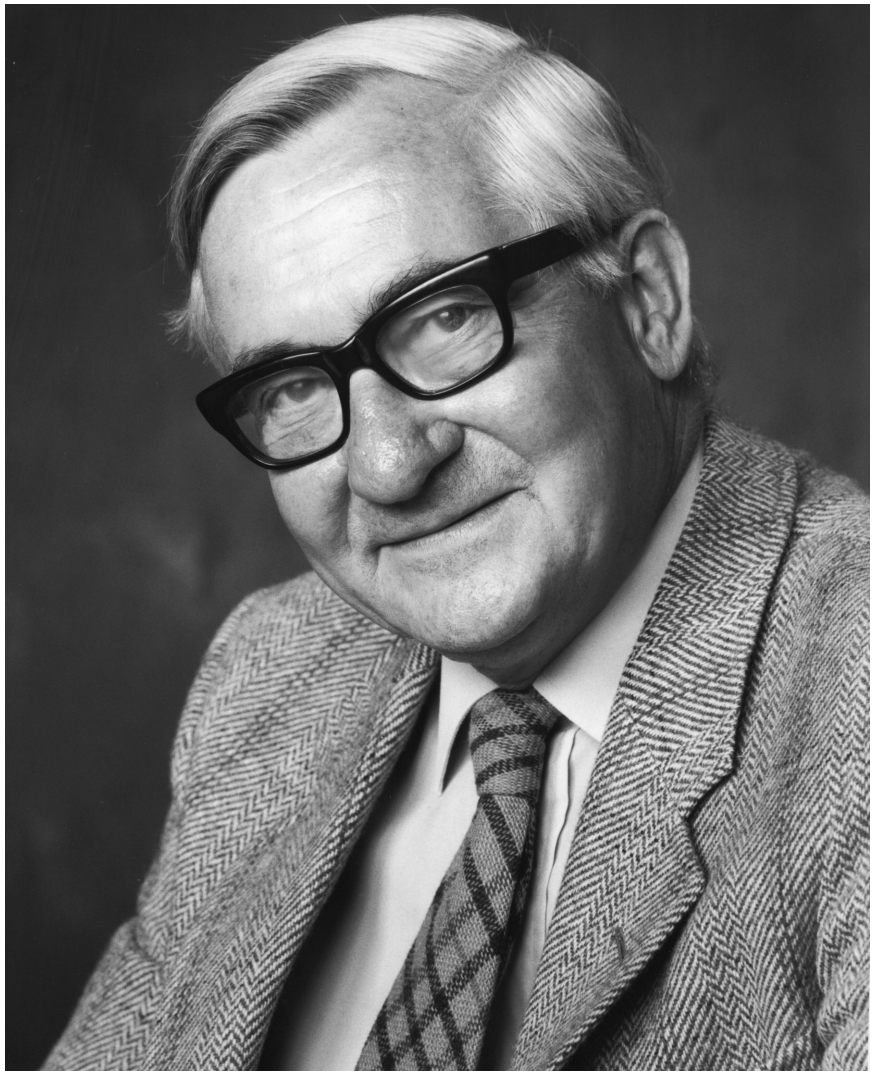

EDWARD MILLER *Peter Lofts*

Edward Miller
1915–2000

I

EDWARD MILLER, the eldest of the four children (three sons and one daughter) of Edward Miller and his wife, Mary Lee Miller, née Fowler, was born at Acklington, in Northumberland, on 16 July 1915. Within the family, he was always known as Eddie but to friends and colleagues he signed himself as Edward and later Ted. Mary Lee Miller's father was a builder, who had walked from Yorkshire to Northumberland and settled there. Edward Miller was a farm-manager—the subject of this memoir was to describe his own healthy appetite as that of a farmer's son[1]—and he and his family lived in a variety of places, mostly in Northumberland and always in the north of England. He was a keen local historian and antiquary and had many short pieces published in *The Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*.[2] His occupation explains how it was that Ted Miller, as his pupils later noticed, possessed an understanding of agriculture such as no books could impart. From his father, who, before his marriage, was for a time in charge of the bird colonies on the Farne Islands, he also inherited a lively interest in birds and wild flowers. Ted Miller always regarded himself as a Northumbrian, and when, in 1959, he delivered the St John's College, Cambridge, Lecture in the University of Hull, on the character and consequences for the northern

[1] Miller to Helen Cam, 21 Oct. 1945, after an excellent meal in a pub in the Vale of Clwyd: G[irton] C[ollege,] P[ersonal] P[apers], Cam 2/5/33.

[2] e.g. Edward Miller, 'Early Remains on Bolton and Titlington Moors', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, 5th ser., 1 (1951–5), 78–86; 'Shilmoor', ibid., 333–5; 'Redesdale', ibid., 365–75.

Proceedings of the British Academy, **138**, 231–256.

counties of the long wars between Scotland and England (a lecture with a note of passion that still resonates) he declared himself to be one.[3] Family circumstances were somewhat straitened, and it was at first uncertain whether they would permit him to take up the place that he won at the King Edward VI Grammar School at Morpeth, Morpeth being too distant for daily travel. The local vicar, a wealthy bachelor, offered to pay for his education at grammar school and university, if he would later be ordained. But although his parents were devout churchgoers, their eldest son was not. He was enabled to take up the place at Morpeth by the possibility of living during the week with his aunt, Margaret Miller, at Warkworth, the home to which he seems regularly to have returned during his undergraduate long vacations.[4]

In 1934 Miller entered St John's College, Cambridge, as an exhibitioner and in due course took starred Firsts in both parts of the Historical Tripos (1936 and 1937). His undergraduate career therefore coincided with a period in which the perennial dissatisfaction of the guardians of the tripos was temporarily relieved by their tinkering with the regulations regarding those aspects of it to which, as it happened, the young Miller was most strongly attracted. Hitherto, the constitutional history of England had been examined in two papers, with the year 1485 marking the break, and its economic history separately in a single paper covering the whole of time. Moreover, whereas those offering the constitutional papers had been required to display 'adequate knowledge of the general course of English History', in the case of economic history it was merely 'correct general knowledge . . . rather than minute acquaintance with details' that counted.[5] Then, at the beginning of Miller's second year, the two elements were brought together.[6] And even if (because it was not a marriage of equals)[7] the liaison was to prove short-lived, nevertheless the questions now being asked did reveal a qualitative change in respect both of approach and of expectation. The shift from the invitation to reflect on the 'essence of Manorialism' to a requirement to describe the

[3] E. Miller, *War in the North: The Anglo-Scottish Wars of the Middle Ages* (St John's College, Cambridge, Lecture, 1959–60; University of Hull Publications, 1960), 22 pp., at p. 3.

[4] All his letters to Helen Cam and J. H. Plumb in the summers of 1936 and 1937 (cited below) were from this address.

[5] *Ordinances of the University of Cambridge to 10 October 1933* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 211.

[6] Ibid., pp. 709–13.

