



V. H. GALBRAITH

VIVIAN HUNTER GALBRAITH

1889–1976

I

VIVIAN GALBRAITH was born on 15 December 1889, the youngest son in a family of four sons and a daughter. His father David Galbraith, and his mother Eliza Mackintosh, came from Belfast, but in 1889 they were living in Sheffield where David Galbraith was secretary at Hadfield's steelworks. Two years later David Galbraith became the representative of his firm in London, and the family lived there from 1891 till 1906. Very early in this period Vivian formed a lifelong friendship with James Gray, later Professor of Zoology in Cambridge, who will appear on more than one occasion on the following pages. From 1902 to 1906 he went to Highgate School, but in the latter year his father was offered a job in the British Westinghouse Company in Manchester, and the family moved once more. Since it was too late to start at another school, Vivian began to attend T. F. Tout's lectures in the history department of Manchester University when he was only 16, and he was formally enrolled as a student in 1907. The Manchester History School was then at the height of its influence and reputation under the powerful leadership of Tout, assisted by the personally less powerful but intellectually impressive figure of James Tait. These two scholars were to be the main influences in Galbraith's life and work. In addition, F. M. Powicke was an assistant lecturer from 1906 to 1908; although he never exerted the same influence as Tout and Tait, he remained throughout his life an admonitory figure in Galbraith's life, each exasperating but never deserting the other. Without any doubt, this group was the most remarkable combination of historical talent in England at that time, and in due course Galbraith became the main representative of their historical views and teaching.

At the time of their meeting Tout was in his early fifties, and in Galbraith's words 'a PRODIGIOUS personality'. Tout recognized in Galbraith, as he had earlier in Powicke, a potential historian of the highest ability, and he quickly became the main guardian of his career and his chief adviser in every crisis. Beside him, James Tait seems a remote and withdrawn

personality, yet in the formation of his historical interests Galbraith probably owed more to Tait than to Tout. Tait was a man of an integrity which was matched only by his reticence. As an undergraduate, and perhaps earlier, he had quietly and without a word of either despair or joy abandoned the faith of his fathers, and he retained throughout the rest of his life an austere and isolated independence of mind. He could always be relied on to judge correctly about any problem which was brought to him. If the evidence of their correspondence is to be trusted, Galbraith relied on Tait mainly for scholarly advice, and on Tout for moral support. He wrote about both men in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Of Tout he said: 'Tout's highest gifts lay in his personal relations with his pupils . . . he met them on a footing of equality, not less interested in themselves and in their future than in their work.' Of Tait he wrote: 'The key-note of Tait's life was his consuming interest in historical research. . . . Alike in nothing but their common devotion to research, Tout and Tait imparted to their school a new quality of exact scholarship which slowly but surely won for it an influence out of all proportion to its size.' Almost the whole of Galbraith's later career is a commentary on these remarks.

At Manchester he twice attended (probably on the first occasion in his preliminary year) the series of Tout's general lectures on European history, and ten years later in Palestine he wrote that he relied on his recollection of these lectures to give a historical context to nearly everything that he saw. For his Special Subject on Richard II—a subject to which he often recurred in later years—he went to Tait. It is clear that from an early date Tout had picked him out as the outstanding student of his year. But when it came to the final examination in 1910, Ernest Barker, the external examiner, disagreed and selected A. E. Prince (later Professor in Kingston, Ontario) 'as the person of best quality of mind in the year'. Tout defended the claim of Galbraith and prevailed. Barker, slightly aggrieved, wrote to Tout, 'I do agree with you about the eminence of Galbraith (but) ought not Galbraith to appear and have a chance to defend himself against my championship of Prince?' In the event both were given Firsts, but Galbraith was and remained Tout's man. Earlier in the year, no doubt at Tout's instigation, he had been a successful candidate for a scholarship at Balliol, Tout's old college in Oxford, and he went there—like Powicke before him—as Brackenbury scholar in the autumn of 1910.

The next four years brought a mixture of calamity and success which left a deep mark on Galbraith's later career. The Balliol of that time exhibited to the fullest extent the success of the policy, instituted by Jowett, of recruiting young men from the ruling families of England, and scholars from wherever they could be found. Galbraith belonged to the latter class, and his later reminiscences show that (unsure of himself and his scholarship) he felt his insignificance in the midst of this concentration of birth and talent. 'Balliol in those days', Galbraith wrote late in life, 'consisted of a large number of small social cliques which overlapped but never coincided. Looking back today, I think Balliol was very snobbish, but also had more able people than the rest of the University put together.' The worst feature of his new situation was that he was expected to read *Litterae Humaniores*—'Greats'—and for this he was in no way suited, either by preparation or habit of mind. At the end of his first year he wrote to Tout: 'Now that my first year in Oxford is over I feel I should like to write and tell you what sort of a time I have had. I have found Balliol much more agreeable than I had ever expected. The men are older than I imagined, and there are besides quite a lot of post-graduate men in our year who are congenial company. I have had very few dealings with the dons except Mr. Davis who has been extremely kind throughout, and Mr. Lindsay, who is my tutor. I am rather lost in the wilderness doing Greats which is due, I think, chiefly to my own unphilosophical sort of mind, but partly too, I think, to Mr. Lindsay. He has been an awfully good tutor but he is very apt to talk over one's head. He has all the unintelligibility of the philosopher.'

In addition to the uncongenial study of Greats, there was the further problem of a steep decline in the family fortunes. Characteristically the best source of information about this is a letter written by Tout some ten years later recommending Galbraith to an evidently reluctant prospective father-in-law. He wrote of V.H.G.'s father: 'Mr. Galbraith was a Northern Ireland man, rather quiet and retiring but quite nice and very much a gentleman. An engineer by profession but rather given to the business than to the mechanical side of his profession. He came to Manchester somewhere about 1906 to be director of the Castings Department of the British Westinghouse Company. He had a good salary which I think went into four figures. After a few years Westinghouse found they could buy castings cheaper from the Americans and Germans than they could

make them, so in true American spirit they cut their loss, scrapped the department and left him (Galbraith) in the cold.' As a result of this dismissal the family returned to London during Galbraith's first year at Oxford, and in July 1911 Galbraith wrote to Tout: 'My father, mother and sister have all come back to London and we are fairly settled down again. The padre I think was not very glad to return, for his own little business is not very flourishing and cannot absorb his energies sufficiently. I have got a coaching job for the Long Vac. to help matters.' It cannot have been a very cheerful Long Vacation; but, besides coaching, he must have been writing his Stanhope Essay on 'The Abbey of St. Albans 1300 to the Dissolution of the Monasteries'. This won him the Stanhope Prize for 1911 and provided the main success of these rather dismal years.

In the long run the Stanhope Essay had a considerable importance in turning his attention to the historical writings of St. Albans, a subject to which he returned in several of his later publications. But in the immediate future the success was swallowed up in a calamity, which in the academic circumstances of that time assumed quite gigantic proportions—he got a Third Class in Greats in 1913, and it took him several years to recover from this disaster. As late as 1919, when he was a candidate for a fellowship at Oriel College, the Regius Professor C. H. Firth, who was also a Fellow of Oriel, wrote to Tout: 'Galbraith stayed with me for a couple of nights. I found him interesting and liked him. I took him to Oriel and he made a good impression, but the fellows in general have a rooted objection that a man who obtained a Third in Greats is a person of an inferior intellect, and that a First in that school is the main qualification for teaching Modern History. I'm afraid his candidature will not be successful.' So the disaster of his Third in Greats clouded his future for a long time to come.

