest trees and carefully laid out with an ample drive round a circular rose-bed, a holly hedge shielding the garden below it, and a central grass walk leading down to a sundial with an orchard at the bottom. There was help in the garden but probably far from enough. When we

got married I promised Frank that he should never do any more gardening, and he never did. Mrs. Stenton gardened and took long walks, probably to make her forget her sorrow, but she never forgot that Frank was a child who must be encouraged to look to the future and not the past. He obviously enjoyed going to Newark to be fitted for his first Eton suit and for a Norfolk suit. They 'had a delicious cup of chocolate at Oldham's', did some more shopping, came back to Bleasby station, and were met on Goverton Hill by Hannah to help carry the parcels. On 13 September Emma and Mary Ann Marshall went to Lincoln with him. They called on Mr. Dixon to inquire how to get into the castle. He sent his son with them and they climbed to the top and saw a wonderful view of Lincoln and the surrounding country. They went to the afternoon service: 'The singing was lovely, except for the Psalms which I thought badly pointed.'

That Frank enjoyed his music, both practising and displaying his skill, is evident. When one of their father's friends came to stay with Katie, she asked Frank and his mother to join them at tea and dinner. Mr. Dixon therefore made him go through his pieces, 'in view of what I may be asked to do tomorrow'. Neither Katie nor his mother was ever really well. Mrs. Stenton still suffered from headache and neuralgia and Katie gradually became paralysed. For many years before her death in 1916 she lay in bed with a nurse in attendance and a looking glass fastened to the outside wall so that she could see whatever went on in Southwell. 'I often feel ill and much older', wrote Mrs. Stenton in 1897. South Hill was an isolated house, turning its back on Southwell and the north. The hill was steep and people did not want to walk up it very often. There was no one in Southwell who collected coins, but it was fortunate that Mr. Metcalfe was a good amateur geologist and a friend of Professor Swinnerton in Nottingham. Frank cannot have had, and perhaps did not want, many of the ordinary pleasures of childhood. Frank Walker's arrival was eagerly awaited, but he was an undergraduate, reading agriculture at Edinburgh. The only time I met him he told me that Frank always worried about money and tried to dodge tenants, fearing that they would ask him for a new gate or something of that sort. His pleasures were grown-up pleasures and he was conscious of his responsibilities as head of the house. His mother taught him to carve sitting down as soon as he was strong enough to hold the carving knife and fork. When Frank Walker came after Christmas 1892

Frank had a cold and had to stay in bed. When he came down the first thing he did was 'to put back in their places all the books that had been disarranged while I was upstairs'. During the last of his school-days Mary Ann was living in a cottage at Southwell and Frank had dinner with her every school day. The great change in his life, which made all the rest possible, was when Frank Walker persuaded his mother to let Frank join him in his Reading lodgings in 1897.

It was a fortunate moment which brought Frank Walker to the nascent agriculture department in the Extension College at Reading. W. M. Childs, who had been at Toynbee Hall, had taken the post of History Lecturer at Reading in 1893 to teach pupil teachers and a young woman who wanted to enter for the Oxford Honour School of Modern History. His salary was £60 a year with another £20 and hospitality provided by the porter for giving one extension lecture a week. There was when Frank first came to Reading no idea that he should read History. Music was what he hoped to give his life to and his mother wrote to Mr. Tirbutt to inquire what he thought Frank should do. Frank Walker evidently took Frank to see Mr. Tirbutt and asked him to write to Mrs. Stenton when he had 'found opportunities of ascertaining his proficiency in Harmony and Counterpoint, and Pianoforte playing'. Mr. Tirbutt considered that 'he shows decided musical feeling and ability, and that at his present age and under his present conditions everything possible should be done to further his progress'. Frank must have 'firm and careful direction in order that he may acquire the necessary technique for brilliancy and firmness, as well as expression; and his Harmony and Counterpoint need regular practice in advanced work'. For a fee of 10 guineas a term Frank would have two hours of instruction a week. Mr. Tirbutt assured Mrs. Stenton that Frank would be an interesting and advanced pupil and asked her to let him know her views as he had already made temporary arrangements for Frank to begin work.

This is perhaps the moment to describe, as well as I can, Frank's mother. Until her death in 1918 she played so large a part in his life that she deserves more than a passing mention. I never met her, but her diary, her letters, and Frank's to her, all suggest a woman of no ordinary type. She was short, but upright and held herself with great dignity. Her face was calm and she bore herself proudly. Her hair was straight and brown, parted in the middle, drawn back and coiled in a bun. She

never imposed herself on Frank, but encouraged him in independence. As soon as he was old enough to stand alone she let him go and was rewarded by a loving attention which lasted throughout her life. All his life Frank made no difference between men and women scholars, save perhaps to be extra scrupulous that women should have the recognition he thought they deserved and did not in his earlier days always get. He did not say this, but his actions speak loudly enough. Rather than let me go away to find a teaching post in a school and despite the smallness of professorial salaries at Reading in 1917, he persuaded the senate to appoint me to a Research Fellowship of £100 a year, beginning in October 1917, by paying half that sum himself. His mother, whom he consulted, fully approved of his action. Later he encouraged me to write about women and he helped women scholars whenever he could. As soon as he became President of the Royal Historical Society he tried to get young women scholars elected to the Council. Mrs. Stenton had put her mark upon him and made him the gentle, courteous, and considerate man he was. She had a great dislike of too much familiarity and was chary of using Christian names. She passed this habit of mind on to her son. The habits of courtesy she had taught him to use to men, women, and young people of all classes, and the hospitality she had encouraged him to show to his friends and hers had instilled in him an attitude of mind which he took with him to the grave.

II. EARLY DAYS AT READING, 1897–9

When Frank joined Frank Walker at Reading, neither he nor his mother can have had any conception of how fragile was the framework on which his future was being built. The late Dr. W. M. Childs has set out in *Making a University* the many difficulties which beset those who were trying to attract students to Reading. In 1897 only an unworldly guardian and one who had no experience in launching young people on a career would have sent a promising boy, so ill prepared at school, down to Reading to be taught. There was a real danger then that if the college avoided complete collapse it would become a technical institution based on agriculture and dairying. Although the Extension College was set up under the aegis of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1893, it was not until W. G. de Burgh came to Reading in 1896 that any Greek or Latin was taught, and not until 1897, the year Frank found his way there, that Sir Walter Parratt undertook to direct a School of Music.

Nor was there a Senior Common Room until 1897. The first Students' Concert took place in the Lecture Hall on 23 March 1898, when Frank played Chopin's Ballade No. 3 in A flat for Pianoforte, and Frank Walker sang the college song, 'The Song of the Shield'. It was not until 1899 that the College was recognized as a Day Training College and given a grant of £1,000 a year to enable it to deal with eighty full-time students who came to begin a two years' course of training as elementary school teachers. Before that, as Childs explains, there were three groups of students, self-contained and each entirely separate from the others: (i) University Extension Students; (ii) Pupil Teachers; and (iii) Students attending Evening Classes. Fortunately, a little pile of Frank's letters to his mother survive from these years, but unhappily he never bothered to date them, except occasionally by the day of the week.

It is, however, possible to tell which was the first letter home.

> You will be pleased to hear that I got down to Reading quite safely at a little after 5 this afternoon. I had a good journey as far as Birmingham where I met Frank and Mrs. Walker, as by this time you know. [Mrs. Walker had gone to stay with Mrs. Stenton at South Hill.] Frank and I came on at a quarter to 3 instead of 4, and thus we had time to unpack comfortably by daylight. *I do hope you are feeling better now; write to me when you are able conveniently to do so.* Frank is certainly very comfortably fixed, his room looked very cosy when we got in. For tea I had a little tongue, some bread and butter and one small pastry concoction; ask Mary Ann if she thinks it will have any ill effects. [Mary Ann was back at South Hill now that there was no need for her to be in Southwell to provide Frank with dinner on school days.] I remain exactly as I was this morning, Yours—F. M. Stenton.

Curiously enough, these letters tell little about what work the boy was doing and nothing about how his music lessons are going. But he tells his mother of having spent the whole day in the chemistry lab. and that he has been introduced to two of the lecturers, Mr. Foulkes and Dr. Luxmoore. Frank has to give an unexpected course of 'popular' lectures and says that 'Science for All' would help him, 'if you would send them by return of post you would greatly oblige him'. A postscript stresses that 'Frank really wants the Sciences'. He describes to his mother an expedition to London the two Franks took to see Emma Marshall, with whom they had 'two eggs each' before they caught the 9.15 train home. They took a long walk out to Silchester to see the Roman remains. They seem to have walked both ways and did not start until afternoon, so there was not time to write

his usual letter that day. Another traditional Reading outing, going over Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory, he describes as 'a very great treat'. In another letter Frank says, 'There is a very cosy library in the college where I spent the morning.' I remember him telling me that when he first came to Reading the library wasn't much more than a bookcase full of books, but among them there was a Bracton's Note-Book. One whole morning he spent over

> a very decent collection of minerals there is at the college and had a good talk with Mr. Austin, the Botany man. He's a very nice old chap. . . . I have the whole run of the College now; and also a latch-key so am well set up. Gilchrist is certainly a very rum shoot, with a hand like Uriah the Great and an extraordinary voice.

On another occasion Frank says that he

> did not write yesterday because while Frank went on one of his pig and cow excursions, I went to that abode of bliss and fossils South Kensington. I came by express to Paddington and then explored the haunts of my childhood in the shape of the dear old stinking Metropolitan. Beautiful sulphur! I practically spent the whole day in the mineral department—lunch of course. I had a good long day too, 11.30 till 5.0. When I got in at about 7 Frank was out so I had tea and ⅛ pork pye [*sic*] in solitary state. At this moment he is reading 'Milk' in 'Science for all'. Went to Church this morning and am now going with Frank to tea with someone you have heard him talk about; Wright, the College Registrar. By the way I believe I am a registered Student.

On another occasion they had an evening out in London and much enjoyed going to the Lyceum, but it meant that they didn't get home until 1.30, so that there was no time to get his daily letter to his mother by 7 o'clock next morning. Before going up to London one day he warned his mother that he was going to try to look in at Lincoln's or Smart's (coin dealers): 'I have withstood temptation hitherto and have only bought a few coppers in Reading.'

There is no mention of either the Principal, Mackinder, or of his successor, W. M. Childs, or of de Burgh in any of these letters. It would almost appear that they did not know that Frank was a student at Reading. When in 1926 the newly made University wished to congratulate its Professor of History on his election as a Fellow of the British Academy, they entertained him to dinner in Senior Common Room and Childs, then Vice-Chancellor, made a speech in which he described how one day when he was in his room in the old Valpy Street

buildings a slight boy came in to see him and said that he was interested in History. No record of this occasion has remained, but for Frank it must have been a turning-point. Hitherto his main interest was Music with Geology as his main academic subject. History and coins were a hobby. But as soon as Childs knew of his existence the scene changed. De Burgh—though he had very poor success with it—was put on to his Latin and Greek and Childs began to consider the future.

Mrs. Stenton probably felt complete confidence in Frank's capacity to make his own way when she let her delicate and cherished son launch out under the wing of Frank Walker. She was not apparently at all concerned lest he might not make a career for himself. What worried her was his health, as his constant assurances that he is *very well* in each letter show. Moreover, music was not his only possible future. A letter survives from Mr. J. S. Wright, the headmaster of Southwell Grammar School, written on 20 March 1899, the day that the news came of Frank winning his scholarship to Keble, congratulating him, but saying that he himself has

> had many regrets that you did not accept the Barrow and win also one of the Senior County Council scholarships which you could easily have done on your Natural Sci. and then take the Nat: Sci: Trip: at Cambridge, but perhaps, after all, this will suit you as well, as the Nat. Sci. needs more Maths. than you will now have to do, but I still regret that I did not enter you for the County Council Scholarship, as that could be held with the Keble one. . . . Mr. Pattison is here just now: he like me thought that your Nat. Sci. should have taken you to St. John's, where you could have won a College Scholarship, but he joins me in heartiest congratulations on your success.

The Barrow was a science scholarship tied to St. John's College, Cambridge, and founded by a member of the Southwell family of Barrow, with preference to a native of Southwell or one whose parents have resided there for ten years or are incumbents of certain specified parishes.[1]

The letters from Frank to his mother which have survived from the first year he spent at Reading are the letters of a lively boy. Little has come through from the next two years. He was still pursuing his music and Childs had set him to work at History in the hope that he would win an Oxford scholarship.

[1] *Ex info.* of the Headmaster of the Minster Grammar School, Southwell, and of Mr. Temperley of Messrs. Dowson and Wadsworth, incorporating Stenton and Metcalfe, Southwell.

He made a first attempt at this in 1898, for a very kind letter from Hassall of Christ Church, dated 23 June 1898, has been carefully preserved.

Some of your papers were excellent and with the exception of *one* paper promising: so much so that we placed you very near the successful candidates. The *one* paper was your language paper. It was done badly and so badly that it would seem that your knowledge of Latin and Greek was very slight. If that is so I hope that you will at once set to work to remedy this defect in your work. Between now and October you ought to make a great improvement in the subjects and if you do so I would strongly advise you to enter *for every History scholarship* beginning with the Brackenbury at Balliol in October. So you see we have formed a high opinion of your prospects. But let no Hist. Scholarship exam^{n} pass by without competing and do not be discouraged. Yours sincerely A. Hassall.

Since Frank was then only just 18 there was still time.

The next in date of Frank's letters to his mother which has survived is a much more mature one written on his nineteenth birthday, still written from Reading, but by 17 May 1899 the Reading Extension College has become 'The College'. Frank's handwriting, which in the early letters from Reading was the writing of a boy, has changed to a very near approximation to his mature hand.

On attaining to the xix year of my sojourn in this vale of Tears, an event which on this day in xlviii year of her present Majestie's reign seemed very unlikely to come to pass, the first thing I do after taking the necessary thought for food and raiment is to write you my wishes that you may see "many happy returns of this day". And first as to raiment:— This morning according to the agreement we made as thou goest into Lord Street, Southport, I have clad myself in a clean and white shirt, my fair, grey suit, and the blue tie we did purchase at the clothiers booth in the same city of Sandhills. Moreover, on ascending to partake of my frugal breakfast I did find by the side of my plate a gold curb chain wherewith I straightway invested myself, which also I think to be the prettiest chain mine eyes have ever lighted upon. In length it falls short of my silver chain by about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch, it is also slighter in make and suits me exactly, being a very good and a worthy ornament to my waistcoat, though not of such a nature as to suit the retired mercer or purveyer of groceries who delights in massive rings of gold reflecting glory upon his goodly paunch, though well befitting a peaceable musician and a poor scholar of by gone affairs. Many thanks to thee therefore and also for the flowers, which are now on the mantleboard in three vases arranged by me, for the sparrow-grass and the rhubarb which Frank and I hope to assimilate at dinner according to your

directions, and for the envelopes and handkerchers. From Frank I have received the sum of x shillings, which, as I told him I accept with clear conscience with a view to his increased screw next year.

He is just now much perplexed about his title. At this college titles are distributed to 'Members of Staff' on the principle of the lucky bag, each gets what title happens to be uppermost in the mind of the Principal when each man comes. The lucky bag is now being shaken and Frank doesn't know whether 'Assistant Lecturer', 'Junior Lecturer', 'Sub-Lecturer' or plain 'Lecturer' will tumble out to him the point being that he and Foulkes are to have the same title whatever it may be.

I am now composing a service 'Stenton in A'. I am half way through the Te Deum which has completely taken possession of me. I am trying to make it as interesting as I can for the ordinary hearer but it is so difficult to be both tuneful and dignified. I don't want it to fall to pieces like a house of cards if anyone shall analyse it, and try to support the melodies by good part-writing. There is at least a rolling bass at the bottom.

This afternoon the 'English Ladies Orchestral Society' is giving a concert in the Large Town Hall in hopes to begin a fund for building a permanent School of Music in connection with the College. Frank and I are going.

I don't think as how there is much more to be said anent my doings here. I do hope you are well and that everything is going well in your own peaceable way. Please remember me to your gentleman-help and to Miss Wyre.

Have you heard aught concerning M.A. From the flowers you have sent I can form an idea of how the garden looks and hoping that you are able to enjoy it, I remain With best Love Your affectionate Boks

It sounds as though Frank were much more interested in Stenton in A minor than in getting up his Ancient Languages, and his diary for 1899 gives the same impression. History has not yet bitten him as a life's work. His grown-up diaries were never more than mere factual jottings with no attempt to record the workings of his mind. In 1899 the first note is a list of 'Books for Keble' beginning with Ranke and ending with Stubbs Lectures. But on 5 January is the note 'finished first movement of A minor Trio'. He went back from South Hill to Reading on 14 January and was at once plunged into a week of examinations, finishing on 20 January when he also noted 'finished 2nd movement of Trio'. On the last day of the month he 'finished Finale (Rondo) of A mi. Trio subject to correction' and on 3 February 'Trio in A mi. for Violin, Viola and Cello' appears to have been indeed finished. On 22 February he wrote home for his birth certificate for Keble and on the next day: 'Finished (subject to

correction) the quartet in my 54th psalm.' He noted that Mackinder had entered him for Smalls on 28 February. His fate in this examination he did not trouble to record for he evidently failed. He recorded without comment that he called on the Warden of Keble on 13 March and that the scholarship examination began on the next day. On 20 March a telegram from the porter of Keble to Reading assured him that he had been elected to a History scholarship. Smalls still remained to be conquered and he failed again in June, a fact that he did not record in his diary. He took refuge in 'beginning to set my 76th Psalm'. Childs was much concerned at his second failure, for 'the situation', as he said, 'is serious', and he wrote to Mrs. Stenton suggesting a tutor for Greek during the summer, but she responded that this would not be convenient and that Frank had promised to give less time to his music and more to Greek.

All through the summer the conflict between the Ancient Languages and Music went on. Frank recorded nothing about Greek, but much about his musical efforts. At the end of the diary for the year he noted all the music which he had written:

1. Trio in A mi. for Violin, Viola and Cello { Allegro / Andante / Allegro

2. Psalm 54 for 4 part chorus and string orchestra
   I Chorus Save me O God
   II Solo Bass Hear my Prayer
   III Quartet (unaccompanied) God is my helper
   IV Chorus—double Fugue. For he hath delivered me

3. Allegretto in E♭ (in Rondo—Sonata form) for Pfte

4. Set of 4 songs by 17th century writers for Pfte
   'Dearest of Thousands'
   'Cynthia's Revels'
   'Go Blossoms'
   'To Odelia'
   'To Odelia' Herrick.

5. Two Fugues (D and D mi) for Pf

6. Service in A for 4 part choir with organ accompaniment
   Te Deum
   Magnificat
   Nunc Dimittis

7. Psalm 76 for 8 part chorus and orchestra

I Chorus In Jewry is God known
II Solo Bass There brake he
III Chorus—At thy rebuke
IV Quartet—The fierceness of men shall turn to thy praise
V Chorus He shall refrain

8. Song: Milton's translation of Horace's Ode I. 5 E♭

On 26 September 1899 Frank noted that Smalls began, that it ended on 28 September, and that he passed. On the 7 October, Medley, then Dean of Keble, summoned him to come to Oxford for matriculation by the Vice-Chancellor at 9.45 on Tuesday next. Medley himself would meet him at the College Gate; that Frank must wear black coat, white tie, and scholar's gown and bring £2. 10*s*. for University fees. The diary entry for that day was 'Matriculated and entered for First Mus. Bac.' But music was not to be his vocation, merely a decoration to his life.

III. UNDERGRADUATE YEARS AT OXFORD, 1899–1902

The credit for turning Frank firmly towards History and away from Music and Geology must go to W. M. Childs. Frank said himself that he was always glad that Mr. Metcalfe and, indeed, his school had encouraged him towards Geology, as it was extraordinarily useful to a historian of the English countryside to know something of what lies beneath the surface. His close friendship with Frank Walker, an agriculturist too, and the fact that most of the small income which maintained his mother and himself came from the rent of the South Hill property turned his thoughts to the history of the Danelaw where he had been bred. He also came to realize that he must choose between Music and History which should be his life's work. He knew that he had not the physical strength to continue his early efforts to maintain both. His failure in the First Mus. Bac. ended his attempts to become a serious musician, but he still hired a piano during term time and won the friendship of many of his contemporaries by his willingness to play whenever he was asked. When Childs replied to Mrs. Stenton's letter thanking him for all he had done to enable her son to win an open scholarship he said:

> The credit for the success is his. He worked exceedingly well and hard and I think we may expect for him a career of distinction. I try to impress on him that he must not go through life as a recluse, but so far

as his strength will allow be an active agent in helping the rest of us on. But that lesson, I think, Oxford will teach him.

When I found this letter in the Stenton scrapbook I could not forbear an affectionate smile. All through his life Childs never realized how Frank loved a party and fun. After we had married Childs felt that I had merely joined Frank in what might become even greater seclusion. We were both constantly urged to come more into Senior Common Room and to work less in isolation. Childs never realized the atmosphere of youthful excitement which Frank generated in both himself and me and in his most intimate friends.

Early in October 1899, before Frank went up to Oxford, Childs wrote him a very kind letter of advice which Frank kept. He began by saying that Frank Walker had told him that Frank was upset by Childs's letter to Mrs. Stenton after Frank's second failure in Smalls:

> I hope I said nothing severe or unkind; but you will yourself realise that the situation was serious, and I think it is a good augury for the future that you have faced it so successfully at last. If you are moderately diligent at Oxford you ought to have no trouble in passing Mods at the end of your 1st year. But don't take them too casually; remember Smalls. It is just twelve years ago since I went up to Keble and I remember that to me memorable occasion. I think you will be happy there; I certainly was myself. You may have to wait a little time before you find friends to your liking, but sooner or later I think you will. I am writing to Mr. Medley and the Warden about you; and I know that both of them will do what they can in the way of kindness to you. You will possibly have heard hard things said about Dr Lock—It was the fashion for certain men to say them in my time. They are not true, put no faith in them. Perhaps such things are not now said at all. I hope not. Dr Lock you will find to be one of the best and kindest of men. Most of the Keble men you will find take more interest in football than in anything else. The general tone of the College is not specially intellectual. There is a dominant Athletic set and a considerable ecclesiastical (High Church) set; and on the whole the first set are preferable. You will gradually find out that there is a group of really keen men—athletic and other, some musical—and try to keep with these.

Childs went on to give one or two bits of practical advice, to join the Union, to pay up his subscriptions to College Athletics—'a matter of College honour and esprit de corps'—to go and see his College boat race regularly in the Torpids and the eights, to go to the weekly debates in Keble and particularly the History

Society, to go to a Varsity sermon now and then when the preacher is famous, and '*generally* don't let yourself get into a little poky backwater or groove'. He ended with kind regards to Frank's mother and blessings to himself.

Whether Frank followed Child's advice in detail I do not know. He certainly made friends at Keble, but none have survived him. He assured me that he went to every University sermon when he was in residence, whether the preacher were famous or not. He had had a good training in church attendance as his childhood's diary shows. He told me how one eminent ecclesiastic of advanced age and poor eyesight, having preached for some time, turned to the gallery and not observing that Frank was the only undergraduate present, thundered with outstretched arm: 'And now I address you young men on whose shoulders the government of this great empire will most surely rest . . .' Stunned by the threat Frank could remember no more. When trouble broke out in South Africa Frank joined the volunteer batallion of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry in company with many of his fellow undergraduates. There seems to have been no sort of medical examination previous to enrolment or he would surely have been ignominiously rejected. At the worst time in the 1914–18 war his services were refused on the grounds that he 'was totally and permanently unfit for any form of military service'.