[7] In the first two years of the combined paper twice as many constitutional as economic questions were set: *Cambridge University Examination Papers, 1935–6* (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 740–2; *1936–7* (Cambridge, 1937), pp. 843–5.

social structure of *either* East Anglia, *or* the Danelaw, *or* the Vale of York was a shift in the direction of detail and the particular.[8]

No doubt that development was not unconnected with the arrival in Cambridge of M. M. Postan, whose lectures on 'English Economic History to 1688' were delivered for the first time in 1935–6.[9] For the study of the subject the coincidence of Postan's advent with Miller's entry into his second undergraduate year was altogether fortunate. It established a relationship between two scholars who, though lightly harnessed rather than being closely yoked together, were thereafter associated in giving their subject a profile it had not previously enjoyed. Also lecturing, on the constitutional side, was Helen Cam, the scholar for whom the young Miller's admiration and affection were abiding and unqualified. Other medieval lecturers listed included Gaillard Lapsley, Steven Runciman and three more, all Fellows of St John's: G. G. Coulton, C. W. Previté-Orton, and (from 1936) Geoffrey Barraclough. Then there was Hugo Gatty. Though not a medievalist, in St John's Gatty supervised the Middle Ages. A connoisseur of fine bindings, his medieval supervisions 'might be unorthodox', his obituarist was to report, and the volumes of Scarlatti, the Chinese figurines and the incense burners strewn around his gracious rooms[10] would have been correspondingly unfamiliar to the scholarship boy from Northumberland. Yet it was to Gatty, as one of 'two historians who taught me to see the history of the college as something which had a significance in English history and who, besides that, showed me many personal kindnesses', that in 1961 Miller's short history of St John's would be half dedicated.[11]

The co-dedicatee of that affectionate tribute was E. A. Benians, Master of the college from 1933 until 1952 and historian of the Colonies, whose relationship with Miller cannot have been strictly pedagogic since, even in the reformed tripos, there was no place in Cambridge for American and colonial history. But Benians was a Master of genius,

[8] Ibid., *1934–5*, p. 769; *1936–7*, p. 837. Cf. G. Kitson Clark, 'A Hundred Years of the Teaching of History at Cambridge, 1873–1973', *Historical Journal*, 16 (1973), 535–53, at 548.

[9] *Cambridge University Reporter, 1935–6*, p. 90. The chronological restriction (or challenge) was dropped from Postan's title in the following year: ibid., *1936–7*, p. 91. This course replaced that of J. Saltmarsh on 'English Institutions in the 11th and 12th Centuries', which in Miller's first year was all that had been available on the subject.

[10] M. P. Charlesworth, in *The Eagle* (St John's College, Cambridge), 53^{234}(1948), 126–9. Gatty had died in March 1948, aged 41.

[11] *Portrait of a College: A History of the College of Saint John the Evangelist, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1961), p. xii.

whose custody of the college ensured that able men of limited means, such as he himself had been, were never lost sight of.[12]

In Miller's case, an indication of that ability, or at least of the reputation he enjoyed by the time he took Part I, was provided by his recruitment as the author of the medieval section of a projected Marxist history of England. And although it was, as he complained, 'of course impossible to write any kind of history of the Middle Ages in 20,000 words, and above all to write a satisfactory Marxist history', while accommodating all the simplifications that that necessitated,[13] he nevertheless declared himself 'fairly satisfied' at least with his coverage of the period 1250–1471. 'It goes against many of the conclusions held by modern scholars,' the second-year undergraduate assured Dr J. H. Plumb in one of a group of letters belonging to the summers of 1936 and 1937.[14]

For this period Miller's college record is meagre. In 1937, according to the Secretary of the College History Society (H. J. Habakkuk, Miller's senior by a year and evidently regarded by him as something of a bugbear), he 'read a very erudite paper on "The House of Percy and the Lancastrian Revolution"',[15] which, despite its erudition, cannot have gone down too badly, since in the following year he was Secretary of the Society himself. In this capacity he asked Plumb to read a paper,[16] and when Plumb failed to oblige, the Society was regaled by Christopher Morris, the tenor of whose talk on 'Gentlemen and Players, a Neglected Aspect of Social History' may not have been quite what Miller had hoped for, though it did combine two themes of central concern to him. With

[12] *Portrait of a College*, pp. 113–14; Peter Linehan, 'Piam in Memoriam: Group III 1894–1986', *Cambridge*, 35 (1994–5), 70–8, at 74.

[13] Uncatalogued papers of J. H. Plumb, Cambridge University Library. Miller to Plumb, 17 Sept. 1936: 'For purposes of simplification. I have permitted myself to repeat an exaggeration that I think both Marx and Engels were guilty of, no doubt from unconscious analogy with the simpler relations of the capitalist period — i.e. an exaggeration of the opposition of *two* classes in the Middle Ages.'

[14] Letters of 15 June and 29 July 1936, both addressed 'Dear Jack'. For an extract from the second of these, proposing a Marxist interpretation of the Wars of the Roses, '(broadly — Yorkist = bourgeoisie; Lancastrian = feudality)', but omitting Miller's crucial qualification 'tho it is not as simple as that, for there are divisions within the bourgeoisie as well as within feudality', see Michael Bentley, *Modernizing England's Past. English Historiography in the Age of Modernism, 1870–1970* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 179 (misdated 17 Sept. 1936). In the event the venture came to nothing ('Michael and I had a long talk with Roy just before I left; there seems every likelihood that the History is off': Miller to Plumb, 2 July 1937).

[15] *The Eagle*, 50^{219}(1937), 43.

[16] Letter dated 2 July 1937: 'I want a don to start off the season, and I think you would probably be more stimulating than most. Incidentally, Habbakuk will be there to ask questions, and it will amuse me to find someone who can deal with him on his own ground.'

memories fresh of the lordly Jardine's recent Ashes victory and with the defeat of the Spanish Republic already imminent, the development of the game, he reported, had been interpreted by the speaker

> as a movement of the proletariat perverted by the aristocracy and rescued by class collaboration (which reached its final triumph in the invention of leg theory bowling). At the same time, like Chekov, he [saw] in sport a certain guarantee against working-class revolution.[17]

But there was more to Miller's undergraduate years than high academic achievement and sport.[18] It was in this period of his life and through his friend, Leo Salingar, then an undergraduate at Emmanuel and later a Fellow in English at Trinity, that he met Fanny Zara Salingar, Leo's sister. Their marriage, in 1941, was to be a source of great happiness to both for nearly sixty years.

The Tripos concluded, Miller was elected by St John's to the Strathcona Research Studentship, and in May 1939 to a Research Fellowship. His dissertation for the fellowship competition, on 'The lands and liberties of the abbey and bishopric of Ely in the Middle Ages', was judged by the two referees, Postan and Cam, to be work of outstanding quality and even greater promise. The text, Cam noticed, escaped 'that heaviness which often haunts the beginner's presentation of such matters'; and Postan, while critical of occasional generalisations unsupported by 'either evidence or arguments', was confident that, 'properly nursed, Miller will rise to great eminence in medieval studies'.[19]

Miller had been working for only a year on the Ely material, while remaining registered in the University as studying for a thesis entitled 'Cambridgeshire landowners in the age of the Barons' Wars (*c*.1250 to 1320)'—a subject which reflected very clearly the influence of his supervisor, Helen Cam. As late as 19 March 1939, after 'six hectic weeks' writing the St John's dissertation, he reported to her his decision to adopt the break up of the knight's fee in Cambridgeshire between 1279 and 1346 as the point of departure of this work, 'and to begin by an attempt to discover what exactly this meant in social and economic terms.'[20] He worked for the dissertation mainly in London. His love of Italian food, encouraged

[17] *The Eagle*, 50^{221}(1938), 281.

[18] 'I have done a little work and have read a considerable amount of Flaubert, Céline's "Voyage au bout de la nuit" (I agree with Leo about it) and some Beaudelaire [*sic*] (rotten) etc.' (letter from Rouen dated 22 Aug. 1937). Eleven days earlier he had reported difficulty in getting the local chemist to understand his pronunciation of 'savon'.

[19] St John's College, Cambridge, Archives, D93. 62.