As a first step to recovery he decided to take a second degree in History. He did this in one year, 'and I only did it at all (he wrote many years later) because in 1913 I had got a Third in Greats. I remember feeling almost suicidal, and such was the worship of "Firsts" at Balliol that no one would have been surprised if I *had* cut my throat. They were black days indeed for me 1913 and 1914.' He worked during this critical year with Andrew Browning (later Professor of History in Glasgow) as his companion, and with A. L. Smith and H. W. C. Davis as his tutors. For Browning as a character, a scholar, and a golfer, he developed an almost reverential respect which remained

with him to the end of his life. As for his tutors, he recalled that 'H. W. C. Davis took me down to Hastings for the Easter Vac. of 1914, and every morning crammed me with a total survey of the whole of English History'. The effort—worth recalling as an illustration of the tutorial system at its zenith—was not wasted, and after the examination he was able to write to Tout on 6 August, 'the viva was more amusing than formidable. They complained of lack of detail in my papers, but showed themselves very ready to be convinced. More than one point from Vinogradoff they shook their heads at, while the Chairman of the Examiners, when I quoted Petit Dutailis, replied with infinite scorn, "I don't read such new-fangled people".' The chairman was C. R. L. Fletcher, who was luxuriating in the success of his *History of England for Boys* written in collaboration with Rudyard Kipling, a very notable work in its own way, but far from new-fangled in its views. Despite Fletcher's 'scorn', Galbraith got his much needed First Class degree, and even before the results appeared, Tout had persuaded the Senate of Manchester University to appoint him to the Langton Fellowship, which was the chief research award in the Arts Faculty, for three years. So his immediate academic future was secured, only to be abruptly interrupted by the unforeseen outbreak of war on 4 August 1914.

Galbraith's letter of 6 August to Tout does not even mention the war. So far as he noticed it, he was against it. But the older dons soon began to feel a morbid anxiety about any young man whose desire to 'do his bit' seemed less than wholehearted. Several of them were worried about Galbraith. He seemed 'unsettled'. On 27 September Davis wrote a long letter to Tout on the subject:

Galbraith is a problem. I hope he will settle down, but he is an excitable creature, and I dare say private worries and public events have upset him this summer. . . . I hope for the good of his soul you will induce him to take up some work which is not self-regarding; looking after University Clubs, or helping a recruiting agency, or doing anything which is not to his immediate profit. At present there is too much Ego in his cosmos, but he is by nature sympathetic enough. He needs to live in an atmosphere of public spirit, and then he will come out of his shell.

Tout did not interfere, and for some months Galbraith explored monastic cartularies and registers in the British Museum and the Public Record Office. He was still acutely conscious of the gaps in his intellectual make-up, and his association with

Andrew Browning during the previous year intensified his self-doubt: 'Looking back, I am reminded powerfully of his commanding intelligence and outlook, which won my lifelong conviction of his amazing precocity when we studied together under A. L. Smith. His outlook and even his literary style were already fully formed then, when I was still trying to find my feet, and to learn not merely what I *thought* about the Past, but how with my *immature* intelligence I could get it down onto paper.' With these self-doubts still unresolved, the war took second place in his thoughts for several months. He kept his hostility to the war largely to himself, but in the course of the Christmas vacation the pressure on him became irresistible. On 8 January 1915 he wrote to Tout, 'I cannot pretend to explain how it has come about, but an increasing uneasiness as to whether I was doing my bit during the last month or two has grown into a determination to join the army in some way or other. I fancy my work (which was very pleasant after the long drudgery) kept me from honestly facing the question in my own mind. I could hardly imagine myself becoming a soldier, but in the Christmas holiday I thought it out and my mind is made up. . . . The few people to whom I have spoken of it seem to find any connection between me and war a huge joke. It is scarcely flattering to me!' To Tait he opened his mind rather more freely, in words which show that Mr Lindsay's teaching had something to answer for: 'I have decided to join the soldiers. This resolution is the result of an inward compulsion against tastes, inclinations, and (almost) private convictions. I have no wish for military glory, and shall look merely ridiculous in a uniform, but have learnt to believe from Aristotle that when everyone puts private feelings before the best common ethos, as it were the common ethos of the cabinet or the Labour party, the state must suffer. As soon as I looked at the question from the point of view of the real state, and not from that of the individual, I was certain I should have to join. I wrote to Powicke, and when he turned recruiting sergeant that settled it!'

The thing was no sooner settled than it was done. On 19 January Galbraith wrote to Tout, 'By great good luck I have got into the Queen's at once, and I am now waiting to be gazetted. Gray [his old friend from childhood] mentioned my name to the colonel—there were vacancies. I had to interview the colonel, and he took me on. As soon as gazetted I am to go to be trained at Windsor where I hope to be billeted with Gray

and to profit by his experience. Meanwhile I mean to drill with the Artists or the Inns of Court in town.'

The story of the next two years in the Army was a tale of the usual succession of unforeseen and inexplicable moves: from Windsor to Tunbridge Wells, from Tunbridge Wells to Chelsea and back, and then to Ramsgate. Galbraith discovered, like many others, that 'training is concerned almost exclusively with square-drill, which they regard as the one essential in the training of troops'. Then in December 1917 his battalion went to Palestine to take part in the final stages of Allenby's campaign. Here he saw his first action, and in March 1918 he reported to Tout:

operations on a minor scale are incessant here, and, as our division has been continuously in the line since I joined it, life has been interesting and energetic. I am bound to say I have found practical war (as *here* conducted) a most fascinating study, and I can scarcely imagine the monasteries interesting me hereafter. For one thing I shall want to know a lot more about the Crusades. . . . I would rather have the *Itinerarium* (of Richard I) here than all Hardy and Meredith. . . . The places I have seen—Ghaza, Beersheba, Hebron, Jerusalem, Jericho, Ludd (not to mention Cairo and Luxor which I saw on leave)—have taxed my 'history' severely, and generally found it wanting. Prince and I (when we met in Cairo) agreed almost in a breath that we had to rely on the recollections of the 'general European' lectures which, you may remember, I was fortunate enough to listen to twice. . . . We could not help remarking that—with Moffatt—we are the sole male survivors of our small circle in Manchester.

Shortly after this letter was written his battalion was shipped back to France to fill some of the gaps made by the German spring offensive. He was in France in July 1918, and in the fighting near Soissons he won the Croix de Guerre and was involved in an incident which might have had a ghastly ending. A survivor recalls that Galbraith, 'leading his company with his accustomed incredible courage against a heavy barrage', called to a sergeant, who was sheltering with his men in a shell-hole, to advance. The sergeant refused and was later court-martialled and sentenced to death for refusing to obey an order in face of the enemy. The sentence was later commuted, not without some unhappy publicity in *John Bull*; but the end of the war soon obliterated the incident in everything but memory. In September Galbraith was wounded, and he was back in England when the war ended.

