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ANDREW SYDENHAM FARRAR GOW

1886-1978

ANDREW SYDENHAM FARRAR GOW was born at 100 Gower Street, London, the house of his mother's parents, on 27 August 1886. His father, James Gow, had been elected to a prize Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1876, had been called to the Bar, and had practised there without great commitment, being as much concerned with writing a book on Greek mathematics. In 1885 he was appointed Headmaster of Nottingham High School. Young Andrew's earlier years were thus spent in Nottingham, where he became a pupil at his father's school, from which he went to School House, Rugby, in 1900. He was far from happy there; it was a handicap not to have been at a boarding preparatory school, he found few congenial friends, and he was bullied by his first form-master. However he enjoyed some good teaching in the Sixth Form, worked hard, won some prizes, and was elected to a major scholarship in Classics at Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1905.

Life at Cambridge was more rewarding than that at school. He made two valued friends in H. St. J. Philby, the future traveller in Arabia, and D. S. Robertson, later to be Regius Professor of Greek. He was one of the founder members of the Marlowe Society, which has become famous for its annual production of an Elizabethan play. Along with Justin Brooke he produced its first performance, *Doctor Faustus*, with Rupert Brooke, whom he had known at Rugby, as Mephistopheles. The Vice-Chancellor of the day was reluctant to give Gow the necessary permission, but public support was extended by half a dozen leading classical dons.

In Part I of the Classical Tripos Gow was placed in the first division of the First Class, but was outshone by some contemporaries who had greater quickness of mind with which to sparkle in examinations and who similarly deprived him of success in the competitions for University Scholarships. He was, however, in 1906 and 1907 awarded the Porson Prize for a translation into Greek iambics, in 1907 a Browne medal for a Latin ode of 25 Alcaic stanzas on the eruption of Vesuvius, in 1908 Browne medals for Greek elegiacs and a Greek epigram,

and in 1909 an honourable mention in the examination for Chancellor's medals. He went on to obtain a distinction in Part II of the Tripos by dint, he later said, of gross overwork, specializing in classical archaeology, a subject in which his interest had been aroused by the lectures of his father's friend, Sir William Ridgeway. The other teacher to whom he ascribed his greatest debt was A. W. Verrall, a man most unlike him but one whose flow of ingenious ideas he found no less stimulating because almost all were false.

Gow competed at the Trinity Fellowship election of 1910 with a dissertation on the character-types of later Greek comedy; it contained a remarkably extensive collection of material, further evidence for the immense capacity for work which his career at Cambridge had displayed. But he was told that his subject was unsuitable, since it allowed little scope for originality. He competed again the next year with a miscellaneous collection of papers and was successful; the material was subsequently published in a series of articles; they included a full treatment of the problem whether masks were used in the theatre of Plautus and Terence, and a definitive examination of the meaning of the word *θυμέλη*, a disputed feature of Greek theatres. The dissertation itself seems not to survive, apart from some pages on the 'mascarade bucolique' of Theocritus vii, so that it is uncertain whether it showed an interest in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, which led to two important articles, one on Hesiod's wagon, the other on the ancient plough.

At this time Gow's one desire was to settle to a life of teaching and scholarship, preferably at Cambridge, but he failed to secure any of four posts for which he applied. Not only were there strong competitors, but it may have been feared that he would frighten and discourage rather than stimulate the average student. In answer to an enquiry from Gilbert Murray, Jane Harrison wrote that he was 'brilliant and sometimes delightful', but 'desperately critical and destructive . . . he depresses the weaker students badly'. When in the summer of 1913 Edward Lyttelton invited him to become a master at Eton, he accepted the invitation with the greatest unwillingness and under strong pressure from his father, who had in 1901 become Headmaster of Westminster. He went to Eton in January 1914 and, although he later came to recognize how much he gained by the eleven years he spent there, his initial experiences were not encouraging. The unique structure of the school was bewildering and he felt that his colleagues, who were

mostly themselves Etonians, were apt to look askance on an outsider. Moreover he was put in charge of a low division composed, to use his own words, 'in about equal parts of new boys and louts who should have been superannuated long before'.