[20] GCPP, Cam 2/5/18.

by visits to Bertorelli's in Charlotte Street, conveniently near the British Museum, dated from this time. So too, his friendship with Rodney Hilton, then in the early stages of his work on the estates of the abbey of Leicester and other landowners in Leicestershire. They had in common, not only historical interests, but also, until a change in Miller's beliefs after the War, the strength of their commitment to Marxism. For a time they shared accommodation in London. Of their correspondence, it is now letters from Miller that survive. Towards the end of 1938, Hilton, then in Oxford, evidently consulted him about the overall plan and detailed contents of his thesis. Miller, still little more than a year into his own research, replied with authority.[21]

> . . . about general approach. I don't think the two courses open are mutually exclusive. I think, in view of the nature of the town evidence, I should play for safety and start from the country. Do the Honour of Leicester estate and perhaps the ecclesiastical estates for which you have evidence. I don't think it is taking on too much at all. And make that the basis for your work. Any fragments from other sources you can fit into the general scheme will emerge from this study. My own view is that a possible method of approach is this:
>
> 1. Social position of owner of estate.
>
> i. Composition of revenue: Agricultural: wool, corn;
> Non-agricultural: rents, farms, proportion of labour services sold.
> Account rolls plus a little from rentals.
>
> ii. Demesne area and comparison with:
> Area of villeinage;
> Area of freehold;
> Area of leasehold
> Surveys, inquisitions post mortem when extents are given, Hundred Rolls, account rolls.
>
> 2. The tenants: development of capitalist peasantry and prosperous rural middle class.
> Extents and surveys, inquisitions post mortem, rentals, account rolls.

In London, at the Institute of Historical Research, Miller attended the famous seminar of Eileen Power and Postan on medieval economic and social history. Power was then Professor of Economic History at the London School of Economics, and Postan, University Lecturer, and from

[21] Letter dated 13 Nov. 1938, and written from an address in Hampstead. In this letter and in that from Miller to Hilton cited below (pp. 239, 247–8), punctuation and the numbering of items have been supplied or corrected where this seemed necessary for consistency or clarity.

1938 Professor, of Economic History at Cambridge. It was at this time, and at the Public Record Office, that Miller first met Marjorie Morgan (later Marjorie Chibnall).[22] Postan's return to Cambridge in 1939 coincided with the removal there of the London School of Economics, and the formation of a new seminar, presided over by Power, until her untimely death the following year, and by Postan, when his wartime duties at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, London, permitted. In a membership that as well as Marjorie Morgan, included Elizabeth Crittall, Dorothea Oschinsky, and R. A. L. Smith, Miller was not the only participant of whom more would later be heard in medieval studies. But he was unusual in being the pupil of Helen Cam, with whom he was now working for the M.Litt., and whose ideas on constitutional history and on the influence of constitutional developments on economic and social history were powerful and enduring influences on his own perception of these subjects.

The members of the new seminar were waiting to be swept into various kinds of war service. In 1940, Miller was conscripted into the Suffolk Regiment, but in the following year commissioned in the Durham Light Infantry. His early experiences as a soldier included a winter in Kendal, where, though joined by Fanny, he acquired a life-long distaste for the Lake District. However, he never forgot and often recounted with keen pleasure how, on one occasion in this period of his war service, on leading his platoon into a clearing, he came upon other soldiers sitting in a circle and eating eggs (legitimately purchased from the local populace) and listening spellbound to a story told by their leader: this was Lieutenant Southern, also of the DLI. 'One piece of really good luck'—he reported to Helen Cam at the beginning of 1942—'is that I have a fellow subaltern in this unit by name R. W. Southern—one time fellow of Balliol and expert on the 12th century. Naturally we get together a good deal and historical gossip gets a chance. Its rather nice to have a kindred spirit on tap.'[23]

His passage through Staff College at Camberley was to him the supreme experience of his war. The after-effects of a severe attack of bronchitis limited the forms of active service open to him in 1944–5

[22] 'Many thanks for the introduction to Miss Morgan, whom I duly met at the PRO, and who has much wisdom to impart': Miller to Cam, 19 March 1939 (GCPP, Cam 2/5/18).
[23] Miller to Cam, 23 Jan. 1942: GCPP Cam, 2/5/23.

during the push of the British and American forces into Germany and towards Berlin, but, now with the rank of major, he was in Germany by the end of May 1945. Prepared to some extent for the work by a crash course in German, he served on the Food-Agricultural Branch, Economic Division, of the Control Commission for Germany. From Berlin on 21 October 1945, he wrote to Miss Cam:

> My present role here is somewhat amusing. In view of the fact that I am relatively literate and able to write minutes, they have made me British Secretary of the Quadripartite Food-Agriculture Committee of the Control Council. In that capacity I have had to play quite a major part in writing some of the basic policy documents governing German agriculture and food production—all of which is [so] completely fantastic that I cant believe its true. So you see what a medieval historian is capable of! The interesting thing is working with the other nations—with the Russians who know and say what they mean, and we don't like it; with the Americans who don't say what they mean; with the French who don't know what they mean. Heaven preserve me from too long a sojourn in a world of diplomats and politicians. I feel too much like one who has fallen amongst thieves.[24]

He also took part in the interrogation of some leading Nazis. Later, he remembered Albert Speer as the only one among them who expressed no remorse.

II

In 1946, Miller was one of the young dons released expeditiously from the services at the request of their colleges and that of the university MPs.[25] He was already a research fellow of St John's. But since his election in 1939 the situation there had changed. Then, with Geoffrey Barraclough recently arrived, Miller can scarcely have hoped for a St John's anchorage after the end of that Fellowship. Now, however, with Barraclough gone to Liverpool and Coulton and Previté-Orton both carried off by the winter of 1946–7, his future there was assured. Director of Studies in his college,

[24] GCPP Cam, 2/5/33.

[25] On 11 Jan. 1946 the Council of St John's, on learning that Miller's war service would terminate on 15 Jan. 1946 'agreed to permit him to resume his Fellowship under Title A from that date for a period equal to the unexpired period, i.e. until 6th October 1947': St John's College, Cambridge, C.M. 1815/4. The calculation implies that Miller had already enjoyed four of the nine terms of his fellowship, i.e. until June or September 1940.

in 1946 he was appointed Assistant Lecturer in History and, in 1950, succeeded to the Lectureship in Constitutional History vacated by Helen Cam on her recent departure for Harvard. Following the accepted convention for one who held prestigious college and university appointments, Miller abandoned all thought of completing a Ph.D. He remained a fellow of St John's and a university lecturer until 1965, and from 1961 combined these offices with that of Warden of Madingley Hall, a spacious establishment outside Cambridge which doubled as the University's 'House of Residence' for graduate students and academic visitors and a venue for courses mounted by the Board of Extra-mural Studies.

His return to Cambridge after the War coincided with a waning of his Marxist conviction, as is hinted at in a letter to Hilton of about this time:

> Re the January assembly—I will come if I possibly can: my political rest is partly enforced, but also a need to decide some political problems. But on theoretical points, my views remain and my interests are not dead. The difficulty, however, is that I am examining for the Open Schols which begin on Jan. 8: before term begins there will therefore be one mad rush. However, its early to say yet. Keep me posted.[26]

In fact, an episode occurring while he was still in the army had fatally undermined his enthusiasm for Marxism. This was the sudden disappearance, never explained, of a Russian with whom he had formed a friendship while both were attached to the Food-Agriculture Committee in Berlin.