The end of the war brought only one thought: how to get back to medieval history with the least possible delay. In

December 1918 he was stationed in Oxford, training 'either to be converted into an education officer or sent back to France'. Getting out of the army threatened to be almost as confusing a business as getting into it, but, as before, the confusion was dispelled by personal contacts. On 2 January 1919, Galbraith reported to Tout, 'I had lunch yesterday with Gray's friend in the War Office, and he tells me I can apply for demobilization *immediately* as belonging to Group 43. My procedure is simply to inform the colonel that the University has applied for me, and to quote the army order. Could I trouble you for an official chit stating that the University *has* applied for my demobilization as I hold a University appointment? I can then attach this to my application.' Once more Tout set the wheels turning. On 13 January Galbraith was appointed a Temporary Assistant Lecturer for the remainder of the academic year, and on 16 January his Langton Fellowship was renewed for the remainder of his term of three years—that is until the middle of 1921. On 23 January he reported to Tout, 'I am now a civilian. Last Tuesday the army demobilized and disembodied me at Ripon in the same casual kind of way as I enlisted in 1915.'

II

For the moment all was well; but Galbraith was now 30, and the position at Manchester was no more than a stop-gap. Tout advised speed, and Galbraith undertook 'to try to collect the raw material of a book in the next six months'. He continued to live in London throughout 1919, spending most of his time in the British Museum. His first step was to return to the work that he had been doing in the autumn and winter of 1914. To understand the direction which this work was taking, it is necessary to look back to the letter which H. W. C. Davis had written to Tout in September 1914. Davis is describing the advice he had given to Galbraith about continuing to work 'on the sort of material which he has already worked at in Finals'. He then continues: 'The Bury St. Edmunds material is tolerably voluminous, and has hardly been touched. To write about decadent monasticism would be a waste of time, but I hoped that when he began to read the fourteenth-century documents he would discover that they are useful for secular history.' This abrupt distinction between secular (useful) history, and decadent monastic (useless) history was not the aberration of a moment or of a single man. It expressed a view of history which

even Stubbs, the common master of all of them, had in large measure shared; and there is no sign that Tout dissented from it. It was the central point in David's historical creed that 'history is past politics', and in a broad sense this view was held by the Manchester school. It was also Galbraith's point of departure.

He had already made considerable inroads into the Bury St. Edmunds material before he joined the army. Building on this, he was able to produce three articles, which appeared in the *English Historical Review* in rapid succession in October 1919, July 1920, and January 1922. The first was an edition of some *articuli* in a Bury St. Edmunds cartulary, which were laid before Parliament by two friars in 1371, proposing the disendowment of the monastic orders to meet pressing national needs. The second was an edition of a fine collection of royal charters of the late eleventh and early twelfth century drawn from Winchester cartularies. The third was the text of a Visitation of Westminster Abbey in 1444 from a Bury St. Edmunds register. Galbraith's editions of these documents were business-like, vigorous, and perceptive, and they at once marked him out as one of the most able and active of the younger medievalists. During the years 1919 and 1920 he was full of further plans for work in monastic cartularies and registers, but the main piece of work which emerged was an edition of the Chronicle of St. Mary's, York, to which his attention had been drawn by Robin Flower at the British Museum in 1920. The work on this chronicle was in full swing in 1921, and in June he wrote to Tout: 'The text is progressing steadily. . . . I have at last managed to relate it to the "Brute" Chronicles in French, and have been lucky to find another copy of the same chronicle up to 1307.' It took another six years before the edition appeared with the title by which it has become known to all medievalists — *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333-1381*. Its appearance established Galbraith's reputation as a major scholar. Meanwhile, however, his life had become complicated in a number of ways.

The letter of June 1921 which reported the beginning of substantial progress on this work also provides evidence of two further important steps in his career. In the first place it was written from the Public Record Office which he had joined in February 1921. On the 10th of that month, the Deputy Keeper, Sir Henry Maxwell-Lyte, wrote to Tout giving him the news of Galbraith's appointment, and asking him to release him from Manchester 'as soon as you can do so without great inconvenience

to yourself'. At about the same time R. L. Poole also wrote to Tout expressing his conviction that Galbraith would be an important acquisition to the Office. He was right. In that rather staid and still Victorian institution, his accessibility, his wit, and his power of laying his hand on significant documents became legendary. His free access to the whole range of medieval royal administrative documents gave him a view of government and of the technicalities of administration which he could have gained in no other way. We may compare these years 'at the coal-face', to use a favourite phrase of his, with Maitland's years drawing up conveyances in a lawyer's office. Both men needed physical contact with documents to elicit their most fruitful and imaginative work. Certainly Galbraith always needed a document to excite his interest in a problem. Nearly everything that he wrote began as an attempt to unravel the complexities of a document. His greatest historical talent lay in drawing a lively and convincing picture of a complex world from the dry and unpromising language of clerks attempting to give a precise formulation to legal or administrative acts. It was fortunate for the range of his interests that he had already started work on the *Anonimale Chronicle* before entering the PRO, for this work kept up his interest in medieval historical writing when the public records of government were his daily task. The combination of the study of chronicles and of administrative records stamped all his later work.

The nature of his daily task at the PRO is vividly brought to our attention by the entries in his official journal which has survived. It begins on 12 March 1921, and the record of his first week's work provides a good illustration of the material with which he had to deal:

12th March. Joined the office. Chancery Miscellanea $\frac{29}{5(2)}$ copied.

(*Indentura de rebus liberatis . . . cancellario* Oct. 30 1302).

14th March. Ministers Accounts $\frac{1147}{7+9}$ Lands of Roger Damory.

15th March. Enrolled Accounts Misc. (L.T.R.) 14.15.16. Enrolments of $\frac{1147}{2.9}$

17th March. Lakenheath Court Rolls $\frac{203}{94, 95}$ Farley deeds (system of calendaring used by the Abbey discovered).

18th-19th March. Pipe Roll and Memoranda Roll 49 Henry III (K.R.) compared in detail: Communia: nova oblata: Sheriffs compoti. Mem. rolls of this date still very 'undifferentiated': also 'action to be taken' obviously filled in in court—orally.

The record continues in this seemingly desultory way for several months: if there was a plan, it cannot now be detected. It seems as if he was free to roam over the whole range of Chancery and Exchequer documents in his own way, and he made good use of the opportunity. Occasionally small pieces of detective work came his way. We find him tracing licences for the production of stage plays in the period between about 1590 and 1610, or searching for Chancery warrants for the Deputy Keeper or for references supplied by H. H. E. Craster of the Bodleian. For 6 and 7 May 1921 there is a single entry: 'D.K.'s proofs', and this entry becomes increasingly common as time goes on. The explanation is to be found in a letter of 9 June 1921 to Tout, which gives a good idea of how he spent his days:

Johnson and Crump are both taking great pains with my education. Indeed the Deputy Keeper is now lending a hand himself. At present my whole time is employed in correcting his proofs and I can only say that if he means to hang on until his magnum opus is finished there will hardly be a vacancy for a D.K. here for 10 years to come.

