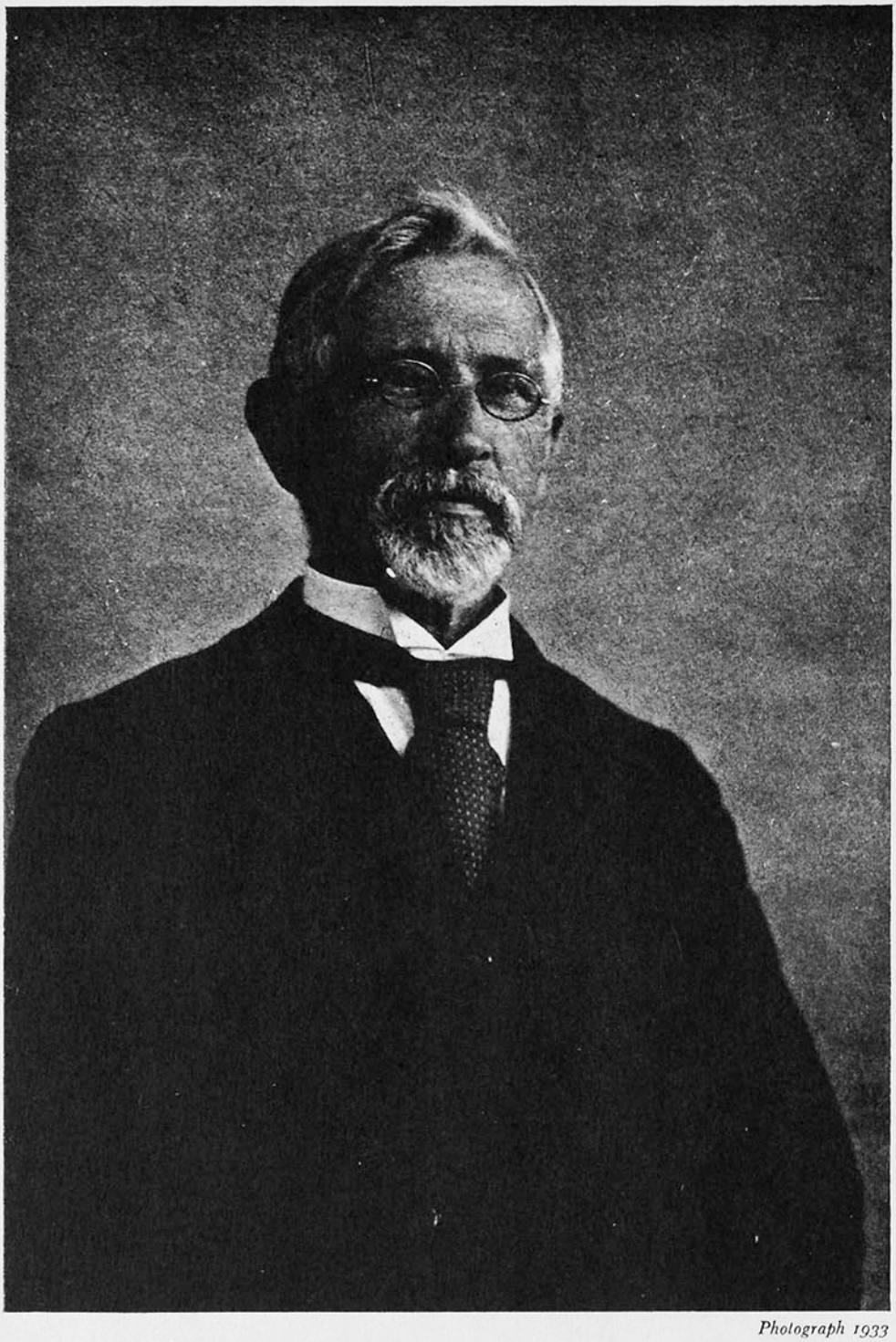

Photograph 1933

SIR WILLIAM A. CRAIGIE

SIR WILLIAM CRAIGIE

1867–1957

WILLIAM ALEXANDER CRAIGIE was born in Dundee on the 13th of August 1867, the youngest son of James Craigie and Christina Gow. He was something of a linguist even before he went to school, for his parents spoke the local Scottish dialect and his maternal grandfather, who was Highland, taught him some Gaelic when he was only three or four. At the West End Academy he learned a second Scottish dialect from two of his teachers, who were Aberdonians; and his headmaster, George Clark, gave him a sound training in phonetics and shorthand, both of which were to stand him in good stead later on.

So lively was his interest in the Scottish language that he began studying the Scottish writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries on his own, while he was still at school, noting in the margins of an abridged Jamieson dictionary the words and forms he came across which Jamieson had not recorded; and he continued to improve his knowledge of Gaelic by working at that language along with his eldest brother.