No one reading *Portrait of a College*, written by Miller to mark the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of St John's, or the sparkling account of the foundation that he had published in the *Victoria County History* two years earlier, could doubt the author's great affection for the college of which by then he had been a member for twenty-five years or more.[27] He looked back on his years at St John's as a golden age, his widow would later recall. He was very much the good college man—or rather, the good college chap: a favourite word of his—and a model lecturer and supervisor blessed with a rare capacity for clarifying material without simplifying it. As Tam Dalyell, who heard him lecture at the beginning of his career, has said of him:

> For a first-year undergraduate, . . . Edward Miller's lectures on medieval English history were a godsend. Clear, obviously deeply well-prepared, devoid

[26] Letter dated 23 Oct. 1946, and written from St John's College, Cambridge.

[27] 'St John's College', *V*[*ictoria*] *C*[*ounty*] *H*[*istory*], *Cambridgeshire*, 3, pp. 437–50.

> of pomposity, . . . with a twinkle in his eye, he would explain the medieval decrees and laws, why ostensibly they were promulgated, and then give the actual reason that motivated the king and the barons.[28]

It is not difficult to understand why he was so much in demand by the WEA. Puckishly revelling in the quirkiness of human behaviour, whether in the 1260s or the 1960s, he is remembered by the present writer (PAL) as an early critic of Elton's *Tudor Revolution in Government* but on only one occasion as expressing exasperation at the work of his medieval colleagues, namely the onslaught on Stubbs mounted by H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles in *The Governance of Medieval England*, almost, so it seemed, because Cam and Maitland (another hero) were not there to defend the citadel.[29] As tutor (1951–7) he was often to be found, unusually for a don in those days, puffing his pipe over 'a quick half' with a pupil in the Blue Boar or the college buttery before setting off across the Backs to be driven home to Madingley by Fanny. Small in stature and a bustling presence, he radiated merriment and good humour, with a throaty chuckle his most distinctive characteristic. Cheerfulness was always breaking in. Field sports were a passion. A guileful bowler and energetic out-fielder in his youth, by the mid-1960s he was regularly to be found on the boundary or touch-line, duffle-coated in season in the role of spectator, or more profitably engaged indoors at a game of room cricket with his colleague, R. E. Robinson, the historian of Africa, and sundry undergraduates. College legend had it that sometime in the freezing and glass-rationed winter of 1947 Miller had gone to a neighbouring room to quell a contest involving the then-undergraduate Robinson, a hockey stick and a squash ball — and had joined in: he came to scold and stayed to score. His record 227 not out has never been bettered. While not for this reason perhaps, in 1969 there were those who wanted him as Master. Yet though Miller was impossible to dislike, he was also difficult to know. He spoke sincerely when he said that he liked to be 'invisible'.

[28] *The Independent*, 6 Jan. 2001. At the time of writing, Mr Dalyell was the Father of the House of Commons. The exceptional quality of Miller's lectures is exemplified in the notes taken by, and still in the possession of, Dr Ronald Hyam, Emeritus Reader in British Imperial History and Fellow of Magdalene College, who as a St John's undergraduate attended his course in 1956–7.

[29] For Maitland on Stubbs, see his 'William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford', in S*elected Historical Essays of F. W. Maitland*, ed. H. M. Cam (Cambridge, in association with the Selden Society, 1957), pp. 266–76; and for Cam on Stubbs, see her 'Stubbs Seventy Years After', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 9 (1947–9), 129–47.

III

If Miller had any regrets about his professional life during his years at St John's, it was that although he had presided with Postan at the graduate seminar in Economic History, few of the research students whom he had been invited to supervise worked in his own principal field of research: by a natural process, Postan, as Professor, had the prior claim here. *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (1996), the Festschrift marking Miller's eightieth birthday in the previous year, reflects this state of affairs. All the contributors to this outstanding volume wished to honour one who had been for so long, in the words of the preface, 'in the creative forefront of their field of study',[30] yet only three, George Holmes, Anthony Tuck, and Jenny Kermode, had been his research students, and only Holmes and Tuck had been so at Cambridge. When, in 1965, he accepted the Chair of Medieval History at the University of Sheffield (one of several that he was offered about this time), it was rumoured that he was disappointed not to have been offered the Chair in Economic History from which Postan was about to retire. But the only Cambridge chair which he had ever hoped for was the Chair of Medieval History, filled in 1955 by the election of Christopher Cheney. The considerations which prompted his decision in 1965 were very different from the one attributed to him. In both term and vacation, Madingley Hall imposed a heavy burden of hospitality for a warden and his wife as conscientious and naturally hospitable as Ted and Fanny Miller. And with supreme tact both wished to leave Cambridge before their son, John, entered Jesus College to read History. By the time they returned to Cambridge in 1971, John Miller, later Professor of History at Queen Mary College, London, was a research fellow of Caius College.

In 1965, with eleven full-time academic staff and between twenty and twenty-five students taking Final Honours every year, the History Department at Sheffield was relatively small; and despite inevitable growth in the post-Robbins years, it always offered scope for Miller's genius for collegial life. In his Inaugural Lecture, he argued vigorously for the ways in which a knowledge of medieval history may contribute to a critical understanding of the present, including the making of modern states, and drew attention to the duty of history teachers in universities to

[30] Richard Britnell and John Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), p. xiv.

teach 'those general audiences which a developing democratic system of education is bringing into our universities'.[31]

To the disappointment of his younger colleagues, Miller attempted no significant changes in the syllabus, dominated by British History, that he found at Sheffield. To have done so would have been to incur the risk of a protracted disagreement with Professor Kenneth Haley, co-head of the department, who was deeply attached to the existing syllabus,[32] and for this Miller was unwilling. But his introduction of tutorials as a regular feature of teaching arrangements, hitherto characterised by lectures with a small admixture of seminars, was a notable innovation. He himself took pupils in this way (and indeed lectured) in modern as well as medieval periods, and in Sheffield as in Cambridge became renowned as a teacher. Michael Bentley, now Professor of Modern History at St Andrews, has described the life-enhancing effects for him of Miller's tutorials when he was a student at Sheffield.

> Essays were submitted in advance, and he was waiting with his list of points and questions to discuss. (. . .) Three images stay in the mind. First, he treated us as though we were important people. Second, he made us feel that spending an hour talking about history was a very exciting and worthwhile thing to be doing. Third, we emerged, or I did, anxious to read everything, absolutely everything, that he had talked about. He said nothing flashy or particularly remarkable. But the manner of his teaching was quite remarkable in its effects and he communicated the idea of 'love for one's subject' without effort or contrivance.[33]

To young members of the staff at Sheffield with careers to build, he gave encouragement and support; and he and Fanny were renowned for their hospitality. His readiness to listen to the students on any topic, in the bar and elsewhere, did much to ensure that the department had a relatively easy passage through the student troubles of the late 1960s. But he was not forgotten in Cambridge. In 1969, he delivered the Ellen McArthur Lectures there, for which he chose the title 'Economic Change in Medieval England', and in 1971 he received and accepted the prestigious invitation to become Master of Fitzwilliam College. On leaving Sheffield, he received a remarkable tribute from *Darts*, the student newspaper, printed

[31] *The Relevance of Medieval History* (Inaugural Lecture, University of Sheffield, 10 Nov. 1965), 14 pp., at p. 13.
[32] For Haley's view, see Mark Greengrass, 'Kenneth Harold Dobson Haley, 1920–1997', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 101 (1998), 407–15, at 413.
[33] Professor Bentley to the authors, 1 Nov. 2005.

under the heading *Edward Miller: The Conservative as Progressive*: 'It is doubtful if there is anyone in the university held in such wide regard, right through the university (. . .) and he must be held largely responsible for running a department in which harmony and friendliness have been more conspicuous than friction and alienation.' In the following year, the University of Sheffield conferred on him the honorary degree of D.Litt.