The D.K. was Sir Henry Maxwell Lyte who had become Deputy Keeper in 1886, and was then engaged on his *Notes on the use of the Great Seal of England*, a work of blindingly intricate detail on every aspect of the process of affixing the Great Seal to every type of document down to the seventeenth century. Work in the Office stood still while the officers, whose co-operation was somewhat meagrely acknowledged in his Preface, toiled at checking the multifarious details in the footnotes. Galbraith's rise to favour was the direct result of a brilliant (or, as he maintained, fortuitous) discovery which is recorded in his journal on 3 June 1921:

Jerveys found (1547) and transferred to Privy Seals 883, 15667A—the P.S. to which it had formerly been attached.

The inwardness of this is that the D.K. had lost a letter of John Jerveys petitioning for a change in the terms of his appointment as chief joiner in the Tower of London in 1482. The letter was a key document in illustrating the progress of a petition through the Privy Seal office to the Great Seal, and the loss was a cause of great dismay. Galbraith, browsing (it would seem) among Chancery Warrants, found it misplaced and was able to restore it to its proper home and to the D.P.'s footnotes (see *Great Seal*, pp. 99 n., 232–3 nn., where the domestic crisis is of course not mentioned). Henceforward Galbraith

was the D.K.'s favourite assistant. Unrewarding though it was, working for the great autocrat of the office had its compensations. It saved Galbraith much laborious labour of copying, which would otherwise have fallen to his lot, and it gave him a chance to browse among documents of every department of the royal government. Besides, the unconventional character of the old man made a strong appeal to him.

Indeed, he was singularly happy with his colleagues. The PRO was a repository, not only of documents, but also of characters who became Galbraith's friends for life. Among them, C. G. Crump and Charles Johnson were men of remarkable gifts and learning, and Johnson's name is the one which appears most often in the pages of the journal. It was to Charles Johnson and to H. C. Johnson, who arrived at the office shortly before he left, that Galbraith most often turned for information about the records in later life. He even inflicted his pupils on his old colleagues. I remember, when I was a second-year undergraduate and Galbraith was my tutor, he sent me to see Charles Johnson, who showed me the typescript of the *Regesta Henrici Primi* fifteen years before it was published, and entertained me at his home in Hampstead with a grave courtesy that seemed to belong to an earlier age. In his vast and leisurely learning he was the embodiment of the PRO of those days. Galbraith was never leisurely, and perhaps in the long run he would not have been an ideal keeper of the Public Records; but his years at the PRO had a greater influence on his development as a historian than anything after Manchester. In return, he brought to the PRO a more vivid sense of history than any of the officials whom he found there, and it was in the stacks that he discovered his personality as a historian.

III

A new note is struck in the journal in the entry for 21 April 1921:

- 21 April. Chancery Warrants filed. Edward I's Roman Itinerary. Marriage leave sanctioned. Fine example of Treasurer's seal found in Chancery Warrants I File 15? 51-3 (another 1596).

Other relevant entries followed in due course:

- 7 June—D. K.'s proofs. Ena in town: flat at Hampstead taken.
23 June—Vacation (Marriage).
28 November (1922) Arrived 10.30. Jane born: half day.

The earliest of these entries is explained in a letter to Tout on 9 June: 'My marriage arrangements are now complete. The date is July 1st, and we are crossing to Cherbourg by the mid-day boat from Southampton with two bicycles and two Jerusalem baskets attached—nothing more. The proposed itinerary will include Mont St. Michel, Vire, Avranches, Domfront and Caen. . . . Yesterday I looked at a small flat in W. Hampstead which we can have for £2-2 a week and unless there is a hitch I think I shall settle on this.' Thus began the marriage on which the whole of his later life was centred. He had met Miss Cole-Baker in 1919 at Manchester, where she was a research student working with A. G. Little on a thesis which was later published as *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216-1360*. The letter of 19 May 1920 in which Tout recommended the bridegroom to an apprehensive father-in-law has already been quoted for the light it throws on Galbraith's family background. It also contains some echoes of the contemporary academic scene which should not be passed over:

I was mystified (Tout writes in his most re-assuring tone) by half-heard telephoning last night, but I have seen Galbraith today and things are made clear. I am much delighted with the news, for rather short acquaintance has given me a particular belief in and regard for your daughter, and Galbraith has long been one of my best pupils. I would send her gladly my heartiest congratulations, but feel that, before I do that formally, I must fulfil my promise to Galbraith to tell you what I know about him and his people. He has, perhaps, already put his financial situation before you, but he seems, in his chivalrous way, to have stressed his immediate impecuniosity rather than his really excellent prospects in a career which doesn't bring wealth to any of its votaries, but will, in his case I feel sure, soon land him in an assured position, a certain reputation in his line, and a modest but not insufficient competence which is all that can be hoped for practitioners of my trade of the academic teaching of history. . . . He is going to do well as a teacher, and I shall be more than surprised if within half a dozen years he didn't get a good professorship somewhere which could hardly bring him less than £800.

It is interesting to see that Tout, the great architect of his career, was already looking beyond the PRO to a university post, to teaching, a professorship, and £800 a year. It was six years before even the first of these prophecies became a reality. The first hint of the change is to be found in the Minute Book of the Governing Body of Balliol College:

16 March 1926. The Master was authorised to ask Mr. Galbraith to

assist with History tuition next year . . . to be paid £50 for his assistance, this to cover (also) his travelling expenses.

Under the same Minute, £10 was to be deducted from the stipend of Mr. K. N. Bell, one of the history tutors of the College. The reason for these canny proceedings was that Bell had become Senior Proctor for the year from March 1926 and a substitute was needed without delay to do his College teaching. Consequently, Galbraith went to Oxford every Tuesday evening for the next three terms and spent the following day tutoring undergraduates. We may leave it to Professor H. A. Cronne—no giddy undergraduate but a mature student who, after graduating at Belfast in 1925, had gone to Balliol to re-read History—to describe the effect of these excursions:

The real turning point for me at Balliol (he writes) came in 1926 when Kenneth Bell became Senior Proctor and a deputy was required to undertake much of his burden of teaching. This was Vivian Galbraith, then an Assistant Keeper of the Public Records, who came up from town once a week and stayed overnight. His figure was slight but full of the most intense vitality. Beneath a mop of unruly prematurely white hair and dark eyebrows were eyes that twinkled with amusement, shone with sheer delight of historical discovery, or flashed with righteous anger, or pinned one like an assagai as he probed one's mind, or expounded a fundamental truth, or denounced some intolerable wrong. The face was pointed and the features good, and they vividly mirrored his varying moods: often quirkish, sometimes sardonic, occasionally choleric; but there always lurked around the corners of his mouth a beguiling and radiant smile, which lit up his whole face. A first tutorial with Galbraith was, for most undergraduates, an astonishing experience for which no other teacher could possibly have prepared them: it was rather like being immersed in a bath of gin-and-tonic, from which one emerged relaxed, refreshed and tremendously stimulated. In fact the next best thing to Galbraith that I ever discovered was the hot brine bath at Droitwich which had something of a similar effect. He began by commending me for having based my essay on sources, but it was soon clear that my handling of them had been less than adequately perceptive. This led Vivian to expound forcefully, in informal and uninhibited terms, the importance and the nature of documentary study. He went on to speak of historians, living and dead, with the most intimate knowledge, of some with deep respect, of some with an impish lack of deference to them or to the existing 'Historical Establishment'. Undergraduates were delighted by his back-stage view of history, but it is to be remembered that back-stage is where the serious work of production goes on. One left a tutorial with him without

having assimilated much precise factual information, but with new and significant insights and a clearer idea of how to pursue one's studies and, above all, with a good dose of Vivian's own highly infectious enthusiasm.

