PLATE V

JAMES KINSLEY

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JAMES KINSLEY
1922–1984

JAMES KINSLEY died on 24 August 1984, still at the height of his powers. He was a scholar of outstanding range, vigour, and exactness, equally authoritative as an editor of English and Scottish writers in every century from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth.

His early environment spanned the two ages. Born on 17 April 1922 at Stobsmills Cottages, Gorebridge, Midlothian, he was the eldest child and only son of Louis Morrison Kinsley, joiner and cabinet-maker, and his wife Mary Bowie Young, both of Scottish Presbyterian stock. Gorebridge, nine miles from Edinburgh, is a large Victorian village which grew up around two coal-pits and the railway, and was still expanding. But it lay mainly in the parish of Borthwick, named from a quiet rural valley a few miles to the south-east, steeped in more ancient history and dominated by its majestic fifteenth-century castle. Principal Robertson, the great eighteenth-century historian, was a native, and John Clunie the song-writer, with whom, as a 'worthy little fellow of a clergyman', Burns was 'well acquainted', its best known minister. Both would appear in James Kinsley's published works. With Burns, his early experience had other affinities; he recalled how in his own boyhood 'cottage families' used the vernacular for 'ordinary social (and intimate) exchange, and English as the language of the Bible, prayer, education, and moral discourse'.[1]

The family's church and their son's first school were at Gorebridge. His mother remembers his reading as always in advance of his age, and there was added encouragement from two Kinsley aunts who were school teachers. In 1933, at the age of eleven, he became a pupil at Edinburgh's Royal High School, for the next six years travelling daily from Gorebridge first to the junior and then to the senior school, impressively housed since 1829 on the side of Calton Hill. This ancient and famous foundation, the 'Tounis Schole', which counted Scott, Jeffrey, Cockburn and Brougham among its alumni, had in the later nineteenth century succeeded in liberalizing the traditional clas-

[1] 'Burns and the Peasantry', Warton Lecture, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, **60** (1974), pp. 135–53.

sical curriculum with English, History, Modern languages and eventually, Science, and was now in the last decade of the long and distinguished Rectorship of Dr William King Gillies. James Kinsley gained several long-established prizes: the Carson medal for English composition, the Sir Walter Scott Centenary Medal, the Macmillan Club prize for being 'Dux' of the school in English, and the India prize—numerous volumes of standard poets, retained throughout his life. From an early age he made his modest mark as contributor to the school magazine, his descriptions, in poetic prose or *vers libre*, conspicuous among the usual run of schoolboy facetious pieces for their serious and romantic tone. There is no record of outstanding performance in games or sports and his 'Nation' (*anglicé*, 'House'), the Angles, was generally low in the lists. But in the OTC he gained the McKelvie Trophy as the best piper, and was presented with a leopard skin and silver baton by the school's India Club. He was Secretary of the Literary and Debating Society and in 1938 'an attempt ... to resuscitate the flagging interest of members in literary matters was successfully made by Mr Kinsley who led a discussion on "The Value of Poetry to the ordinary man" '. In the following summer, the 'Sixth Form Review' of leavers tagged each name with an appropriate quotation, satirical, complimentary, or both. His was from Tennyson's 'Sir Galahad'—'My strength is as the strength of ten, Because my heart is pure.'

He had two poems in the magazine: in 'Visio Alumni', a picture of sunset and sunrise, he rejoiced in 'new-found liberty', though the road ahead was 'shrouded in the darkness of Fate' while the path behind 'faded in that dawn of dreams'. He commemorated the school twenty years later in the doubly eloquent dedication of his Dryden edition to 'Walter Scott / Historico Poetae Editori / Scholae Regiae Edinensis / Alumno'—and recorded thanks to his English teacher Mr Law when he edited Alexander Carlyle.