IV

As a reviewer (a role in which he had few equals) Miller moved confidently in worlds as remote from each other in time and place as those of Robert Latouche and Lawrence Stone.[34] His capacity to do so reflects a deep understanding of the history of a Europe that did not stop at the Channel ports. The same quality, together with meticulous scholarship and an equable temperament, made him an ideal editor of wide-ranging works with many different contributors to keep on the rails.[35] His interests as a scholar centred, however, on the social and economic history of medieval England. As discussion of these themes gathered momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, and social history acquired the quantitative dimension that economic history already possessed, they tended increasingly to receive separate treatment. Miller always regarded them as inseparable and believed that neither could be understood apart from a legal and constitutional context.[36] History with so few frontiers could easily have been rather baffling to those who attempted to engage with it, but on paper Miller had the unfailing clarity that was also admired in his lectures. He was averse to model-making, as tending to remove variables from the total environment in which they existed, and on one occasion quoted Postan with approval on this point: '. . . if it is the theoretician's job to remove from his argument the considerations which do not happen to be

[34] *English Historical Review*, 72 (1957), 486–8; *Historical Journal*, 9 (1960), 133–6.

[35] M. M. Postan and E. Miller (eds.), *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, 2: *Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1987); M. M. Postan, E. E. Rich and E. Miller (eds.), ibid., 3: *Economic Organization and Policies in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1963); E. Miller (ed.), *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 3: *1348–1500* (Cambridge, 1991).

[36] 'The revulsion on my part from the purely economic is even stronger than it used to be', he wrote in a two-page *tour d'horizon* of the Cambridge historical scene and other academic matters addressed to 'Dear Helen' on 18 March 1949: 'I don't know how the Board envisage the future, but next year at least I do the whole course [of English constitutional history to 1485]': GCPP, Cam 2/2/12.

"strictly" economic, it is the historian's function to bring them back'.[37] Never much attracted as a historian by economic theory, he became even less so, and in his later years claimed, somewhat unconvincingly, to be wholly ignorant of it. On more than one occasion he pointed out that in the Middle Ages the explanation of economic developments often lay outside the economic system: this was, indeed, one of his core beliefs as a historian.

Within each area of concern, he liked to tackle large problems. But however large or small the problem, he brought all the relevant variables to the surface — a capacity demonstrated to perfection in his discussion of the fortunes of the urban and rural cloth industries in England in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. If readers begin this essay (as some, following the lead given many years previously by Professor Eleanora Carus-Wilson, may still do)[38] believing that the principal factor at work was the proliferation of water-driven fulling-mills situated in the countryside, they know by the end that the complicated story also involved the fortunes of the Flemish cloth industry, industrial strife in the urban industry at home, the development of English fairs as centres of distribution for English and foreign cloth, and the fiscal policies of Edward III.[39] In discussion, he moved easily from the general to the particular and seemed always to have a remarkable store of particulars to hand. This feature of his work reflected the wide reading and extensive note-taking, often in local record offices, that preceded and accompanied every new research project. At his death, some thirty large card indexes of extraordinary range and detail, written in his neat and unvarying hand, witnessed to the time and energy that he spent in the search for primary sources and the collation of printed material, from his time as a research student to the Fitzwilliam years and beyond. Willing as he was to speculate, he always made it clear when he was doing so, and a reluctance to rest any argument on such a foundation helps to explain why some of his most important publications had exceptionally long periods of gestation — though the delays that are a hazard of contributing to multi-author volumes, as Miller did on many occasions, also played their part.

[37] E. Miller, 'The Farming of Manors and Direct Management', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 26 (1973), 138–40, at 140; M. M. Postan, *Fact and Relevance: Essays on Historical Method* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 121.

[38] E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'An Industrial Revolution of the Thirteenth Century', first published in *Economic History Review*, 11 (1941), 39–60.

[39] E. Miller, 'The Fortunes of the English Textile Industry during the Thirteenth Century', ibid., 2nd ser., 18 (1965), 64–82.

However, slowness to publish, for whatever reason, sometimes makes it difficult to follow the development of his ideas or shifts of interest over time. He often wrote on controversial topics, but never with the killer instinct: he was moderate in advancing his own views and valued moderation in others. He was also modest about his own work and generous in acknowledging the influence of others on his ideas — traits that made it easy for readers to undervalue his originality.

The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely, published in 1951 but dating as an enterprise from the late 1930s, is still the classic account of the formation of a great ecclesiastical estate in the late Old English period and its fortunes during the immensely complicated period of the Norman Conquest.[40] Moreover, in tracing the effects of the bishop's lordship on local societies in East Anglia over a much longer period, when such an estate provided the inescapable nexus of relationships for all its tenants, free and unfree, Miller discussed issues that were to be at the centre of debate about agrarian society in this period for many years to come.

Concurrently with the writing of *Ely*, Miller pursued his wider interest in medieval landowners and landownership and in the manor, the basic territorial unit of the latter down to the fourteenth century. In particular, he wished to discover how manors differing in size and form from each other adjusted to the developing cash economy, and what influenced the choice of villein or wage labour on manorial demesnes.[41] He was also interested in the reasons why from an early date many large landowners had leased their manors for fixed renders in cash or kind, known as 'farms', but had taken them in hand again in the years around 1200 and begun to exploit them directly for market profits.[42] He felt challenged by the views of the Marxist historian, E. A. Kosminsky, who concluded from the evidence of the Hundred Rolls of 1279 that the form taken by feudal rent in the thirteenth century, in the swathe of Midland England covered

[40] E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely: The Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the Tenth Century to the early Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1951).

[41] Ibid., 80–112; E. Miller, 'La société rurale en Angleterre (X^e–XII^e siècles)', in *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 13: Agricoltura e mondo rurale in Occidente nell'Alto Medioevo (Spoleto, 22–28 Aprile 1965)*, 111–34, at 129–31. For Miller's first published remarks on demesne labour supplies, see 'The Estates of the Abbey of St Albans' [a review article on A. E. Levett, *Studies in Manorial History* (Oxford, 1938)], in *St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Transactions*, NS, 5 (1936–8), 285–300, at 289. In style, this article is indebted to Maitland. Miller did not repeat the experiment.

[42] E. Miller, 'England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: An Economic Contrast?', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 24 (1971), 1–14, at 7–14; E. Miller, 'Farming of Manors and Direct Management', 138–40; cf. Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086–1348* (London, 1978), pp. 204–13.

by this source, varied directly with the size of manors and of the estates to which they belonged.[43]

These concerns Miller shared with a number of scholars, including Postan, whose essay, published in 1937, on the chronology of labour services had become the take-off point for much of the debate, and Rodney Hilton and Marjorie Morgan. Postan had shown that many obligations to perform labour services that had been commuted into money rents in the twelfth century were reimposed, and in some cases augmented, in the thirteenth century.[44] Here and elsewhere,[45] he implied, or stated explicitly, that the practice of leasing manorial demesnes in the twelfth century reflected contraction in the economy as a whole, to be contrasted with the expansion to come in the thirteenth-century. In important monographs published within a year of each other (1946/7), Morgan and Hilton demonstrated that the labour service obligations of villeins, even if completely enforced, were inadequate for demesne needs on a wide variety of manors, involving many different kinds of lords: much hired labour would always have been needed to fill the gaps.[46]

Miller's views on these problems were distinctive. He pointed to the limitations of the Hundred Rolls and all sources recording the obligations of villeins but not the extent to which these were used from year to year: for information of the latter kind, different sources are needed.[47] Into the discussion of the leasing or farming of manors in the early Middle Ages and the virtual end of this system in the years around 1200, he introduced a new factor: an attitude on the part of landowners to their estates that for the greater part of the twelfth century was only distantly related to the underlying economic trend and should not be used as a kind of barometer to ascertain that trend.[48] Large landowners were for a long time

[43] E. A. Kosminsky, 'Services and Money Rents in the Thirteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 5 (1935), 24–45, at 40–3; E. A. Kosminsky, *Studies in the Agrarian History of England in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. R. H. Hilton, trans. Ruth Kisch (Oxford, 1956), chaps. 3 and 5.