Only one letter to his mother has survived from Frank's first term at Keble:

8 December 1899

To begin with please excuse my writing on this leaf from a note-book, for I am through my own South Hill paper and it is unpleasant writing in the Common Room with a lot of fellows about. Thank you very much for your last letter. It is especially useful on account of the instructions it gives as to what and how my things are to be stowed away. It is a most comfortable feeling that by this time tomorrow I shall be at my old haunts for I am beginning to have had enough of Keble for a season. The Classical man opposite, I think, is even more keen on going down than I am.

We have now had all the College terminal exams known as Collections the number I have had has been three. In Logic and Cicero I got the highest possible mark, but not in Tacitus, through not having looked it over the night before. Tomorrow morning an awesome ceremony takes place 'in hall'. At the high table at the end sit the Tutors of the College with the Warden in the middle of them. One man at a time is called up and judgement is passed upon him by his tutor and the

Warden. As I myself have not been notoriously drunk once and am *probably* among the 10 best chapel keepers in College and moreover have got through some 1200 pages of history within the last 3 weeks I can face the assembly with an easy mind, but woe to the ungodly and evil doer! People go up in order of seniority I believe, so I as scholar shall be among the first twelve. After that I hope to finish what of packing is left over and to joyously go down by the 12.10.

Last night there was a smoking concert to which I, as did nearly every one, went, though I did not stop the whole time. Afterwards the whole place ran riot, and there was a most fearful row in the quad and anyone who wished could indulge in fighting six. I may say that I modestly retired into the background and save that twice my rooms were invaded by a man who was so far gone that he couldn't stand and had to be supported by his friends, I had peace. By the way, these men simply came in and went out innocently not a stick of my furniture being hurt in any way.

I have however to confess a large outlay of 7/1. I have bought myself a copy of Stubbs' 'Select Charters', a book which as I have perhaps told you is indispensable for the Schools and which I shall have some opportunity of getting up alongside my Mods work.

I had a note from Frank the other day asking my train and saying that he will be at Reading and not in Dorset. I have written this letter over my tea and hope it will reach you all right tomorrow morning. Yesterday, having eaten up my cake I went to Boffins and bought 2 bath buns one of which I had yesterday while the other is at this moment entering my system. Having got to such very minute details I think it is time to wind up so hoping you are not overburdened with setting South Hill in order and that you are free from headaches and neuralgia with best love and looking to see you about a week hence I remain Yours affectionately Frank.

Not much has survived from the whole of Frank's undergraduate life at Oxford. By the time I came to know him well History occupied his thoughts and it was of the great men he had come to know there, of Firth, Poole, Stevenson, and Vinogradoff rather than of his contemporaries that he wanted to talk. It was as an undergraduate that he took to a bicycle and began to ride about the countryside looking at it with the eye of a budding historian. He was fortunate, as he often recalled in later days, to have been able to do this before the petrol engine and the increasing population of the twentieth century had spoiled it. His bicycle and his piano gave him the entertainment he needed and he resisted the attempts of the rowing men of Keble to turn him into a cox. He was still in close touch with Frank Walker and soon found a few kindred spirits at Keble. One of them was a Welshman named Phillips, who also achieved a First and

became headmaster of Brecon College. Frank had no intention of failing in Mods or Divvers. A letter to his mother written on his twentieth birthday gives some idea of his concentration on his work:

17 May 1900

Very many thanks for your fine long letter this morning. I guessed your reason for not writing earlier this week and expected to hear today. I shall be very pleased to have father's razors done up so long as the name isn't polished off as the two I have here are in want of re-setting: you will keep the little case. This afternoon being a perfect day I intend to take the bike and go a good ride, along the Banbury road I think. I can't imagine what I should do without the aforesaid bike: nothing could have been hit upon of more use to me. I've done three hours work this morning 9–9.30 Tacitus: 9.30–10 having a Cicero paper given back, 10–11 Tacitus again, 11–12 having a Logic paper given back. On the Cicero I got S+ and on the Logic S. It is now a quarter past 12 and I shall start soon after lunch on my ride. This morning I signalised the occasion by putting on my best raiment with the Nottingham tie and a clean white shirt. Thanks for the other things you sent. I am in need of some pants. The only letter I got besides yours was one from Frank and he enclosed a little cheque for 10/6. On Saturday morning early I made a pounce and got to Reading early, at 9.30 or thereabouts. Frank was delighted to see me and I had a most enjoyable ride. Also the eggs and bacon of the house of Butler were by no means unacceptable. Frank was especially glad to see me as Gilchrist has been (quite naturally) kicking against the new arrangements and Frank, having dropped on certain students who were careless about their work is just at present in rather bad odour with certain members of the Reading community. However Childs and Mackinder are with him entirely and I tell him that if he incurs a little unpopularity by over-strictness at the beginning of his independent work the successive layer of students will conform to his ways without any bother. So I had a splendid day on Saturday and came back by train in the evening. I was sorry to hear in the little pencil note that your head was bad. You don't say anything about it in this morning's letter but I hope with all my heart that it is well again, otherwise wallowing in ashes would be very bad for it. The cold is keeping on a considerable time, although today the sky is perfectly blue and cloudless. I am still keeping on fires and have found my fire-lighters most useful. Only three are left. Will you send some more before very long or shall I get them in the town? I'm sorry to hear about Katie's change of nurse for I don't think it can be a change for the better. I'm very glad you can get to church. It must make Sundays go quicker. A month on Sat: divvers come off, no term has gone so quickly as this, (largely owing to the bike which does away with the afternoons) but my vivas in Mods and Divers may be a

fortnight later before they come off. S is low down on the alphabet, and there are many for examination. If I can get through! I'm not doing much volunteering just now, I can't spare any time other than the 2 hours or thereabouts I spend on my cycle. I rejoice that the K.B. is recontinuing his appearances—he says 'Mrs Stenton, why not come to Oxford and see your Frank? Next week', says he 'is the eights week when Oxford is at its best and by staying at Reading eights week expenses would not have to be met.' And I thought that there was wisdom in the K.B.'s remarks. At least if you were to come down to Miss Walker, now is a very seasonable time to do it.

Premonitions of lunch time remind me to tell you that somehow (perhaps with getting up at 7.30 or earlier) or other I get so hungry that I have taken to having cold meat at luncheon. This will mean some addition to my buttery bill but I think not a useless addition. Ham, potted meat, or meat pie are the things generally going, also beef, mutton or veal. Anyhow I succumb to temptation in this matter and don't have jam. This afternoon I think I shall have some tea at the house of the man Boffin perhaps with the classical man if he can come. He is working harder than ever, largely in the Radcliffe to which I also turn my longing eyes in anticipation of the time after Mods. Your little flowers are just beginning to get faded, the narcissi are the prettiest of the lot. The scout has just swept my room while I was at lecture so it looks all right, 1 has just struck and there is the tread of many feet down the passage so I will write no more now but remain with best love and many thanks for birthday wishes Your very affectionate Frank aetate sua 20.

No other letter of Frank's to his mother survives for a year and no diaries seem to have been kept by him while he was an undergraduate. Telegrams in the Stenton scrapbook record his passing Divvers and Mods in July 1900 and this letter of 3 May 1901 suggests that hard work and occasional, if rare, play was his daily portion and that he enjoyed it.

Your note of last night was brought to me at 8.30 as I sat with Holmes and Phillips, after the inspection. I had written you a note in the morning and hope it has quite set your mind at rest today. I know you must feel very glad to be alone again and it is only a matter of 17 days till I come down for the most blessed season—the Long.

Last week has been very full. On the last day of the Eights week Phillips' father and mother with two friends came up to Oxford on their way to Wales. Phillips duteously held a lunch in his rooms, borrowing a table from the peaceful fresher at the end of the passage whereat we six did seat ourselves. The lunch was quite good and afterwards as there were very few cubic feet to spare we all migrated into my abode and the others sat on chairs and on the floor whilst I played. Next at the charge of Phillips' friend, (who owns coal pits and has many

dibs) we drove round by Iffley and Nuneham Courtney, and finally came back to dinner at the Randolph, though not in our old corner of the room. The dinner was excellent, champagne and all, and I went to bed in a most peaceful state of mind, having taken a half day clean off. These people seem to be under the impression that Phillips' first is in some measure due to me and his father thanked me for all I had done for him in the days of Mods and they want me to look them up whenever I am in their parts.

The subject of the Stanhope Essay for 1902 has been announced this week. It is Henry Grattan, and I am seriously thinking about a shot at the essay. For it will bear on my schools work as Irish history is included in the English paper, the authorities are accessible and no foreign languages are required, though of course these points would tell in favour of everybody alike. The prize is £20 in books and would be of the greatest value with regard to a Fellowship. I shall consult with the History tutor on Saturday and in all probability decide on trying. Tell me what you think when you write.

This morning at 9.30 all the Honour Schools began and a year today I suppose I shall begin my papers also. I must read steadily in the Long, especially if I take up with the Stanhope. I shall try to make pretty sure of Constitutional History at home, that being a subject for which close rather than wide reading is wanted.

Yesterday we of the Volunteers turned out to make a holiday for the *élite* of Oxford. We performed in a big park half way up Headington Hill and lots of people sat by and gloated over our misery. From half past one to half past six we continued in uniform. We formed up in Merton fields, marched past the House, down the High, and over Magdalen Bridge while a band played a dismal and monotonous dirge, with an extra allowance of drum, which the K.B. says is an instrument he never could abide. However except for some stiffness the hispagger has gone and left no traces today.

Several days ago I wrote to Lincoln asking him his price for that Edward III set I told you about and he has sent an actual set on approval at £1–12–6. This is too high a figure, but I think I shall take a half groat at 6s. and a delightful little silver farthing at 10s. 6d. and probably also a half penny at 6s.

The weather has today taken a change and is inclined to be showery. With best love Your very affectionate Frank.

An account of the volunteer meeting appeared in the local paper and Mrs. Stenton cut it out and pasted it into the scrapbook. But Frank found volunteer activities little to his taste and when summoned with the rest of the company to stand guard at Queen Victoria's funeral he stayed in bed in comfort. Whether he did try for the Stanhope I do not know, but rather think not. He certainly did not get it.

How many of the great historical figures working in Oxford Frank became at all friendly with while he was an undergraduate it is not easy to judge from the surviving evidence and the things Frank told me of his youth. The fact that he had come to Oxford immediately from Reading which owed its beginnings to the inspiration and help of Christ Church probably meant that some Oxford teachers were interested to see what the embryo institution at Reading could produce.[1] Until 1903 Halford Mackinder, a student of Christ Church, remained the nominal head of Reading, but could only afford time to visit it about twice a week. Childs, nominally assistant Principal, was really its head. He felt an almost paternal interest in Frank's future and welcomed him at Reading almost as warmly as did Frank Walker himself. Although Childs had deprecated too much music when Greek had to be mastered for Smalls, he did not hesitate to send Frank verses to put to music for singing at the Reading Christmas Party, the Jantaculum, and Frank, however busy, always tried to oblige. This connection of Frank's with Reading may have been one reason for the kindness shown to Frank by York Powell, then Regius Professor of History at Oxford and one of the Christ Church men who had given their help to the development of Reading.

But Frank's interest in Scandinavian studies was of a different nature from York Powell's. Frank was not a romantic and always preferred evidence which really was contemporary to that which was written down several hundred years afterwards. Hence it was the gritty food of language and early law for which he yearned rather than the heady tales of Vikings which were for him entertainment rather than intellectual sustenance. He was fortunate that after his country upbringing, which had included the freedom of a lawyer's office with a long tradition of managing the business of the soke of Southwell, he could choose 'Land Tenure' as his special subject in the Schools. This drew him to the study of Anglo-Saxon and the course of lectures given on that subject by A. S. Napier as well as to Paul Vinogradoff's seminar. Stevenson, who had in 1895 collaborated with Napier in producing what Frank was in *Anglo-Saxon England* to describe as 'a model edition of a small collection of charters in the *Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents*',[2]

[1] Even as late as 1912, when I went up to Reading as an undergraduate, a considerable number of the books in the Library bore the purple stamp saying that they had been given to the Reading Extension College by Christ Church, Oxford.

[2] 1st ed., 1943, p. 691.

welcomed Frank, not only as an aspiring Saxonist, but also as a fellow Nottinghamshire man and showed him great kindness and hospitality. If Stevenson was more anxious to talk of the local politics of Nottingham itself than Frank, as a Southwell man who rarely visited the county town, approved, he was ready to listen, awaiting the crumbs of wisdom which he knew would fall from time to time. Keble was, as Childs had warned him, not a specially intellectual college, hence it was perhaps natural that its tutors should fear that results in Schools might be endangered if men strayed ahead of the programme to follow their own intellectual interests. His tutor warned him not to attend R. L. Poole's lectures on Diplomatic, but he warned him in vain. Except for the first lecture, which was also attended by Samuel Hoare, later Chancellor of Reading University when Frank was Vice-Chancellor, Frank attended the whole course alone. In after years at Reading when the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor were comparing notes on their youth, Lord Templewood confessed that he did not go again because he was afraid that Frank also would drop off. To C. H. Firth's lectures Frank went, both because of his lasting interest in the period and also because of the affection he immediately felt for the man, an affection which lasted their joint lives and was, I think, reciprocated.

In later life Frank had little interest in going abroad, but in these early years, perhaps under the influence of de Burgh, he seems to have spent a little time in France or Germany with his Reading friends each year in the summer. A letter sent to Mrs. Stenton at South Hill on her birthday, 7 August, in 1901, survives and suggests a very happy holiday.

As on this day last year we [he and Frank Walker] are writing in the hope that the two days post will bring this in time to wish you many happy returns of the 7th. I do hope you have had no return of the illness of last week, and that you have been able to get things straight without discomfort. My post card would tell of our journey as far as Havre and we have now spent two splendid days at Caudebec and are on the eve of departure for Rouen, where I hope we shall get a letter from you one day. Frank's gripes have not prevented him having a reasonable good time albeit a very busy one, for we have been running around this neighbourhood well. Yesterday we went to Jumièges—Robert of—and afterwards for a big walk over the hills along the Seine. On Friday afternoon de Burgh, Frank and I walked to St. Wandrille where there is another abbey. I don't know that this is much more civilised country than that around Gerolstein and our excursions take much the same form. Music was performed by us last night by agency of

a very cracked piano to the delight of an audience which assembled on the bank of the river outside. Frank is somewhat harassed about the club accounts and an evil disposed stationmaster having given him an Argentine 'Peso' which nobody will take. Moreover I am commissioned to write the Club diary that it may be read in the evenings, the which labour is very grievous. Meals are—'petit dejeuner' = coffee and roll at 8.30, 'dejeuner' of 5 or 6 courses at 11 or 12, and 'diner' much the same at 7. Food is good and the coffee excellent. We are sticking to the arrangements in the itinerary so you will have been following our doings all right. I have just given way to my besetting weakness in the shape of two coins of Charles VIII and Henry III of France respectively the like of which I have never seen in England. Frank has written a letter which I believe is to arrive with a parcel from the north of England on the morning of the birthday, and as dejeuner is waiting I will remain Your very affectionate Frank.

The club as the travellers called themselves consisted, I believe, besides de Burgh, Frank, and Frank Walker, of Lady Jenkinson and her daughter Polly, who lived at Leamington and perhaps one or two Reading folk. Lady Jenkinson was the widow of a member of the Daimler firm. I never met her for the club had broken up before I came into the group. Marriage, different jobs, and death had separated the old companions. I only met Frank Walker and Polly Jenkinson once.

In 1902 Frank took his Schools and almost daily found a minute or two to send his mother a line to say how he was faring. Some of these notes have survived.

June 7th 1902

Two foreign history papers this morning and afternoon. The first I liked very much, the second not so well, though the things I have looked up I have got right.

I shall be thankful to have a day off tomorrow. Six out of the ten papers are now over—one way or the other—and I think that perhaps it will turn out the right way.

With best of love from Your very affectionate Frank.

June 9th.

Political Science this morning. Political Economy this afternoon. On the former I really think I did very well and on the latter not too badly. Only two more papers now. One of my answers this morning was highly coloured by the relations between Frank and old Wood which I imported into a discussion on the end of the state. By the way Land Tenure tomorrow. Am lunching with Nan on Thursday. Have put on coffee coloured shirt this morning.

With best of love from Your very affectionate Frank.

P.S. Had a question on Corn Tax.

Many years later Frank told me why he was so sure that his Political Science Paper was good. His seat was placed just under that of the invigilator at the head of the row, and he could not help seeing that his paper was being read and marked a clear α. He probably did a lively answer on the Corn Tax, which had been a living issue in the Stenton household, as Henry Cawdron, Frank's father, had been closely involved in all the elections in the Newark division in which the Corn Laws had been a crucial question. It was that which occasioned the barrel of soot from which Frank's father suffered.

June 10th 1902

Schools is over. Blessed thought. Had my specials (on land tenure) today. Did a really good paper this morning and a reasonable one this afternoon. I revelled in the one this morning. I wonder what I've got—not knowing can't say. Now I must be thinking of getting my things together. I shall probably go to Reading on Friday.

Many thanks for sending on letters of Mrs. Butler and Lizzie. I am very sorry about the continuance of neuralgia. Take care of yourself. I will write more soon.

With best of love from your very affectionate Frank.

Already before his viva Frank's future was being settled, although hardly as he would have chosen at the time, had the choice been his. Like most other promising young historians he aimed at the All Souls Fellowship and with the encouragement of Firth, himself a Fellow of All Souls, and the support also of the Warden and tutors of his own College he entered for it, but did not get it, much to Firth's annoyance. There were at this time few opportunities for profitable employment which offered both a livelihood and training in research to those who wanted to make History or any other intellectual subject their life's work. Firth himself was fighting what seemed at the time like a losing battle against college tutors who were uninterested in encouraging young men to get the training necessary for the sound writing of history. Unlike his father, whose strongly worded letters on local topics were a recurrent feature of the local papers in his day, Frank was never one to write to the papers, but even he felt so deeply on this subject that in 1905 he wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* from his first post at Llandovery College:

the essential point is that research as such finds no place in the Oxford scheme of historical education. Historical research at Oxford is a luxury both to the undergraduate, who can only apply himself to the

technicalities of this art at the imminent risk of losing a class in his final examination, and to the graduate, who will normally find no endowment from University or college sources available for the purposes of his studies.

A previous generation of young scholars had found the *Dictionary of National Biography* a starting-point. At the turn of the century *The Victoria History of the Counties of England* was in its initial stages and those who were responsible for it, notably H. A. Doubleday and soon William Page, were on the look-out for historians, young or old, who could share in the work.

In the letter which Frank told his mother about the viva he also told her about his first meeting with Round.

Bodleian Library

June 25th 1902

I haven't had no viva really—only one or two little questions about Aristotle's Politics. Then A. L. Smith said that he had been asked by the examiners to express their appreciation of my papers, which he said showed a great amount of careful and thoughtful work. The only thing and I must take it as a compliment, he said, was that they wished I had been able to write more but I was one of those who thought before writing. I said I was afraid I was at which all five kind gentlemen laughed very much and Smith then said he meant it as praise not dispraise.

I gave an abstract of this conversation to Jackson the only don in residence and he said that that was the regular Oxford way of expressing to a man in his viva that he had got a first—that individual examiners might just possibly use it wrongly but he never knew a man congratulated in his viva who didn't get a first. They *never* tell a man his class explicitly in his viva.

As to London I couldn't 'gram the mystic see because the arrangement we have come to is of rather a different kind. Doubleday had the great man Round to see me and they want me to begin at once on Nottinghamshire history receiving payment for each piece done. The first step is a translation of Domesday book as it relates to the county. Of this they want me to do a specimen page—if Round thinks that satisfactory which Doubleday says is practically certain, go through with the whole of it at South Hill. He will send down to me whatever books I may want and the payments will come to about £20–25 for the Domesday translation alone. This will be acceptable as it will neither involve delay nor just at present the bother of getting rooms in London, for it looks as if the first part of my work would be feasible at home. You will see then that this system of payment by results was not expressible by telegram, though satisfactory in that it promises relief to our finances without much delay and a continuance of work.

For the rest I am feeling rather limp after all the scooping. The list will be out on the evening of the 30th or on the 31st. This morning's conversation has made more keen my interest in it. I am at present housed in Beauchamp 5 next door to Phillips' old room!!

I hope the boil is less virulent and that the order of things is peaceable. Today I wasn't wanted at the Schools till 10 minutes past 12 and I spent the time in wandering about aimlessly. I am writing in the Bodder because the J.C.R. is shut. I borrowed an envelope from the one young man who is now up in College.

With best of love from your very affectionate
Frank

All his life Frank remembered Round's kindness with gratitude. He had gone to London with some trepidation, not lessened when he observed the top hat and frock-coat in which Round was clad. When asked to write a foreword to a reprint of *Feudal England* in 1964 Frank brought it to a conclusion by saying:

> And when regretting the acerbity which too often colours Round's style, it is no more than just to remember the generosity which he could show to younger men, such as the present writer, who were venturing into the fields where he was master, sixty years and more ago.

Congratulations upon Frank's First Class flowed in from Southwell, from Bleasby Vicarage, from Reading, and of course, from Frank Walker, now at Ridgmont in Bedfordshire, and from Oxford contemporaries, one of whom was so excited that he dropped and broke a new meerschaum pipe he had just been given, adding, 'How I envy you clear of our beloved "Alma Mater".' Phillips wrote that he had 'won pence considerable' on the result. Another mourned the prospect of Frank's departure: 'It will be wretched next term without you and your piano. Fancy if one of Goody's chums gets the room and they hold weekly drunks.' The Warden, Dr. Lock, said that he had done 'real help to the College, which needs the intellectual stimulus very much'. Childs wrote of his own heartfelt pleasure, adding

> I am proud of you; so I am sure is your mother and Walker; and it will do you no harm to be proud—for a bit—of yourself. . . . Well done, my dear boy. If ever you have a pupil who justifies himself and you, you will know that my present pleasure is a very deep one.

His tutor, Geoffrey Baskerville, wrote that 'nobody could have deserved a first better than you: and you owe it entirely to yourself I consider: at any rate my share has been merely a negative one—that of striving to prevent you working too hard'.

All these and many more letters were preserved by Frank's proud mother who herself wrote, 'Words fail me when I try to write about the good news of the last two days. . . . The news gave me greater pleasure than anything I had ever had before.' She urged him to have a holiday before he came home and ended 'Your delighted Mother'.

IV. SCHOOLMASTER AT LLANDOVERY, 1904–8

Frank was not unduly depressed by his failure to get the All Souls Fellowship, and applied himself to Domesday Book under Round's direction. He returned to Oxford in October 1902, hoping to supplement his earnings from the *V.C.H.* by some journalism and by coaching for the Honours School of Modern History. As a coach he seems to have been successful. Men from his own and other colleges came to him and surviving letters show that he was successful both with good men and with the less intelligent. In 1904 one man thanked him warmly for getting him a Fourth and a number acknowledged his help in getting their Firsts. How much he made by these labours I do not know, but when as an undergraduate I came to know him I gathered that he was often hard up as he was unwilling to accept or ask for help from home. His diary for 1903 is blank, except for a note that he has finished a draft of the Nottinghamshire Domesday in January and begun on Rutland. A new source of evidence now becomes available in the stream of picture postcards sent home to his mother at South Hill from wherever he went. They show that even if he felt poor he was able to take a holiday in the Rhineland with the de Burghs, Frank Walker, and his group of Reading friends in 1904, when he proudly wrote of his immunity from the sea-sickness which afflicted all the rest of the party. On one postcard he told his mother of walks of seventeen and twenty-four miles taken with de Burgh.

It was probably his work on Domesday Book which led to an invitation to take part in the Putnam scheme of volumes on the 'Heroes of the Nations', sturdy, well printed and produced volumes on great men of the past aimed at the general reader and the student, for they were modestly priced at five shillings each. The editor was H. W. C. Davis. Frank wrote the life of William the Conqueror for the series. It appeared in 1908 and was a remarkably mature book, which for a generation and more was the authoritative book on the Conqueror. It is well worth reading even today. The low price at which this series was sold meant that the authors were not richly rewarded for their

labours. At this date publishers did not expect to pay royalties. For the life of William Frank received two cheques, each of £50. I can trace no more payments, although the book was several times reprinted.