'The darkness of Fate' must have seemed apt in October 1939. But a University entrant under eighteen could at least hope to complete his course. At Edinburgh the tradition that the Regius Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature lectured thrice weekly to the vast 'First Year Ordinary' was still maintained; it suited John Dover Wilson, who began with the *Battle of Maldon* and continued, with ample oral illustration, as far as the Pre-Raphaelites—taking 'some trouble', he recalled, with Dryden and Pope as least likely to be known to the students. Long after,

writing from his own Nottingham Chair, James Kinsley referred approvingly to 'the amphitheatrical lecturing technique of the Scottish universities ... often executed with great brilliance'. Dover Wilson made the innovation of appointing assistant lecturers to supplement the lectures with discussion and essay writing; Kinsley came first in the end-of-year examination. A later prize for an Anglo-Saxon essay happened to be a copy of Mackay Mackenzie's edition of Dunbar, which began, he said, 'one of the most intense literary affections of my life'. Always he defended the value of a comprehensive course: 'The modernist who knows little or nothing about medieval literature *at first hand* is not properly equipped for his own work.' In 1942 he was awarded the James Boswell scholarship; he did not take the usual fourth year, but became Private Kinsley in the Army Pay Corps, soon making his first acquaintance with South Britain. In October 1943 he was given an unclassed MA Honours degree in English 'as War Privilege'. His war service from 1943–5 was in the Royal Artillery, where he reached the rank of Captain; in summer 1945 he was in the Army Education Corps.

His Edinburgh scholarship took him to Oxford for a second Honours school; the choice of Oriel College was perhaps influenced by its eminent Provost Sir David Ross, once of the Royal High School. By the time Kinsley took his Schools (with a First) in 1947, the foundations of his later life and achievement had been laid. He had the encouragement and assistance of much older scholars, notably David Nichol Smith, just retiring from the Merton Chair—an influence perhaps decisive in turning him towards Dryden as the subject of his Edinburgh doctoral dissertation (supervised by Dr A. Melville Clark) and of a possible edition. He had the benefit of continued medieval and renaissance studies with distinguished scholars. He had doubtless decided to transfer his allegiance from the Presbyterian communion (he was confirmed in the Episcopal church in 1948). He had met—appropriately, in an Oxford library—Helen Dawson, undergraduate in the English school at St Hilda's, and a native of Yorkshire, who would become a sharer in all his work and interests before and after their marriage two years later. Her name on several title-pages and in every preface, including the last, is only the outward token of a close and stimulating partnership. And he had been immediately appointed to his first post under the happiest of auspices.

He impressed the Oxford Board of Examiners in 1947 as one

of the best students any of them had ever met and one, Gwyn Jones of Aberystwyth, having a vacancy in his Department, telephoned at once to his Principal and told him (he recalls) that

> I had a veritable Lion of Judah in my sights, and could we not offer him an assistant lectureship before anyone else could?

So Kinsley joined an excellent Department, and his seven years there were a happy and fruitful period, with Gwyn Jones as mentor and in the event, a lifelong friend. Colleagues were stimulating; students, many of them ex-servicemen like himself, responded to his powerful presentation of (for example) the Border ballads.[2] In their other activities he took a vigorous part, singing in concerts and giving backstage assistance of professional quality in plays; the bar counter that he built for Cecil Price's production of Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* is still remembered.

The Dryden dissertation was submitted in 1951 and accepted by a Board chaired by Bonamy Dobree. Its special concern was with diction and style in the poems and translations, which meant that much of the detailed work for the Oxford English Texts was already in train. Articles in the *Review of English Studies* gave evidence of his original work on historical and topical references. Yet, to have its four volumes ready for press by 1957 would have been a prodigious feat even had it stood alone.