[44] 'The Chronology of Labour Services', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., 20 (1937), 169–93; revised in M. M. Postan, *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 89–106.

[45] 'Glastonbury Estates in the Twelfth Century', ibid., pp. 249–77, at pp. 276–7.

[46] R. H. Hilton, *The Economic Development of some Leicestershire Estates in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 76–7; M. Morgan, *The English Lands of the Abbey of Bec* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 87–96.

[47] See, e.g., his review of Kosminsky, *Studies*, in *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 9 (1956–7), 499–501, and the postscript to his postcard of 17 Oct. 1958 inviting Helen Cam to supper before her talk to the St John's History Society: 'I still remember with awe your devastation of poor old Kosminsky' (GCPP, Cam 2/7/9).

[48] 'La société rurale en Angleterre', 118–23; 'England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', 8–12.

well served as consumers by taking food farms, or renders in kind, from a selection of their manors. It was not until the years around 1200, when their consumption needs were growing, but the cash incomes drawn from their remaining manors were squeezed by the effects of prodigal subinfeudation on the part of their predecessors earlier in the century, that they were tempted to take their demesnes in hand and enhance their incomes by producing for the market. It mattered, too, that by this date the necessary bureaucracy of literate servants was available to manage manors used in this way. Very tentatively, he suggested that small landowners, having small and administratively flexible manors, probably adapted more quickly to market incentives.

Miller did not publish these views in their entirety until the 1970s. Remarkably, however, a letter to Hilton, who had apparently sent Miller a copy of the proofs of his own forthcoming book for comment, suggests that his views were already well developed in 1946, within a very short time of his return to academic life after war service. A cautious reference by Hilton to the possibility that labour services were less efficient than wage-labour elicited another remarkably authoritative, not to say penetrating, response from Miller, including brief critiques of the ideas of Kosminsky and Postan.[49]

> This raises a very big problem, where I feel that you have rather begged the question (as to some extent Kosminsky does, though he does raise it, if I remember rightly — I'm speaking without my copy by me). The following points occur to me:—
>
> 1. What is the evidence for the efficiency or inefficiency of the labour service system as compared with the wage labour system under medieval conditions? (NB — modern efficiency of labour depends partly upon provision of economic incentives, which demanded in first place a long process of psychological habituation; and as we have seen recently these can easily break down if the circumstances for which they were devised are not present: e.g. if [the] purchasing power of wage[s] is diminished or avenues of expenditure closed etc.). Moreover, [the] lord had in [the] manor court formidable machinery for increasing efficiency, and it is applied indifferently to villeins and hired labour.
>
> 2. What is the evidence for the fact that there was a large scale transference from serf to wage labour on the smaller estates? Most of it I have seen merely suggests that there *never* were large scale labour services on many of the small estates.
>
> 3. Evidence based upon surveys (Hundred Rolls, Inquisitions post mortem, terriers etc.) conceal[s] one vitally important fact about the organisation of the thirteenth-century great estate: that there was a very great deal of wage labour

[49] Letter dated 23 Oct. 1946, and written from St John's College, Cambridge.

> employed. Indeed, my impression is that serf labour *in general* tends rather to be the reserve for periods of heavy demand for labour. The day to day tasks (shepherds, carting, even ploughing, etc.) [were] done mainly by *famuli*.
> In fact, I am more and more coming to the view that the factors of differentiation between the large and small estates, and the classes who owned them must be sought along quite different lines:—
>
> (i) An original difference determined by the scale of ownership as a factor of *demand*: the large household (monastic, baronial, episcopal) demands a steady flow of commodities from a wide area, which naturally finds expression in stereotyped quotas (e.g. food farm system) and stereotyped labour organisation (villein services). The small estate, on the other hand, is more flexible because more individual — both in reflecting individual requirements and probably more detailed individual management. There was thus from the beginning a tendency for far less stereotyped arrangements, both in cultivation and labour, than on the larger estates.
>
> (ii) The reaction of these two types of estates to the twelfth-/thirteenth-century boom is a logical corollary of their different scale and their differing organisation.
>
> (a) It was easier to change the production pattern and the flow of commodities in the small than on the large estate — it was generally more compact (therefore market pull can be canalised into one direction) and its organisation was in any case more flexible.
>
> (b) Postan's thesis tends to conceal another basic characteristic of the thirteenth-century movement. By concentration on the demesne/villeinage relation, he makes it appear that the issue of the thirteenth century is one of money rents v. labour services. Now, all I have seen of the records of the period goes to show that this is not true. Rents increase as well as services, even more than services, on the great estate (and in the process reflect the changing valuation of land as a source of subsistence plus labour — the former a dead loss more or less to the landowner — to a source of profit). For this, on the large estate, there was an ample reserve, since subsistence requirements were met by a relatively small portion of the estate, and management problems restricted to some extent the profitable exploitation of the rest. On the small estate, on the other hand, the advantages of commercial exploitation were probably enhanced by the fact that it was a more manageable unit — and from that point of view the easiest source of working capital was probably partly found in such villeinage as there was. Therefore the primary tendency for the smaller estates to depend largely on wage labour was probably enhanced.

After arguing briefly that the most important difference between large and small or medium-sized estates was not their contrasting modes of production but their social function in supplying the needs of very different kinds of consumers, he concluded:

> I'm sorry about this dethroning of Kosminsky: but I do feel that he is quite wrong. However, perhaps I am just at sea. I have merely tried to rationalise on *facts* which he simply seems to ignore.

In these decades, the wider understanding of economic change in the Middle Ages was profoundly influenced, first, by Postan's belief in the alternation of ebb and flow, of contraction and expansion, and in due course by his analogy between the agrarian economy of medieval England and the (then so-called) under-developed economies of the twentieth century. Miller was sympathetic to both these ideas, and, at an early date in the discussion stimulated by the analogy of under-developed economies, argued persuasively that even when expansion occurred, it was accompanied by too little qualitative change for long-term gains to be secure.[50] It was generally agreed that, within these limits, the thirteenth century was a period of expansion; but the underlying trend in the twelfth century, a period of many violent fluctuations, was harder to identify. Miller argued convincingly, and was the first to do so, that this, too, was an expansive century and continuous in this respect with the thirteenth: the growth of population, of overseas trade, of towns and internal markets, pointed to this conclusion.[51]

In the later Middle Ages, when, on a modest estimate, the population of England probably fell to about one half what it had been in 1300, and structural changes were conspicuous features of the towns and countryside inhabited by the residue, the underlying economic trend has proved even harder to identify. Miller hesitated to accept Postan's diagnosis of economic contraction and himself pointed out that 'economic growth' would not do either.[52] As a pragmatist, however, he wrote authoritatively on many of the changes making up the puzzling whole. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 3: *1348–1500*, for which the contributions had been first commissioned some twenty years previously under a different editor, and which was finally published under Miller's editorship in 1991, is a major contribution to the history of the diverse local and regional economies and societies which assumed new forms in this period. Miller wrote a masterly Introduction, in which he traced the attainment of a new, if fragile, balance between land and people, favourable to small and middling farmers though less so to large ones. Although only a minority of peasants enjoyed social promotion, many had 'more to eat

[50] E. Miller, 'The English Economy in the Thirteenth Century: Implications of Recent Research', *Past and Present*, 28 (1964), 21–40.