The life of William the Conqueror was not produced until Frank had left Central Wales for Reading, but the work was all done and the book written while he was a schoolmaster. Schoolmasters are not given, nor do they expect, extra free time in consideration of their literary labours. In view of this, the book is surely a remarkable piece of work for a beginner. His own later labours have inevitably invalidated some of his pre-1908 conclusions and it always irritated him when reviewers and young writers pointed out that what he said in 1908 did not agree with what he wrote in *Anglo-Saxon England* or *English Feudalism* a generation later. A careful re-reading of *William the Conqueror* today shows the reader why it was that the young author of 1908 became the master in his subject a generation later.

Since the financial outlook was so poor at Oxford Frank applied for the lectureship in History advertised towards the end of 1903 at the College at Newcastle attached to the University of Durham. He was strongly backed by Firth and his Keble tutors. H. A. Doubleday and William Page, as general editors of the *V.C.H.*, wrote a joint letter recording their appreciation of the work he had done for the 'Putnam History' and their hope of being able to offer him a post on the central staff. A letter which he wrote to his mother survives telling her of his reply to Doubleday's letter offering him one.

> I have made it quite non-committal and implied that my acceptance will depend on conditions. I talked it over with Baskerville and Firth, who advised me to write in this way. Of course it is early days yet to talk about whether I shall take on or not, that will so entirely depend on Doubleday's next communication. A regular screw would have great charms for me—on the other hand my connection here is certainly going up. I have two New College men who come together to be fed on Period II (about which they know absolutely nothing) before schools.

The real advantage of staying at Oxford was that he was near his Reading friends and able to sit at the feet of the scholars in Oxford, particularly Firth, Poole, Stevenson, and Vinogradoff. Their friendship was invaluable to the younger man and he never forgot what they had given him.

Frank had no particular wish to go to Newcastle and was so little regretful at not being appointed that he never even mentioned to me that he had ever applied for a post there. But he was not happy at earning so little money to supplement the resources of South Hill. Hence in mid November 1904 when the History master at Llandovery College in central Wales felt that he could endure it no longer, packed his bags and departed, Frank very willingly took his place. He sent his mother a picture postcard on the way and went straight into the deserted class-room. Llandovery College played an important part in Frank's life although he was there for less than four years. He never tired of talking about it. The school was founded in 1848 as a Welsh Public School. Its Founder's aims were somewhat grandiloquently set out

> that the school should be a Welsh school in the diocese of St. Davids for the study and cultivation of the Welsh or ancient British language and literature, not only as a medium of colloquial communication, but as a means of promoting antiquarian and philological investigation, in combination with a sound classical and liberal education fitting for a young man destined for any liberal profession or scientific pursuit to be exercised or followed in the Principality of Wales, and more especially for young men desirous of qualifying themselves to be efficient ministers of the church in that principality.

It was, in fact, to be a Welsh school for Welsh boys and it was fortunate that patriotism was as strong in Wales then as now, so that many sons of families known as 'plas people' as well as boys from farming and trading families came and mingled in the same school instead of being sent as many still were to English public schools. In the nineteenth century, while many little boys as young as 12 were sent there, pupils in their twenties were still being entered at Llandovery. Even in Frank's time he had vivid memories of the bearded young men kept on to defeat Brecon at football, who at early prep. (7.15–8) sat round the stove cracking nuts.

The years he spent at Llandovery made him a lifelong lover of Wales and its people. In the library he rejoiced to find a *Monasticon* and other books he needed for his own work. In Wales and the Marches he found castles which delighted him and were responsible for the Historical Association tract,[1] first printed in 1910 and reprinted twice since then. By a stream of picture postcards of Welsh castles, rivers, mountains, roads,

[1] *The Development of the Castle in England and Wales.*

and little country towns he tried to keep his mother in touch with his activities and show her something of the charm of the Principality. Among the tough boys of Llandovery College he gained great respect by his conquest of mountain tracks in the long bicycle rides he took at week-ends and whenever time allowed; by his work on William the Conqueror and Domesday Book which was going on all the time; and by his music of which the school made full use. His altogether unjustified reputation for toughness meant that he never had any difficulty in dealing with even the bearded footballers. Many scholars of Frank's and earlier generations found their first posts in Wales. G. G. Coulton was at Llandovery for a year or two and left behind him the reputation of a difficult eccentric. If he could not open a window he took it out. T. F. Tout was at Lampeter and became mayor of the town. A. G. Little was at Cardiff. All agreed in one thing, that they found friendship and inspiration in the Principality. Frank remembered the Llandovery masters of his day as very good teachers whose best pupils won Oxford scholarships. Knight, who taught Mathematics at Llandovery for twenty years, and Richards, who taught Science there for twenty-three, were both friends of Frank's and stayed in the holidays at South Hill. L. V. D. Owen, who was in the History VIth and won the open scholarship at Oxford, which Childs and Frank had won in their day, was a lifelong friend. His father sent Frank a pound of tobacco when he won his scholarship. His neat handwriting, very like Frank's own, enabled him to help copy out *William the Conqueror* while at school and help in later plans when he was Professor of History at Nottingham. It gave Frank enormous pleasure when an old pupil appeared here one summer afternoon in the guise of the Archbishop of Wales, having brought a cricket team from his diocese to Reading by bus to play a local team in the playing field behind Whitley Park Farm.[1]

[1] Mr. Joshua Evans, J.P., B.Sc., Agric., the present head of the Science Department at Llandovery and Keeper of the Records, has very kindly responded to my inquiry about Frank's activities there and quotes from an article on 'Some Great Masters', written in 1957 by one of the men who obtained a history scholarship to Oxford in Frank's days at Llandovery: 'I will only say that I owe more to him than to any man under whom I have sat. His brilliance, his patience, his kindness and practical wisdom brought to birth and nurtured anything there is in me, and it is my sorrow that I have not more to show for it. When I think of those tranquil afternoons in the library, as he criticised our essays and expounded political, social and literary themes I regard them as typical of the peaceful days before 1914,

The four years at Llandovery proved that Frank would never be deflected from his destiny as a historian. He was working hard all the time as a schoolmaster, writing and publishing serious Domesday Book articles on Derbyshire, 1905, Nottinghamshire, 1906, Leicestershire, 1907. Each involved difficult identifications of Domesday place-names. It was his obvious capacity in the matter of identifications which made Round so sure of him. As well as these considerable works he produced a number of articles, which, though short, were none the less important. The first article he chose to remember was, as he told his mother on a postcard, accepted by the editor of the *English Historical Review* soon after his arrival at Llandovery in November 1904: 'You will be pleased that Poole has accepted a short article of mine for the *Eng. Hist. Review*.' It was an important article and showed that Frank could already command the material necessary for the identification of place-names as well as that to trace manorial descents. It identified the place 'Godmundeslaech', where Æthelbald, king of the Mercians, issued his important immunity charter with the place of a similar name where Offa issued two charters and traced it down through the manorial descents of both parts to the seventeenth century when its name took on the modern form of Gumley. 'It was', he wrote, 'a place which admirably suits all the conditions for a meeting place of the Mercian witanagemot being situated roughly in the centre of that kingdom.' The speed with which the article appeared in the *Review* after the editor received it shows that it did not need elaborate editing as articles received from the young all too often did. Frank's work was extraordinarily mature and finished. On 25 February 1905, a picture postcard of Llandovery told his mother, 'My Derbyshire Introduction sent off at 7.30 this evening. Most blissful relief.' That, too, was very soon in print. In his maturity Frank was never tempted to send off unpolished work to the

when the world blew up, since then nothing else seems to have gone right. He was a brilliant pianist, a composer in his spare time, and played the organ, though he had not gone far in this. His home was at Southwell, where he may have been chorister [pure supposition. He had not. D. M. S.]. He carried on the choir for a term after Heap's departure, with John Morgan (the present Archbishop of Wales) as organist. He left with Exton at Easter, 1908.' The writer was Mr. A. Pierce Jones. Another member of Frank's History VIth, Mr. A. G. Prys-Jones, who obtained an Oxford scholarship, wrote that 'It was in Lyttleton C. Powys' study at Emlyn House that Sir Frank Stenton completed his first major historical work—*William the Conqueror* published in The Heroes of the Nations Series'.

press. That seems already to have been a characteristic of his youth.

Every event, like the sending off or the printing of an article, was shared with his mother, although he often had to apologize for not writing at length on that day because he was so busy. His letters home at this time have not been kept, and I suspect that he himself destroyed them after his mother died. All his picture postcards were carefully stuck in an album and Mrs. Stenton told Mary Ann to give them to me. He sent off at least two or three at a time, each telling her some little piece of news from each place he visited, or thanking her for 'comestibles', or books or clothes for which he has written, or assuring her that he is well. Two other short notes also appeared in 1905; 'The Death of Edward the Elder' and 'Inwara and Utwara', both in the now defunct journal *The Athenæum*, the former identified 'Fearndune in the Province of the Mercians', where Edward the Elder died as Farndon in Cheshire north of Wrexham, and the latter explains the meaning of the phrase 'inwara and utwara' as 'all manner of charges laid upon a man's land by the authority of his lord and by the authority of the king'. These little articles, or notes, give the impression that Frank was aiming at clearing up a number of small, but important points before he began to write a consecutive history of the Anglo-Saxon period. It is, however, possible that he hardly realized that this is what he was doing, for he was slow to begin to write such a history and needed a good deal of persuasion. He began to lecture on the Anglo-Saxons in the session 1913–14 and allowed me to attend the lectures although I was not yet free of the Intermediate examination. After I had taken my final examination in 1916 I suggested that I should come again and take a verbatim copy so that he could use it as a working base for the book.

By the modest standards of the early years of this century Frank regarded the financial rewards of Llandovery as good. He was paid £70 a term, resident. This made it easy for Mrs. Stenton to adopt what became her usual plan until the 1914–18 war of spending the winter months at Smedley's Hydro, Matlock. South Hill was shut up and Frank spent his holidays at Matlock too. This was not their first experience of Smedley's, for Frank remembered happy holidays there as a boy when he was keenly interested in geology and spent most of his time looking for specimens on the Derbyshire Hills. In those days many people who would in later years have taken a cruise

visited Smedley's, especially business people from the north. The Hydro provided every kind of fancy bath, maintained doctors and nurses on the premises, had the unusual comfort of central heating, a very large concert hall furnished with many large easy chairs and winter gardens where tea was served. Besides providing professional concerts to entertain the guests, the management encouraged guests to entertain each other and the nurses, by themselves performing in the concert hall. Frank was quite ready to take his part by playing not only the usual concert material, but also by playing his own compositions.

In 1906 he published another brief note on a matter of Anglo-Saxon history in the now extinct *Academy*, 'Place-Names as Evidence of Female Ownership of Land in Anglo-Saxon Times'. This is a subject which he elaborated in one of his Presidential addresses to the Royal Historical Society and encouraged me to pursue into post-Conquest and even modern times. His diary for 1906 with its enigmatic notes shows him continually spending small sums on coins, mainly Saxon ones, and his mind ever turning to the Anglo-Saxons. 'Wigingamere', he notes, 'cannot be Wickmere.' He went from Matlock to see his friends at Reading early in 1906 and his mentors at Oxford before going back to Llandovery through Matlock again at the beginning of term. Childs at Reading was very conscious that the College was coming to a turning-point. It must either make up its mind to move forward towards university status or accept failure. The future turned on the question of whether he could raise money for the day-to-day expenses of salaries already due. He has himself told the story of the way in which George William and Alfred Palmer came to the rescue and by their example encouraged Leonard Sutton and other Reading businessmen to help. These were men whom I knew when I first came to Reading as a student. There were others who helped, but I did not know them all. At some time during this year Childs raised the question with Frank of whether he would care to come back as a Research Fellow in local history if he could raise a sum sufficient to support him. Firth was proposing that he might be able to get him an invitation to give a couple of lectures at Oxford. H. W. C. Davis had asked his help with the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*. The future was opening out, but there was no possibility that success would be achieved without very hard work and it made no promise of riches. Every day he tried to write a page or two of *William the Conqueror*. He was lucky enough to buy a fine copy of *Orderic* for eleven shillings on

12 February. On 22 January he noted, 'Begin to see how to treat the Confessor's reign.' This was the day he rode to Llanwrtyd and back and saw the Sugar Loaf. On the 4 February he noted that he had written twenty-six pages this term. Then a bad cold came on and he had to knock off for a time. When his head was not clear enough to write sentences he wrote out lists of places where Anglo-Saxon kings went to die or made notes about coins or place-names. One Sunday afternoon he spent checking figures relating to sokemen tenements and another day 'amused myself with Anglo-Saxon genealogies'. But it was a hard term, in which he had two bad long colds. On 19 March he rode to Llangammarch and to the top of the Eppynts. His tea and dinner cost five shillings and sixpence. Before the end of the term he had drafted the Domesday chapter under fourteen headings and the chapter remains today to show how carefully the headings were drafted and how exactly the draft was followed.

Before he went home for the Easter holidays in 1906 Frank noted in his diary what he wanted to talk over at Oxford: with Davis the Norman charters and the precise plan of *William*; with Stevenson the place-name endings 'by' and 'berie'; and with Poole 'sokemen tenements'. He went home by Knighton and Offa's Dyke and his first task, after seeing Katie, was to count the number of words in the line and on an average page of the volumes in the Heroes series. On Palm Sunday he walked round the Halloughton fields, a note which means, as it did in later years, serious thought about the wording of a passage or the plan of a chapter. At Easter week-end he took his mother to York and attended the morning and afternoon service in the cathedral with her. But it was clearly a working week-end, making up his mind about what happened at York in the crucial months of 1066. They went out to Tadcaster and Stamford Bridge. When they came back to South Hill on Tuesday he found the final proofs of the Introduction and Translation to the Nottinghamshire Domesday Book awaiting him. Two coin bills were paid during the Easter holidays and nine shillings for Earl's *Land Charters*. Before going back to Llandovery he went down to Reading, where he stayed with de Burgh, and Childs came in to dinner. The next day he went to London and to Oxford in the evening, where he dined with Frank Morgan at Keble, 'saw Davis next day about the charters', and dined at St. John's with Stevenson, returning home to South Hill the following day and to Llandovery on 2 May.

In the summer term 1906 Frank noted a number of exhilarating rides, sometimes with two masters who were his closest friends at Llandovery, Richards and Knight. With them he went to Llanyrtyd on 15 May, perhaps to celebrate the fact that on 13 May he 'killed the Conqueror'. His birthday he celebrated by going to Llangammarch. Often a ride is followed a few days later by a bad cold, as it was after his ride 'to Brecon and Crickhowell with Tretower castle on the way back, got in at 11.30'. He did not give it time to get better, but 'rode to the British camp', with the result that he noted 'cold very bad on chest' the next day, and the following day 'cold utterly incapacitating'. Towards the end of the term he spent some days 'copying *William*'. He 'took Ivor's prep for him', for he could copy *William* while superintending the boys. When the school examinations began he had several clear days and on one of them took the train to Builth road and rode to New Radnor, Old Radnor, Kington, Staunton on Arrow, and Mortimers Cross. He spent the night at Richard's Castle and went to Ludlow, where he stayed at the Feathers, which cost twelve shillings, and went on to Wigmore, Leintwardine, and Craven Arms. He spent the Prize Day taking the train to Craven Arms and biking to Shrewsbury and, presumably, back by train. He went home the next day and was soon down with asthma.

Most of the holiday he spent at South Hill, as we used to do after we were married. One could not spend it at a more attractive place. Richards and Frank Walker each came for a holiday there too. Towards the end of August he had his usual visit to Oxford and Reading again, seeing his usual friends and in Oxford staying at his old lodgings. Before the end of the holidays he was able to send off the Leicestershire Domesday Introduction and by the beginning of November to copy into his Diary the scheme of chapters for *William* of which little remained to be done except the Introduction and Conclusion. The proof of the Leicestershire Introduction and Translation was coming in, and L. V. D. Owen was elected to the Keble scholarship. He must have felt that life was brighter when 'he heard from Childs and wrote a tentative acceptance'. Unhappily Childs was unable to get the grant for which he hoped and Frank after writing a definite acceptance to Childs had, after all, to stay at Llandovery still longer.

The diary for 1907 shows that Frank wanted very much to get away from Llandovery. He was not tired of Wales, but he was tired of schoolmastering. He took to writing music more

seriously again and took even more rides than before. Even Domesday Book seems to have become a burden. He wanted to move on to something else. During the spring term he finished Leicestershire and began on Rutland. He engaged himself to do Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire. In May he sent off the second 'Utwara' letter which was soon in print. In June he took his M.A. and on Friday, 19 July he 'resigned 2.10–2.20'. To celebrate his resignation he took a tremendous ride, starting by 'training to Llanyrtyd at 10.30, cycling to Abergwesyn and seeing Strata Florida by the head-waters of the Towy and then by Pontrhydfendigaid and Ystrad Meurig, (castle) Train to Lampeter and bicycle from there to Llandovery 10.15'. Now the Welsh Mountain Road makes these parts more accessible, as we found going much the same way by car in May 1960. The manuscript of *William* went off to Putnams in mid October, and Frank was anxiously looking for another post. The possibility of lectureships at Oxford excited him, but nothing came his way, though Vinogradoff promised to do his best to get the board to invite him to give a couple of lectures on some Danelaw topic. Frank planned a volume of Danelaw Studies, one of the many books he planned, but did not write. There were to be ten chapters; 1. The Types of Manorial Structure; 2. The Landholders T.R.E.; 3. The Position of the Sokemen in the Manorial Group; 4. Sokeland and Inland; 5. Carucates, Teamlands and Teams; 6. The Hundreds of the Danelaw; 7. The Wapentakes of the Danelaw; 8. Private Jurisdiction T.R.E.; 9. The Process of Manorialization; 10. The Origin of Rutland. Although this book never appeared as he had planned it, most of these subjects are treated in one or other of his works, and treated with more authority than he could have dealt with them in 1907. As the term and year drew to an end the Warden raised the question of Frank's return to Llandovery in 1908 for a little longer, and, after consulting his mother, he agreed to do so.

As his third year in Wales drew on Frank began to feel that he must move or he would find himself at 70 pensionless, still teaching there. Moreover, he found that the climate of Llandovery had given him asthma, and that he suffered from continual incapacitating colds. Nor did he like the food supplied to the masters in Bank House, where they lived. His mother sent him from home hams, bacon, and pork-pies as well as asparagus and other foods from the garden. He also established friendly relations with a number of country inns—Llanyrtwd, Llangammarch, the Ivy Bush at Carmarthen, Senny Bridge are

often mentioned. If ordered betimes an excellent meal of roast duck or the like could be obtained, washed down by a modest bottle, and followed by a pot of good brown Welsh tea before a hospitable fire as the turning-point of a ride. The inns were simple, but the beds not uncomfortable and the meals and the rides were remembered over the years. Long afterwards, as we drove over the Welsh roads improved out of recognition from the rough surfaces which lived in his memory, Frank talked of the days of his youth, the pleasures of companionable rides with other young masters who, like himself, had books on the stocks and looked ahead to the pleasures and pains of a scholar's life. For Frank it meant looking back to Reading where Childs was trying to raise a modest sum sufficient for him to invite Frank back there as a Research Fellow in Local History.

The spring term of 1908 was Frank's last term at Llandovery. He was beginning to feel like his predecessor and with no certainty of another post he left the school at the end of that term. He had undertaken a substantial programme of *V.C.H.* work. As well as the Domesday articles he had in hand, he had agreed to write the articles on the social and economic history of Worcestershire and the city of Worcester. He noted on 9 March that he had 'sent Page the Rutland Introduction' and on 3 April he left Llandovery for good. During April he kept hard at work at the Lincolnshire Domesday Introduction until he left for Oxford on 30 April to stay at his old lodgings and finish the Introduction in Bodley. He finished the last paragraphs on 3 May and sent it off to Page the following day, at 6 p.m., noting that it 'amounted to 59 pp. Virtually it has taken me just four weeks'. He was also writing for the *V.C.H.* the general history of Nottinghamshire. This considerable amount of work made him feel that he had been wise to leave Llandovery, but before much more work could be completed financial disaster had befallen the *V.C.H.* In December Frank noted that he 'Had conversation with Page about *V.C.H.* finance.' At the same time, Page promised £25 on account of what the *History* owed him and £5 for his Rutland expenses. By this time Frank was safely back at Reading as Research Fellow in Local History. The arrangement was made in June, and he entered in his diary on 11 July that he was 'settled for two years'. His salary was to be £100, out of which he would have to pay for his rooms and battels at Wantage Hall, which had been given to the College by Lady Wantage as a memorial of her husband. It was opened formally by her in the winter term of 1908. The Domesday articles on

Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire went into cold storage, as did the articles on Worcester and Worcestershire.

In 1922 the second Lord Hambleden bought the assets and rights of the *V.C.H.*, and authorized Page to continue as editor as best he could with the help of an annual allowance. Hambleden died in 1928 and his son maintained the subsidy until 1931 when the economic crisis made it difficult for him to do so. The surviving rights were therefore conveyed to Page who at once offered them to the University of London. The offer was accepted on 9 November 1932, the deed of gift being dated 15 February 1933. The Senate of the University then asked the Institute of Historical Research to appoint representatives to confer with the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Senate on the financial future of the *History*. A. F. Pollard, Charles Johnson, and Frank were enlisted, but only Johnson and Frank attended the meeting on 8 June 1934.

Frank himself again wrote an Introduction to the Lincolnshire Domesday, but for the Lincoln Record Society, not the *V.C.H.* He also wrote the Huntingdon and Oxfordshire Introductions for the *History*, but by then he was established in the world and no longer needed payment for his work. Despite what had seemed a serious misfortune to a young man he was able to carry on, for he had saved something of his Llandovery salary; Firth arranged the much-talked-of Oxford lectures in 1909, which were printed in 1910 as *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw*; his first £50 for *William* came on 12 November 1908 and the second in the following year. He was still able to hire a piano for his rooms in Wantage Hall.

V. RESEARCH FELLOW IN LOCAL HISTORY, 1908–12

Frank did not realize that when he returned to Reading in 1908 he had found his life's work. He looked no further than his two-year fellowship. Page was suggesting that he should take on the Domesday articles of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire as well as Worcestershire and Nottinghamshire for the *V.C.H.* His first work as a local historian was to be a tract on Berkshire place-names and he was looking ahead to the early history of the Abbey of Abingdon, which was to follow it up. He was also writing *Types of Manorial Structure in the Northern Danelaw* to serve as lectures at Oxford for Vinogradoff. These two lectures do not make easy reading. They were written under Vinogradoff's influence and aimed at satisfying his technical precision, but even Frank could hardly have made them a simple story.

There is all-too-little pre-Conquest evidence to build on in the *Danelaw*, but Frank made the most of what he could find and the fragments of early post-Conquest evidence. They led him on to *Danelaw Charters*. His tract on the 'Development of the Castle in England and Wales' was also on the stocks and was delivered first as a lecture on 18 February 1909. Firth was giving him good advice to become a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, to keep up his numismatic interests, and to do a paper on Abingdon in the Civil War. Firth could not help him to get paid work on the early period in which his interests lay. It must have been a shock, although he knew it was coming, when he had his first salary cheque for £32. 15*s*. 5*d*. rather less than half his Llandovery cheque. He also received £5 from de Burgh for giving two of his evening-class lectures at Bethnal Green for him. He spent Christmas with his mother at Matlock, as usual going to Southwell during the vacation, playing as usual in the concerts, and going to Chester via Manchester to take another look at the castle there.