But the early 1950s also saw the first of many important contributions to Scottish literature and his first edited text, Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits* (1954). What seems by hindsight a thoroughly appropriate first book may have had fortuitous origins. In 1948, the spectacular success of the newly established Edinburgh Festival was Tyrone Guthrie's production of the play on a platform stage in the vast, galleried Assembly Hall. Never performed since 1554 and hardly known even to Scots outside the Scottish Text Society, this 'roaring politico-religious satire', as Agnes Mure Mackenzie wrote in her introduction, 'emerged from beneath a cairn of scholars' notes to hold a modern audience enchanted'. James and Helen also thought it a superb production, and their friendship with Miss Mackenzie, whose life's mission was 'to foster among Scots an awareness of their cultural heritage', had the happiest results. Naturally Kinsley added more stones to the 'cairn'; but his main purpose was to provide a sound text and helpful glossary. This led, in 1954, to a more ambitious volume from the same publisher,

[2] Recalled by Professor A. J. Smith, a student in the first year class.

Cassell: *Scottish Poetry: a Critical Survey*, his first experience of organizing and leading a team of scholars. His own chapter, 'The Medieval Makers', was followed by nine others—Miss Mackenzie again, others, like himself, expatriate academic Scots, who between them treated the remaining five or six centuries. The standard is high (the word 'survey' was not yet blown upon) and Kinsley's own chapter illustrates his remarkable capacity for covering a wide field with unstrained conciseness and no loss of enthusiasm or closeness to the texts: Dunbar, called 'startlingly unique', and exhibited in his striking variety of genre and style, occupies a quarter of the space. A detailed study of a single poem, the 'Twa Mairit Wemen and the Wedo', the subject of an article in *Medium Aevum* in 1954, evidently led to his being asked to do a selection from Dunbar for the Clarendon Medieval and Tudor Series edited by Jack Bennett—his first Oxford publication, just preceding the Dryden in 1958. Designed to attract students and to fit an editorial pattern, it lacked scope for intensive work on text or canon, and in the critical part of the introduction he emphasized the poet's 'wild comic fantasy' and supreme craftsmanship—which led to the surprising charge, in a prominent, anonymous review, of having slighted the religious lyrics. Others encouraged him to proceed to a complete scholarly edition. Perhaps for this reason, an earlier project on Scottish literature, a companion 'survey' of prose, was given up. But on Agnes Mure Mackenzie's death in 1955 Kinsley edited and saw through the press her anthology for schools, *A Garland of Scottish Prose* (1956); his little known introductions to her chosen extracts contain some of his best criticism at that date, and deepen our regret that he never wrote extensively on Scott.

The same year saw the beginning of a third major undertaking. The chapter on Burns in the *Scottish Poetry* volume was by Robert Dewar, already a friend with common roots in lowland Scotland (Dewar's were in Kilmarnock and Glasgow), and long at work on a critical edition of Burns for the Oxford English Texts. Dewar's Clarendon selection of 1929 was an early token of its high quality; but now in his seventies, after an exacting career at the University of Reading, he was glad to enlist the aid of a young scholar so well equipped and personally congenial, and on his death in 1956 Kinsley became the willing heir of his materials. Obviously the Dunbar selection and the big Dryden must be seen through the press first, but Burns was planned to follow, and work began at once. An earlier occasion for a kind of preview fortunately offered. In 1958, in view of the coming bicentenary,