The war of 1914-18 did not cause him to leave Eton. Rejected for military service on account of a heart-murmur, the remains of childhood rheumatic fever, he stayed on, rapidly growing much happier, as he learned how to teach and to maintain discipline, was moved to a higher division, and made many friends among both staff and boys. To mention only a few, they included John Christie, whom he often visited at Glyndebourne, Eric Blair (George Orwell), and the future 28th Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, who became a lifelong friend, closely connected by interest in art and intimate enough to reprove him on occasion. Lord Home of the Hirsel records that he made Greek 'exciting and vivid and with his caustic wit added a lot to the amenity of the life of the elder boys'. Although the caustic wit did not endear him to all its victims, his personality was widely appreciated and his teaching enjoyed by many able boys, who knew that 'not utterly bad' was high praise, and on whom his standard words of condemnation, 'Oh death, boy!', did not inflict a mortal wound.

Nicknamed 'Granny Gow', as much in affection as in mockery, he appeared to be set on a successful career as a schoolmaster, when in 1925 he was invited to return to Trinity as Fellow and Lecturer in Classics, the vacancy being caused by the departure of Ernest Harrison to the University Registry. A decision was difficult. He enjoyed Eton and was about to succeed to a house. What turned the balance was that Trinity offered the prospect of a home for life and of scholarly activity so long as he could pursue it. He knew he was right in accepting, but nightmares betrayed the struggle it cost him. He always retained his affection for the school, often revisited it, and in old age would share reminiscences with those who knew it.

He was immediately appointed to a University Lectureship and in 1929 he became a Tutor at Trinity. A Tutorship had in those days a ten-year term and was no light load. The Tutor was *in loco parentis* to his 'side', a quarter of the College, something more than 150 men. He conducted all correspondence with and about them before their entry, and autocratically chose whom, apart from winners of College emoluments, he should admit to his side and so to the College. When they came into residence, he kept an eye on their progress, was normally

available for two hours every weekday for consultation on all manner of problems, some of which would need further action, and might be called on at any hour to deal with a crisis. With many he would keep in touch after they had gone down. The job was interesting in its variety and unpredictability and rewarding in the opportunities for influencing the growth and gaining the friendship of young men.

Paper-work was not then the burden it has since become and Gow, who was having trouble with his eyes which caused him anxiety because his father had gone blind in his sixties, was the first Trinity Tutor to employ a secretary on a regular basis to help with the business of his pupils. Even so he felt much of the work to be drudgery; at the end of his ten years, when called on because of the war to resume office, he said that it was like setting out again after a long walk; one could have gone further, but having once sat down, did not want to put on one's boots again.

It must be confessed that there were pupils who found him unsympathetic and frightening, a fear or dislike shared by some senior members of the College. 'I have no use for old fools', he once said, 'as you may have observed; but I rather like young ones.' Some of the young may never have realized this liking; the old did not relish his condemnation. He could not stand an affected or aggressive manner, which he saw as conceit. Sincerity was the way to his approval. His liking was by no means restricted to those who were clever, and he regretted the disappearance of men reading for the Ordinary Degree in Agriculture. Many of his tutorial pupils acquired a real affection for him and those with whom he had something in common were made welcome between 10 and 11 in the evening. This ability to win the friendship of young men remained with him even in old age; he could talk genially and amusingly, and there were always some who recognized the warmth of heart that his manner too often concealed.

Among the duties of a Tutor was that of giving his pupils permission to engage in aviation. Alleging that he should know what he was letting them in for, he took flying lessons himself, which he greatly enjoyed, and so acquired experience which was to be useful to him when during the war he was Chairman of the Board which recommended RAF cadets for commissions. He took readily to precise physical activities. He played real tennis, and when opportunity offered engaged in English figure-skating, an art which he had learned as a young man at

Davos and which he exercised at Madingley Hall, near Cambridge, in a foursome that included two first-class performers.