Like many others I can substantiate everything in this account from my own experience four years later. Galbraith's tutorials were in a remarkable degree intoxicating. They always started later than the appointed time and finished much—sometimes very much—later: he was probably unique among tutors in his generosity with his time and I have no doubt that we exploited this generosity. In all his talk he showed his passionate zeal for the study of documents, and his equally passionate contempt for all who wrote history without applying themselves to this discipline. He was proud to combine the alleged mustiness of the PRO with an almost reckless breadth of sweeping generality, coloured with the warm humanity which reflected Tout's contribution to the Manchester School of History. He put everything into his teaching. He often said that he had no private life, and this was true in the sense that he exposed his foibles, his prejudices, and his personal feelings to almost anyone who was young enough or congenial enough to suspend criticism and enter into the spirit of his sincerity. He poured himself out in his talk, whether in his tutorials or in casual encounters with a profusion that must often have debilitated him, but it aroused his hearers to a high pitch of excitement. When I first heard this amazing flow of vivid and picturesque historical discourse, I rushed away to write down what I could remember of it; and I was surprised to discover how often in the cold light of recollection it appeared to be wrong. The immediate reaction to this discovery was disappointment, until I discovered that the greatest gift of a teacher to his pupils is to lay himself open to criticism and dissent. He kept nothing back, he was never pompous, never self-important, and—unless some irritable nerve was touched—he was generous to excess and deeply perceptive of every quality in others except those of formality and a prudent reserve.

A characteristic remark of his was that he had never had any pupils. In saying this he was contrasting himself with his own great teachers, notably Tout and Powicke, who always seemed to see their pupils as agents in a grand scheme of historical research. Galbraith by contrast lived too close to the 'coal-face' to have any broad view of what needed to be done, beyond trying to understand the records of the past. For him, the

pursuit of history was a personal encounter between the individual scholar and the material. Nothing more; nothing less.

In recalling these experiences, however, I anticipate. The year's substitute teaching for K. N. Bell ran out in June 1927 and it was not until the following year that the move was made which would have seemed wildly improbable ten or twelve years earlier: Galbraith returned to Balliol as a tutorial Fellow. The immediate cause of this was his appointment as Reader in Diplomatic at Oxford in succession to R. L. Poole. When this became imminent Balliol offered him a College lectureship to be held jointly with the University readership. After some haggling, this offer was raised to an Official Fellowship at £400 a year. On 8 October 1928 his *PRO* journal closed with the words 'Res. from P.R.O.', and three days later he was admitted to his Fellowship. The family had already moved to Oxford, to the house in Garford Road, which became a centre of warm-hearted and hilarious social life for several generations of undergraduates.

The most important publication of his nine years at Balliol was the edition of the *St. Albans Chronicle* from 1406 to 1420, which was published in 1937. The general importance of this work lay in clearing up the whole bewildering question of the succession of *St. Albans* historians from the death of Matthew Paris in 1259 to the early fifteenth century, and in putting the complicated manuscript tradition of historical writing during this period into an intelligible shape. In Galbraith's scholarly development, it continued the series of studies of medieval chronicles, which he had begun as an undergraduate in his Stanhope essay and resumed in his edition of the *Anonimalle Chronicle*. Work on the new text had started as early as April 1930, when he wrote to Tait announcing his discovery of the 'common original' of the work of the last great medieval chronicler of *St. Albans*, Thomas Walsingham, in Bodley MS 462. Here again we have an example of the discovery of a manuscript providing the impetus for a long and arduous enquiry into the sources and ramifications of a large body of historical material. The work had to be carried on in the midst of his complicated activities as tutor at Balliol and Reader in the University, which he combined with a weekly visit to lecture on palaeography and archives at University College, London. His research had to be fitted into fragments of spare time in the vacations and rare moments of leisure during the term. Not surprisingly it gave him a great deal of trouble to put

his material into shape, and he was not very satisfied with the result. 'The introduction (he wrote in the preface) as finally presented is not, I'm afraid, very satisfactory. In so far as it is intelligible it is due to the patience of Dr. G. R. Galbraith, as I may here call her, who has read it in perhaps as many recensions as the Chronicle itself.' The number of proof corrections led to some acrimonious exchanges with the Secretary of the Oxford University Press, but in the end it was completed. With whatever faults of presentation he might detect, he had cleared up the main questions of authorship and manuscript transmission, and made accessible to historians a new body of material for the years when the long tradition of monastic chronicle writing was petering out.

In 1937 he moved to the Chair of History at Edinburgh in succession to Basil Williams. The change did him good in giving him a new impetus and a flow of new ideas; but perhaps he now found it almost too easy to make an impression. Moving into a society where professors were accorded all the reverence that had once been reserved for the clergy, he took pleasure both in the absurdities of the veneration, and the delight with which his bubble-pricking was greeted by his students. The stories of his picturesque formulation of historical problems are part of the stock of good stories still circulating among those who were in Edinburgh at that time. One of his colleagues writes: 'His popularity with students may be gauged from the fact that a Law examination had to be moved from his vicinity on account of the stamping and laughter which accompanied his lectures.' But it must not be thought that all this clowning meant that he had not given a great deal of thought to the preparation of his lecture. In 1941 he wrote: 'The necessity of keeping all one's energy to lecture on the Outline of British History from Bodicea to Mr. Chamberlain three times a week to 150 raw but good Scots—this, in war-time, just degutted me *daily*.' It was done with a broader brush and a more liberal sprinkling of expletives than had been necessary in his Balliol tutorials, but the effect was the same on the large numbers of students who—to quote the words of one of their number—could write: 'How can I explain what an impact the Professor made on my life. . . . He played on his first year students as on a musical instrument, having us stamping or scuffling at will'; or as another writes, 'He was the first and greatest mind-opener in my little suburban world. A dazzling light seemed to shine in my life after I had listened to him.' The Edinburgh

tone is subtly different from that of Oxford, but the message is always the same.

With the exception of the first two years, the whole of his time in Edinburgh was passed under the conditions of war, and this took up more of his thoughts than he cared to admit. In April 1942 he wrote:

A sort of paralysis lies upon one here when you take up a pen, for every right-minded man has, *au fond*, only one thought—to win this war. Outwardly, all goes on as usual. I even ‘research’ and publish: but the supreme moment in every day (however loath one is to admit it) is the nine o’clock (p.m.) news. . . . The University goes on outwardly as usual. Our numbers each year show little decline in the Arts Faculty—but of course none of the men ever *finishes*. So history teaching consists of an eternal round of elementary, first year work; a little second year Honours, and a few third year (women), and still fewer to the Final. It is just a question of carrying on.