the Everyman text of the *Poems and Songs* was re-issued with a new introduction, some additional poems (ten of them songs) and a revised glossary—all admirably fitted to the needs of the general reader and, as an interim report, those of the scholar. His claim was staked in a note announcing the 'complete critical edition' in preparation, and the bicentenary year itself was marked by his important article on 'Editing Burns' in the *Robert Burns Chronicle* (Kilmarnock), a detailed account of work done and planned, a blueprint of his textual policy and of how he hoped 'to synthesise the work of his predecessors' (gratefully named) and 'to extend it in almost every direction'. In the Everyman introduction, Burns's career is concisely outlined with firm and fine discrimination: 'he knew himself as few men do and was honest with himself as few men dare to be.' His satire is defined as 'pulverizing, brutally direct, in the vulgar tradition', uninfluenced by the English Augustans; but most emphasis is given to the traditional songs and how he transformed them. Finally, 'what he did in these short years is set in the Scottish mind and heart, and will remain there to stimulate and enrich so long as the language and the people last.' Such writing is as characteristic as the comparatively austere commentary in the massive four-volume Dryden, published a few months later; when Kinsley forgoes a critical introduction, it is from a sense of editorial propriety, not incapacity or disinclination. The Oxford English Texts, at least at that date, had no space for a shop window. The declared purpose of the commentary was 'to explain the occasion of each poem, elucidate the text, identify quotations and adaptations and illustrate the more important of Dryden's literary and intellectual affinities'—and implicitly, to do all this as concisely as possible; 1800 pages of text with variants at the foot are given less than 300 pages of notes. Kinsley liked to compare making books to making tables (for which he had a hereditary skill) since both required accurate estimates, keeping to scale, and hard work; these represent only the minimum qualities of his editing, but are perhaps more obvious in the 1958 Dryden than elsewhere. Its great achievement was the provision for the first time of a sound text of the poems and translations based on a critical review of all the early printings—a formidable task, carried out on clear-cut textual principles. Thirty years on, the Oxford Dryden stands unimpaired, its only rival the California edition (more comprehensive, but even the poems still incomplete), the product of a large and well-subsidized team. An earlier generation had the further benefit of Kinsley's Oxford Standard

Authors volumes (the *Virgil*, 1961, and *Poems and Fables*, 1962), and an annotated selection (1963). The current preference is for modernized spelling; but his introductions, especially to the Virgil translations, are irreplaceable.

This account has run ahead of Kinsley's teaching career. Some of the work described was done while he was still at Aberystwyth though little was then published. After seven years as lecturer, a move would seem professionally, and with a growing family, financially advisable; the academic climate was more propitious than before or since, and at only thirty-two, he was appointed as Professor at the University College of Swansea; part of the University of Wales, but a much younger and smaller institution. He inherited from his predecessor, the late W. D. Thomas, virtually the creator of the English Department, a staff of five and a syllabus overdue for reform. As a newcomer he may have shown more zeal than tact, and there were to be collisions both of principle and personality. But what stands is the credo in his Inaugural, delivered a few weeks after his arrival, on 'English Studies in the University'. Copies, as I recall, were widely circulated to heads of Departments elsewhere, and its tenor generally, if unevenly, acclaimed. (He preserved the replies.) Even in 1954 it was necessary to defend historical criticism; 'literary criticism *in vacuo* is as perverse as Biblical fundamentalism'. Dealing boldly and wittily with other current heresies (and not afraid to name names), he reminded his audience that 'the roots of our literature run deep in medieval soil', while also advocating 'the critical reading of modern literature'. Still timely, thirty years on, is his warning against imposing the taste of one generation on its successors: 'however extensive the field, we must try to keep it open in its entirety for our honours students . . . Our first responsibility is to our subject.' Within a year, courses were both broadened and stiffened, with more prescribed texts from early literature, including Dunbar. Later, Department and Faculty were reinforced by lectureships in Renaissance studies (Alastair Fowler) and in the History of Ideas (Sydney Anglo); other prescient appointments were Howard Erskine-Hill and A. J. Smith.

Students and scholars also benefited from Kinsley's exemplary edition of David Lindsay's *Squyer Meldrum* (1959) in the 'Medieval and Renaissance' series edited by C. S. Lewis. The introduction radiates enjoyment of this unfairly neglected work and shows the editor's wide and close familiarity with medieval romance. Also in 1959, an Edinburgh D.Litt. on his published

work, and a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature were deservedly bestowed. Colleagues who knew Kinsley best in the Swansea years recall his intense energy and the priority he gave (and encouraged) to the promotion of scholarship. 'Our first responsibility is to our subject' also defined his own practice; undergraduate teaching and day-to-day departmental administration could be contained, and much of it delegated. Even so, the sheer amount, range, and consistently high standard of his publication in these seven years is amazing.