[51] E. Miller, 'England in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries: An Economic Contrast?', 5–7; and for expansion in the North, E. Miller, 'Farming in Northern England during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Northern History*, 11 (1976 for 1975), 1–16, at 6–7.

[52] Review of M. M. Postan, *Essays on Medieval Agriculture*, in *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 27 (1974), 681–2; Miller, 'The English Economy in the Thirteenth Century', 38–40.

for more of the time' than in the past.[53] But he also contributed the sections on Yorkshire and Lancashire, and, on the withdrawal of another contributor,[54] those on the southern counties.

War in the North, the St John's College, Cambridge, Lecture delivered at Hull in 1959 and published in the following year, retains all its authority as an account of the effects of the long wars between Scotland and England on the northern English counties;[55] and in an essay contributed to the memorial volume for David Joslin, in 1975, Miller suggested that the economic consequences of the taxation needed to pay for the king's wars in the years around 1300 may have been as significant as the consequences for constitutional development.[56] He also foreshadowed later work in this field by pointing out that the peasant contributed more than his lord to these taxes.[57]

As urban history moved in these decades from the study of gilds and other institutions, and liberties, to the more humane study of urban populations (how they were recruited, stratified, earned their wealth, if any, and spent it) Miller, in embracing the new concerns, never lost sight of the institutions and liberties. His article on the city of York in the Middle Ages, for the *Victoria County History*, still one of the best histories of a medieval town or city in print, treated both in depth and gave him an appetite for more.[58] When this was published in 1961, however, he had acquired an interest in the interaction between urban and rural populations. Indeed, his correspondence with Hilton in 1938, previously referred to, already reflects this interest, for it urges Hilton to scan his sources for rural landowners holding land or burgages in the town of Leicester.[59] Principally, however, this interaction was reflected in migration (in both directions) and in the investment of wealth made in towns in rural as well as urban property; the latter process he described as 'a constant haemor-

[53] *Agrarian History of England and Wales*, 3, pp. 1–33, at pp. 15, 32.

[54] I take this opportunity of expressing regret for a withdrawal that was my own and accepted with the utmost courtesy by Edward Miller (BFH).

[55] See above, n. 3.

[56] E. Miller, 'War, Taxation and the English Economy in the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries' in J. M. Winter (ed.), *War and Economic Development: Essays in Memory of David Joslin* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 11–31, at p. 27.

[57] Ibid., pp. 17–18.

[58] Miller to Cam, 8 Aug. 1958: 'I have enjoyed doing [*VCH, Yorkshire: The City of York* (1961), 25–116]. Indeed, I have decided that urban history contains so many unsolved problems that I ought to do more of it. But I have no plans for that at present: the next assignment is some vulgarisation for Longmans' (GCPP, Cam 2/7/9).

[59] See above, n. 21.

rhage' of capital from industry and trade into real property.[60] From this interest flowed a more specific one in the identity of the ruling oligarchies in towns, or, as they are often called in modern historiography, the patrician class. Eventually, Miller's investigation of these, the dominant burgesses, comprised a geographically dispersed sample, extending from Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the north, to Southampton in the south. The oligarchies, he found, were indeed oligarchies, but open to recruitment from below, relatively short-lived, and, given their investments in rural property, separated by no very clear line from the local gentry.[61]

In *Historical Studies of the English Parliament*, Miller and E. B. Fryde, his co-editor, set out to provide a 'convenient compendium' of some of the essays which, beginning with Maitland's on the Lenten Parliament of 1305, had 'shaped the way in which historians of the present day regard the beginnings of English parliamentary history'.[62] The two volumes are dedicated to Helen Cam, as 'one of those who enlarged the horizons of English parliamentary studies'. They represent a major contribution to the historiography of the English parliament, and Miller's Introduction to the first volume, covering the period down to 1399, provides a critical review of developments in that period, in an essay of great and confident learning. Inevitably, much of this volume is devoted to the beginnings of representation and later growth in the powers of the commons in parliament. In a later essay, he pointed to the consequences for parliament of the lack of a firm distinction in England between the gentry and leading burgesses: this made it natural that both should eventually come together in political life as the commons in parliament. Thus to some extent, parliament was moulded by social developments in town and countryside.[63] Yet it was, in words of G. O. Sayles which he quoted with approval, 'the child of the monarchy',[64] and its rise reflected the 'state-building' on the part of the monarch that provided a persistent thread in Miller's understanding of English history.

[60] 'The English Economy in the Thirteenth Century', 37.

[61] E. Miller, in *VCH Yorks: The City of York*, pp. 40–1; E. Miller, 'Rulers of Thirteenth Century Towns: The Cases of York and Newcastle upon Tyne', in P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (eds.), *Thirteenth Century England*, I, *Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference, 1985* (Woodbridge, 1986), 128–41; E. Miller, 'English Town Patricians, *c.*1200–1350', in A. Guarducci (ed.), *Gerarchie economiche e gerarchie sociali, secoli XII–XVIII: Atti della «Dodicesima Settimana di Studi», 18–23 Aprile 1980* (Florence, 1990), pp. 217–40.

[62] *Historical Studies of the English Parliament*, 1: *Origins to 1399*; 2: *1399–1603* (Cambridge, 1970), 1, p. ix. See also E. Miller, *The Origins of Parliament* (Historical Association pamphlet, General Ser. 44; London, 1960).

[63] 'Rulers of Thirteenth Century Towns', pp. 141–2.

[64] *Historical Studies of the English Parliament*, 1, p. 6.

State-building, however, was under way long before there were parliaments.[65] From the tenth and eleventh centuries, Miller argued, it provided a context for economic change, for it was in these centuries that government in England first extended its activity to this sphere of life. But its greatest effects on society were felt in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In an ambitious paper delivered to the Royal Historical Society in 1952, he compared the policies of the French and English monarchies towards feudal fiefs and in particular the desire of feudal tenants to establish the right to alienate these when family or other needs made this desirable.[66] On this occasion he anticipated a conclusion to which he subsequently returned many times, namely that in England at this time, government so shaped private law that feudal tenants became landowners, and land, no longer the basis of feudal obligation, became an economic asset for all those fortunate enough to own it.[67] Political involvement followed naturally for many who did. But there was a two-way traffic in these matters, and at times in the later Middle Ages the economy led and government could only follow. In a virtuoso comparison of economic policies in France and England, in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, 3, Miller pointed to the dominance of, first, wool and later cloth in England's overseas trade to an extent affecting the very structure of economic life here. In ways having no parallel in France, it facilitated the development of a doctrine akin to economic nationalism and this in turn brought financial and diplomatic advantage to the Crown. For this, parliament provided a forum, and England's precocious centralisation the necessary administrative base. Mercantilism lay ahead.

On moving from Sheffield to Cambridge in 1971, and leaving the work-load of a professor and head of department in the one place to

[65] For this paragraph, see E. Miller, 'The State and Landed Interests in Thirteenth Century France and England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 2 (1952), 109–29; E. Miller, 'The Background of Magna Carta' (review article on J. C. Holt, *The Northerners: A Study in the Reign of King John*, 1961), *Past and Present*, 23 (1962), 78–83; E. Miller, 'France and England', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, 3, chap. 6, pp. 290–338; E. Miller, *Government Economic Policies and Public Finance, 900–1500* (C. M. Cipolla (ed.), The Fontana Economic History of Europe, 1: The Middle Ages, chap. 8; London, 1970).