Nevertheless, it was in these years that the two most ambitious projects of his later years took shape. The first was a growing commitment to a new fundamental review of Domesday Book; the second, a plan for a series of editions of medieval texts in Latin with an English translation.

IV

The first of these projects had its origin in a discovery made as long ago as 1930, when he found in Balliol College Library a twelfth-century manuscript containing a transcript of the Domesday Book entries for Herefordshire. The main interest of the volume was that it represented an attempt by some royal clerk in the reign of Henry II to bring up to date the information which had been collected nearly a hundred years earlier. More interesting still, the attempt seemed to be connected with Thomas Brown, the well-known clerk at the Exchequer who had already had a career as an administrator in Sicily. This combination of circumstances suggested the possibility of getting new light on the way in which Domesday Book had actually been used throughout the Middle Ages. While he was in the PRO Galbraith must often have seen the two volumes of the original survey displayed in all their disconcertingly pristine beauty, looking as if they had seldom been looked at until they were displayed in the Museum of the Public Record Office, but they did not stir his imagination into active enquiry. Even in 1934, when he summed up his experience of the PRO in his *Introduction to the use of the Public Records*, he had nothing to

say about Domesday Book except that the edition of 1783 was 'so well done that it has never been superseded'. It was the Balliol manuscript that inspired his Domesday studies; but it was not until he had left Oxford that he started serious work on it. It was in July 1939, on the eve of a tour round the archives of Normandy just before war broke out, that he began transcribing the Balliol manuscript. In November he reported from Edinburgh to Tait, 'I have copied out *everything* in the way of notes and marginalia (in the manuscript). . . . It seems to me full of interest, though I soon get lost in it all.' He began to feel overwhelmed by the mass of genealogical detail which the Balliol manuscript contained, and it was soon broadly agreed that Tait should work out the genealogies, while Galbraith concentrated on the manuscript and the administrative background of its compilation. By the end of 1939 he envisaged a joint article with Tait which would draw attention to the manuscript; and this was to be followed, if (as was not at all clear at that time) there was any future to follow, by a full commentary and edition of the whole manuscript.

Galbraith was still writing to Tait along these lines in November 1940, when he received an unexpected invitation to deliver the Ford Lectures in Oxford in the following summer. It was alarmingly short notice, but on 1 December he wrote to Tait: 'I am going to give the Ford Lectures next Summer Term, Robin Flower having suddenly gone sick. This raises a difficulty viz. what can I scratch up in such a short time to talk about? But beggars can't be choosers, and the money will just about pay me for setting up my brother Dudley who has just been bombed out of hearth and home in Croydon. I shall have to take refuge in "Our Public Records" in some form or other. I have long intended to write the history of their *custody* and have made some collections to this end. So I think I shall manage.'

In fact, the *custody* of the Records was soon forgotten, and the main interest of the Ford Lectures is that they gave Galbraith an incentive to develop his ideas about Domesday Book. We must, therefore, examine the way in which his ideas had been developing under the influence of the Balliol manuscript. The first point to notice is that the purpose of the compilation of Domesday Book had been a mystery to scholars since the beginning of serious work on the subject following the celebration of its eighth centenary in 1886. The celebration prompted J. H. Round's first important contribution to Domesday studies,

his paper on 'Danegeld and the Finance of Domesday', from which all later discussion of the purpose of the Survey flowed. Briefly, the problem was that Domesday Book contained more information on more subjects than could have been necessary for any well-defined purpose; and there were too many gaps in the information on almost any topic to make it satisfactory for any purpose whatsoever, however narrowly defined. In a word, it may all have been a bit of a muddle, and rather useless from the start. But this was not a conclusion that any one, least of all scholars in the hey-day of administrative history, could readily accept. As we shall see, Round had by 1895 developed a very clear view of the purpose of Domesday Book, and had supported this view with a convincing account of the method of its compilation. Galbraith, who had imbibed some morally well justified hostility to Round in the PRO, was not sorry to find that he was wrong, but he only slowly came to realize the extent of his disagreement.

It was the Balliol manuscript which suggested a new approach to the problem. With its help, he hoped to discover the purpose of the survey of 1086 by studying the way in which it had been used throughout the Middle Ages. The Balliol manuscript provided evidence of its use in the reign of Henry II; in the PRO there was another abbreviation of Domesday, written in the Exchequer in the reign of Henry III, which illustrated its use a century later. From these, with the help of the Pipe Rolls, he hoped to build up a picture of the continuing use of Domesday Book, and so to work back to 1086 and solve the problem of its designers' intentions.

It was a good plan, but it came up against a number of difficulties. First of all, if the purpose of Domesday Book itself was obscure, the purpose of the later abbreviations and annotations was scarcely, if at all, less puzzling. There were signs indeed that the annotations and additions to the Herefordshire Domesday had a financial purpose, but the precise nature of this purpose and its practical effect, if any, were not clear. As for the later abbreviation in the PRO, Galbraith wrote that 'it is so clean and unthumbed that we can be sure it was never used'. In the face of these difficulties, this line of enquiry soon began to fade out, though it was still given a place of honour in 1950 when the text of the Balliol manuscript was finally published:

This Balliol manuscript and also the abbreviation of Domesday are surely our best guides to the broader motives behind the Domesday Inquest. The Inquest was after all a strictly financial matter which

was carried through by the Treasury. Its essential purposes are best approached through the later record of the Pipe Rolls, which are in fact a running commentary upon it.

This passage contains the most extreme expression of the point of view which dominated the first phase of Galbraith's Domesday studies. But by the time these words were published he had progressed to a more fruitful line of enquiry. The aim of this next phase of enquiry was to determine the purpose of the survey, not (except as a subordinate aid) from its later use, but chiefly from the method and stages of its composition.

The first step in this new approach was taken in an article on the 'Making of Domesday Book' published in the *English Historical Review* in 1942, and the line of argument adopted in this article occupied him increasingly during the next thirty years. In form, the article was largely a polemic against J. H. Round's view of the stages of compilation and the purpose of Domesday Book. Round had believed that the prime purpose of the Domesday enquiry was to provide a basis for the reassessment of danegeld, the tax which the Norman rulers had inherited from their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. He also believed that he had discovered the way in which Domesday Book had come into existence. It had long been known that Domesday Book was the result of an enquiry conducted by royal commissioners who travelled round England in a number of different circuits. Round's achievement lay in giving the first detailed account of how they worked and how they arranged their material. In his view they travelled round each area, hundred by hundred, took evidence from local juries, and arranged their material on a strictly geographical plan. They then sent the results to Winchester, where royal clerks rearranged the material fief by fief within each county. On this Galbraith made the point, which had already been noticed but not fully appreciated by Round, that since danegeld was assessed by geographical units and not by fiefs, the reorganization of the material into fiefs would have nullified the value of Domesday Book as an instrument for the reassessment of danegeld. This difficulty could be overcome by arguing that the 'feudal' reorganization of the material, and the compilation of Domesday Book as it now exists, had taken place several years after the survey, when the original purpose had either been accomplished or forgotten. This was the line that had been taken by several workers in the field after Round. But Galbraith produced evidence to show that this explanation would not work, because the feudal

reorganization of the material had already taken place *before* the commissioners sent their material to Winchester. The proof of this, he believed, was to be found in a number of documents (notably the 'Exon' Domesday, the *Inquisitio Eliensis*, and the 'Little' Domesday) which had had no clear place in Round's reconstruction of the process of the enquiry. In Galbraith's view these documents could best be understood as intermediate stages in processing the raw material of the enquiry before it was sent to Winchester. From this it would follow that the feudal organization of Domesday Book was not an afterthought but an integral part of the original process of collecting and sorting the material; consequently, the reassessment of danegeld could not have been the main, or even a subsidiary, purpose of the operation.