His decision to put his name forward for the Chair of English Studies at Nottingham on Professor Pinto's retirement in 1961 was characteristically made only after careful inquiries about the academic interests and standing of the staff. These, over the years, he was concerned to foster and consolidate, helping colleagues and research students to publish and recruiting them as collaborators.[3] The move to Nottingham was in all respects happy and probably always intended to be permanent. His attachment was not only to the University and place—the family home was at Beeston, within a few miles' vigorous walk of University Park—but to the local church and diocese. While still at Swansea he was studying for ordination; he received deacon's orders in 1962 from Bishop Barry, priest's orders in 1963. He was for a time curate at Beeston, entered the University chaplaincy, and in 1964 was public preacher in the diocese of Southwell. This represented no dramatic new departure (he had been a lay reader much earlier), but the fulfilment of an inclination latent in early youth.

There was no reason for it to impart any change of emphasis in his writing. Burns was his man, and continued preparation for the big edition was the main avocation of the early Nottingham years. As the Everyman introduction suggested, the poet engaged many of his deepest sympathies. The nature of the material also lent itself well to oral communication. His Inaugural is recalled as including song; no text survives, but this part of it was probably absorbed into his Gregynog lectures, given at Aberystwyth in February 1963, themselves partly represented in the splendid article 'The Music of the Heart' in Nottingham's annual *Renaissance and Modern Studies* for 1964.

Nothing shows better in small compass the range of Kinsley's learning and critical powers than this discourse and demonstra-

[3] With James Boulton, *English Satiric Poetry: Dryden to Byron* (Arnold, 1966), an annotated selection introduced by a historical survey; with George Parfitt, *John Dryden: Selected Criticism* (1970).

tion of the union of music and words: in opera and oratorio, embracing Dryden, Purcell, and Handel; popular song (the *Beggar's Opera*, 'typical middle-class art'); theorists, Beattie, Avison and Hugh Blair of Edinburgh ('arbiter of taste in that dogmatic city' with his 'grotesquely over-simplified views'), and finally, as a long climax, the relationship of the two arts fulfilled uniquely in Burns, interpreter rather than initiator of song. The last dozen pages, with their musical illustrations from the early 'Mary Morison' to the late 'John Anderson my Jo', touch the highwater mark of Kinsley's writing. A second article the following year on 'Burns and the *Merry Muses*' clears up a tangled area of mystification and conjecture by bringing new evidence and mature judgement to support the conclusion that the compiler had before him Burns's own papers. Much went into the big edition with little change; by 1965 it was near enough to completion for him to use its number-references, and the three-volume *Poems and Songs* appeared in 1968.

For the first time, texts and apparatus were based on extensive and intensive examination of all early printings and about 800 manuscripts. The songs are accompanied by 'all their identifiable airs in their eighteenth-century forms'. Where traditional songs were reshaped or even touched by the poet, the editor was 'cautiously liberal' in inclusion, resting his case on sympathetic insight as well as analysis of evidence. The promise of his 1959 article is fulfilled: 'an edition built on scrupulous collation and on thoroughly critical analysis may be expected to illuminate the poet's art as no subjective literary discussion can do.' He disavowed 'systematic critical or biographical comment', but the operative word is 'systematic'. Everything is there, biographical matter distributed through the introductions to each phase of Burns's career, critical comment and concise information in the commentary on each poem and song. These notes are a treasure-house, stored up by an editor equally aware that 'facts are chiels that winna ding' and that the poetry, above all the songs, is 'felt in the blood, and felt along the heart'.