The years as a Research Fellow were not easy ones, for he was determined not to allow his mother to spend the winter months at South Hill and her migraine was as bad as ever. His diary for 1909 has little to tell. He was working hard at the things he had agreed to write. Near the end of March he recorded another visit to London, when he dined with Page and found him 'more hopeful about the *V.C.H.*' At the end of April Frank began to work on Abingdon and was cheered by a letter from Firth to say he had arranged for his two lectures to be given on 15 and 22 May in the Hall of All Souls. On the occasion of the second lecture he lunched with the Warden and 'accepted Rothley'. This cryptic entry, which never in the end came to fruition, came up from time to time. On 1 April 1911 he noted that he had agreed with Merttens, the owner of the Rothley papers, that he would write a history of Rothley on the basis of the documents for £100 and expenses. I do not know why the proposal fell through. It may have been that Mr. Merttens died or lost interest. When I came up as an undergraduate in 1912 Frank was still bubbling over with interest about Rothley. The Danelaw lectures given in All Souls came out in 1911, five copies arrived on 16 January, but it is dated 1910 and is so listed among his publications.

In May 1910 news came of a resumption of work in some counties for the *V.C.H.*, together with a cheque for £35 on account of what was owed him. On 24 June he handed in to

Childs the manuscript of his *Place-Names of Berkshire*. This was a very remarkable pamphlet for its date and for the work of a young man. It was by no means confined to Berkshire. He himself describes it as

> an attempt to consider the local nomenclature of a single county as illustrating some aspects of early English history; in particular the first stages in the growth of the village community and manor. While, therefore, many of the local names of the county are omitted from the essay, no restrictions have been set to the area from which illustrative examples have been drawn.

Late in his life he read it again and said that he felt that it wore well and he did not wish to alter anything. To him, place-names were always one type of the materials from which our knowledge of English history should be drawn rather than things to be studied for their own sake. Nor did he ever expect final answers from them to difficult questions. The day after he handed the Berkshire place-names to Childs he sent off the castles work to Tout to be printed as a Historical Association tract. It came out in the same year and contains a great deal of enjoyable work, for all the castles mentioned in it had been visited by the author. The place-name book did not appear until 1911, for the correction of proofs was much more elaborate work. He was also doing a certain amount of reviewing at this time mainly for the *Daily News*, although not to any striking profit.

Things were looking up a little, for Childs had managed to get the £100 for Frank's fellowship for a third year. Page wrote to him in December 1910 asking him to write 20,000 words on Worcester City and 25,000 on the Social and Economic History of that county. Frank put in a full requisition for the work done on Nottinghamshire. Although no more money was apparently available for the fourth year of the fellowship, a Council minute decided that 'Mr. Stenton's services must be retained in the best interests of the College'. Frank was informed that his stipend would be £200 and his title that of Lecturer, £100 to be in virtue of the fellowship and £100 in virtue of his evening class and other lectures, about seven or eight a week. Childs himself had not been enjoying an easy passage during these years. Each year income had run far short of expenditure and the deficit was getting worse. The two brothers, George William and Alfred Palmer, had saved the position in 1903 when the College was to be evicted from its Valpy Street buildings and

there seemed every possibility that the town would make it impossible for suitable buildings to be erected on the site they were prepared to allow the College to acquire. The same men together with Lady Wantage, the giver of Wantage Hall in 1908, supported by those who had supported them in the 1903 crisis, saved the College again in 1909, producing an endowment large enough to enable Childs and his associates to go forward with their plans of working towards independent University status. With an endowment of £200,000 in 1911 a University seemed within the College's grasp. Childs recorded how with 'one who was at once an old pupil, an old friend and a new colleague' he 'fled to the wilderness'. In other words, he went camping with Frank by the Huntingdonshire Ouse.

Childs and de Burgh were both concerned to find something which would bring in a little money for Frank during 1910 and 1911. They did not want to lose him from Reading any more than he wanted to go. He had always enjoyed the lively society of Reading from the time he went there as a boy in 1897. There was plenty of music. It was close enough to London and Oxford for people to come there easily. Frank's Oxford friend, J. L. Phillips, was now a parson and working in London and Frank was frequently in London himself. His diary for 1910 contains in the early pages a list of *Possibilities*: Victoria History, Pitman's series, Oxford Extension, Special Course, Rothley, Place-Names, Abingdon, Danelaw. One possibility which he did not note here was the Historical Manuscripts Commission. In July he called at the Public Record Office and 'saw Roberts and Maxwell Lyte and agreed to do the Staunton papers at a guinea a day of seven hours'. When he was at home for the summer 1910 he came to know George Staunton of Staunton and his family. He stayed with them both in 1910 and 1911 in Kessingland and Clare as well as their lovely old house at Staunton, where the seventeenth-century bullet holes in the front door bear witness that it was one of the English manor-houses that stood a siege for the king. When in later days I came to know them, I heard how Frank's prowess in hopping on one leg upstairs with a child on the hopping toe impressed the family. The Staunton papers supplied him with £12. 12*s*. at the end of the year and also with a paper for the *English Historical Review* on the Staunton manumissions.[1] At the end of the year £10 also came in from coaching the Egyptians at Reading and £40

[1] Vol. xxvi, pp. 93–7. I regret not being able to find room for it in his Collected Papers.

for his W.E.A. class. The inaugural class was held on Tuesday, 4 October 1910. He went on holding it on a Tuesday evening until after we were married in 1919.

The diary for 1911, while keeping to the usual enigmatic form of entry, gives a more cheerful impression, and is sometimes a little more verbose. Phillips's presence in London and L. V. D. Owen's at Oxford meant that Frank had more, and perhaps less worried, friends at hand. The castle tract brought him the friendship of J. E. Morris, a first-rate historian of Tout's generation who never escaped the net of schoolmastering, and by the time that I came to know him, had long ceased to want to. In the autumn term of 1910 Bourdillon was succeeded as Warden of Wantage Hall by S. B. Ward, who at once became a close friend of Frank's, a friendship which lasted their joint lives. On 17 March a note in his diary, 'To Thorney, West Drayton and Harlington', indicates that he has noticed and investigated the place-name 'Thorney'. His investigation resulted in a brief note in the *English Historical Review* of 1912 identifying the Thorney Island in the river Colne to which the invading Danish army fell back after its defeat in 893 at Farnham. He noticed that a hamlet called Thorney stands on the Buckinghamshire bank of the Colne some six miles above its junction with the Thames. When he went to look at it he found that the Colne flows into the Thames in several channels, thus making islands. This makes another of the conclusive little notes on Anglo-Saxon matters, which are among the foreworks of *Anglo-Saxon England.*

After his camping holiday with Childs in Huntingdonshire in 1911 he went home to South Hill and it is curious to read on 11 July, 'Rode into Leicester. The Foss cannot yet be ridden', and to remember that he told me that he had to push his way through bushes. In 1920 when we rode home for the Easter vacation we could ride the Foss, but had to keep our eyes on the road to avoid stones and other impediments. By then the Foss in Nottinghamshire had been done up. On that far-off day in 1911 he 'returned via Mount Sorrel and Nottingham 3.10–8.10. 76–80 miles'. On 1 August he 'left Thurgarton at 9.0 Oxford 12.30. Lunched Balliol. Cashed £10. Tutorial meeting. Expressed opinion adverse to concentration on text books. Tea, then to Reading. Knapman only in Wantage Hall'. The next morning 'de Burgh phoned up and read me the last two chapters of his book in the Library. To Worcester 2.30–4.45. Found the hotel and had tea and dinner'. He did not say, what he told

me in later years, that there was a rat in the dining-room and that one came in to his bedroom. The next day he 'perambulated Worcester. Attended afternoon service. Train afterwards to Evesham, which I admire.' The next day he copied 'charters in the Guildhall in the morning. Train to Ledbury in the afternoon. Hired cycle then and rode to Bromsberrow.' The next day he 'settled points at Worcester and went home through Birmingham where there were great crowds'. In the following weeks Frank wrote the Worcester and Worcestershire articles, which went promptly into cold storage until 1924 when they were printed. Whether he was ever paid for them I do not know; I think not. In September J. E. Morris came to stay at South Hill to visit historic sites, a visit long remembered; for he was as much an addict of getting about the country as Frank himself.

The more cheerful impression given by the diary of 1911 may be due to Frank's realization that as the College moved towards university status more security of tenure could be expected. The last thing he wanted was to go elsewhere, an attitude he never abandoned. P. N. Ure was appointed to a chair of Classics and Ancient History in that year so that de Burgh was free to become Professor of Philosophy. A chair in Modern History was advertised for the next year. But Frank took nothing for granted and had a careful application printed at the Oxford Press, his Oxford friends being pressed in to provide testimonials. Firth, Poole, Haverfield, and Vinogradoff made an impressive company. It was gratifying when the appointment was made without calling any other candidate than Frank for interview. The letters which Frank received and his mother preserved on this occasion from Childs and de Burgh show that they held him in as much affection as he in return held Reading. Childs wrote:

> I am heartily glad that the affair is ended and ended well. You won on your merits. I am very delighted about it, though it makes me feel aged to see one of my own pupils placed in authority over me. . . . I must not close without thanking you most heartily for the admirable way in which you ran the meeting. The success was due to you more than anyone else.

De Burgh wrote from 2 Southern Hill where he lived until he retired in 1934:

> The recommendation of the committee was unanimous and decisive. They did not feel it requisite to interview any other candidate. They

came to their decision solely on the merit of your published work and on the value of your testimonials and record. Had they allowed feelings of personal regard and confidence to enter into their consideration, their verdict would, if possible, have been still more emphatic,

and he went on to stress his own pleasure and 'real delight in the appointment'. He ended by hoping that Frank's mother and sister will be cheered up by the news. The Registrar, Francis H. Wright, who had entertained Frank in 1897, wrote to express his pleasure and hope that the future historian of the institution 'will not fail to note that you are the first student of the college to attain professorial rank'.

In the autumn term of 1912 I first came up as an undergraduate to Reading. It was the custom of Professor de Burgh as Dean of the Faculty of Letters to address all the students of the Faculty on the first morning of the new session. I remember very clearly him saying that we were 'faced with two new professors, Professor Dewar', who was indeed new to us, 'and Professor Stenton, who was an old friend [loud applause] and an older friend than most of you will realize, since he was himself a student here before going to Oxford, which, incidentally shows the excellence of the instruction given in this institution'. To me, enjoying my first experience of first-rate teaching in the weeks that followed this meeting, life at the College was delightful and I became a dedicated historian from the first lecture on Roman Britain which I attended. Reading University College, indeed, had much to give, first-rate teaching in some subjects, adequate instruction in most, and the vitality of a young institution, conscious of a purpose and an aim. Frank had already formed an alliance with Percy Ure, only one year his senior, with Stephen Ward of Wantage Hall, his junior by some six years, with Herbert Knapman, tutorial secretary, later to become Registrar, and Donald Atkinson, who succeeded him in a Research Fellowship and was to dig the barrow of Lowbury on the Berkshire Downs. His longstanding friendship with Childs and de Burgh was in no way weakened by the new relationship.

The congratulations Frank received on his appointment were preserved by his mother and among them some stand out as characteristic of the writer. I cannot forbear to quote a card from R. L. Poole, who was on holiday at Grindelwald:

I was very glad to hear from England that you had received the appointment. Do not allow it to interfere too much with work.

Remember that the great vice of our time is overteaching. Be sure to assert your independence of Boards of Studies, and resist them if they presume to encroach on your liberties. These are golden rules to begin with. Best Wishes.

James Tait, also on holiday, but in England, wrote from Yorkshire: 'I congratulate you on your success. Am glad to hear that you are at work on the Lincolnshire D.B. But do you take no holiday?'

VI. PROFESSOR AT READING UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, 1912–26

The year when Frank became the Professor of Modern History at Reading saw the death of a great historical figure of the past, Frederic Seebohm. For the *University College Reading Review* Frank wrote an account of this scholar's work and his place among the historians of the nineteenth century, which not only carries conviction but also shows an almost prophetic understanding of the trends which the study of Anglo-Saxon origins would follow as a result of the work which Vinogradoff, Maitland, and Round had been doing in recent years. He could write as he did because he had already gone so far himself towards reaching the conclusions he adumbrates. His essay on Seebohm, which marks the first year of his professorship, should be read with his last Presidential address to the Royal Historical Society which was delivered in 1945 and discusses the writing of English History between 1895 and 1920. Behind Frank's work on Old English society and in particular on the society of the Danelaw lies the inbred knowledge of a family which has lived and worked on the land for generations and seen families rise and fall as chance and individual ability has led them. This personal fortune is behind his appreciation of Seebohm's *English Village Community*.

A book [he wrote] must be judged by its strongest part; and there is no question about the strength of those opening pages in which the agrarian framework of an English village is described for all time. By a fortunate chance the little town of Hitchin, in which the greater part of Seebohm's life was passed, still retained when he was writing abundant traces of its open fields. It follows that throughout this section of his work there is present the note of personal conversance with the details of common fields, with their strips and gores and balks. It is just because of this personal note that Seebohm's work is a supreme illustration of the way in which the study of local conditions may react on the general development of scholarship. The opening pages of the *English Village Community* lie behind every subsequent treatment of English

agrarian history, but they also form a superb piece of topography. The *English Village Community* would have been a lesser work had its author lived in a region subject to ancient enclosure.[1]

It is equally true to say that Frank's own work as a teacher and writer of history would have been less effective had he not enjoyed a similar 'personal conversance' with a country background in the heart of the Danelaw shires; if he could not have himself claimed to own strips of land in an ancient open-field village.

The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon appeared in 1913, a work which he had proposed as filling the requirements of his Fellowship in Local History. Not that Frank thought of it as definitely local history or regarded local history as a special and perhaps subsidiary form of history. The history of a land and people is composed of the history of all its parts. In his diary for 1909 he wrote on 11 November, 'began Abingdon', but there are hints of the foreworks of Abingdon long before. On the 7 October is the cryptic note 'Abingdon<Malmesbury'. As far back as 1906 in March he copied into his diary the statement of Æthelweard that when the ealdorman of Berkshire was killed in 871 in the fighting round Reading with the Danes his body was 'privately withdrawn and carried into the province of the Mercians to a place called Northweorthige, but Derby in the language of the Danes'. When he read this passage in his study at Bank House, Llandovery, he must have had that flush of excitement which comes when one finds something which throws new light on a period of history. Here again, too, is evidence that already in 1906 his mind was set on the Anglo-Saxons. This little book on Abingdon, which was greeted with applause by those best qualified to judge, made a real contribution to early English history. In concluding the tract he writes that: 'In the previous pages stress has been laid especially upon those details which bring the early monastery of Abingdon into touch with the general condition of the country.' That a Mercian was ealdorman of Berkshire in 871 showed that Berkshire was indeed a border county fluctuating in allegiance between Wessex and Mercia in accordance with the power of the kings. By a critical examination of the surviving documents of the abbey Frank concludes that Abingdon in origin differed not at all from the many *monasteriola* which studded the shires of Wessex in the eighth and ninth centuries. Its importance under Æthelwold as

[1] *Reading University College Review* (August 1912), vol. iv, p. 249.

a school of monks tended to hide its insignificance in earlier times. The monks of the Norman age applied themselves to the invention of details in the history of their house of which the authentic memory had perished and thus obscured the true story of their origins. 'It remains possible to recover a faint outline of the history, and the facts that are thus suggested have their significance in relation to the general condition of the country in the age which lies behind the middle of the tenth century.'

R. L. Poole, writing to thank him for the book, said: 'The charter work is quite first rate and shows how much can be learned from records by those who are capable of treating them critically and bringing them into connexion with local and territorial history.' He went on to urge Frank to undertake a new edition of the Abingdon Chronicle, edited for the Rolls Series by Joseph Stevenson. 'I should think that the Delegates of the Clarendon Press would favourably consider such a proposal.' At the same time H. W. C. Davis wrote expressing his 'delight' at Frank's study of the Rolls edition of the Abingdon history, adding: 'I suppose a new edition would be too big a business for the Reading University College Press? I wish you could be persuaded to undertake it all the same.' Neither Frank nor anyone else has yet found time to undertake this work.

As Professor responsible for preparing students for the examinations for the external degrees of London University and also the much larger numbers of students who were entering for the Reading Diploma to qualify themselves to teach in Elementary Schools, Frank had a full timetable. He was able to carry out his work owing to his capacious memory. It seemed, indeed, that he forgot nothing that he read. A few notes were enough to see him through. For the two main courses given in alternate years to Diploma and all history students he prepared two stout notebooks in the summer before he took over the classes in 1911. One dealt with Tudors and Stuarts and the other with the eighteenth century. Each page had about two entries on it leaving large blank spaces below them, in case he wished to add anything or to note new material which appeared. But Frank never gave the same lecture twice and never wrote them out in full. He had one assistant lecturer, J. Humphrey Sacret, a sound teacher, though by no means inspired. He was a Reading man by birth who had been to Oxford and, as he never ceased to complain, had won only a Second Class degree. To pupils and colleagues alike he continually bewailed the lot of the underpaid lecturer who must of necessity supplement his in-

come by any hack work, coaching, or reviewing, which he could obtain. Help in teaching Political Philosophy came from de Burgh, a first-rate lecturer, and in teaching Ancient History from Percy Ure, whose original mind was a constant stimulus to his class. Donald Atkinson, later lecturer, then Professor at Manchester, lectured on Roman Britain, beginning in 1915. He was not an exciting teacher, though he could occasionally be amusing.

As far as I can remember there were in the session 1912–13 some thirty-odd intermediate students who attended Frank's lectures on English History, beginning with Roman Britain, on Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock and on Friday afternoon at 2.30. We also attended the Diploma classes he held, as also did the Honours class. As the years went by I noticed that the honours students who had attended the Diploma classes in their first year never failed to come again when the same period came round for attention again in their third year as undergraduates. In those days the intermediate students of London, both external and internal, took in addition to general English history a special subject, studied from some original source. In the two years I spent on getting through this most tiresome examination, I studied, in turn, Froissart's Chronicle and Stowe's Survey of London. These were taken on Saturday mornings by Sacret, very faithfully. I was always sorry when this practice of giving intermediate students the chance of studying closely an original source, was dropped. Frank also lectured on Economic and Social History, on Political and Constitutional History, and in the summer term was expected to give several lectures on successive Saturday mornings to Diploma students on the Teaching of History in Schools. It is not surprising that in view of the many lectures he had to give he set few essays. Sacret and Ure were much readier to burden us in this way and I, for one, never found much profit in such exercises, whereas I remembered, and still remember today the Professor's lectures, and the reading with which I supplemented them. The weakness of the College lay in the small size of its Library, but fortunately the town library was good. Well might Tout declare, as Professor Galbraith told me, 'Reading has one good man in Stenton, if they don't wear him out'.

Beginners in those days took five subjects in the London Intermediate examination and if they had not been well taught at school they tended to fail in one of them, in which case they had to take all five again a year later. I failed in French, but

Frank allowed me to attend his course on Anglo-Saxon history on which he lectured for the first time while I was dismally serving a second year as an intermediate student. His strong belief that universities should exist to extend the frontiers of knowledge not only by teaching the young, but by research faithfully pursued by university teachers, made him insist in later days, as his influence in the University grew, that every lecturer should have at least one day completely free of teaching each week for the prosecution of his own studies. Sabbatical terms or years were completely impossible at Reading throughout his days as professor and he never had one in his life. After the exacting duties of a schoolmaster in a boarding-school in central Wales, the slightly shorter term at Reading, the slightly less full working day, and the nearness to the great repositories of the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and the Bodleian Library helped him to continue to do what, like R. L. Poole, he regarded as his real work. A season ticket to Paddington was not expensive and he had never regarded first-class railway travel as an extravagance. It was not until July 1911 that he noted in his diary: 'At R.O. Discovered the Round Room.' Presumably he had hitherto used either the Long Room or the room in the other wing where those who were working for the Historical Manuscripts Commission sat.

His activities in the Museum and Public Record Office in these years fell into two divisions, the discovery and collection of twelfth-century charters relating to the Danelaw and the investigation of English records of the Tudor and Stuart periods, towards which he was drawn as a result of the records of those times preserved at Southwell minster and in the strong room at his father's old office. Nowadays students in Colleges of Education automatically attempt to write a thesis on some topic which necessitates the use of original documents and they expect and generally obtain much help from the local record offices, which did not exist when Frank was young. Their work is rarely of any particular profit to anyone except themselves. Frank, an incurable optimist, encouraged by the interest his teaching aroused in the adult class he taught in Lower Caversham every Sunday morning at 9.30 in 1909, in the workingmen's evening class which he began to take in 1911, and in the Diploma class which he began to take in the same year, determined to offer good Diploma students the opportunity of using original materials themselves. This was an extension of Childs's interest in local history, for the subjects he proposed to them

were Lay Subsidy Rolls and Miscellaneous Inquisitions, Manor Court Rolls, Forest Surveys, and Court Rolls. He copied a good deal of this sort of material himself in pencil in the Round Room at the Record Office and used it to the benefit of all his students who found this fresh news from the past very stimulating.

Few degree students could in those days afford to stay a fourth year to work for a higher degree, for there were no grants which could be obtained. He hoped that perhaps one or two good local Diploma students might be able to stay, although there was no other qualification which they could aspire to. It was his good fortune to begin with S. A. Peyton, a Newbury man, who was indeed a pupil to be proud of. From his own papers Frank taught him to read the old handwriting and set him to the study of the lay subsidy rolls for Nottinghamshire. The outcome of his work was an article entitled 'The Village Population in the Tudor Lay Subsidy Rolls' which that austere critic R. L. Poole accepted for publication in the *English Historical Review*.[1] The war of 1914–18 interrupted his studies, but when he was demobilized he returned to them. Since a Librarian was soon needed at the College, Peyton was before long fully occupied, doubling librarianship with lecturing to the Honours class on Economic History and to Education Diploma students on the History of Education. As the Library grew it became his absorbing interest and he never wrote the great work on Local Government in the seventeenth century that Frank had hoped to see. No other Diploma student of his quality appeared, although Frank started two girls on work. They could copy the documents but did not succeed in doing anything with them. It became plain that the good average Diploma students were not Peytons and that any work begun by them would have to be finished by someone else. For that Frank had not the time.

Unfortunately no diaries survive for the next few years, nor have any letters to or from his mother survived, but a stream of picture postcards sent to her throw a good deal of light on his doings. He was engaged in collecting the charters in the British Museum, the Public Record Office, and Bodley which eventually appeared in 1920 as *Documents illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw*, commonly referred to as *Danelaw Charters*. The Preface to the volume gives no information about when Sir Paul Vinogradoff, as editor of the new British Academy series of Records of the Social and Economic History of England

[1] Vol. xxx, pp. 234–50.

and Wales, invited Frank to contribute to it a volume to illustrate the society of the northern Danelaw, but he had for some years been urging him to concentrate on the Danelaw and I think that Frank must have begun the collection as soon as he was established in Reading. A postcard sent to his mother on 25 June 1912 mentions the documents as being in the hands of the Clarendon Press. I can only conclude that these documents were charters sent to the Press for the setting up of specimen pages. In 1912 his postcards show that he was using a season ticket to take him to the British Museum whenever the excellent train service of those days allowed him time enough to make the journey worth while. In 1913 he sent an urgent postcard asking for Eyton's *Court, Household and Itinerary of Henry II* to be posted to him and described the exact place in which it stood on his shelves. On another card he thanked his mother for sending it so that 'it came just right for me to use it today.... The season is a great gain. Charters growing. One can now work regularly.' Sir Israel Gollancz, as Secretary of the British Academy, several times spoke of the heavy strain on the resources of the Academy caused by the slow progress of *Danelaw Charters* during the years of the First World War.