His College teaching was strictly limited to its official length of time and confined to criticism of the pupil's composition in prose or verse; but there was a great deal to be learned and many gratefully recognized how much they had learned. He himself had at Eton practised the art of writing in Latin and he continued to do so with outstanding skill and taste at Trinity. For the University he delivered an annual course of lectures on Theocritus which were, in spite of a certain austerity, well attended by undergraduates of a wide range of ability; they were enlivened by a dry wit and at one point by a sonorous practical demonstration of an Australian 'bull roarer', the modern equivalent of the ancient *rhombos*. Other subjects were Herodotus, Juvenal, and Martial, the two latter treated as illustrating Roman life. Much work was involved in preparing detailed courses, which could be repeated only once, on the text of set books for Part II of the Tripos; they were addressed to those reading for Group A (Literature). Gow was called on to do *Persae*, and *Heroides* i-x. He also held classes in textual criticism, setting papers which included practical work on passages from English as well as classical authors. A brief introduction to Greek Art was very successful and often repeated.

Immediately war broke out in 1939 Gow put in hand a project of composing a series of letters to be sent in stencilled form, at roughly monthly intervals, to those young friends, mainly past tutorial pupils, with whom he wished to keep in touch. Most of the recipients replied, often detailing their experiences; those who remained silent were after a time dropped from the list, which always had about a hundred names. The letters, of which the 64th and last was written in December 1944, were published in 1945 under the title *Letters from Cambridge*. Combining a light touch with much information, they give an evocative picture of Cambridge in wartime, of Gow's own very busy life, and of his varied interests, while they also reveal something of his thoughts, his principles, his appreciation of the beauties of nature, his knowledge of wild life, his likes and dislikes, and his emotions. He records much of what he read for relaxation, surprising both in range and in quantity. The book brought many letters of appreciation, even from complete strangers whom it had captivated.

Soon after his return to Cambridge Gow found himself

involved in a distracting task. Sir William Ridgeway had before his death in 1926 asked Gow and Donald Robertson to be his literary executors, with the intention that they should publish the second volume of his *Early Age of Greece*. They found four long chapters in proof, but still needing a great deal of work: quotations had not been checked and many references were blank and had to be identified. There was a mass of other material which had to be sorted and examined, to no final purpose; it proved to be unusable. This took time, the more so because Ridgeway's interests had wandered away from Greece, and Gow, who had undertaken the lion's share of the work, was relieved to see publication in 1931.

Gow's first book of his own was a memoir and bibliography of Housman, published a few months after his death in 1936. The two men had become Fellows of Trinity in the same year; Gow had recognized the elder man's qualities, regularly attended his lectures, and did something to penetrate his reserve. On his return the old association was resumed; there was reciprocal respect, and there was no one in Cambridge who knew Housman, within the limits he set, better than Gow did. Housman showed his appreciation by securing him election in 1928 to the Family, a select dining club of twelve members. Later he provided by his will that Gow should control access to such unpublished writings on classical subjects as he was not ordered to destroy and should take what books he wished from his library. The memoir barely hints at this relationship and it makes no attempt to solve the mysteries of personality that Housman kept concealed. But within the narrow space of fifty-five pages it brings to life most convincingly and sympathetically the figure of the man as he could be known. The bibliography, an expansion of one privately printed in 1926, is valuable for a 49-page-long index of passages treated in Housman's articles in journals. A minor act of piety was to supervise a new edition of the five volumes of Housman's *Manilius*; only superficial changes were possible.

According to the preface to his edition of Theocritus it was in 1933 that Gow set his hand to that work. He had already published several Theocritean articles and he continued the series up to and, more remarkably, during the war; for that robbed him of much time that he would have given to research. Although the number of classical undergraduates steadily dwindled, so did that of classical dons still in residence, and finally he was teaching all the men from five colleges. He had

also, as has been said, been recalled to a Tutorship, and was given much work by the national service obligations of his pupils. But even more important was the fact that in 1940 he assumed responsibility for Air Raid precautions in the College. This involved the organization of Fire Parties and First Aid Parties from a constantly changing population of undergraduates, taking his turn to sleep in his clothes at the control post, and turning out for frequent alerts caused by the air raids on London. He was also a member of both the Council of the Senate (1940-5) and the General Board (1938-44), each with a weekly meeting during Full Term, committees, and a mass of documents.