By 1968 other work had already supervened, but Burns was not left behind. The text was reproduced in a new Oxford Standard Authors edition in 1969, without commentary but with the 'airs' and a reduced chronology and glossary. In 1970 a short lecture tour abroad included, at Vienna, a seminar on editing and a lecture on 'Music and Poetry' in which, I am told, he delighted a large student audience with his 'sonorous vocal performances'. The Warton lecture at the British Academy in

1974 was his 'Burns and the Peasantry'; this concentrated on such poems as 'The Holy Fair', 'Hallowe'en' and especially the cantata 'Love and Liberty' ('The Jolly Beggars'). Besides drawing on his own 1968 commentary (again enlivened with a snatch of song) he admitted, in conclusion, a subsequent change of view. Repudiating 'the fashion (in which I have shared)' of relating the cantata to the pastoral tradition, he now saw it as satiric realism in which 'the poet's ironic vision is his *cordon sanitaire*'.

Meanwhile, in 1969, came another piece of not unrelated editing, the new *Oxford Book of Ballads*, replacing Quiller-Couch's anthology of 1910, with tunes for over half the texts, in recognition of the advance in ballad scholarship since Bronson. Stricter in textual policy than 'Q', Kinsley widened his range in other ways, closing with a group of bawdy street ballads and another of 'literary' ballads from Chatterton to Swinburne. Though no ballad anthology can hope to please all the experts, and the common reader missed some old favourites, the collection happily combined scholarly with popular appeal and in 1982 was reissued in paperback.

With a similar purpose, the editorial hand and eye were extended to prose fiction. Part of the social background and much of the local speech of Burns's world were drawn on in a new edition (1967) of John Galt's quasi-novel *Annals of the Parish*—never neglected, but not before set so clearly in its historical and biographical perspective or with such infectious enjoyment. It was one of the Oxford English Novels, established under the general editorship of Herbert Davis; at that stage anchored in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and offering sound texts, selective apparatus, scholarly introductions and 'explanatory notes'. On Davis's death Kinsley succeeded him, inheriting many assignments, and in the next ten years supervised over sixty novels ranging from Defoe to (exceptionally) Oscar Wilde; for several, he was also responsible for the text.

In 1971 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy; in the view of some, and in retrospect surely of all, a 'thing that was come rather late than soon'. But few could know and appreciate the entire range of his scholarly work. To him, however, as he told me later, the invitation came as an overwhelming surprise: a mark of the humility (as distinct from modesty) which was ingrained in his nature.

Increasingly in the 1970s Kinsley's wisdom and judgement were called upon, both in the Academy, where he soon became

chairman of the still undivided Section Six and of the 'Small Grants' Committee, and in his own university, as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Chairman of the Library Committee. The building of the new Library was especially near his heart, and it stands as a monument to his energy and imagination. In his Department he supported new developments while maintaining its unitary nature; one early and obvious change was the removal of barriers between medieval and modern literature.[4] But he also regarded Linguistics, American, and Scandinavian literature as essentially related to English Studies, and his own knowledge of these areas gave the more weight to his views on Academy and other research committees.

His productiveness was little affected. *Dryden: the Critical Heritage* (Routledge), the work of both the Kinsleys in 1971, was the last of his contributions in that field and in some ways the most attractive, from the warmth of his Introduction, the originality of method in making Dryden his own critic, and the opportunity afforded for homage to Pope, Johnson, Scott and Saintsbury. Then, in 1973, for the Oxford English Memoirs and Travels, another series which he was supervising, he edited *Anecdotes and Characters of my own Time* by the Reverend Alexander ('Jupiter') Carlyle, minister of Inveresk. Long known in an inferior text as the (mistitled) Autobiography, it was now properly edited from a newly discovered manuscript in family hands with a lively and affectionate introduction. This was the work of several years, on a subject obviously congenial: the setting was the Lothians of his own youth, the period Scotland's 'silver age', and the minister in many ways a kindred spirit—

> a man of great generosity and sympathy. But these qualities were balanced, as they have to be in pastoral ministry, by hard, realistic detachment.