The outbreak of war in 1914 had soon drained men from the College. Whereas there had been a small but steady increase in full-time students under tutorial supervision each year between the session 1906–7 and that of 1913–14, the tendency was reversed between each year until the war was over. In 1916–17 the number of students sank to 258, nearly twenty fewer students than were attending the College in 1906–7. Childs, in an access of patriotism, set off at the beginning of the war for London to offer all the College buildings to the Government for war needs, pursued by de Burgh to say that the buildings could not be spared. In the event the only major building the College had to relinquish was Wantage Hall, but that could be done without as few men students remained to use it. Its Warden, Stephen Ward, had married in 1914 before war broke out and he and his wife were in Germany on their honeymoon and only got home without their luggage. Stephen Ward went into the Home Office and he and Frank often went to London by the same train. Neither Frank nor Percy Ure was accepted for military service and neither of them wished to join the Civil Service. They both preferred to continue to do what they both felt to be their proper work. In the event, when Wantage Hall was taken over by the Royal Flying Corps early in 1915 until

1918 the three residents, Frank, Knapman, also unfit for military service, and a Fine Arts teacher called Whiteside, had to leave the Hall and Knapman took a house for them in Morgan road near the College early in the session 1915–16. Mrs. Stenton wrote anxious letters to Frank about the house and the servants they needed to keep it clean and comfortable and to feed the three men. But she did not come down to Reading to see how they were getting on, having complete confidence in Knapman who had stayed at South Hill. Knapman allotted the two largest rooms to Frank, who had much better and lighter rooms, warmed by gas fires, than he had had in Wantage Hall. His mother urged him not to let the charters out of his sight while the move was in progress and prophesied that his papers would all get mixed up.

A considerable number of letters from Frank's mother at South Hill have survived from the First World War. She found the cold winters of the war years difficult. It became hard to get enough help for the garden and she could not get away from home. Frank was troubled to think of her with only Mary Ann to help. In 1915 and 1916 she was anxious about how the household in Morgan Road was going to manage. Frank wrote her long letters telling her of all his activities. She never felt reconciled to his going to London regularly, saying 'Bombs are bombs'. She was grateful to the Wards who did all they could to help Frank and frequently entertained him. Mrs. Ward had helped him furnish his rooms amd he spent every Sunday evening at their house in London Street. In 1916, while he was at home for the Christmas vacation, Katie died as quietly as she had lived, but her affairs could not be settled because the son of Frank's half-brother was in the army and could not get home until 1918. The Southwell house was therefore kept on and the maids and Katie's nurse were still there until the division was made in 1919. Meanwhile, in 1916, Frank started me off on my researches. The London degree was taken in November in those days and I bought a season ticket so that I could do the papers and also go to the British Museum on the one free day and the Saturday afternoon in the examination week. Frank was himself copying charters of the Danelaw counties and he optimistically set me to copy the twelfth-century charters of all the non-Danish shires. Frank was also making a collection of grants of land made by and to men with native names. He also collected personal names of native English and Scandinavian origin, taking enough of the document

in which the names occurred to enable us to know something of the status of the individual. He also continued his file of slips recording place-names which were derived from personal names, a file which was of the greatest value when the English Place-Name Society was established. He was still adding to this file late in life. But the big book that he meant to write about personal names was never written.

In 1916 Frank and Canon Foster of Timberland made each other's acquaintance and soon became firm friends. Frank must have initiated the correspondence by joining the Lincoln Record Society in 1915. The Canon first came to Reading in the summer term of 1916 and in the summer vacation Frank went to Lincoln and Timberland to look at the charters of Lincoln cathedral. His enthusiasm, described by the Canon in the Preface to the first volume of the great edition of the *Registrum Antiquissimum*, fired the Canon's. Frank was invited to join the Council of the Lincoln Record Society and it was obvious that he would not rest until he had persuaded the Society to undertake an edition of the charters. Before the first summer of their friendship was over, the Canon was firmly convinced that it was his duty to make a model edition of the earlier charters belonging to the Dean and Chapter; Frank himself had agreed to edit the transcripts of charters of the Gilbertine houses of Lincolnshire which he had copied in odd times from Lancastrian Memoranda Rolls in the Public Record Office; and he had arranged that I should edit for the Society the first eyre roll for the county. This was a large programme of solid Latin documents for a local Record Society to undertake at this date. It is still in progress. The Lincoln Society was in composition much like any other county record society of those days. Its members were very largely Lincolnshire country gentlemen and clergymen of the Church of England. Its rare meetings were held on a Friday because that was market-day when everyone went to Lincoln. Members preferred English documents, not that they could not read Latin, for most of them had been through the public school mill, but they liked parish registers, wills, and, in general, English documents, of which the record depositories in Lincoln could offer an immense store.

Where the Lincoln Record Society differed from other contemporary societies was in the quality of its founder who was its Honorary Secretary and General Editor. Canon Foster and Frank together were an irresistible combination. When they first met, Canon Foster had a large volume entitled *The State of*

the Church, vol. i, set up in print, but not quite ready for publication, part of a great scheme, begun when he edited the Register of Bishop Cooper in 1912, to provide, from the records at Lincoln and in the British Museum, information which would fill the gaps in the continuous series of Bishop's Registers for the diocese and reveal something of the state of the church in the obscure period which follows the rejection of Roman Catholicism in England. He had also slowly going through the press a calendar of the feet of fines of that part of Henry III's reign not covered by the volume of abstracts, paid for, but unfortunately not edited, by the Revd. W. O. Massingberd of South Ormsby in 1896. Under Frank's influence the Canon included in the volume a list of the errors in Massingberd's volume and all the final concords of the twelfth century, in full Latin text, which could be found in originals or in cartulary copies not printed elsewhere. The *Feet of Fines* appeared in 1920 and *The State of the Church* in 1926, both very large and meticulously edited volumes. Meanwhile the Canon was laying careful plans for the edition of the charters of the Dean and Chapter and also proceeding with a long-held ambition to edit the Lincolnshire section of Domesday Book. Frank's omnivorous interest in the documents at Lincoln is revealed in a letter to Canon Foster preserved among the society's documents and written on 16 September 1917. After referring to the progress of the Gilbertine charters he continued:

> About those terriers. So far as I can see the only satisfactory way of dealing with them would be to print the lot in full. I should think that they might interest a considerable circle of members, after all they deal with glebe. The best way of approaching them would be to publish them by rural deaneries. It looks a formidable body of MS, but xvi cent. writing shrinks greatly in print (unlike our delightful Angevin charters). One detailed introduction would serve for the whole series. They do not merely throw light on the number of the village fields, they give information about the size of strips, and I saw things which looked to me very much as if the church land lay in a rota. They illustrate even feudal divisions. The distribution of the glebe of Walesby in the hamlets of Risby and Otby carries one straight back to Domesday.

He went on to suggest that when and if Peyton came home from the war he might be put on to do a volume of terriers.

Frank was clearing up outstanding matters before beginning his book on the Anglo-Saxons. He enjoyed reviewing Thurlow Leeds on *The Archaeology of the Saxon Settlement*; but R. L. Poole had to plead with him to review Howarth's *Golden Age of the*

English Church; the former was a book of the new age of Anglo-Saxon history, the latter belonged to the passing age. He had also in 1915 written a pamphlet on Norman London, which before he died he twice revised and enlarged. In 1917 he printed 'An Early Inquest Relating to St. Peter's, Derby' and in the next year 'Sokemen and the Village Waste', both in the *English Historical Review*. The outstanding article which he wrote in 1918 was 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings'. It settled a central problem of Anglo-Saxon history and cleared the way for his attack on a large-scale account of the Saxon age.

When the war ended Frank's nephew returned from Egypt, but even then it was some time before Frank could get Katie's estate settled, for Rupert Stenton was very dilatory and matters were not cleared up until the end of the summer vacation of 1919. Things were not altogether easy in Reading either. The man and wife who looked after the Morgan Road establishment both in turn fell ill and died. The illness of Mrs. Appleton made the house very uncomfortable, for it meant beds ill-made and bad cooking. When she died the house had to be given up and I had to find other rooms for Frank. Sacret, too, was far from well and Frank had to take him for a time to a nursing home in Kent. My services in cooking on a gas-ring were useful, all faithfully retailed in Frank's letters to his mother, who wrote: 'bacon and eggs come in like a refrain'. Frank was anxious that I should have a couple of years with plenty of time to get started on work and generously found £50 a year beginning with the session 1917–18 on condition the University found another £50 for me. I was to do no more teaching than one lecture a week. Unfortunately my first lecture coincided with a complete breakdown on Sacret's part and I had to take on his work, for which I was ill-fitted as he was a modernist. It grieved Frank that I did not have the clear years he wanted for me, but I was happy and was learning all the time.

Meanwhile Mrs. Stenton was far from well. All her life she was plagued with headaches. She found the hot weather as trying as the cold winters of the war. Frank had a worrying and sad time in the long vacation of 1918. He was finishing his Introduction to *Danelaw Charters* and as he wrote to me in August he was also 'trying to write down a plausible outline of the settlement of Wessex. But this is a luxury and I do not divert myself from the Introduction. I keep up my page a day. I am now cleaning up the Hundreds section.' His mother was visibly failing. When Frank should have returned to Reading

at the beginning of the new session she was too ill for him to leave her and in a few days she died. She had lived long enough to see the fragile little boy develop into the dependable scholar, whose reputation was firmly established.

On 8 November 1919 Frank and I were married and set up a modest household in the back half of a seventeenth-century farmhouse, called Lunds Farm, at Woodley with a daily help. Our home was South Hill where, on Mrs. Stenton's breakdown in 1918, Mary Ann had produced a Yorkshire niece called Lucy to cook for Frank and herself. When we went down to South Hill for the first time we went on bicycles, staying a night at Leicester on the way. I found the second day's ride very tiring, particularly the last few miles of beautiful, but hilly road. A forty-mile ride in Nottinghamshire was much harder work than a similar ride in Berkshire, where I had had good training with Frank in the previous two summers. I was always amazed at his toughness. He enjoyed showing me the countryside. We walked his own fields, which he and his mother had walked in his childhood, exploring the Halloughton Woods and the Halloughton dumbles on foot, cycling to Newark, Nottingham, and Lincoln. We spent every morning working. Frank was getting the Gilbertine Introduction written and I was working on my eyre roll and Glanville. It is difficult to keep myself out of the story since we did everything together. The year I first came to South Hill a pleasant eccentric Londoner called Ashton James, who belonged to a Shropshire family, retired to live in one of the prebendal houses at Southwell. He had spent his working life alongside the squire of Gonalston in Childs's Bank at Temple Bar and they retired together when they reached the age of 50. Mr. James wanted to learn how to read old documents and write something about the past of Southwell. We taught him to read them and checked his transcripts on what in the retrospect seem always sunny summer afternoons. He soon became Hon. Librarian and daily attended the minster service. Through the years he made complete transcripts of all the documents in duplicate, one for our Library and one for his own. Every Saturday Mr. James spent at Gonalston Hall, cycling there and generally stopping at South Hill on the way there and back. He wrote and paid for the printing of several books of a highly individual flavour, a history of the Southwell Grammar School, and a history of Southwell Minster. An account of the Mills on the Doverbeck

appeared month by month in the Parish magazine. Mr. James had the excerpts bound up for his friends.

To get a large volume through the press in the First World War was a slow business. On 16 December 1918 Frank wrote to Canon Foster that 'the Press is now sending proofs at the rate of 16 pages a day (having kept my MS just a year). They have now printed all the copy I sent them. I think that 1919 may really see the whole thing out . . . p. 400 is happily the end.' The volume at last appeared late in 1920 and Frank's copies came to Lunds Farm in January 1921. In the same letter Frank answered questions about the identification of places for the Canon's index of *Danelaw Charters* and the edition of Domesday Book, pointing out that the Torp of Domesday Book f. 355 cannot, as the Canon suggested,

> be Laythorpe and that [he himself] has always regarded it as Ewerby Thorpe. I don't know any other case in which DB uses the full form of a place-name on one folio and its terminal alone on another. Did the Gant fee [he enquires] include any part of Laythorpe?

Such statements remind the reader that Frank has already himself done a translation and introduction to the Lincolnshire Domesday Book, although he never mentions it at this time or makes any claim to a knowledge on his own part of early Lincolnshire topography. Nevertheless, it was very clear to me when I was struggling with identifying the places and people who appear in the earliest Lincoln eyre rolls that his own knowledge of the county was intimate and accurate. He jettisoned his own work on the Lincoln Domesday Book without a murmur even to me when he realized how much the Canon wanted to do it himself. The end result was, of course, a far better edition, for the knowledge that both scholars had gathered is included therein.

The edition of the Lincolnshire Domesday appeared at last in 1924 and included also the Lindsey Survey. For many years the incumbent of a remote rectory in north Lincolnshire had been working away in isolation on the problems of the Domesday assessment of the county and tracing the connection between the entries in Domesday Book and those in the Lindsey Survey. The Revd. Thomas Longley of Conisholme was a Cambridge mathematician, who seems to have revelled in the problems of adding up twelve carucate units. When Canon Foster came to know him he very soon brought him over to South Hill to lunch and tea on 21 April 1921, and made up his mind to secure for

him, if possible, a canonry in the cathedral church of Lincoln. An undated fragment of part of a letter of Frank's about Longley's work was probably written to help Canon Foster's successful campaign:

> After much thought it seems to me that Longley's work is quite first class. I think it is the best piece of assessment reconstruction that anyone has carried through. I was nervous at first about hypothetical reconstructions, but unnecessarily. I don't care so much about his restorations of the hundreds, nor, I think, does he. But it is a full work for a life time to have brought DB into line with the Lindsey Survey and to have demonstrated in detail what the assessment of the county was and how it was distributed. It brings no general reputation (was not the bishop ignorant of his existence?) and there isn't a halfpenny in it, neither of these points I imagine would worry Longley. But it is work which really does shove things on, and it will never have to be done again. It is amusing to think that there isn't an Oxford College that would give Longley a Fellowship of £200 a year.

This luncheon party is commemorated among my snapshots by a photograph of Foster, Frank, and Longley and also one of Foster, me, and Longley standing on the front steps of South Hill.

The Canon ran a very well organized research office. He had made comprehensive catalogues of the documents at Lincoln, and trained a number of village girls who could copy English documents and had learned to do shorthand and typewriting. His senior clerk, Miss Florence Thurlby, was extremely competent and had taught the younger ones. The Parish Room, which opened off the study was furnished as an office and three girls worked in it. Another worked in a hut in the garden. Florence had learned to play the organ and performed in church on Sundays. The Canon offered to index Frank's *Danelaw Charters* for him and before the end of 1916 it was agreed that I should go to Timberland in the Christmas vacation and help to copy the Lincoln charters. Mrs. Foster had little interest in her husband's work, but was concerned to be a good housewife provided she could find good servants. Since she found this difficult the Canon's hospitable instincts were often thwarted. I stayed on this occasion about a fortnight, copied a great many charters, and learned a great deal about dilapidations, for the Canon also ran the Lincolnshire Diocesan Trust and Board of Finance. I assisted in visiting in the parish and shared the Friday pilgrimage to Lincoln. Neither our lives nor the Canon's were ever the same again. Nor was the Lincoln Record Society.

Another letter of Frank's, dated at South Hill on 15 April 1923, shows that Canon Longley was getting discouraged by the length of time it was taking to get the first volume of *The Lincolnshire Domesday and Lindsey Survey* into print:

My Dear Foster, Longley's letter is pathetic and I agree with you that it will be best not to lay stress on the facts of the case, and that he had better appear as the joint editor. This of course won't do justice to you and the mass of work you have done. On the other hand, it looks as if Longley—after many years absorption in Domesday—was beginning to fear that he would never see a book in print with his name in the editor's place and was correspondingly anxious to appear on the title page of DB vol. i. I can understand his point of view, the misunderstanding is not in any way your fault—it is entirely on Longley's side. But in view of his age and very many infirmities I should be inclined to put his name along with yours on the title page and cover.

I am very glad you like the Introduction and think it may serve the purpose for which I wrote. With advancing years I am coming to be more interested in persons than in terminology—hence I wrote more freely towards the end. The *Testa* arrived safely. Many thanks for it. On second thoughts, I think you ought to make it plain that the section on lost vills is your work. Not merely because you should have the credit, but because the question of responsibility is involved. Outside Lincolnshire this is the part of the book which will be most used, and those who use it will want to know whom they are following. Now they will follow you unhesitatingly, but unless the responsibility is definitely yours the authority of the section will lose some of its weight. This is, I think, a serious point. Yours very sincerely.

The section on lost vills was a second instalment of an appendix of 'Lost Vills and Other Forgotten Places' which had appeared at the end of the Introduction to the *Feet of Fines of Henry III.* It was as well that Canon Longley's name was put on the title-page and cover of the book, for he died before the volume which was to contain his tables could be printed, and in the end it never was printed at all.

Danelaw Charters, the Introduction of which makes easy and pleasant reading, gives a full account of villages and towns and the methods of landholding in the Danelaw derived from a large collection of original charters. It was the last big piece of work which Frank had begun before we were married. I only saw at close hand the last stages of its preparation. Of the transcripts of Gilbertine Charters, which came out in 1922, I saw every stage except the actual copying of the charters, which

had been done in odd times at the Public Record Office after Frank had left Llandovery for Reading in 1908. I even did some of the translations, but the Index was again done at Timberland under Canon Foster's eye if not by his hand. In later years Frank said that he ought not to have used late medieval transcripts as the foundation of his arguments about the history of the development of the medieval private charter. But since the copies were good, generally slavishly accurate, and it was high time that someone made the effort to place the development of the private grant of land in the perspective of history, there was no reason against using them in this way. No one had attempted to do anything of the kind since Madox had published his *Formulare Anglicanum* in 1702. The Gilbertine charters were particularly suitable for the attempt because they were a homogeneous collection from a part of the country which Frank knew well, which was in the forefront of advance and where freedom was in the air. The Introduction was sent off to Canon Foster on 1 February 1922. In the same year Frank had also produced an article on 'St Benet of Holme and the Norman Conquest' and a review of J. Armitage Robinson's *Somerset Historical Essays*, both for the *English Historical Review*.

Frank's close alliance with Canon Foster and the Lincoln Record Society led them both to consider the possibility of tapping other sources for new historical material than those of the National Collections and the great ecclesiastical repositories. In founding the Lincoln Record Society in 1910, the Canon had been careful to ensure that the Society could claim to print not only Lincolnshire record material, but also the records of the vast ancient diocese of Lincoln, which stretched from the Thames to the Humber, by naming the Society after both county and diocese. This, of course, included Northamptonshire, from which Miss Joan Wake, a friend from youth of Mrs. Stephen Ward, had, with her, attended the lectures on palaeography and diplomatic given by Dr. Hubert Hall at the London School of Economics. They had both been excited by the learning and enthusiasm of Dr. Hall, and Miss Wake in 1915 began what ultimately developed into a search for family records in her native county of 'squires and spires'. She met Frank at the Wards' hospitable house and what had begun as an interesting amateur activity soon changed into serious historical research. When the war ended Miss Wake came to stay in Wokingham in order to further her studies under Frank's direct eye. She was amazed at the wealth of material she found in the great houses

of Northamptonshire and in the manor-houses up and down the county. It covered all periods from the little Latin writs of the Norman age to workhouse records of the nineteenth century. While she was investigating the muniment rooms of Northamptonshire county families, Canon Foster was pursuing a parallel course in Lincolnshire. I remember accompanying him on a number of occasions with a certain trepidation to the front door of some noble house where he suspected documents might lie unnoticed and forgotten. He opened proceedings with the utmost urbanity by asking the footman or butler for permission to see the lady of the house. If he won through this first barrier he expounded to her that he was interested in 'the old days' and inquired if any records of those ancient times remained in the custody of the family to the present day. The Canon had the advantage of being a Lincolnshire man by birth, but Miss Wake had the greater advantage of belonging to one of the oldest families in her county. Her forbears had believed that they were descended from Hereward the Wake, although this fantasy concealed a much more noble ancestry from a Norman baronial family of pre-Conquest days.

Both Miss Wake and Canon Foster in close consultation with Frank were moving towards the idea of founding local record offices where the owners of family or official papers could deposit them for safe keeping so that they could be available for the use of historians. This movement was by no means confined to Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. In Bedfordshire Dr. Fowler had already embarked on a similar task beginning as a county councillor. At the Public Record Office, Hilary (later Sir Hilary) Jenkinson supported the movement to the utmost of his power and planned the National Register of Archives. This is not the place to trace the history of local Record Offices from their small beginnings in the energetic work of individuals to their position today, when a new profession of county archivists has grown up, new training schools for them have appeared in several universities, and new training facilities in old libraries, such as Bodley. Frank was no archivist and his interest in the movement was purely that of the user, not the keeper of records, but he was extremely influential in the early days in helping on the work and guiding the activities of his friends in Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

In 1920 he and Canon Foster both spoke at meetings arranged by Miss Wake at Northampton and at Peterborough, the capital towns of the county and the soke of Peterborough in

support of the foundation of the Northamptonshire Record Society. At Northampton Mr. Manfield proved almost as strong a supporter of the Society as was Mr. Mellows at Peterborough. Surprised that an impecunious scholar was prepared to work without payment, Mr. Manfield sent Frank a dozen of port and a brace of pheasants. Frank was delighted at the number of twelfth-century charters which appeared and agreed to produce a facsimile volume. Its preparation took some time as the charters themselves were only gradually brought together as Miss Wake visited the houses in which they lay and examined the individual collections. The volume appeared in 1930 under the title *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*. Sir Emery Walker took charge of making the facsimiles; Ruddock of Lincoln printed the volume in which Frank wrote an Introduction to the whole series and individual notes on each charter. The first volume of the Northamptonshire Record Society was a volume of Quarter Session Records edited by Miss Wake, to which S. A. Peyton, Frank's former pupil, by this time our university librarian, provided an Introduction. Mr. Manfield had intended to make the volume a personal gift from himself to the members of the society. Unhappily he did not live to see it, but his executors honoured his promise. The second volume was the work of Mr. Mellows. In the third volume Miss Wake collected papers relating to 'musters, beacons, and subsidies' in the county between the years 1588 and 1623, and Frank's friend, Dr. J. E. Morris, the main authority at that time on medieval military history, wrote the Introduction, tracing the history of the militia from medieval times. This volume was followed by the facsimile volume of charters and after that came two more volumes suggested by Frank who found their editors. As a member of the Council and Vice President of the Society Frank retained his interest in it to the end of his life, although his many other preoccupations did not allow time for so close a watch over its affairs as he had kept in its early years, neither was it necessary, for around Miss Wake were grouped many Northamptonshire supporters. When Frank died Miss Wake wrote in *Northamptonshire Past and Present*:

> It was at his instigation and with his powerful help that the Northamptonshire Record Society was formed forty-seven years ago. As a founder member and Vice-President, he has been its friend and counsellor ever since, and . . . has been with us at all the great moments in our history.

Mention should perhaps be made of another Society which Frank and Canon Foster were together connected with restoring to activity. The war and the rising price of printing thereafter had left the Pipe Roll Society in a state of suspended animation. No volume had been published since 1914. The text of the last roll of Henry II's reign had been printed off, but Round had not been equal to writing the Introduction. Some members had gone on paying their subscriptions. Others had paid a few before stopping. No attempt had been made to find additional members. The reverse process was followed. We had acquired the early printed volumes but were advised not to join the Society. Canon Foster and Frank were both in urgent need of the rolls, partly in order to help them date undated twelfth- and early thirteenth-century charters. After a Lincoln Record Society meeting in the early twenties we discussed the matter in the café on High Bridge, Lincoln, and the Canon said: 'Something must be done.' He decided as a first step to consult Mr. Stamp, then Hon. Treasurer of the Society and Secretary of the Public Record Office. Mr. Stamp had been indexing the volume which had been so long in the press and agreed to remain Hon. Treasurer if the Society could be started up and to see that volume through the press. There was a general move among historians interested in either genealogy, financial administration, or legal development. The Pipe Rolls are a record series without which any historian who is interested in the early Middle Ages is hampered in his work. My husband provided a new editor prepared to do the work and promised to see that she did it properly by checking the first roll himself. Miss Salisbury, who had copied many rolls professionally for the Society, undertook to copy the Surrey account each year; Dr. Fowler copied those of Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, Essex and Hertfordshire; Mr. M. W. Hughes those of Oxfordshire and Berkshire; Professor L. V. D. Owen the Lincolnshire account from photostats lent by Canon Foster. Dr. Farrer presented the Society with copies of the Hampshire and Wiltshire account made by Mr. Brownbill. The Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte, Mr. Stamp, and Mr. Charles Johnson did everything they could think of to make the task of an inexperienced editor easy. Mr. Johnson wrote a most valuable Introduction to the first volume of the new series, but without the guidance of my husband I doubt if the new secretary and editor would ever have faced the work.