In spite of all this work on Theocritus continued. His articles established him as the authority on that poet and brought him election to the British Academy in 1943. He was able to give up his Tutorship in 1942, and in 1946 he resigned his College Lectureship and was appointed a Praelector, an office with no duties but which entitled the holder to a Fellowship. Appointment by the University in 1947 to the Brereton Readership in Classics, on the other hand, did nothing to reduce his obligations. Yet he had already in essentials completed his magnum opus, of which the manuscript went to the Cambridge University Press in May 1947. The book appeared in 1950, a beautiful piece of printing, introduction, text, and translation in one volume and commentary in another.

For information about manuscript readings Gow finally trusted to Gallavotti's edition of 1946 and to the original publications of papyri, supplementing this evidence by referring to photostats of the manuscripts D and K and to his own copies of the 1516 editions of Junta and Callierges, which were derived from a lost manuscript. The text contains few novelties, but represents a considered choice between alternative readings, traditional or conjectural. The translation is modestly said to have 'no higher aim than to show in tolerable English what I understand to be the poet's meaning'. But what he calls tolerable others would describe as elegant, and it has been much praised, not least for the way in which it mirrors the changes in Theocritus' style as he passes from the poetic to the colloquial. In places the version uses an artificial, 'poetic' prose, a mode now somewhat out of fashion, but which he handled well.

Those critics may be right who think that he clings at places to a reading that is false; but he deliberately followed the severe principle that no emendation should be introduced unless he

thought it certainly correct and no words obelized unless they were certainly wrong. There can be a more justified division of opinion over his practice of not admitting conjectures to his apparatus unless accepted in the text. Even though they may be found in the commentary, not all readers of the text will apply themselves simultaneously to the other volume. But there can be no doubt that his scholarship, judgement, and good taste produced a text far superior to any that had gone before and one that deserves to remain the standard unless new evidence appears.

The commentary owes some of its matter, of course, to previous editors, but it is striking how much fuller it is. Greek literature from Homer to Nonnus has been searched for illustrative or explanatory passages; at the same time archaeological evidence is adduced in a measure previously unknown and made more effective by the inclusion of fifteen plates. The many problems of interpretation are never shirked, but soberly discussed, most frequently assigned a firm solution, but left undecided where he believed the evidence inadequate to settle them. Although he doubtless knew from his own feelings that Theocritus at his best was much more than a learned versifier, but an artist with the magical genius of a poet, he did not think that to be the business of his commentary. He was very sparing of praise, following Housman's model. Probably he thought that these were things that had to be felt, not explained. Nor did he think it his business to discuss matters of style and genre; he did little to relate Theocritus to other Alexandrian or earlier authors; he chose not to be a historian of literature. What the commentary sets out to do is to supply all the information that is needed to understand Theocritus' meaning; this involves, among other things, the attempt to determine as closely as possible what is intended by phrase after phrase, word after word; the usage of other authors is compared in support or in contrast. The result is a rich storehouse of learning, to which generous indexes provide a helpful guide.

By-products of the work on Theocritus were an Oxford Classical Text of *Bucolici Graeci* (1952), which replaced that of Wilamowitz, and *The Greek Bucolic Poets* (1953), an introduction and translation. These used the text and translation of his edition of Theocritus, and added the poems of Bion and Moschus, whose epitaph for Bion he described in a letter to Beazley as the crackling of thorns under a very cracked pot.

Theocritus very rapidly sold out and a second edition (dated

1952) appeared in 1953. It contained four pages of addenda and corrigenda, mostly supplied by friends or reviewers. The same year saw his next book, *Nicander, The Poems and Poetical Fragments*, prepared in collaboration with his friend A. F. Scholfield, who had been Librarian at Trinity and was now University Librarian. Nicander, an Alexandrian poet of 'contorted style and fantastic vocabulary', had not been edited for nearly a hundred years and that edition was hard to come by. His two surviving works deal with remedies for snake-bites and for poisons; but the 'victim who turns to Nicander for first-aid would', in Gow's words, 'be in a sorry plight'. The two scholars, although disclaiming any pretence to publish a definitive edition, provided 'an accessible text and first-aid in reading it'. Gow was more free with conjectures than was his habit, introducing 25 of his own into the text. First-aid was given by a tentative translation, the first in English, and fifty pages of exegetical notes. Scholfield was mainly responsible for botany and Gow for zoology, which he learned from books about snakes and spiders.