By now the Oxford English Novels were running out of steam, not editorial but financial. More editions were completed than the Press, in the recession of the seventies, could afford to publish; some were sadly returned to their editors, and by about 1975 the series was discontinued. Soon after, I ventured to approach him (through Dan Davin) to ask if he might be disposed to join me in the general editorship of the Clarendon Dickens; obvious assets were his wide experience of many kinds of textual problem and consequent understanding of the need to adapt editorial policy to

[4] See his 'English Studies at Nottingham', *The Critical Survey*, Spring 1963, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 120–1.

the actual materials (in contrast to the rigidity of some theorists), and his intimate knowledge of the eighteenth-century novels so beloved of Dickens, yet so often disregarded as an essential part of his roots. Since the early death of my former coadjutor, John Butt, ten years before, I had seen three novels published, others in the press or near completion, and several 'in preparation'. Fortunately for all concerned, especially myself, Kinsley agreed—on the understanding that his complete Dunbar must first be seen through the press. He was better than his word, scrutinizing the proofs of *Little Dorrit* during the same two-year period. If at first sight the transition seemed incongruous, at a deeper level both poet and novelist were alike in being demon-driven geniuses and fine craftsmen.

Undiverted by all the other activities of the preceding twenty years (including, in 1976–80, his work on the Church of England's Liturgical Commission), this third *magnum opus* had been noiselessly growing to fruition. 'For a long time', he wrote in the preface (dated 1977), 'it was a recreation ... a harmless pleasure'. But that was a measure of his fascination with Dunbar's poetry, not of any lack of problems in text, exegesis, and glossary: each poem, he found, was 'a new textual experience, calling for the fresh exercise of critical judgement', and more exacting than the far more extensive texts of Dryden. As he expected, some of his decisions were questioned; but none could dispute that this is the first scholarly edition of Dunbar, unlikely to be superseded: the glossary alone, as his colleague Kenneth Cameron testifies, 'a most outstanding contribution to scholarship'. No longer did he hesitate, as in the 1958 introduction, to make the highest claims for the poet; full justice is done to the astonishing variety and brilliance of 'the greatest European "maker" between Chaucer and Spenser'. In the light of the critical commentary, every poem glows afresh, not least through the parallels from liturgy and iconography. Kinsley's 1975 visits to continental museums and galleries were an added bonus, and he benefited from (and generously acknowledged) work published since 1958 by Rosemary Woolf, Denton Fox, and others. There is one disappointment. He envisaged, as one result of his labours, 'the complete students' edition which is needed to feed Scottish culture at its roots.' Ten years later, none has appeared and the ordinary student has no ready access to Dunbar in any form.

The Poems of William Dunbar (1979) proved to be the last new work published in Kinsley's lifetime. 'Into this warld may non assure.' He had joked about 'editing in decades'; the prospect for

this fourth editorial decade, the 1980s, was Dickens. By 1980 he was well established as joint general editor, after the close supervision of two more Clarendons and preliminary work done towards his own—on the sound principle that serious general editing must be accompanied by specific editing. *The Pickwick Papers* proved to be the ideal choice, from the challenges of its peculiar problems of text and plates, the unusual (and unrecognized) extent of early authorial revision, its close relation to the eighteenth century, and its unique qualities as Dickens's first novel. The result outran even my high expectations, and has already been acclaimed, though it has yet to make its full impact on Dickens scholarship. His keen eye for detail and perceptive comment were also exercised on the illustrations and their relation to the text. I shall cherish, for example, his observation of the 'obviously Caledonian' gardener in one sketch, and the 'insouciant songbird' on the famous cover. But these are typical of his habitual command of the exact and memorable word or phrase: the 'vegetating' footnote, the 'quaint deficiency' of an ill-informed critic, the 'distracted lyricism of Scott's defectives', the 'futile intrepidity' of the Apostles as fishermen. ('The formal word, precise but not pedantic.') Such instances will revive memories of the pungent asides in his lectures and in relaxed conversation; he was a good raconteur and could be devastating in mimicry.