The greater part of Galbraith's later work was an elaboration of the arguments put forward in the Ford Lectures of 1941 and the article of 1942. It is symptomatic of the great complexity of the problems which were thrown up in the course of this work that another article (in 1950) and three substantial volumes (in 1950, 1961, and 1974) barely sufficed for all that he had to say. The end of the discussion is not yet in sight, and a final judgement on his contribution to the solution of the problems of Domesday Book must be left to the future. What can be said is that he opened up a new view of the complexities of the Domesday problem, and developed new and promising lines of enquiry. Next to Round, no one has done so much to bring together the bewildering array of documents, to chart the gaps and ambiguities in the evidence, and to suggest new ways of looking at the first and most important of our Public Records. He has not left the subject tidier than he found it, but he has brought it to life.

V

The second enterprise which he started in Edinburgh, and which continued to absorb his energies for the rest of his life, was the series of texts, known first as Nelson's *Medieval Classics*, and now as the *Oxford Medieval Texts*. The series came into existence as a result of conversations between Galbraith and H. P. Morrison, the managing director of the famous Edinburgh publishing firm of Thomas Nelson & Sons, in 1941 and 1942. The two men first met in November 1941, and they took to each other at once. They both had a certain expansiveness, and an ability to encourage expansiveness in others, which each found immediately attractive in the other. Galbraith wrote on

12 November 1941: 'I met a very interesting and delightful man called Morrison yesterday, and in conversation he told me he was anxious—very anxious—to extract a book . . . on the English Church to replace the now out of date . . . Wakeman.' At the darkest moment of the war it took a very optimistic, or a very far-sighted, publisher to be 'anxious—very anxious' about such a work. The war had put a stop to most publishing plans, but Morrison was already planning a great expansion in the religious and educational side of Nelson's business. The fruits of this vision began to appear in 1946 with the publication of the *Revised Standard English New Testament* and the continuation of Dom Schmitt's edition of the works of St. Anselm. It took another three years for the first volume of the Medieval Classics to appear, but work had been in hand since 1942. The series was an enterprise which Galbraith made peculiarly his own. It appealed to his belief in original texts as the foundation of all historical study even at the most elementary level, and it also expressed his conviction that even those who knew little of the original language would benefit from the opportunity to check a translation against the author's own words. He threw himself into the project with zest, and the search for texts and editors was never far from his mind during the next thirty years.

At the very beginning Galbraith had sought the editorial help of R. A. B. Mynors, and the names of these two editors appeared on all the volumes published in Galbraith's lifetime. The main responsibility for choosing the texts and editors lay with Galbraith; Mynors was responsible for examining (and in several volumes transforming) the account of the manuscript tradition, the Latin text, and the translation. The early volumes strongly reflected Galbraith's own interests, especially the three volumes edited by his old colleague at the PRO, Charles Johnson. In the course of time, and especially after 1959 when C. N. L. Brooke became one of the general editors, the series became very diversified, but to the end Galbraith's was the hand on the tiller. He fought for the series in every crisis: 'after all' he wrote in 1963, when it seemed to be going on the rocks, 'it was *not* Nelson's idea, nor Morrison's—but *mine*—the child of my old age, and I will not readily let it go'.

Twenty volumes appeared between 1949 and 1963, when Nelson's was taken over by the Thomson organization. The new publisher had none of Morrison's starry-eyed view of the desirability and profitability of religious and educational volumes. For two years no new volumes were commissioned,

though the three which were published included G. D. G. Hall's edition of *Glanvill*, one of the most important volumes in the whole series. Then in 1965, after a long negotiation, the series was taken over by the Oxford University Press, and its future was assured. Once more the flow of volumes began, spreading over an ever-widening area of interest, and culminating (so far as Galbraith's editorship went) with the great edition of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Ordericus Vitalis by Dr Marjorie Chibnall. Although this did not begin to appear until 1969, it had been commissioned in Nelson's day, and it is the finest monument to the collaboration between Galbraith and Morrison, his publisher. Taken as a whole the series can claim to be the most important publication of medieval historical texts undertaken in this country since the closing down of the Rolls Series in 1897.

While these two enterprises—the Domesday Book studies and the Medieval Texts—were in progress Galbraith made two moves, first to London, and then to Oxford. The change to London was made in 1944 when he became the Director of the Institute of Historical Research at a difficult moment in its history. The Institute was a unique creation of a single man, A. F. Pollard, who (in the words of Sir George Clark) had 'hacked his way through the tangle of London academic politics virtually single-handed' to bring about its foundation in 1921. From 1921 to 1931, with Pollard as its director, the Institute had become the visible and institutional expression of his own powerfully expressed view of the way in which historical studies should be conducted. The Institute became a conspicuous landmark in the historical world, the only serious institutional rival to Manchester in historical research. But in 1931 Pollard had retired from his university chair, and from this date he was no more than the honorary director of the Institute, appearing about once a fortnight to conduct his seminar. This arrangement led to growing disagreements with the Committee, and finally to Pollard's resentful resignation in 1939. To add to its misfortunes, the Institute in 1938 had been moved from the rooms in Malet Street which it had occupied since its foundation, and it had begun a series of moves into temporary accommodation which did not come to an end until 1947. Deprived of its director and its permanent home, the war added the further misfortune of depriving the Institute of its students, and it remained in a state of suspended animation for the first four years of the war. By 1943, however, it was becoming

clear that the war was nearing its end, though the end was slower in coming than many people expected. It was necessary to make provision for the future. Galbraith was invited, and with some hesitation he accepted this nebulous but potentially influential position. He resigned his Edinburgh chair on 1 April 1944, and moved with his family to Woburn Square within a few minutes walk of the Institute. His early experience at the PRO, when he had lived at Hampstead, had taught him the value of living over the shop, and everyone benefited from his proximity. In October he began his first graduate seminar: 'I am about (he wrote) to begin my first little seminar class here on Palaeography and Sources. . . . As a matter of fact I am rather nervous at having to teach such advanced scholars as the three who are coming to me!'