At the University of St. Andrews, where he went in 1883, the resources of the library enabled him to extend his reading of older Scottish literature, and during his last session there, 1887–8, he worked on a manuscript of Wyntoun's Chronicle of Scotland to such good purpose that he succeeded in making out how that work had been originally written. He had previously shown his amazing genius for solving problems in the Greek Class by providing an ingenious and convincing explanation of the order of the numbers in a passage towards the end of the Tenth Book of Plato's *Republic*, which was afterwards published in the edition of that work which Jowett and Campbell produced in 1894. Concurrently with his university studies he taught himself French by reading the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in the Dundee Public Library, learned German by attending evening classes in Dundee and, as the result of receiving a present of a small book of Norwegian songs from a friend, took up the study of Danish and Icelandic. Amid all these activities his university work was never neglected. 'Craigie took all the prizes', a contemporary, the late Dr. D. Lawson, once said to me 'but nobody bore him any grudge for that.'

He had other problems in his university days, which his unfailing tact and sense of fitness enabled him to take in his stride. Small of stature and slightly built and having the friendliest of dispositions he was easily persuaded by his less gifted classfellows to do their Latin proses for them, and when there was a long wait for their connexion at Leuchars junction—for they travelled daily from Dundee to St. Andrews by rail—he would often dictate four or five versions of the same passage to as many undergraduates; but he always took care to include in each version a few mistakes such as the person concerned might be expected to make. The net effect of this was that the work which his fellows handed in as their own was to all intents and purposes their own. When he got home he would do a correct version for himself.

In 1888 he came up to Balliol with a Guthrie Scholarship and, after only one term there, went on to Oriel as a Bible Clerk. He was glad to get away from Balliol: he did not like Jowett because of the way he had behaved to a friend of his. While up at Oxford he continued his Celtic studies by attending the lectures of Professor (afterwards Sir John) Rhŷs and, though there were no Scandinavian lectures in Oxford at the time owing to the illness and death of Gudbrand Vigfusson, he worked at the Scandinavian languages on his own; and he also began now to contribute articles to Scottish journals, especially *Scottish Notes and Queries*. His tutors were alarmed at the number and variety of his activities: they were sure he had too many irons in the fire; but they did not know their man. He got his First both in Classical Moderations (Mods) and in Literae Humaniores (Greats) without a hitch.

This satisfactory and unexpected result seems to have convinced the Provost and Fellows of Oriel College that his Scandinavian studies ought to be encouraged rather than discouraged for they now offered him the means of prosecuting these in Copenhagen; and he spent the winter of 1892–3 there. As was to be expected, he made good use of his time: he studied manuscripts in the Royal and University Libraries, making copies of the texts that interested him—among them that of *Skotlands Rímur*, of which he produced a critical edition in 1908—and he learned modern Icelandic by associating with Icelanders in Copenhagen, several of whom became his life-long friends. He also seems to have had an attack of home-sickness, as his verses *Autumn in Denmark* show; for amid all his new friends he missed the accents of his native tongue.

On his return to Scotland in 1893 he was appointed assistant

to the Professor of Latin at St. Andrews, and there he remained for the next four years. In the course of these he collaborated with Andrew Lang in an edition of Burns, supplied material from Scandinavian sources for Lang's *Fairy Books* and *Dreams and Ghosts*, and began producing books on his own account. His *Primer of Burns* and *Scandinavian Folk-Lore* belong to this period, and his own edition of Burns, which was to appear in two small volumes in 1898, was in hand.

In the summer of 1897 he married Jessie K. Hutchen of Dundee and was just on the point of leaving for his honeymoon in Denmark when he received an entirely unexpected invitation to join the staff of the *New English Dictionary*. It could not have come at a more awkward moment; but he did not take long to make up his mind: the honeymoon was postponed, and he set off for Oxford at once with his bride.

The explanation of this sudden summons came later: Charles Cannan, the then Secretary to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, had decided that even with two editors, James Murray and Henry Bradley, the production of the *New English Dictionary* was not proceeding fast enough, and that a third should be found. On his way back from one of the meetings of Delegates at which this matter had been discussed he happened to meet D. H. Nagel of Trinity, and he told him of his preoccupation. 'I can tell you where you will find the man you want' said Nagel, naming Craigie. Nagel, who was a chemist, did not know Craigie personally, but he had heard of him from his father who was a schoolmaster in Dundee. Cannan went straight to the Provost of Oriel, who confirmed Nagel's opinion; and the invitation to Craigie was sent off without delay.