Nicander out of the way, Gow embarked in 1952 on an edition of Hellenistic epigrams, a field which had engaged his attention while he was working on Theocritus. He reduced its extent by confining himself to those poems in the Greek Anthology which were written after 323 B.C. and had been included or possibly included in Meleager's *Garland* (c. 100 B.C.) together with poems written by authors of the *Garland* but not to be found in the Anthology, which is a late Byzantine compilation. In his edition the whole comprises about 4,000 lines. A necessary preliminary was to decide what poems could be plausibly assigned to the *Garland*, and to check their ascriptions. The *Garland* itself no longer exists, but selections from it were used by Cephalas (early tenth century A.D.) to make his anthology, which gave rise to two versions, the so-called Palatine and Planudean. Gow dealt with these problems in a monograph, *The Greek Anthology; sources and ascriptions*, published in 1958 as a supplementary paper of the Hellenic Society, and again in his introduction. Work on the edition was substantially completed by 1959, but he had excluded Meleager's own poems, misguidedly as he now saw. He feared that his strength might not last long enough to enable him to add that poet's 132 epigrams, and he invited Denys Page to undertake the task. Although the two scholars commented upon one another's work, their contributions, revised as a result of these consultations,

are basically independent. The copy was ready in 1962 and published in 1965 in two handsome volumes that followed the model of *Theocritus*, and were entitled *Hellenistic Epigrams*.

The Hellenistic epigrammatists present many difficulties both of text and of interpretation. Their vocabulary is often recherché and its meaning in doubt. Gow was not afraid to put questions and admit that he could give no certain answer, nor was he hesitant to use the obelus. Yet he introduced a dozen emendations of his own and printed as many more in the apparatus; but most of his conjectures were modestly relegated to the commentary. No one had previously attempted an edition on this scale, neglecting no problem, accumulating parallels, and providing a treasury of information on subjects touched on by the poets. Some of the more important writers had received some attention, but with many he was breaking new ground. The subjects of this book are less interesting than Theocritus, but the commentary on them is as great an achievement as that on the more famous poet, and an invaluable aid to the student of Alexandrian literature.

Although now nearer 80 than 70 years of age, Gow did not become idle. Machon was an Alexandrian versifier of anecdotes about notable or notorious figures, mostly artists or courtesans, a slightly scabrous and still slightly amusing author, from whose work long extracts are cited by Athenaeus. The text presents many problems and the matter often stands in need of illumination. Gow's edition of 1965, which inaugurated the series Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries, showed how well equipped he was to recall to life a forgotten author, who provides an interesting document of social history. The evidence of comedy, both plays and fragments, was fully used, which brings to mind the subject of his first Fellowship dissertation of 1910 and the fact that he had in his library seven editions of Aristophanes earlier than 1600, including the Aldine *editio princeps* of 1498. Several scholars were stimulated by Gow's book to attempt solutions of problems he had left unsolved or uncertain, but it already supplies the reader with almost all he can need.

Reviewers of *Hellenistic Epigrams* often expressed the hope that Gow and Page would continue their work on the poems of the Greek Anthology, a hope fulfilled in 1968 by the appearance of the *Garland of Philip*. This followed the format of the earlier work, except that a translation was included, and once again the two scholars read and criticized one another's

contributions. But this time Gow was primarily responsible only for the 650 lines ascribed to Antipater. There were at least two poets of this name. What could be confidently assigned to Antipater of Sidon had been included in *Hellenistic Epigrams*; the residue, among which the later Antipater of Thessalonica was strongly represented, were printed here; and he, no doubt, had appeared in the anthology made by Philip in the middle of the first century A.D. to comprise authors who had written since Meleager had composed his *Garland*. The contrast between the two editors is patent; Gow is fuller, more informative, and more cautious; but whereas Page gives praise where he can, Gow refrains from aesthetic judgements except for an occasional word of reproof. But as with his earlier work he magnificently achieves his object of giving information on the language of these Antipaters and on every subject they mention.