With the end of the war life quickly returned to the Institute, and the 'little Seminar Class' was soon filled to over-flowing. Galbraith provided just the stimulant needed by students returning from the war, and he saw this as his main task. It was work which appealed to him, and the memory of his own plight in 1919 must often have been in his mind. The magic of his presence was as potent as ever: 'An hour with him (wrote one of his post-war students) was a kind of intoxication which kept up one's intellectual pulse for a week.' After five years of war the restoration of intellectual pulses was a delicate operation, and probably no one could have succeeded in this task as he did: 'When I was despondent it used to seem that if only I could get back for one hour with Galbraith all would be well', wrote a student of that time. And another: 'His classes on palaeography and diplomatic were indeed exhilarating. He had the extraordinary gift of transforming an outwardly dull subject into a really exciting study. It was all so simple that we felt about diplomatic as Molière's Monsieur Jourdain did about prose, that we had known and practised it all our lives without realizing it.' These are the testimonies of hard-bitten men, who had been through the war, and were later to achieve distinction in academic life. But when it came to 'hacking his way through the tangle of London academic politics' it was a different story. As he himself wrote to Sir Charles Clay in 1949: 'My contribution (to the Institute) was a personal one, almost a social one, and no one knows better than you how I hated the great edifice of committees, estimates, fees, admissions—for which I am constitutionally unsuited. The professional administrators on our committees did not, after all, spare me, and my

deficiencies as an administrator and a business man were—rather crudely—laid before me month by month. . . . I loathe ADMINISTRATION with every fibre of my being, and London has been a painful revelation of academic men gratuitously inventing machinery to waste time that would have been better spent doing what we professors are—after all—paid to do, viz. teach and work.’

By 1947 he felt that the work which he could best do in London—the re-establishment of the Institute as a place where young researchers would like to meet, and where those who had been battered by war for four or five years could find the enthusiasm necessary for picking up the threads of their intellectual life—had been done. So in June 1947, when the offer of the Regius Professorship at Oxford reached him, he accepted without much hesitation, and returned to Oxford in January 1948.

If the succession to Pollard in London was a difficult one, that to Powicke in Oxford was almost too easy. The key-note which he struck, not without overtones of ironic humour, in his inaugural lecture was, ‘Carry on Sergeant Galbraith’. He and his predecessor were bound together by intimate ties of loyalty and common experience. They both shared the general view of the Manchester school about the way in which history should be taught. The special feature of the Manchester system was its combination of great generality in the treatment of the outlines of European history during the first two years of an undergraduate’s career, with intensive and carefully supervised concentration on a special subject and thesis in the third year. Powicke had supposed (wrongly, as he found to his dismay) that he had been called to Oxford to introduce the Manchester system in Oxford, and he had tried hard to graft a year’s specialization on to the Oxford course of study. Galbraith had been a tutor too long to believe that any such reformation was possible, and he left the curriculum severely alone. In so far as he brought the flavour of Manchester to his Oxford teaching, it was in his concentration on giving general lectures to undergraduates. His old fire was still alive, and he could still draw crowds of enthusiastic and admiring undergraduates. ‘I was surprised, and indeed embarrassed by finding myself with nearer 400 than 300 audience (he wrote at the end of his first year) and I still had two thirds of them at the last lecture.’ But if he had escaped the administrative responsibilities of London, he was weighed down with the load of other calls on his time—

membership of the Halford Committee on listed buildings, of the Royal Commission on historical monuments, and many other academic committees of one kind or another, as well as a large general correspondence. Most of these activities continued for years after his retirement in 1957. During these years, both before and after retirement, he was less part of an institution than an institution in himself, written to, visited, and consulted by large numbers of pupils of all ages, who were anxious to hear his views on every kind of personal, professional, and scholarly subject. It was only in his late seventies that the pace became noticeably slower, and it was only in his eighty-fifth year that he sold his books to the new university of Ulster—back to his origins—and brought his life's work to an end. He died without pain or illness on 25 November 1976.

In general appearance Galbraith was small, wiry, and energetic. Despite his early stoop and white hairs, he gave an impression of perpetual alertness and vitality. His head was remarkably large, and his profile had a rugged distinction that was very memorable. He was careless in dress, and lacked any kind of pomp or sense of formal dignity. The colloquialisms and expletives of his lectures—relics of his days in the army—were abundant on all occasions when he was not chained to a written text, and his colourful expressions and uninhibited comments were the delight of his audiences.

As a scholar he will probably be longest remembered for his editions of chronicles and his contribution to Domesday studies. These are the weighty part of his work and they will long survive. But my own personal preference is for his smaller miscellaneous articles. These studies in which he unravelled the significance of documents of modest size, and threw light on the thoughts, circumstances, and difficulties in which they had their origin, seem to me the masterpieces of his critical art and his historical imagination. It was in these little studies that his sharp eye and keen sense of the historical occasion had their most satisfying fulfilment. I think especially of *Monastic Foundation Charters* (1934), which grew out of his discovery of the foundation charter of Quarr Abbey, and led to an elaborate account both of the diplomatic form of the document and of the way in which an extended baronial family made provision for its spiritual well-being; or of the *Literacy of the Medieval English Kings* (1935), which grew out of the study of the writs and charters of royal government, and developed into an account of the literary equipment of the kings under whose names these

documents were issued; or of the article on the *Modus Tenendi Parliamentum* (1953), in which he was able to associate a historical fiction with the routine operations of royal clerks of the reign of Edward II. I think too of his many studies of the autographs and methods of composition of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century chroniclers—studies which spanned the whole sixty years of his working life. When he was engaged on any of these pieces of work he was wholly absorbed in his subject, and he would talk about it on every possible occasion. I often thought it strange that a man who had so little patience for administration should have had so much pleasure in the contemplation of the administrators of the past. He enjoyed the bustle of life; and in the bustle of their lives he was able to forget that they were probably quite as formal and boring as their modern counterparts. They came to life for him in their documents, and to the end the PRO, where he had learnt his trade, remained for him the happiest of hunting grounds. It was in his studies of documents that his writing was at its most lively. Yet, in the last resort, nothing that he wrote could be as vivid as the man himself, as he stood by the fire scattering his shafts of wit and wisdom, truth and error, in all directions, a fascinating study in himself, and a source of energy in others.

R. W. SOUTHERN

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from 1925 to 1927. Professor M. D. Legge has given me some memories of Galbraith at Edinburgh, and Mr A. T. Milne has provided valuable information of his years at the Institute of Historical Research. Mrs Galbraith has been unendingly patient and helpful in providing information about the family and in correcting my mistakes. For the rest, I have relied on Galbraith's publications, of which there is a list down to 1957 in *Facsimiles of English Royal Writs to A.D. 1100*, eds. T. A. M. Bishop and P. Chaplais (Oxford, 1957), and on my own memory. The following is a list of his main publications after 1957:

BOOKS:

The Making of Domesday Book, Oxford, 1961.

An Introduction to the Study of History, London, 1964.

Domesday Book: its Place in Administrative History, Oxford, 1974.

ARTICLES:

'An Autograph MS of Ranulph Higden's Polychronicon', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 23, 1959, 1-18.

'Runnymede Revisited', *Proc. of the American Philosophical Society*, 110, 1966, 307-17.

'Notes on the Career of Samson, bishop of Worcester, 1096-1112', *EHR* 1967, 86-101.

'Afterthoughts', *The Historian's Workshop*, ed. L. P. Curtis, New York, 1970, 5-21.

'Thoughts about the Peasants' Revolt', *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack*, eds. F. R. H. du Boulay and Caroline M. Barron, London, 1971, 46-57.

'Sir Frank Stenton (1880-1967)', *American Historical Review*, 76, 1971, 1116-23.