[66] Miller to Cam, 4 Feb. 1952: 'I've been getting completely out of my depth over French and English economic policies in the Middle Ages—for Camb. Econ. Hist. vol. III (. . .). I tried to compare Anglo-French attempts to tackle the problems of the land-law in the 13th cent. for the Royal Historical Society this autumn—a frightening experience which I don't think quite came off' (GCPP, Cam 2/2/12).

[67] Cf. Miller and Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086–1348*, pp. 176–8.

assume that of a head of house in the other, Miller abandoned the intention to write the book on the medieval nobility for which he had been committed to a publisher for some four or five years. Given his new circumstances, the decision is understandable. On a smaller scale, however, and taking in his stride many reviews, he published prolifically during the Fitzwilliam years, not least on peasant society, with which he had first engaged when he embarked on a study of the see of Ely and its estates in the late 1930s. In *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086–1348*, written jointly with John Hatcher and published in 1978 (presumably the 'vulgarisation for Longmans' to which he had referred in 1958), nothing that had earlier seemed important to Miller in this wide area of concern is neglected, and standards of living and problems of poverty receive a more extended treatment than had been possible in his other recent works.[68] (The vivid treatment of poverty in his lectures is still remembered.) His willingness to lecture for the Faculty, after his return to Cambridge in 1971, on industry, commerce, and economic policy in the Middle Ages underlines his interest in topics which, as he had always believed, were not only intrinsically important but also had implications for the agrarian life of the period. *Rural Society and Economic Change* and a second volume, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts, 1086–1348*, published by the same authors in 1995, set a new standard for textbooks in all these fields.

V

Although founded a century earlier, Fitzwilliam House (its title since 1924) did not secure collegiate status in the University of Cambridge until 1966, and Miller was the first Master to be elected by the Fellows. When he assumed office, the college lacked endowments, and being, in consequence, dependent on fee income, had a very large number of Junior Members, of whom it could accommodate, at most, only half. Ten years later, when he retired, the endowments, though augmented by contributions from the university which his high profile on central university bodies had, without doubt, helped to secure, were inevitably still inadequate, and the buildings were no more extensive. In 1971, however, there were needs of a more intangible kind as compelling as the needs for money and buildings. For several reasons, the campaign for collegiate status, beginning in the 1950s,

[68] Ibid., pp. 128–33, 147–61.

had opened divisions that were not quickly healed after its success. Among the greatest needs in this period were the attainment of a true collegiality among the Fellows and more widely in the college, and the integration of the college in the life of the university. It was also vital to restore harmonious relations with the Fitzwilliam Society (comprising Old Members). Miller, possessing as he did an outgoing personality, an infectious sense of humour, and long experience of Cambridge, was the man the hour required. He was, moreover, a good administrator, and it was felt as a further advantage that he had been at a northern grammar school.

The new Master was also a good listener, and as a chairman he sought consensus: he presided but did not lead. Nevertheless, the admission of women in 1979, a controversial matter among the Fellows, reflected his own common-sense view that a more balanced society would result from the change. When, near the beginning of his Mastership, a minor revolution among the Junior Members set aside the existing claim of the Amalgamated Clubs, dominated by the Sports Clubs, to speak for the whole student body, he greatly eased the transition by his active cooperation with the new and much more representative Junior Members' Association. If sportsmen lost some ground in this change, sport itself enjoyed a novel degree of encouragement from a Master who was frequently to be seen on the touch-line and towpath. But he was interested in all aspects of undergraduate life and involved himself enthusiastically in others beside sport. He also supervised undergraduates for the Historical Tripos. Reaching out to Old Members, he continued the strenuous efforts of his predecessor, Walter Grave, to heal the breach with the Fitzwilliam Society to such good effect that it twice elected him as its President. As for meetings of the Governing Body and its committees, they became notably more good-humoured and relaxed than previously.

Miller's return to Cambridge occurred in a difficult period for the Faculty of History, since, for the time being, the university could not afford to fill the vacant Lectureship in the Social and Economic History of the Middle Ages: this remained vacant until the appointment of Dr (later Professor) John Hatcher in 1976. On Miller's election in 1971, Postan, who, in these circumstances, continued to lecture and hold classes and seminars in retirement, invited him to share in this work, and Miller immediately did so.[69] His service on the central bodies of the university,

[69] Letter from Postan to Miller dated 2 June 1971 (Cambridge University Library, Add. 8961/I/55). On 16 Dec. 1971, Postan wrote to Professor F. H. Hinsley, Chairman of the History

including the Library Syndicate, which he chaired, was much less congenial to him than any form of teaching, but crucially important for the college, in integrating Fitzwilliam in the life of the university. He received an invitation to become Vice-Chancellor but, mindful of the likely financial burden to the college, felt unable to accept. In 1975, he told Postan that the General Board, the Council of the Senate, and their committees, had 'virtually destroyed' his freedom in afternoons and evenings.[70] However, a highly developed, perhaps over-developed, sense of duty prevented him from seeking to avoid any chores of this kind. Miller's ten years as Master form a distinct period of consolidation in the history of the college, and his own part in this was a large one. And there were evidently some chinks in his Cambridge timetable, for from 1972 until 1979 his expertise in both rural and urban history found a new outlet in his chairmanship of the Victoria County Histories Committee of the Institute of Historical Research; and his fifteen active years (1974–89) as Chairman of the Editorial Board of the *History of Parliament*. began in the same period. He was elected FBA in the year of his retirement.

VI

Since Fitzwilliam College had no Master's Lodge at this time, retirement, in 1981, involved no change of residence, and Ted and Fanny Miller continued to live at 36 Almoners Avenue, as they had done throughout his Mastership. He greatly enjoyed working with John Hatcher on *Towns, Commerce and Crafts, 1086–1348* (1995), and the publication of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 3, under his editorship four years earlier was a personal triumph. He took particular pleasure in seeing his two grandsons growing up, and they for their part were devoted to him. But in only his second year of retirement, while on holiday in Rouen, where he had summered as an undergraduate, he suffered a punctured lung after falling in a shower. His stamina and his ability to speak in public for any length of time were permanently affected. Later, failing eyesight and deafness added to his reluctance to move far from home, as on the Swan Hellenic cruises which he and Fanny enjoyed at an early stage

Faculty Board, to say that he and Miller would repeat their discussion class in English Social and Economic History in the Middle Ages in the next Michaelmas Term, and would offer a lecture course then if no lecturer had been appointed in the interval (ibid.).

[70] Letter from Miller to Postan dated 20 March 1975 (ibid.).

of retirement. Despite these afflictions, however, a visit to the Kirov Ballet not long before he died gave great pleasure, and only a very few days before the end members of his family heard him explaining the meaning of some entries in Domesday Book to his granddaughter-in-law, who had expressed an interest in the matter. He died in Addenbroke's Hospital, after a very short illness but a long period of debility, on 21 December 2000. In accordance with his wishes, his funeral was private and there was no memorial service.

BARBARA HARVEY
Fellow of the Academy

PETER LINEHAN
Fellow of the Academy

Note. Letters from Edward Miller to Rodney Hilton, now in the possession of Jean Birrell, are cited with her permission, and we owe to her our knowledge of their existence. Letters now in the Postan papers, and reports on Edward Miller's fellowship dissertation, submitted in 1939, are cited with the permission, respectively, of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library and the Council of St John's College, Cambridge. Extracts from the letters of Helen Cam are cited by permission of the Mistress and Fellows of Girton College, Cambridge. The obituary of Edward Miller published in *The Independent* of 6 January 2001 is cited with the permission of the Editor of *The Independent*. For a further account of his Cambridge and his Sheffield years, see Peter Linehan *et al*., *The Eagle* (2001), 80–8.

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