Nothing has as yet been said of Gow's activities in a field which probably gave him more pleasure than that of Hellenistic poetry. Painting had been practised in his family, by his father and by his mother, Gertrude Sydenham Everett-Green, by both his grandfathers, by his great-uncle Robert Carrick, and by his uncle and namesake Andrew Gow, R.A. He himself never thought of following their example, but he soon became aware of his aesthetic sensibility. In 1912 and 1913 he paid many visits to Germany and Austria to learn the language, but he also spent much time in galleries and began a serious study of art-history, which he continued in annual journeys to Italy between the wars, often in the company of A. F. Scholfield. They would stay in a town and hire a car to visit outlying places where there were paintings to be seen. Thus he acquired an extensive knowledge of the pictorial art preserved in churches and galleries north of Rome. His approach to art was always determined by his early familiarity with that of the classical period in Greece and he had strong opinions about the merits of artists. He had the utmost distaste for Mannerism and for all Baroque. Sir Anthony Blunt, who records this, continues 'equally unfortunately—and much more surprisingly—Gow had a violent distaste for Poussin. "You can hear the works creaking", he used to say, and once added: "What surprises me is not that Poussin drew badly, but that he always drew badly." Degas would not have agreed. In fact—apart from Degas—Gow really only accepted as great artists after, say, 1500, Rembrandt and Velasquez, and, rather grudgingly, Rubens.'

Even before the first war he had joined J. D. Beazley, whom

he had met about 1909 or 1910 and with whom what was to be a lifelong friendship had rapidly ripened, in buying for £20 in Paris a panel representing S. Ansaldo, in which they believed they had recognized a work by the early fourteenth-century Sienese master Simone Martini. It had been overpainted with a sword to convert the saint into Joan of Arc. They sold it about 1915 for £800 to Langton Douglas, who had acquired other panels from the same polyptych. It is now ascribed to the slightly later Sienese Lippo Vanni and is in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Another association with Beazley concerned the collector E. P. Warren; the two stayed together in his house and Gow gave some help in the cataloguing of the great collection of gems; Beazley dedicated his book about them to his friend. They continued to take great interest in one another's work; Gow records that Beazley read *Theocritus* in typescript and by his suggestions improved in particular the 'somewhat amateurish archaeological notes beyond recognition.'

When Gow returned to Trinity in 1925 there was little interest among the Fellows in painting or the history of art, and the same unconcern was widespread in the University. He was unique in attracting a number of young men in whom he detected a leaning to these subjects and from him they learned how to study them. He had acquired a great collection of photographs of paintings, destined to be accepted after his death by the National Gallery; the tiro was set down before some of these and made to consider them. A member of another College, who attended his lectures on *Theocritus*, recalls being invited to a dinner-party and there telling that he had been to the National Gallery and there discovered wonderful artists called Piero della Francesca and Giovanni Bellini. Gow seized the opportunity, invited him to study and discuss the photographs and initiated a lifelong friendship based on their interest in the world of art. The most outstanding of those he influenced was Anthony Blunt, who says that it is to Gow that he owes knowledge of how to study art-history. 'Gow's rooms', he has written, 'were almost the only place where one could enjoy serious conversation about the art of the past and also find the essential reference books . . . it was a severe schooling, because Gow was not tolerant of unconsidered comments or youthful enthusiasms, but it was something from which I, at least, drew immeasurable benefit.' It is significant of the attitude to such things in the College at that time that when Blunt was elected

to a Research Fellowship, the Master in a speech welcoming the newly elected Fellows said that he was the first to be elected for proficiency in art and did not conceal the hope that he would be the last. In such a situation Gow easily obtained a free hand with the College's pictures, reducing with an eye to merit the number of those on display and hanging them to their best advantage.

Gow's very considerable knowledge of Italian, and particularly Renaissance Italian painting, qualified him to become a member of the Fitzwilliam Museum Syndicate in 1934, a position which he held until 1957, when he retired under the age-limit. But as the thirties wore on he became dissatisfied with the opportunities that period offered him; the identification of the work of minor and inferior artists was of little interest. He began to turn his attention to recent French artists. He was soon fascinated by Degas and in 1939 was able to buy a drawing by that artist for £45 and another for £111. He had to think twice about the expense, but the death of his mother in 1942 perhaps brought him some private means. In 1943 he bought a small oil-painting by Forain; the subject is a boy wearing a reddish coat; he was very fond of it and always gave it a place of honour in his rooms. In the same year he acquired a drawing by Matisse and a water-colour by Camille Pissarro. He was already thinking of the Fitzwilliam Museum, which he intended to make his beneficiary. Accordingly the needs of that Museum may have influenced him in some of his purchases and perhaps induced him to see merit in some of the works of artists who, like these two, had previously had no appeal.