We kept on at South Hill until the end of the summer vacation 1926. By then we were finding it hard to transport enough books between Reading and Southwell for the two of us. We should probably have had to give up South Hill before then if it had not been for University College, Nottingham. L. V. D. Owen, Frank's Llandovery pupil, was Professor there and helped us by lending books from the college library. He had been a prisoner in Germany during the greater part of the war and his health had been ruined by inadequate food so that he was never able to do the work that was expected of him in youth. Mary Ann took herself away from South Hill in 1921 for she could not get on with her niece and had an ungovernable temper. Lucy did not mind being alone in term time and willingly looked after us by herself when we went down for a week-end during the Reading term. For the vacation I generally managed to find a housemaid to take down. South Hill was so close to Frank's heart that I wanted to keep it on as long as I could. We always said we would come back when we retired, but we always feared that we should not. Frank would never have been happy living in what Lady Firth, herself the daughter of a country vicarage, contemptuously and very unfairly described as a house in a back street. The acquisition of a car in 1921 made it possible to go on longer at Lunds Farm, which was only four miles from the College, but in wet or winter weather that seemed a lot. In foggy weather, when Frank had to be at college after tea, either for his working men's class, for a faculty, or senate, it was impossible. Our first car was a three-wheeler Coventry Premier, open and very chilly, which we kept a very short time. It was not reliable and we could not stack much luggage in it. We treated it rather badly, for the dicky seat was made to carry Stephen Ward's 6 feet 2 inches for many long, hard, drives about the country. In 1922 we acquired a real car, a Bean two-seater with a dicky seat in which two could sit. That was a considerable improvement. In the same year we made a change in our household arrangements. Mr. and Mrs. Butler, who had looked after us at Woodley since we were married, agreed to come to South Hill to look after us there. She was a highly trained cook and had completely taken us in hand at Woodley. Mr. James at South Muskham Prebend wanted a housekeeper who could make sponge-cake and Lucy was ready to go to him. We could not get a gardener at South Hill and Butler was a well-trained gardener, who did not mind going daily down the hill to Southwell to collect the paper and undertook without

complaint the daily trimming of lamps in a country house with no artificial light. The arrangement worked well and the years at South Hill with the Butlers were very happy ones.

In 1924 and 1925 life began to be very full. The first volume of the English Place-Name Society appeared in 1924 and in it Frank wrote two chapters, 'The English Element in English Place-Names' and 'Personal Names in Place-Names'. Both were based on the collections we had been making through the years. The Director of the Society had no intention of losing members by allowing publication to get behind, so that the material for volume 2 was at once taken in hand; for this volume Frank wrote the historical Introduction. The time was also coming round for the production of volumes of essays in honour of the great scholars of Frank's youth. He was delighted to set out his own opinion about an Anglo-Saxon problem in a volume presented to Professor Tout in 1925; 'The South-western Element in the Old English Chronicle' was a subject he had long turned over in his mind. All his life he retained his interest in 'Wessex beyond Selwood' and lectured on it when he was asked to be President for a year of the Somerset Archaeological Society in 1959. Unfortunately he did not write out the lecture. Before Frank wrote the article in the Tout volume no one had challenged, or apparently thought of challenging, Plummer's suggestion that the 'annals which led up to the full development of historical writing under Alfred' were kept at Winchester. The fact that in the last years of the Old English state Winchester had become the largest town south of the Thames is no evidence for its importance in earlier times. The many references to people and events which concern the south-west of England, the few references to Winchester, or the Bishops of Winchester suggested to Frank that it may well be possible that the early annals were written by or for a lay noble of the south-western shires.

We had many friends who came to South Hill for brief holidays in the summer vacations. S. A. Peyton came every year for a week and was driven about all over Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. Both he and Frank wanted to be taken to see railway tunnels and main line crossings of the Great North road. Professor and Mrs. Tout came once for a fortnight because Tout wanted to see north Lincolnshire before he died. Frank and he seemed not too uncomfortable in the dicky for day-long drives, while Mrs. Tout and I occupied the front seats, for I was the only driver. We took them to Timberland

and Tout was stunned by the phenomenon of cartulary after cartulary, the property of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral, brought from the safe in the hall and put on his knees, and piles of original charters displayed for his pleasure. Miss Joan Wake came, anxious to see Frank's open-field strips at Eakring and the open fields of Laxton. Professor Powicke came and my housekeeper was much distressed by his apparent, but quite unreal air of fragility. Dr. Fowler from Aspley Guise came as did Sir Herbert Thompson, who occupied a suite of rooms there. We week-ended from Reading fairly often at Aspley Guise. When the English Place-Name Society went into action, Allen Mawer was a frequent guest both at Lunds Farm and South Hill, but he came for work, not pleasure. Place-names brought Miss Anna Paues to South Hill, too, renewing an acquaintance begun when Frank was an undergraduate at Oxford and his mother was staying at the Randolph at the same time as Miss Paues. Professor and Mrs. Ekwall came frequently in the years between the wars to be driven about to look at English villages and rivers. Frank (now Sir Francis) Hill, then an undergraduate at Cambridge, came, and of course Canon Foster was a frequent guest. All these activities meant that music gradually dropped into the background. Frank still played his favourite Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin, Schumann, and Schubert, but gave up the effort to compose himself. At Reading, where we had no piano in the house, until he became deeply involved in writing *Anglo-Saxon England*, he played in the Great Hall at the University on Wednesday and Sunday afternoons. Mr. Knapman, the Registrar, and S. A. Peyton generally came and for a time we acquired other performers. Peyton's brother-in-law was as devoted to Bach as was Frank and played his organ music. The sister of one of our Reading students played the fiddle and came on Wednesdays, but as the years went by and Knapman fell ill and died and work increased these enjoyments were gradually dropped.

Frank's publications in 1926 were prepared for the press in the previous year and illustrate both how he yearned to get on with the Anglo-Saxons and still felt a sense of responsibility towards Domesday Book and the *V.C.H.* His work on the Domesday Survey of Huntingdonshire appeared in that year for the *V.C.H.* was now saved from extinction by the action of Lord Hambledon, although dependent on the courage of Dr. Page and his faith that so good a cause would not fail for lack of support. Professor Ekwall of Lund and Professor Zachrisson of

Uppsala, both members of the first Council of the English Place-Name Society, jointly invited Frank and me to visit their universities in 1925 to enable Frank to lecture on some aspects of his work on the English Danelaw. We enjoyed a holiday of between five and six weeks in Scandinavia, acquiring with the help of Professor Ekwall a number of important books, mainly in Lund. The outcome of Frank's lectures was the printing in the *Bulletin* of the Royal Society of Lund in 1926 of a small pamphlet entitled 'The Free Peasantry of the Northern Danelaw', founded on his collections of charters granted by men and women of native descent in the shires drawn by the West-Saxon kings round the armies of the Five Boroughs.[1] For us the Scandinavian visit was an adventure, as we generally spent our vacations at South Hill working. Finally, the lecture which he delivered in January 1926 to the Royal Historical Society on 'The Foundations of English History' shows how firmly, though unobtrusively, he had been through all these years laying the foundations of his own knowledge of the literary sources on which his work on Anglo-Saxon England would be based.

During the years since 1919 the College had come appreciably nearer acquiring university status. In 1919 men began to return from the wars and all our Halls of residence, now six as against four before the war, were full. The local authorities gave us increased grants, not large ones, for they were not rich authorities like the northern cities and counties on which the universities of those parts depended. Moreover, a grant from a local authority carried with it the obligation to receive reduced fees from the students under their jurisdiction. The first post-war application for university status made by Childs in 1920 was rejected in August 1921 on the ground that the income of the College could not carry the responsibilities of a University, but we were encouraged to try again. Our constant benefactors, the Palmer family, had promised in 1913 to provide us with a library building and Lady Wantage, another constant benefactor, had, when she was told this by Dr. Childs, at once promised to bequeath to us the library which her father had built up at Overstone Hall in Northamptonshire. Lord Overstone had bought the library of over 7,000 volumes which had belonged to the economist J. R. McCullock and continued himself to add to it. Our own library at the College was growing owing to the selective buying of our librarian, S. A. Peyton, who was not only a hard-working, but a lucky librarian. He seemed

[1] To appear again as a separate volume by the Clarendon Press.

to carry the library catalogue in his head and was constantly able to buy something which filled a gap. We often drove him to Blackwell's and Parker's in Oxford or to Thorpe's in Guildford and seldom returned from such excursions without additions both to the College library and our own. On one never-to-be-forgotten Saturday we found the library of W. Farrer at Guildford, recently purchased on Farrer's death by Mr. Thorpe and very moderately priced. When Peyton stayed with us at South Hill we generally had a day in the second-hand book shops in Leicester, where we were equally fortunate. When Lady Wantage died in 1920 the Overstone library was brought to Reading and temporarily housed until the Library should be ready. Our new library was opened at the beginning of the session 1923–4 as a memorial to George William Palmer, who, with his brother, Alfred, had been one of the main supporters of the university movement in Reading. The former library was taken over to become the dining-room of the Senior Common Room.

To one who, like my husband, had watched the College grow from the old days in Valpy Street and had himself matured with the maturing of the institution he rejoiced to serve, all this was intensely exciting. He asked nothing better, nor indeed did I, than to spend our lives at Reading. He was delighted when Childs in 1924 suggested the setting up of a small committee to examine and report on the development of research within the College. Frank was elected Chairman and the report, while affirming the paramount importance of teaching undergraduates, pointed out that 'divorce between teaching and research is undesirable'. The report surveyed the research activities of the College and recommended that a serious effort should be made to improve the library to make it more helpful to those engaged in research. Possibly with a backward glance by the Chairman at his own youthful ambitions, the committee stressed the desirability of helping forward creative work in fine art and music. They recommended the establishment of a Research Board and the provision of a grant-in-aid of research throughout the College and future University. The committee further insisted that in making appointments to professorships and lectureships the importance of research should be stressed. A Research Board was established and a modest grant of £500 was made and my husband was appointed chairman, an office he held until he became Vice-Chancellor in 1946. The Board was given the further responsibility of administering the

endowment fund of £10,000 for research in agriculture which the firm of Huntley and Palmer had set up. The University Grants Committee at this stage made an appropriate gesture with a non-recurrent grant of £15,000 for the improvement of the library. Our next application for the grant of a charter was favourably received and Reading became a University in 1926.

VII. PROFESSOR AT READING UNIVERSITY, 1926–46

To us the year 1926 always seemed one of the turning-points in our lives. We had made up our minds when we returned from Sweden in the autumn of 1925 that we must find a home in Reading, but although we looked at many houses could find nothing which we could contemplate giving up South Hill to live in. The session 1925–6 saw the last of Reading University College and the first of Reading University. My husband rightly felt that we must have a more permanent home, and a more dignified one, than the back half of a dilapidated seventeenth-century farm-house some miles from Reading if he was to play his part fully in the development of the University during the years ahead. Near the end of the summer term in 1926, the Vice-Chancellor one day told Frank that he had the chance of buying 22 acres of grass-land behind St. Patrick's Hall and asked him to come with him to look at it. It was approached by Whitley Park Lane which apparently led nowhere. They found that the lane actually led to a substantial late eighteenth-century house which had stood empty for several years, but was still dignified in decay. It was long since the house had been a gentleman's residence and it needed a great deal of repair and a complete overhaul. What had been its drive led past a large farmyard on the right hand and a farm pond on the left. In the farmyard was a noble barn of church-like structure facing south, typical of the larger sort of Berkshire farm. Behind it, but not on the land the University was to buy, was another barn of the same type. References to an old map of that part of Reading showed that the barns were called Harrison's Barns in the eighteenth century, and Civil War trenches could be traced south of the house. The east side of the farmyard was bordered by a good row of poultry houses and the west by an excellent row of stables and cattle sheds, which ended to the south in a small shed which had been used as a stable for a pony at one time and also as shelter for some sort of trap or dog cart. Next to it was a pathetic cottage, where once the cattleman of the farm may have lived. Next to that there stood on staddles a fine and

typical Berkshire granary, with double wooden walls and corn bins. To the Vice-Chancellor all this hardly seemed worthwhile noticing, for he looked at the site with an eye to clearing it at some remote time for the erection of another university hall of residence. To my husband it looked like our future home if he could persuade the university authorities to agree with him.

Nobody else seemed to want the house and when Frank and I went with Childs and, curiously enough, the late Miss Florence Harmer, who had come down from Manchester to consult Frank on a subject for her future research,[1] we at once fell in love with the house, which we found not unlike South Hill in plan, only slightly more roomy, and rather less well finished. We were always grateful to Alfred Palmer and Childs, who seemed to regard our enthusiasm with kindly, almost paternal, sympathy. There was little enough money to make the necessary repairs and little enough time to make them in, if we were to come to live there for the beginning of the autumn term. Although the Butlers had greatly enjoyed living at South Hill and Butler had got the garden into first-rate order, they were perfectly willing to come back to Reading with us and Stenton and Metcalfe set about finding a tenant for South Hill. By the end of September all was ready. We were enthusiastically welcomed by the old black farm cat who had been the only tenant of the property for at least two years. She became the mother of one of our most notable cats, Pangur, who sat with Frank in the garden as he wrote *Anglo-Saxon England*. We soon found a housemaid to help the Butlers and a sister of Butler's came to deal with 'the rough'. The rest of my husband's life was spent at Whitley Park Farm. As the outside world grew noisier and more restless, it gave us peace, room for our ever-growing library, and quiet to write. It is true that towards the end of his life my husband's thoughts often turned to the home of his youth and the place from which his family sprang. We had kept up our links with Southwell and the Danelaw, but Whitley Park Farm was our much-loved home and to the University of Reading he owed the loyalty of a life-time's work.

Something of our life at Whitley Park Farm should be said. It is never easy to protect the privacy of a house near a growing town. The north was protected by a playing field belonging to Sutton's playing club, which Mr. Leonard Sutton left to the town on his death. On the south a housing estate was develop-

[1] This was the occasion when she decided to undertake her monumental edition of *Anglo-Saxon Writs*.

ing, from where, particularly in the school holidays, large numbers of somewhat ill-conditioned children came to seek occupation for idle hands and minds. It became unwise to leave anything unlocked and both we and our neighbours found it necessary to keep a sharp look-out to protect our sheds from attack. But we had one doughty defender, a large, tough gander to whom we were asked to give a home on our pond as he would otherwise have been left desolate when we bought the ducks with whom he had been brought up. I was delighted to have him as I had kept geese as a girl and knew how interesting they could be as pets. My gander was very happy with his ducks, who greatly admired him. He became devoted to Butler and it was a pleasure to see him leading the procession of ducks to bed at night, following Butler with their food and out to the pond in the morning. As they all grew older they became full of character and watched for opportunities to come in procession into the garden. When the war broke out and we were asked to provide allotments in the field and a shed for tools in the birds' quarters, they stayed out at night, winter and summer alike, and thrived on it. The housing estate protected us from the south from foxes. After Butler left us I took to feeding them myself and the gander developed an affection for women and distrust for men and boys. Even Frank whom he had known as a friend all his life was not safe from a vicious nip if he came with me to feed them. All the tradesmen knew him and feared him. The sight of this large bird with outstretched neck and wide-spread wings flying towards him occasionally forced the postman to take back letters having written on them 'goose loose'. When Frank retired in 1950 our ducks were all dead and the gander was greatly cheered by the University Farm's parting gift of some grey geese to Frank. It is now some years since I went out on 24 April 1955 and found my gander stretched out dead on the pond. We could only comfort ourselves that he had had a happy life of some thirty years' duration.

He had sometimes been an embarrassing pet, when he attacked visitors as determinedly as he did trespassers or when he decided to follow us quietly, but faithfully, when, during the war we walked to the University in the morning. His quiet padding along behind us went on unheard until we reached the main road, when he broke into a full-throated roar at the traffic and began to wave his wings. The only thing to be done was to take him home again. But he was a wonderful protector and raised a great outcry if anyone came near the house, day or night. The

Farm offered me four geese and a gander when he died, but I regretfully declined as I feared that I should not be able to look after so many. We had no other pets but cats, to whom Frank was devoted. He had never cared for dogs and while we had the gander dogs were unnecessary.

The year 1926 was also notable in the annals of our lives because my husband was in that year elected a Fellow of the British Academy, an honour which brought new friendships and the invitation to deliver the Raleigh Lecture. He chose to give it on 'The Danes in England', a subject central to the history of the period where his interests lay. His Domesday studies on his own county of Nottingham, on Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland had started him on the serious study of the Anglo-Saxon period. The Raleigh Lecture gave him the opportunity of setting out the conclusions to which much thought and avid reading, encouraged by Sir Paul Vinogradoff, had led him. His collections of cards containing evidence about men and women who, in the charters and other documents of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were still bearing names of native English or Scandinavian origin were invaluable material for this study, as were the slips which noted place-names derived from personal names of native origin. The Academy Lectures were sometimes at this date delivered in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries. Frank was a lecturer who always automatically got on terms with his audience and even if he had his lecture written out seemed to deliver it extemporarily. He rarely had his lectures written out in full, so that many have been lost or have left only a few notes behind. I have a vivid memory of this lecture. I sat with his old friend Stephen Ward in the front row and we shared the dust Frank in excitement banged out of the black cushion on which lecturers laid their notes.

The year 1927 and the seventieth birthday of R. L. Poole gave Frank the opportunity of writing another satisfying article on an Anglo-Saxon subject which he had been turning over in his mind since Llandovery days, when he noted in his diary 'amused myself with Anglo-Saxon genealogies'. In the article entitled 'Lindsey and its Kings' he showed that, obscure as is the history of Lindsey, it was a kingdom the boundaries of which were clearly marked, ruled by its ancient line of kings until late in the eighth century. The kings of Lindsay could trace their descent from Woden and could still use the title *Rex* to a time when Alcuin is remarking that scarcely anyone

survives who comes of the ancient royal lines of the English peoples. Despite their royal and God-descended line the kings of Lindsey had never been strong enough or rich enough to attract young warriors from neighbouring kingdoms, which alone could make it possible for an Anglo-Saxon king to make his power felt outside his own kingdom. When R. L. Poole acknowledged the receipt of the volume in a gracefully worded printed letter, he added in his own hand, 'I have read your paper twice with special interest. It is most illuminating.'

The invitation to give the Ford Lectures in the University of Oxford came to Frank in 1927 and was momentarily embarrassing. He did not want to give them on an Anglo-Saxon subject for he was not ready to write at length on the Anglo-Saxons. He wanted to deal with individual problems before attacking the period as a whole. He came to the conclusion that he had better for a time turn his back on the Anglo-Saxons and give the Ford Lectures on a twelfth-century subject. He therefore planned a series of lectures on the feudal society of the immediate post-Conquest period, based on Domesday Book and the charters we had steadily been collecting since he returned to Reading from his Welsh school and since I had taken my degree in 1916. In this subject he could count on the help of many friends. Canon Foster could make available to him the great collections at Lincoln as he had already done. It was through the good offices of the Canon that Frank and other scholars interested in family history had come to know of the book prepared under Sir William Dugdale's eyes and known as *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*. Its owner, the thirteenth Earl of Winchilsea, had allowed the Canon to borrow this most valuable collection and it had joined the Cartularies of Lincoln cathedral in the safe at Timberland. In 1927 the fourteenth Earl, on succeeding his father, placed his manuscript collections, including the Book of Seals, in the care of the Northamptonshire Record Office, now firmly established by Miss Wake, for the use of scholars. Mr. (now Sir Charles) Clay's collections for Yorkshire and his knowledge of Yorkshire families were all at Frank's service, as was Mr. Lewis Loyd's vast knowledge of feudal genealogy. Round's death before the lectures were delivered gave Frank the opportunity of assessing the debt which all who are interested in feudal history owe to that irascible, but often generous scholar. Henry II's demand in 1166 from his tenants-in-chief for information about the knights whom they had enfeoffed provided a convenient date for the end of the lec-

tures and also a title for the book founded on them, *The First Century of English Feudalism*.[1]

The Ford Lectures were an attempt, as Frank himself points out in his Preface to the second edition, 'to get behind the abstract conception of feudalism to the actual relations between the king, his barons and their men in the aristocratic society imposed by war on the ancient Old English state'. He wanted to show feudal society, particularly lay feudal society, in action. He deliberately excluded from his discussion the organization of the great ecclesiastical baronies. Much more had been written about them. But inevitably his search for documents which would reveal feudal society to the historian provided him also with much evidence, sometimes unexpected evidence, about other aspects of feudal relationships, notably about the place of the church and its ministers in relation to the king and his ministers. Many bishops were ministers both of church and state. They administered ecclesiastical law, but were also, as royal judges, bound to administer the law of the land. When he was invited to lecture at Cambridge in 1927, he took the opportunity to illustrate some of the varying interests which the vast number of documents put out by the chanceries of English bishops may provide. He called his lecture *Acta Episcoporum*,[2] a title which has since been taken as the usual description of documents issued in the names of English bishops. Since Frank gave this lecture other scholars have taken up the challenge and turned their pupils on to this field of work. A notable early contribution was made by Miss Kathleen Major's *Acta Stephani Langton Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi* in 1950,[3] based on her B. Litt. thesis of 1931, of which Frank had been the examiner. Our close friendship with Miss Major dates from this B.Litt. examination, when we spent the week-end with the Galbraiths and Miss Major came to tea.

The enthusiasm of Sir Paul Vinogradoff had initiated the British Academy series of Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales of which *Danelaw Charters* was vol. v.[4] Before his death in 1925 he had already planned several other volumes which were slowly proceeding in the years which followed. Professor Tout succeeded Sir Paul as Director and

[1] First published 1932, 2nd ed. 1961. Mr. Sisam suggested this title.

[2] Published in the *Cambridge Historical Journal*, vol. iii (1929), pp. 1 ff.

[3] Oxford University Press.

[4] *Documents illustrative of the Social and Economic History of the Danelaw*, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1920.

Frank was one of the four scholars who were added to the committee in over-all charge of the enterprise. When Professor Tout died in October 1929 Frank succeeded him as Director, and in the first introductory note written by him in 1932 to Professor Douglas's volume of *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds* set out the arguments for concentrating on printing monastic cartularies in future volumes of the series. Unfortunately only one more volume, edited by Miss B. A. Lees, *Records of the Templars in England in the Twelfth Century: the Inquest of 1185 with Illustrative Charters and Documents*, appeared before the war (in 1935). This volume was so large that it ate up all the money that could be spared from the then limited finances of the Academy for this series, and my husband's vision of a series of Cartularies faded into a nebulous future.