To return to the preparation of the Clarendon *Pickwick*: within two years of starting work he had virtually mastered the text and drafted introductions. A 1980 letter said he had 'finished with Dickens House for the present' (he had been travelling there daily from Nottingham). In August 1982 he was consulting me about similar visits to the Newspaper Library at Colindale for an appendix on the early reception of the novel. The same letter referred incidentally to an invitation to Cardiff for the Welsh Liturgical Commission ('fancy that!') and his appointment to the British Academy's Readership and Publications Committees. A typical vacation. But holidays were somehow fitted in, and he and Helen enjoyed following the Pickwickians' trail to Bath and Ipswich.

Our editorial work was increased in the early '80s by a new project: Dickens in paperback 'World's Classics', with the text of the Clarendons, new introductions and 'explanatory notes'. We wished to maintain scholarly standards, and when the Press were still recalcitrant about including Dickens's 'number plans' for certain novels, his was the clincher: 'If for *any* reason these are

not included, my interest in the project diminishes rapidly.' Six novels duly appeared between 1982 and 1984, and I personally appreciated his supervision for my own new introduction to *Oliver Twist*, twenty years after the Clarendon. Once assured that (unlike a few of his earlier editors) I would genuinely welcome suggestions for improvement, he made several, adding agreeably that he had preferred this exercise to reading Haggai. His own World's Classics *Pickwick* was drafted before the end of 1983: this kind of 'subsidiary job' (to which he had long been accustomed) being 'best done', he wrote, 'while the text is live in the mind'—to avoid what he had doubtless observed in others rather than himself, the 'hint of weariness in paperback editorial work that comes a year or two later'.

None was evident in either edition, though the later stages of preparation coincided with the onset of illness. At his own wish, our discussions were resumed by letter in February 1984 while he was still undergoing post-operative treatment for throat and voice; and we met in March. In the summer he resumed university duties apart from teaching, and copy for both editions, though known to be in some ways incomplete,[5] was delivered to the Press. By July he was set free for a holiday; East Yorkshire, with Whitby the chosen centre (partly because of his recent reading of Mrs Gaskell), was an absorbing new experience, followed by a visit to Wales, where his daughter was on holiday. The prospect of recovery looked hopeful, and his sudden death came as a shock. Throughout his illness he had been supported by his loving family and his firm faith.

He leaves an inspiring example—and inspiriting, if we accept his view that the virtues of scholar and critic are not special, but 'human virtues . . . their cultivation in some measure possible to us all'. Certainly in him intellectual power was closely allied to moral strength, expressed in a robust self-discipline and what seemed an instinctively ordered life. He never wasted time (or words) and probably saved time by knowing what to exclude. Though he had learnt to drive in the army, he never owned a car, working in trains, or while walking. He never travelled outside Europe and (one must surmise) declined numerous academic invitations. His willingness to make his learning accessible through students' editions and encyclopaedia articles hardly

[5] What remained to be done is mainly indicated in my prefatory notes to the volumes finally published in 1986 and 1988. The Clarendon *apparatus* was also found to need some revision, but not affecting his important conclusions on the text.

extended to journalism, even of the kind called 'literary', or to broadcasting; nor was he a frequenter of conferences. Any form of self-promotion was alien to him.

Among recreations, as already noted, he liked to include his editorial work on Dunbar. Others, more orthodox, were all constructive, active, and mostly centred on his home: carpentry, decoration, gardening (design as well as execution), singing folksongs and ballads, sometimes in convivial company. 'Burns night' was regularly celebrated, Johnson Society dinners seldom missed. For his family (all four generations) there was always time, and for warm and generous hospitality to friends old and new. As *The Times* obituary said, he was 'a big man of classic second-row forward build and powerful personality'. Often redoubtable in manner, he could at times be intimidating; but he was large-hearted and commanded deep and lasting affection as well as respect.

KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

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