Being more interested in line than in colour, he concentrated his attention on drawings and later on prints, as originals became scarcer and higher in price. At his death his collection, almost entirely obtained before 1963, comprised five oil-paintings, sixty drawings, in a few of which water-colour was used, fifteen prints, and six small bronze statues, two by Degas (one, a dancer, had cost him £270 in 1947), two by Rodin, and one by Renoir. Degas was represented by twenty-four works; Rodin and Forain came next, with six apiece. The collection was left to the National Art Collection Fund, of whose executive committee he was a member for some twenty years, with the wish that it should be passed to the Fitzwilliam Museum; its extent was a surprise to many; it was a surprise too that he was able to leave the Museum not only many valuable art books but also more than a quarter of a million pounds to establish a

Gow Fund, of which the prime object was to be the purchase of works of art.

Even during the war the onset of arthritis in both hips had handicapped him as he clambered over the College roofs, and the condition grew steadily worse, although sometimes alleviated by visits to the brine baths of Droitwich and the attentions of a physiotherapist. So long as he could drive his car, he did so. In 1965 he moved from Nevile's Court, where he had to manage three flights of stairs, to a set of rooms in the King's Hostel that is served by a lift. He soon ceased to go to Hall, but for a time he could move, more and more slowly, on level ground, making a weekly visit to the Parlour or crossing Great Court to be taken on a drive by some friend. But even this became impossible and he would get no further than a chair in the sun at the foot of the King Edward Tower, where he would read, and answer the questions of tourists, and sternly discourage attempts to pass under its arch. Finally he was confined to his rooms, unable to walk except in a frame, and very dependent on the ministrations of his friends and of a College porter, James McCrystal, who served him devotedly. As he had not had the rooms redecorated and some of his furniture had grown shabby, his surroundings were surprisingly dingy for a man of his taste. During the last few years of his life he ceased to read Greek literature, although much remained in his memory and the award in 1972 of the Academy's Kenyon Medal brought him great pleasure, which he hardly made the effort to conceal. In 1969 he was reading Swift, Defoe, and Johnson; later Pepys's diary in the edition of Latham and Matthews; in his last years he re-read Shakespeare and also some lighter literature, often concerned with wild life.

In September 1973 he fell in his rooms, not for the first time, and broke his thigh. The surgeon took the opportunity to insert an artificial hip-joint, but this brought no more than a marginal improvement and, finding life in his college rooms increasingly difficult, Gow returned to the Evelyn Nursing Home. He was comfortable and well cared for; his general health was good, his mind still acute, his tongue less sharp. He missed the presence of any art, until David Wynne, the sculptor, whom he had cautiously encouraged at Trinity, brought out the beloved Forain and persuaded the Matron to allow it to be hung. In the autumn of 1977 his strength began to fail and he died on 2 February 1978, at the age of 91.

When he was an infant (so he had been told) the domestics

used to say: 'Poor child, he's not long for this world.' His working life was longer than that of most men and that does something to account for the richness of his varied occupations and achievement. How varied this sketch has done something to show, but it has not insisted on the interest he took in those he counted as friends nor how numerous and diverse they were, not only men but also women, among whom there may be mentioned Mrs Enid Freeman, at whose hospitable house in Wales he spent a summer holiday for many years, and the actress Dorothy Tutin, whose photograph stood latterly on his desk. But at least as important as long life was the ability never to waste time.

F. H. SANDBACH

This memoir has drawn much from an autobiographical sketch written in 1967 for his family and covering his life down to 1925, together with something about his interest in art. I have also had access to many letters preserved in his rooms and to a few in the Beazley archive at the Ashmolean Museum. I have talked to many who knew him, and received valuable letters from others; I should particularly thank Sir Anthony Blunt, Sir Athelstan Caröe, Dr Michael Grant, Mr Bertram Hallward, and Mr John Roper.