Frank's long preoccupation with the charters of the early feudal period did not in any way turn the strong undercurrent of his thoughts from the Anglo-Saxons. In any time he had to spare from day-to-day duties and professional preoccupations such as lecturing, teaching, examining, and writing encyclopedia articles, he was slowly and painfully beginning to draft the early chapters of what ultimately became *Anglo-Saxon England*. This meant that an invitation to write an article for a Festschrift volume for an old friend or to give a casual lecture generally produced an article or lecture on the Anglo-Saxon period. In 1933 Professor Tait's Festschrift produced one of his best articles, 'Medeshamstede and its Colonies'. This could only have been written by one who had brooded long and profitably on recalcitrant material. Frank knew very well that it would be useless to rush into writing the history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. He had the patience of the great scholar who was ready to allow his subconscious mind to work on material long collected and stored there. His prodigious memory made this possible. This article is founded on a sifting of the material collected by the twelfth-century monks of Peterborough in their search for the early history of their house among the sad relics left from the devastation of the Danish wars, on careful examination of seventh- and eighth-century charters to determine how much genuine evidence might lie concealed among them, on the grateful acceptance of the archaeological evidence provided by A. W. Clapham, which shows that the remains of the early church at Breedon-on-the-Hill in Leicestershire coincide with the date claimed in the twelfth-century for the settlement of a colony of monks there from Medeshamstede in the

seventh century. Hugh Candidus, the twelfth-century monk of Peterborough responsible for attempting to write of the early history of this house, knew that Medeshamstede was a monastery from which other monastic houses were founded. I remember very clearly Frank's excitement when he noticed the similarity between the long privilege running in the name of Pope Constantine in favour of the monasteries at places which must be Bermondsey and Woking and the privilege issued by Pope John VII for the house of Farfa and preserved in the Register of that house. Bermondsey and Woking were two of the monasteries which Hugh Candidus claimed as colonies from Medeshamstede, the pre-Danish monastery which was the predecessor of his own Peterborough. Stubbs had not ventured to claim authenticity for Constantine's privilege, but the Farfa privilege appeared to Frank to be of 'unimpeachable authenticity' and supported the slightly later document.

When 'Medeshamstede and its Colonies' appeared in the Tait volume, Frank had already signed the contract with the Clarendon Press undertaking to write the Anglo-Saxon volume for the Oxford History which Professor (now Sir George) Clark was planning. He wrote to Frank on 26 September 1929, sending a formal invitation to take part in the enterprise and also a personal letter assuring him that he would make every effort to enable Frank to fit his plans for the volume which he was known to have begun into the new series. Frank was slow to answer for he never liked to be tied down to a time-table, nor were his own plans clearly formed. Sir George's next letter is dated 30 October 1929 and shows great consideration for Frank's susceptibilities and a persuasive tact which was evidently irresistible. He was very willing to allow Frank to begin where he liked and A. L. Poole, who was to write the third volume, was very ready to leave Domesday Book to Frank. Frank's only worry was whether he would be able to compress all he wanted to say into the space the Delegates of the Press felt it possible to allow. Nor were they ready at this time to accept as many footnotes as Frank would have liked to put in. It was a time when there was a strong feeling among reviewers against footnotes. Nevertheless, I should record the generous sympathy of all the officers of the Press to a slow-moving author, the helpful attitude of the Secretary, Mr. Sisam, and the general editor of the series, who may well have feared as the years passed, that Frank would never get the volume finished, but would tire of his seemingly endless task. The last of the

little bundle of letters from Sir George Clark which I possess is dated 5 November 1929 and from its terms it is clear that Frank has agreed to write the volume:

> Thank you very much for your most welcome letter. I have carefully considered everything you say, and am in no doubt at all that a volume such as you suggest, from the starting point of the formed kingdoms to the death of William, would be the best possible thing for the series, in which it would be the second volume.

From this time forward this household revolved round *Anglo-Saxon England*. It was always there awaiting attention. Its plan was under constant discussion. The wording of every paragraph was continually revised. Frank was a perfectionist, who took endless trouble with every part. Occasionally, as in what he wrote about King Alfred, or the end of his account of the Normans, an interior excitement seemed to move his pen so that he produced a passage which was not only history, but literature, and has been so recognized by his readers. I shall never forget going into his room to borrow a book one summer morning in 1939 and finding him walking about and very excited. He gave me the paragraph to read which ends:

> The Normans who entered into the English inheritance were a harsh and violent race. They were the closest of all the western peoples to the barbarian strain in the continental order. They had produced little in art or learning, and nothing in literature, that could be set beside the work of Englishmen. But politically, they were the masters of their world.

The first stage of the long task was finished. We took the copy over to the Clarendon Press on 9 September 1942 and an advance copy of the book reached Whitley Park Farm on 19 October 1943.[1]

Dr. Childs retired from office at Michaelmas 1929, at the age of 60. He was succeeded by Dr. T. F. Sibly, Principal of London University, an experienced university administrator. Professor de Burgh retired in 1934 and was succeeded as Deputy Vice-Chancellor by Frank. With Sibly Frank soon felt in close sympathy, although Sibly felt some annoyance with Frank's unwillingness to admit a telephone to the house. However, when our housekeeper, Mrs. Butler, began to fail in health[2] I

[1] A second edition appeared in 1947 and at the moment a third edition is with the Press.

[2] To our grief she died in 1941. Butler stayed on until some months after his second marriage in 1944.

was able to persuade Frank to agree to having a telephone on condition that he could not hear the bell in his study. Reading was the only University College to acquire a charter in the inter-war years and the only one of the first wave of new universities to aim from the first at making itself a residential institution. If it had not done so it is very doubtful whether it would ever have become a university at all. Reading was a small town in the early years of this century and the country round it was purely agricultural. The local population could certainly not have supported a university. At the same time, it must be recorded that local boys and girls were not forced to reside in Halls in order to read for degrees. The fees were low for local students and by living at home it was possible to be educated very cheaply. Both I and Professor Darlington, now of London University, were each in turn cherished pupils of Frank's as day students residing at home reading for an honours degree in History. In those early days of the university movement all qualified students were welcomed with open arms and very few were turned away. I cannot remember any failures and I can remember many outstanding successes in many departments. My contemporaries and those who came after us were eager to learn. It never occurred to us to want to share in the running of the institution. The College was so small and compact that teachers and students could know each other well. As students we were conscious of privilege. Historians had no doubt of it. Frank was a brilliant teacher and keenly interested in his students.[1] Looking through old diaries I see many notes of having students to meals or going to tea with them, or going on expeditions with them. Post-graduate students were given close and ample supervision.

In some quarters there was a certain uneasiness about the future when we first acquired our charter. Southampton, Exeter, and Nottingham were still University Colleges preparing students for external London degrees and some people felt that schoolmasters and mistresses would prefer to send their pupils where they could take the London examinations. We were soon reassured. We entertained a large company of headmasters and headmistresses in our Halls of residence in the Easter vacation in 1926 and found them ready to be interested. The headmistress of Manchester High School told Frank that

[1] Many students who were here in Frank's early days as professor wrote to me when he died and one who missed the notice of his death wrote, saying all this to me today, 15 July 1968.

she had a vacancy for a History mistress and would like to appoint a pupil of his. We were delighted and the appointment was a success. It is true to say that we never looked back. The sort of degree course we set up in History was very much in the Oxford and London tradition. Frank did not believe in premature research, but in sound learning. He also believed in a sound knowledge of English history. While his Anglo-Saxon history was slowly taking shape he gave a course of lectures on the Anglo-Saxons and took a special period in it every year. He found it very helpful.

In the early thirties it was evident that Canon Foster, who had always worked to the limit of his strength, if not beyond it, was beginning to fail. In 1934 the Pilgrim Trust had given him and the Lincoln Record Society a grant for the conversion of the rooms which he rented for records from the Dean and Chapter at the Exchequer Gate so that they could be made into a proper depository where an archivist could work and where owners of records and solicitors could put documents on temporary or permanent loan for the use of students. We celebrated the grant with a Luncheon Party at the White Hart, presided over by the President, Lord Monson, and addressed by the Master of the Rolls, Lord Hanworth. It was fortunate for the Society that Miss Major was willing to be appointed as archivist and to assist the Canon. When Frank wrote in her support in August 1935 he said:

> It is very pleasant to think of this scheme so long debated, taking practical shape at last. It is an important business, for if all goes well it will set an example which may in time remove the worst of all hindrances to historical investigation. It will give a permanent basis to the work of the L.R.S. The chances against getting someone who can make the scheme effective are really quite considerable and Miss Major is a piece of sheer good luck.

When Canon Foster died suddenly in early November of that year, Miss Major took up the work where he had laid it down. Under her guidance the work has gone from strength to strength. Canon Foster had always intended to leave his fine library for the use of local scholars and had appointed my husband, Mr. (now Sir Francis) Hill, and me as trustees to see that his wishes were carried out. Miss Thurlby was available to carry on the sort of work for which she had been trained. The present Lincolnshire Archives Office in Lincoln Castle under Mrs. Varley, who succeeded Miss Major, is one of the finest in the

kingdom and is the direct successor of the extremely cold and uncomfortable office founded by the Canon in the Exchequer Gate. Canon Foster's own desk and chair from Timberland Vicarage are there and his library makes the office a pleasure to work in. When Lord Monson died in 1942 Frank was elected President of the Society and thereafter, until his death in 1967, the annual meeting of the Society in September became a regular part of our life. The only year when Frank did not preside was 1956 when Southwell celebrated its millenary and he was needed to speak in the Minster. In 1960 he presided over the luncheon with which we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Society and the unveiling of a tablet to the memory of Canon Foster in the south-east transept of the Cathedral.

Frank was invited to give the Creighton Lecture in London University in 1936 and chose to give it on a subject which had long fascinated him, 'The Road System of Medieval England'. For many years he had kept a notebook into which he entered any information he noticed in his reading about English roads. When he planned this lecture he asked me to consult Mr. Stamp, Deputy Keeper of the Public Records, about possible material to be found in the Record Office. Mr. Stamp helped me to look for journeys along English roads which could be timed and dated. We found a surprising number, so that the lecture was assured of success. In the same year Frank was invited to lecture on St. Frideswide by Christ Church, an invitation somewhat embarrassing because, as he said, the only certain thing known about the lady is that nothing certain is known. Nevertheless, he managed to fill out a very entertaining hour's lecture. Two papers were wanted by the Historical Monuments Commission in these years, one on 'Pre-Conquest Westmorland' and the other on 'Pre-Conquest Herefordshire'; about the latter Frank felt that there was not a lot more to say than there was about St. Frideswide.

In 1937 Frank was elected President of the Royal Historical Society, an office normally held for four years. Owing to the war Frank held office for eight years and in consequence had to deliver twice the number of Presidential addresses usually given. All of them were well attended and safely delivered without the interference of bombs, although bombs could sometimes be heard in the distance. Five addresses were on the 'Historical Bearing of Place-Name Studies' and three on other aspects of early English history. Frank's well-furnished mind meant that

this gave him no difficulty. The last one dealt with the writing of 'Early English History 1895–1920' and concluded that 'for fifty years early English history has increased in range and interest with each successive decade of research. The end of this enlargement is not yet'. The part that he had himself played in this enlargement was already a leading one, but he did not touch on it.

Frank wrote the last of his many studies of Domesday Book for the *V.C.H.* in 1939 when he wrote another account of Oxfordshire rather than let the editor print his youthful exercise on that county. When war broke out we were both so busy that we had no time to worry. O. G. S. Crawford came to stay with us early in the war and made me promise to type out another copy of the newly finished *Anglo-Saxon England* in case the unique copy were bombed. The Clarendon Press soon set it up, but printed so few copies that it went out of print at once. As Frank found a number of changes he wished to make, the Press set up a new edition in 1947 and we took the greatest trouble so that the pagination should not be changed. At Reading the later war years were troubled by the knowledge that Sir Franklin Sibly, who like Canon Foster, had always worked too hard, was failing and Frank had to be ready to take his place at Council or Senate at short notice. When on the advice of his doctor Sibly retired in 1946, Frank was invited to follow him as Vice-Chancellor. Sir Allen Mawer had died in 1942 and Frank had taken on his work as Director of the English Place-Name Society. Frank did not want to succeed either Mawer or Sibly and could not cope with the work of both of them. Bruce Dickins agreed to take over the English Place-Name Society and Frank became its President. Reading University could not be so easily handed over. Frank was a first-rate administrator, although he did not, like his predecessor, enjoy that type of work. He was also an extremely good public speaker, whether as the giver of a learned lecture or an after-dinner speech. He also had the sympathy with others and the wisdom and patience which a Vice-Chancellor needs. Moreover, as he was 66, he could not have a longer session as Vice-Chancellor than four years. By statute he would be bound to retire at 70. The fact that he would not be leaving Reading, but would be serving the institution he had served so long was a final argument making for the acceptance of the invitation. At no period of his life would he have accepted such an office in any other place than Reading.

VIII. VICE-CHANCELLOR OF READING UNIVERSITY, 1946–50

Frank's last years of active employment were in complete contrast to those which had gone before. No longer was writing his main occupation. Nor could he work continuously at home. Every day he spent at the University, generally lunching meagrely in Senior Common Room. The vacations were no longer times of blessed surcease from university cares. It became difficult to get any time at all for a holiday. It was a time of loosening purse-strings and Vice-Chancellor and Bursar sat together day after day devising new wage-scales and salary-scales. In 1948 Frank received the honour of knighthood, to his pleasure, as a historian, not as a Vice-Chancellor. Congratulations came from many of his old Llandovery pupils as well as old Reading students. His friends at the University had his portrait painted by William Dring, who painted also a smaller one for me. In the same year he was chosen a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, an office he held until 1965, when he was nearly 85, a good many years after the normal period of tenure. His wide reading, particularly his knowledge of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and his tenacious memory made him a useful member of that body. He was Vice-President during his last few years on it. It gave him pleasure to be able to convince his fellow trustees that coins could often provide excellent portraits of kings and queens of whom there are no other likenesses. He came to know a number of numismatists as friends and was able to be of some use to them by seeing that the British Academy included numismatic periodicals with other learned journals as sharers of the money granted to help with the higher publishing costs of post-war years. It gave him pleasure, too, to help win the support of the Academy for the *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles*, and to become its Chairman and provide in his friend Professor Dorothy Whitelock a member of the committee who could take his place when he could hold it no longer.

One further result of Frank's Vice-Chancellorship in a period when scholars could look for larger non-recurrent grants than any of us could remember before was that Frank himself was able to acquire a share in this bounty for a subject very near his heart, the purchase of coins to add to his own collection, which he gave to the University to form a teaching collection for the History School. As it happened the years which followed were particularly fortunate for those who were interested in collecting

Anglo-Saxon coins. There came on the market many which much interested Frank. The late Mr. Albert Baldwin was extremely helpful in advising him in the purchase, at a moderate price, of a representative Anglo-Saxon collection. Messrs. Spink also purchased the Duke of Argyll's coins and Frank was able to buy from them many silver pennies from a representative number of mints. Frank's duties as Vice-Chancellor, which meant also the spending of time on extra-university affairs, prevented him taking full advantage of the opportunities which arose in connection with the coins, but despite these handicaps his efforts have secured for Reading University some very interesting pieces. He himself found considerable enjoyment in making a catalogue of the coins after his retirement.

The outstanding events of my husband's Vice-Chancellorship of Reading University were the acquisition of Whiteknight's Park in 1946 and Shinfield Grange in 1949. From the time the war ended the number of our students began to increase sharply and it soon became evident that we should not be able to accommodate them all in London Road. In recent years we had made a number of small acquisitions as opportunities arose, but what we wanted was a park big enough for a whole university and Frank was barely in the saddle before the opportunity arose to purchase Whiteknights. He looked back over a lifetime to early days when he often as a boy walked in Whiteknights with de Burgh and Childs and someone nearly always said, wistfully, but without hope, that it would be an ideal site for the future university. In 1946 neither the money for the purchase was available nor were the conditions propitious. Part only of the park was within the borough boundary and part was in the parish of Earley, so that both the Berkshire County Council and the Reading Borough Council were involved as well as the Wokingham Rural District Council. The owners did not want to sell it to the town, although they were prepared to sell it to the University. Both Town and County had scheduled the park as an open space. Frank never lacked courage to attempt a difficult task nor eloquence to carry an audience with him. A meeting of interested parties was held in the Shire Hall on 30 September 1946 at 2.30, at which the University was represented by the Vice-Chancellor, three senior Professors, Dewar, H. A. D. Neville, and O'Donoghue and the Registrar and Bursar. Frank opened proceedings by stating our needs. We needed new land on which to build for teaching and for halls of residence both for local students and those who would be

coming from other parts. Our present site was completely inadequate for the new conditions of the present day. New laboratories would be needed and new departments of study. Student numbers would increase rapidly and by 1956 he expected that there would by about 1,300.[1] He looked to the future in which we should do our utmost to preserve the park-like character of Whiteknights, by scattering the buildings. It would be possible to release the present main university site in London Road and the Wessex Hall site in Redlands Road would be available for the Hospital. The town for its part had been told by the Minister that it could not look for industrial expansion, but that it might expand educationally. It wanted to be assured that the University would allow access to the park such as Oxford and Cambridge allowed. On that Frank reassured them and agreed that the University would collaborate with the planning authority. The Chairman of the County planning authority declared himself in sympathy with the University. The Ministry of Works which held rather over 14 acres of the park stated that the office building now occupied by the Ministry was expected to be temporary and would not affect the long-term proposals of the University. Frank had carried all parties with him and came away tired but jubilant.

The local authorities were persuaded to annul their previous decision to preserve the park as an open space and to join the University in looking to the future when careful planning should have made a site worthy of a great university and good building secured a university worthy of the site. But this was but the beginning of the task and Frank rapidly set about interviewing the University Grants Committee about the purchase price. The Grants Committee could only send him on to H.M. Treasury, where he was interviewed by our present Chancellor, Lord Bridges. An interest-free loan of £100,000 was generously provided by the Treasury, and Lord Bridges made it plain that the lenders did not expect to see their money back. It gave Frank the greatest pleasure that he could secure Mr. Gerald Palmer,[2] grandson of Alfred Palmer, as chairman of a representative Development Committee to choose the architects and work out the building plans. Thus the continuity with our past was secured. There were many episodes on which those who lived through these years look back with amusement. There was

[1] There were actually 1,267, a number which had risen to 1,423 in the following year.

[2] Now President of Council.

the occasion, often quoted by one or other of the senior members, when the committee had planned to go to Cambridge together with the architects to look at various buildings which the architects had designed. As it happened it was a morning of thick fog and as they gathered at the station they said to each other 'the V.-C. certainly won't go today'. The time for the train drew near and he at last arrived saying, 'Are we all here? Come along then.' No chance to get out of the journey was given and to Cambridge they went. In building an institution much preparatory thought must be given and time spent on drains and such necessaries, so that in the few years which remained of his period of office Frank could not hope to see much done. I remember how in his farewell speech at the dinner which our colleagues gave us, Frank said that, as Moses stood supported on the one side by Aaron and on the other by Hur to view the promised land and keep the battle against the Amalekites going, so he could only stand supported on one side by the Registrar and on the other by the Bursar to look in imagination on the University which would in time be built.

An imaginative gesture much appreciated by Frank was initiated by Professor Wolters at the Senate on 17 November 1947. After Frank had left the room, Professor Wolters, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, referred to the outstanding services 'Dr. Stenton had rendered to the University College and to the University over a long period of years during his tenure of office as Professor of Modern History from 1912 to 1947, particularly in his outstanding contribution to the field of Historical scholarship.' He therefore proposed that 'the University should express their recognition of Dr. Stenton's services by conferring upon him the title of Honorary Professor of Medieval History'. On the motion of Professor Hawkins, seconded by Professor Brierley, the following motion was approved unanimously:

> That the council be informed that in the opinion of the Senate, it would be fitting at this time to confer upon Dr. F. M. Stenton the title of Honorary Professor of Medieval History, thereby recognizing the high distinction which marked his tenure of the Chair of Modern History in the University College and the University of Reading from 1912 to 1947.[1]

This decision was confirmed by the Council on 5 December when the President of Council thanked the Senate for their

[1] *Reading University Gazette*, Senate Meeting of 17 November 1947, p. 7.

recommendation and moved the resolution from the Chair.[1] In this way Frank kept his close connection with history and the School of History in the University to the end.

Of my husband's work as Vice-Chancellor I can say little at first hand. To me it seemed largely to mean long discussions with the Registrar or Bursar, committees, meetings, and interviews with individuals, mostly members of staff, occasionally with students. There were meetings in London, too, often reluctantly attended. I know that he felt it incumbent on him to get to know the teaching staff and the senior clerical staff. In the old days he had known many of the senior teaching staff as friends, others he had known mainly as fellow teachers in the University. He had always wanted to get to know the young lecturers in the Letters Faculty and we had tried to entertain modestly in former years, but we were both extremely busy with our own research. My housekeeper, who with her husband had been in our service throughout our married life, was unfortunately considerably older than us both and began to fail in the thirties, which made things difficult. She died in 1941 and proved irreplaceable. When Frank was Vice-Chancellor we were greatly helped by the staff of Senior Common Room, so that we could do some entertaining there with the goodwill of the committee. Frank did not drive a car, so that I was the chauffeur and we could go together to the University where I had my work to do in the History department. Occasionally I was pressed in to help in the Vice-Chancellor's office. I vividly remember one Saturday afternoon when Frank had to interview the University Grants Committee on Monday morning and needed enough typed copies of his statement for each member of the committee to have one before him. Frank, a practised typist of historical works, the Bursar, and I worked hard typing out the copies. The Registrar, a less practised typist, was kept busy looking up points and helping generally, so that we could get the envelopes in the post in good time.

Near the end of Frank's period of office as Vice-Chancellor another occasion which needed rapid decision and action came up one Saturday morning quite unexpectedly. It became known to the Bursar that a property of some 478 acres, called Shinfield Grange, was about to be put on the market. It was an estate lying between Cutbush Lane and the river Lodden and considerably larger than Whiteknights Park itself. The soil is excellent and Frank thought of the house as providing

[1] Ibid., p. 5.

accommodation for post-graduate horticultural research and the grounds as an opportunity both for research and display. He sent an urgent message to the Professor of Horticulture and when he appeared greeted him with 'If we can get Shinfield Grange can you use it?' The unfortunate professor tried to play for time, but Frank would have none of that and demanded an instant agreement. Fortunately the Council 'unanimously approved the action which had been taken on their behalf and congratulated the Vice-Chancellor and Bursar on the expedition with which the negotiations had been carried through',[1] so that we acquired the property and all that Frank foresaw and more has come about.

A professor could always, without any feeling of guilt, regard his subject as his first responsibility after the general well-being of his department, or as Frank would say of his 'School'. Frank disliked giving up control of the History School and missed having at least one post-graduate student to look to. The Librarian, Miss Kirkus, was one of our closest friends, as her predecessor, S. A. Peyton, had been. They had both been members of the History School in their time. Miss Kirkus and her staff were always ready to welcome him in the Library, so that he could allow himself to feel that his influence was extended rather than contracted by his new office. Outside the University he had considerably more to do than in the past. Traditionally the Vice-Chancellor was Chairman of Reading School Council. Frank's period of office there was marked by the provision of a new library for the School. Vice-Chancellors and, indeed Professors also, are expected to give away prizes at local schools, a more onerous task than the schools perhaps always realize. Frank already had much practice in the art and not only locally.

At least two other local bodies of which Frank became President must be mentioned; one was the Berkshire Archaeological Society and the other the Berkshire Association of Parish Councils. The Archaeological Society was an old Society, in a sense perhaps an old-fashioned Society. In the Victorian age nearly every county could boast an Archaeological Society, sometimes called a Field Club. The chief interest was sometimes slanted towards history, sometimes towards the fauna and flora of the area, sometimes towards archaeology. Generally there was also a strong social side to the Society. Its members were amateurs who enjoyed a tea-party after their

[1] Minutes of Council, 20 May 1949.

meeting and generally also enjoyed an annual outing in the summer to some place or places of historical interest. When we lived at South Hill we belonged to the Lincolnshire Society and went every year to the outing which was a two-day affair in those days. At the beginning of the century the Revd. P. H. Ditchfield was the powerful secretary of the Berkshire Society and his mistrust of the young College and all its works had kept Frank from joining the Society in those days. But by the forties the Vicar of Barkham was long dead and a new generation had grown up who looked to the University to provide both lecturers and a meeting-place for lectures. Frank was asked to become President in 1947 and although he was too busy to become a regular attender of lectures he offered to give an annual Presidential address and did so from 1947 to 1960 inclusive. He took immense trouble to find a local topic on which to talk and always found something fresh to say about it. This was a new development, but it was unfortunate that Frank did not, when he initiated the practice, go a step further and write out his lectures for printing in the Society's journal, as Mr. Underhill, the Hon. Secretary, wanted him to. I did not realize at the time how much the members enjoyed his lectures. Frank had an unusual gift of talking to an unlearned but intelligent audience as if he were talking to each one individually and never as though he were talking down to them. Dr. Slade, a former student of ours, who is now President of the Society, tells me that members still talk of Frank's time as President and even say as a natural thing that he made it all seem so exciting. This is what I and my contemporaries felt about his lectures in our youth.

The presidency of the Berkshire Association of Parish Councils mainly involved taking the Chair at the annual summer conference, Frank was annually elected to this office long after he had ceased to be Vice-Chancellor and resigned in 1964. He was pleased to hold this office as he was always mindful of the long history which runs back from the modern parish council to Anglo-Saxon days. In writing me a letter of sympathy on Frank's death, the chairman of the committee where all the work was done said:[1]

> Originally we approached him on account of his eminence in the field of scholarship, and as one of the founders of Berkshire's University, but he wore his erudition so gracefully and evinced such a warmth of

[1] Mr. Peter Warren of Breach House, Cholsey.

sympathy and personal understanding that the sentiment of respect became transformed with that of personal affection. When he spoke to us his thoughts were always individual, perspicacious, deeply understanding and exquisitely expressed, and, what is more, diversified by his enchanting sense of humour. It was not only a great privilege, but a great felicity to meet under his guidance.

Nor do I think that this was exaggeration, for the chairman and committee generally asked me to go too and I remember how that stab of wit, which was apparently always at Frank's service, inevitably surprised me into laughter as it did the rest of the company.

It is not given to all of us to be able to express ourselves so that our hearers at once feel that what we say is right, could not be said better, and is what they would have liked to say themselves. For a Vice-Chancellor no gift could be more valuable. In taking the Chair at the Senate he must be able to guide that body in the way he knows that it must go. In sitting beside the Chairman of Council or Faculty, the Vice-Chancellor must be able to intervene without giving offence if he thinks a word of direction or guidance is necessary. Frank was indeed fortunate in his command of the English language. He never missed a meeting, because, as he said, if you do you always regret it. He was conscious that attendance at meetings was a primary duty. He had good reason to know this, for both Childs and Sibly had each in turn treated him as a listening-post and discussed their vice-cancellarial problems unreservedly with him. It might be said that he had served a long apprenticeship in the work of an administrator. As the secretary of another body[1] which chose Frank as President has written to me:

> Sir Frank was splendid in persevering in the agreed policy: he liked a detailed brief and showed absolute mastery of it in debate . . . I feel it was as an administrator that he helped us most: he got through a mass of work in a short time on committee and insisted on decisions being reached . . . He came to my assistance later on at an even more dangerous crisis . . . just after I had taken over the Presidency [of a different Society]: he came as our Guest of Honour in 1960 and one instantly felt the enormous strength of his personality and prestige. It was a tremendous help.[2]

Frank retired from the Vice-Chancellorship in 1950 at the age of 70 and both his Historical friends and his University

[1] The Historical Association; see also *History*, vol. liii, no. 177, p. 55.

[2] Mr. Philip Whitting, then President of the British Numismatic Society.

friends did their best to show their affection by the warmth of their leave-taking. His old friend, Austin Poole, son of R. L. Poole, to whom Frank owed so much at Oxford, was at that time President of St. John's College and Chairman of the Delegates of the Clarendon Press. He suggested that the Historical world should give him as a 'Festschrift' an edition of *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*. Ever since Canon Foster had first shown it to him Frank had wanted to see it in print and in 1936 Mr. Lewis C. Loyd had agreed to edit it for the Northamptonshire Record Society in whose custody the book had been placed by the fourteenth Earl of Winchilsea in 1927. Six years of war all spent at his desk in the Treasury Solicitor's Office had broken Mr. Loyd's health so that he was unable to do the work. Frank had offered to help and so had I, but when Frank became Vice-Chancellor he could not and the project had lapsed. Moreover, Mr. H. S. Kingsford, who had offered to write the heraldic descriptions of the seals, had died, having done about half the number. When Mr. A. L. Poole revived the suggestion of publishing the book, Mr. (now Sir) Charles Clay offered to describe the rest of the seals and to help by reading the proofs. That left me with the preparation for the press, writing the Introduction, and doing the indexes. The volume would obviously be a very expensive one and time was short. The Clarendon Press produced a time-table for me and agreed that if I kept to the time-table they would bring out the book in time for Frank's birthday. It could only be done with the help of the subscriptions of Frank's friends and a grant from the Northamptonshire Record Society, of which Frank was a Vice-President. It was presented to him at a most enjoyable dinner-party held in the Senior Common Room at Reading and presided over by Austin Poole. The leave-taking by the University was equally warm and Frank never forgot the kindness of the several groups who organized gifts and parties to mark the occasion: the University Employees Club, who gave him an initialed notecase; Lane End Farm, who would have given us a gander and four geese, if I would have taken them; the Students' Union, who entertained us both to dinner in Wantage Hall and presented Frank with an oak bookcase made in the Fine Art department, which now stands in our hall at Whitley Park Farm; and our colleagues and their wives who entertained us to dinner in the Great Hall of the University. An elegant Latin letter of congratulation and compliment was addressed to Frank by the Senate on the occasion of his seventieth birthday

on 17 May. Its concluding sentence ran, 'Cura ut nos ames et nos te amabimus. Vale.' I must myself confess that in reading through the records which we have preserved of the past occasions in our joint lives, that which I find most moving and revealing was written by the professor who was Deputy Vice-Chancellor while Frank was Vice-Chancellor at Reading and had been almost a life-time's colleague at Reading. 'He showed me', he wrote, 'the letter containing the first hint of the possibility', that is, of acquiring Whiteknights, 'and when I had read it I looked at him. I met again the eager eyes of the young creative musician I had known so long ago.'[1]

Frank had held office through four difficult years and when he retired was glad to rest, reading history in his own library until he felt restored and ready to take up work again. One last public performance he undertook on behalf of the University. At the invitation of his successor he cut the first sod for the Faculty of Letters building, the first of all the buildings on the new University site. The speech he made on that occasion, 18 October 1954, was not quickly forgotten. It lingered in the memories of his hearers, for as usual he struck an individual and surprising note: 'Unaccustomed as I am to public digging, as indeed to every other form of physical exercise . . .', the rest of the sentence was drowned in a great shout of laughter from his hearers. His performance in firmly and efficiently turning a large sod belied his denial of efficiency as a digger and looked back to his mother's stern training in his childhood in the heavy clay of Nottinghamshire.

IX. RETIREMENT, 1950–67

The first task which Frank took up in the fifties was the organization of the History of Parliament. He had been consulted by the trustees of the fund raised for the purpose by Colonel Lord Wedgwood as long ago as 1942. Lord Wedgwood's enthusiasm had enabled him to raise among his friends sufficient money to provide two large and indigestible volumes covering the years 1489–1500, which had been met by serious criticism from the historical world. It was to some extent, perhaps, unfair criticism. The faults were there certainly, and to do these two large and costly volumes was an expensive way to avoid them in future. Nevertheless, Frank always felt that the Wedgwood volumes were a pioneer effort in a difficult field and

[1] Professor Wolters in *The Universities Review*, vol. 22, no. 3 (May 1950), pp. 181–2.

should be regarded as teaching future workers both what mistakes they must avoid and at what they should aim. In 1943 Lord Wedgwood died and two only of his research staff remained in employment. About £2,500 of the fund raised remained, which was being used up at about £70 a month. Frank suggested that work might go on slowly during the war under a historian interested in Parliamentary history and advised by a committee of eminent historians interested in the same subject, but he found it impossible to suggest a name. Nor was there enough money to pay a scholar to accept the work. Frank himself became a trustee, but there was little that he could do beyond agreeing to supervise the researchers until they were called up. The most effective thing he could do was to talk to a possible future editorial committee, Professor (now Sir Goronwy) Edwards, Professor (later Sir Lewis) Namier, Professor (now Sir John) Neale, and the late Professor Plucknett, to stimulate them to think about what might be done in more propitious days. When in 1948 the trustees formally consulted Namier he suggested that £100,000 would be needed to provide an effective establishment for the work and that the Institute of Historical Research might provide a home for the History. Frank agreed to prepare a detailed scheme for the History and in 1949 his proposals were agreed in principle and he began negotiations with the Treasury.

In November a formal joint meeting between the trustees and the Chancellor of the Exchequer took place and the latter agreed to put a proposal for a grant before the Prime Minister who would consult the leaders of the two parties in opposition, the Conservatives and the Liberals. Final agreement was reached in January 1951 on a government grant of £15,000 a year for twenty years and the supervision of the History was entrusted to an editorial committee who were to prepare and carry out the plan. Frank suggested Professors Edwards, Namier, Neale, and Plucknett for the committee and was himself asked to become chairman. He therefore resigned his trusteeship and took up the task of chairman. The Institute of Historical Research agreed to provide accommodation.

From that time the History of Parliament became one of Frank's problems, often a tedious one. It needed an exercise of patience, for he had always found it easier to do a job himself rather than watch someone else doing it more slowly than he would have done. Some of the sections into which the committee agreed to divide the History were no trouble. Professor Namier

and his assistants forged ahead like a train and it was obvious that their three volumes would appear in reasonable time. That Sir Lewis died too soon to see the completion of his work was a tragedy, but Mr. John Brooke was able to finish it. The expansion of the universities and colleges and the increase of university salaries drained researchers from the History to better-paid and pensionable work. The committee was fortunate in securing the services of Mr. E. L. C. Mullins as secretary who proved extremely competent. Before he retired from the chairmanship of the editorial board Frank had the pleasure of seeing Sir Lewis's volumes appear. The last meeting of the board at which he presided was held at Whitley Park Farm in the summer of 1965. Travelling to London had become a burden and I was thankful to reflect that he need trust himself in the rush hour no more.

I asked Mr. Mullins to describe my husband's work on the History of Parliament. It took up so much of his last years and I realized that I myself knew very little of it and should like to be able to add something about it. He sent me the following account for which I am extremely grateful. It reminds me of innumerable meetings in the University where Frank's tactics were the same. I print what he writes in full:

> You have asked me to describe Sir Frank as I knew him at meetings of the Editorial Board. The short answer would be that he was on those occasions no different from what he was in his study at Whitley Park Farm. To me, at least, Sir Frank always seemed the same. Time and circumstance had very little influence upon him. His was a single personality, which did not change to suit the occasion, and probably you alone know how strong, how consistent, how thoroughly integrated, and how profound a personality it was.
>
> During the first nine of his 15 years as Chairman of the Board its composition did not change. In its way it was a remarkable group: Edwards, Namier, and Neale, already in 1951 the doyens of English parliamentary history, and Plucknett, equally distinguished as medievalist and editor. All were eminent scholars, richly varied in experience and attainments, and united by their concern for the new History as well as by numerous complementary interests. Their discussions, though purposeful and effective, were conducted in the relaxed after dinner manner of the Senior Common Room, full of wise saws and modern instances, and never unduly solemn for long. This is how Sir Frank liked them to be. His art as chairman was of the sort that conceals art. Unfailingly courteous and boundlessly patient, he preferred agreement to evolve from full consideration of the pros and cons, employing his lively sense of the ridiculous to prevent divergent views from hardening

into irreconcilable attitudes, and always ready, with that quizzical glance of his, to indicate that he regarded a particular argument as unsound or unwise. He had, too, a remarkable capacity for silence, never interrupting others, and waiting until everyone had had his say before himself delivering, slowly and in words most scrupulously exact, a consensus of the views expressed or an authoritative decision acceptable to them all. Similarly, when a letter or report was being drafted in committee and suitable phrases were suggested on all sides, he would intently study his cigarette—no cigarette was ever held more delicately —until he was ready, in his fine renaissance script, to draft in the margin of his agenda paper an unexceptionable expression of precisely what needed to be said.

From his colleagues on the Board Sir Frank received unqualified respect and regard. That he was one of the Founding Fathers of the History and senior to them in experience as well as age, may have contributed to this, but I had the impression that they recognised in Sir Frank a master whose knowledge of their own specialisms was greater than theirs of his, and whose scholarship ranged more freely over topics and centuries than did theirs. To consult him on any problem seemed the sensible thing to do, not merely because he was their Chairman but because he was Stenton and very wise. Scholarship mattered more to him than everything; more even than the need to make a living, and certainly more than administration. He retained the chairmanship of the board for so long because he was unshakably convinced that the History of Parliament was a scholarly enterprise well worth his effort, and to ensure, as far as he was able, that it should be done well.

From university administration and the History of Parliament alike Frank turned in relief to the Anglo-Saxons, their coins, their solemn charters, and their works upon the ground. Professor Wormald invited him to give three lectures on the solemn charter in the department of Palaeography in the University of London. This he did with enjoyment in March 1954. They were published a year later as *The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period*, perhaps an austere title for what were fascinating lectures, as an appreciative audience testified by their faithful attendance and considerable applause. As always Frank's felicitous choice of words held those who heard him and the printed book has been reviewed in terms of the highest praise. Professor Whitelock in the *Modern Language Review* firmly says that:

> This small book . . . has an importance out of all proportion to its size. Hitherto, work on Anglo-Saxon diplomatic has been much scattered, in footnotes, prefaces and articles. No one has contributed so

much of value as Sir Frank Stenton himself in various earlier works, such as *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon* (1913), 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings' (*E.H.R.* xxxiii, 1918), 'Medeshamstede and its Colonies' (*Historical Essays in honour of James Tait*, 1933) 'St Frideswide and her Times' (*Oxoniensia*, i, 1936), while the skilful and authoritative handling of the charter material in his *Anglo-Saxon England* (1943, 2nd ed. 1947) is one of the factors which make it so epoch-making a work. Now, in the present work Sir Frank examines the larger issues of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic, basing his conclusions on a life-time study of the documents.[1]

This is a little book which I myself find it easy to read, and read again. The material with which it deals covers the whole field of Old English history and forms 'an almost continuous series joining the seventh-century kingdom of Kent to the England of William the Conqueror'. It is safe to say that even when the full edition of all the charters for which the author pleads has been produced this little book will still not be superfluous. It will still serve later generations of scholars, both students of Old English history and of the Anglo-Saxon language, as an introduction to one of their most valued sources of evidence.

For many years about this time we regularly stayed for a week at least within reach of Offa's dyke. We used to drive to a point whence we could walk along it and try to follow it in places where the indifference of farmers had gradually worn it down so that the line was not easy to trace with assurance. We used to take with us the reports which Sir Cyril Fox had published of his work on the dyke between 1926 and 1934. I have happy memories of windy and sunny days when we clambered up the hills near the Three Shepherds, and looked down on the ruins of Sir Samuel Romilly's house, a house which we heard a local lady in the hotel say one day had belonged to 'such an unlucky family'. After Frank retired we took the History Honours Class there with us one year, I think 1953. Sometimes we stayed at Oswestry, more often at Presteigne; once at Sedbury Park. When the British Academy determined to reprint Sir Cyril's reports as a book, Frank was delighted to be asked to write a Foreword to it which he did during 1954. The very beautiful book was issued in 1955 and Frank's Foreword greatly pleased Sir Cyril. Frank showed in it, arguing from Felix's *Life of St. Guthlac*, that in the reign of King Cenred between 705 and 709 the Welsh were carrying out a series of devastating raids over Mercia and that King Æthelbald's reign (716–57), when the

[1] The *Modern Language Review*, vol. lii, no. 1, January 1957.

king of the Mercians can claim for himself the title of king not only of the Mercians but of all the southern English, was the time when Wat's dyke, the first of the great Mercian defence works against the Welsh, was made.

Sir Cyril wrote a most appreciative letter to Frank, 22 September 1954:

> I am *delighted* with the Foreword. I read the *Vita* under Chadwick for racial and religious-historical reasons: without understanding. Your comments are a major contribution to A. S. history, and the inclusion in the foreword greatly adds distinction to my book. But I do not want to concentrate in this note of thanks on one item, however important. Your text is of a quality which no other scholar in Britain could provide, a work of intellectual art which rises to an unforgettable climax. I am sending to R.E.M.W. today: You may know that we are producing the best of Offa's coins, one of the Canterbury mint, obverse and reverse on the front and back of the cover. I doubt if this duplication has ever been done before.
>
> Again my grateful thanks.
> Yours sincerely,
> Cyril Fox.

Frank had refused an invitation to America himself and we had never expected to go there, but at Christmas time 1961 I was invited by the American Philosophical Society to give the Jayne Lectures at Philadelphia for 1963. I wanted to refuse it, for I did not think it would be good for him to undertake the journey and I could not leave him alone. He would not let me refuse and nothing would satisfy him, but that we should both go and go we did. We went by sea and found our fellow historians in America most kind and hospitable. We enjoyed visiting in their own homes Americans who had visited us at Whitley Park Farm, notably Mr. and Mrs. Drinker of Philadelphia and Col. and Mrs. Wiener of Washington, who lavishly entertained us there and showed us the city and the countryside. I lectured at the invitation of their President, Mrs. Drinker, to the Colonial Dames of Philadelphia on English women at the time of the settlement of the American colonies. We came home understanding at last the enthusiasm so many of our English friends had shown for American hospitality.

One piece of work which Frank did in his retirement was, like coins, very much a return to the interests of his youth. Dr. Bela Horowitz, the founder of the Phaidon Press, planned and raised the funds to print a sumptuous facsimile edition of the

Bayeux Tapestry and invited Frank to edit the book and write about the historical background to the work. That Professor Wormald would take part in it gave Frank great pleasure and greater still to find that his view of the English origin of the tapestry was also held by him. An advance copy came in the early autumn of 1957. That Dr. Horowitz died in America before the volume came out was a matter of sorrow to all connected with it.

Frank's main intellectual interest through his last years was in building up a collection of coins which could be used to illustrate the whole sweep of English history. He was, of course, primarily interested in Anglo-Saxon coins, which are a main source of information for the period, but the amount of history which he could extract from the coins which he had collected as a boy was surprising.[1] When a little more money meant rarer items and even an occasional gold coin he was delighted. He greatly enjoyed dropping into Messrs. Baldwin for a chat with the late Mr. Albert Baldwin and the purchase of a coin or two after what was often a rather tedious meeting and bringing home the coins to show me after supper. When he was very ill he asked his night nurse for his coins, meaning his coin catalogue which he wished to look at. Mr. Blunt and Mr. Dolley wanted him to do a Sylloge volume of the Reading Saxon coins, but it was too late. It would, however, give him pleasure to realize that such a volume is being done now in his memory. He was pleased to realize that he could still spot a die-duplicate even in his middle eighties. Fortunately neither his sight nor his mind failed him as the end of life drew near.

Mr. Dolley planned a Festschrift for Frank when he reached the age of 80 based on and entitled *Anglo-Saxon Coins*. He had hoped to be able to present it at the British Numismatic Conference in the summer of 1960, but it was not ready. It was published in the following summer and greeted by reviewers with warm praise both of Frank and the book. Dr. Nowell Myres described Frank as having contributed more to Anglo-Saxon studies of every kind than any other living scholar and the book as

> the most important and valuable Festschrift in the Anglo-Saxon period that has appeared in this country for many years. It is true that by

[1] I may perhaps note that his first published work was an account of English copper farthings from the time of Charles II in 1672, which he published in the school magazine when he was in the sixth form.

limiting its subject-matter to problems connected with the coinage, its sponsors have deliberately ignored the wide range of related subjects in which Sir Frank has shown his mastery, and also the claims of his pupils and friends to share in paying tribute to his inspiring leadership.[1]

The coins gave Frank great happiness. He spent days brooding over them, and making a catalogue in his beautiful clear handwriting. It was a pity that he made the catalogue on flimsy paper. I ought to have seen that he used the best. Mr. Christopher Blunt, who, in Frank's retirement had become a friend wrote to me:

> All would agree with you that if one had a second chance at one's life one would make a better job of it. There are certain mistakes one would avoid and certain positive steps one would have taken. But though inevitably one looks back with regret at missed opportunities I believe as one grows older, one is entitled to remember (without conceit) one's achievements. I believe in Frank's case such things as his virtual creation of a new and vital school of Anglo-Saxon studies in England; his writings; his friends; his books—I feel that here under this stimulus he has built a memorial to himself; and the same can be said of the coin collection he put together with so much pleasure and informed interest in the later years of his life.

His last speech in the University was made on 30 October 1964 at a dinner in Senior Common Room given to Sir George Mowbray on his retirement from the office of President of Council. Frank had not been asked to speak and went off to the dinner saying to me, 'Well, thank goodness I haven't got to make a speech tonight at any rate.' Mr. Carpenter, our Bursar, had promised to bring him home and they returned in very jubilant mood, the Bursar announcing, as soon as they entered the house, that Frank had made a wonderful speech. Neither of them seemed able to tell me what he had said, but when I demanded from Frank to be told about it, he said that Lord Bridges had come along the table and asked him to speak so that he could hardly refuse. Pressed further he said, 'Oh I just told them that I had had a wonderful life, doing what I wanted to and being paid for doing it.'

Although he had found it difficult to get the sort of academic post he desired in early life, once he was established at Reading recognition was not long delayed. His single-minded devotion to learning was his most obvious characteristic and election to

[1] *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. xliii, pt i (1963), pp. 153 ff.

the British Academy came early in days when it was generally slow in coming. He was early elected to the council and served on it for nine years until he resigned so that a younger man should take his place. He won recognition also from learned societies in other lands. He was elected a Corresponding Member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in the Institut de France (1947), an Honorary Member of the Royal Flemish Academy for Language and Literature (1949), a Corresponding Member of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (1955). The Universities of Oxford (1936), Leeds (1939), Manchester (1944), Nottingham (1951), Reading (1951) conferred on him an Honorary D.Litt; the University of Cambridge (1947) an Honorary Litt.D.; the University of London an Honorary D.Lit. (1951), the University of Sheffield (1948) an Hon. LL.D. In America he was elected a Fellow of the Mediaeval Academy of America. But more important were his friendships and the many people who loved him.

The longest life is never long enough for all the devoted scholar plans to do. Nor does the young man ever believe that his strength will fail and, as the years pass, he will not have the energy to work as he did in former days. Most scholars must be conscious of the books they have planned but which, as life draws near its end, they realize that they will never write. Frank's collection of personal names, both Old English and Old Scandinavian, will never be made into a book, nor will his collection of personal names compounded in place-names. They have been used in many of his own and other peoples' writings, but on cards they will remain. Similarly the book to be called 'The Unity of England', of which he had set out the chapters in his well-worn notebook and had discussed with Mr. Sisam, will now never be written. Nor will the Reading Cartularies, of which in odd times, between meetings in London, he had copied almost the whole, ever be published by him. The years as Vice-Chancellor have much to answer for. They drained him of energy and although he seemed to recover his old vigour he no longer had the excited sense of urgency which carried him through the earlier years and made him so much fun to work with. To the end he could give sound advice on matters of scholarship and was interested in the work that I and his friends were doing. Moreover, his affection for Reading, which goes back to his own boyhood and Reading's origins and kept him here all his working life, despite offers from other places which might have seemed to some men more attractive, was

such that he never regretted abandoning so much to take his turn at the labours of its Vice-Chancellor.

DORIS M. STENTON

A select Bibliography of Sir Frank Stenton's publications to 1946 will be found on pp. 453–7 of *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, ed. by Lewis C. Loyd and Doris Mary Stenton, Oxford, 1950. A more complete Bibliography is included with his Collected Papers to be published under the title of *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England, being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton.*