After working for two years with Bradley and a similar time with Murray, Craigie started on the letter Q in 1901 as an independent editor, with a fresh staff of assistants. He and his staff shared the ground floor of the Old Ashmolean with Bradley and his. Dictionary hours were long, some forty-two hours a week, and the work was hard, but he still found time and energy for his other studies. In 1905 he was appointed Lecturer in the Scandinavian languages at the Taylor Institution, and when the Chair of Anglo-Saxon was restored in 1915 he was elected Professor, and the scope of the duties of the chair was officially extended to enable him to continue lecturing on Old Icelandic. He resigned this chair in 1925 in order to take an English chair at the University of Chicago, but he continued his work on the *English Dictionary* until not only the dictionary itself

but the *Supplement* also was completed in 1933. His work for the main dictionary, which was completed in 1928, included the letters N, Q, R, V, and U, part of S (Si-Sq) and part of W(Wo-Wy). His main responsibility in Chicago was the *Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, and his work on this enabled him to supply additional American material for the *Supplement of the Oxford Dictionary*.

In March 1936 he retired from the Chicago Chair, but retirement for him meant no cessation, not even a slackening, of his labours. Though his colleague, Professor J. R. Hulbert, now took over the reins, he continued to work on the American Dictionary until its completion in 1944. But the main part of his time was now devoted to the task he had reserved for his old age, *The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, which he had started in 1925. He made steady progress with this until the Second World War caused the printing of it to be suspended about the end of the letter D. The difficulties and hardships of the war years were aggravated in 1944 by the onset of Lady Craigie's last illness. For the next three years most of his time and energy were perforce expended on ordinary household tasks under circumstances too distressing to recall. It is doubtful if he fully realized the nature of his wife's illness, but even if he had, he was ill-fitted to cope with the situation. Yet he never complained.

After the death of Lady Craigie in 1947 one of his nephews (he had no children of his own) came, with his wife and family, to live at Ridgehurst, and this enabled Craigie again to give most of his time and attention to his literary and lexicographical work, but his whole situation had changed in the meantime. For reasons which will be given below the cessation of the printing soon involved a suspension of the editing of his Scottish Dictionary, and this had continued until Craigie realized that he would not live long enough to finish it. The result of this was a loss of interest in the whole undertaking and his accession to the wishes of his Icelandic friends that he should write a Supplement to Gudbrand Vigfusson's *Icelandic Dictionary* and edit a selection of Icelandic *Rímur*. Even the resumption of the printing of the Scottish Dictionary after the war failed to revive his old interest, in view of his age and his more recent commitments; and it was only when the Scottish Universities took steps to provide for the continuance of the work by finding him a capable assistant and successor that his old zeal for his Scottish Dictionary really came to life again.

That the initiative for this appropriate and prudent arrange-

ment was taken by Scotland and not by Craigie himself is well known to Sir William Hamilton Fyfe and Sir Hector Hetherington, who were the Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow, respectively, in 1947; and it is important that it should be generally known. Craigie himself wished it to be known, not because the concern of the men of learning of the land of his birth for this major contribution to Scottish studies was gratifying to him and becoming in them—both of which it undoubtedly was—but because his special obligation to the University of Chicago Press, which had generously borne the whole cost of the printing and publication of the Scottish Dictionary from the outset, precluded him from taking the initiative in any such arrangement, and his characteristic scrupulosity made him anxious to avoid even the appearance of having done so. (His many friends and admirers will be pleased to learn that the University of Chicago Press is continuing this generous support for his *Magnum Opus* now that it is being edited by his assistant and successor, Mr. A. J. Aitken, under the auspices of the Scottish Dictionaries Joint Council.)

The details of this arrangement, from the time it was first mooted to the transference of the materials and reference books to Edinburgh and the final handing over of the editorial responsibility, engaged Craigie's attention for several years, for he insisted on choosing his successor himself, and turned down a great many offers; and the whole episode together with its happy issue had a special importance for him personally, for his last ten years were on the whole lonely years. He missed the ready sympathy, admiration, love, and protective care of the one who had been his constant companion for fifty years, and though many friends still visited him from time to time, they could not fill the void. The only one who might have, and to some extent did alleviate his loneliness, was the late Dr. J. J. Munro; but Craigie always had a feeling that his was a cupboard love and he did not give him his confidence. His friends in Iceland never forgot him, as a constant stream of presentation copies of their many publications reminded him. But for the most part he was cut off from the scholarly world to which he properly belonged.

There was one other event of this period, however, which gave him genuine pleasure and satisfaction. That was when a group of his friends in Oxford honoured the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday by presenting him with his portrait and a List of his Published Writings in the Library of Oriel College, in October 1952. The presence then of the Vice-Chancellor of his

original University, St. Andrews, the First Secretary of the Icelandic Legation, and the Director of the Frisian Academy, as well as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, gave the ceremony an appropriate international character. Subscriptions for the portrait and the List of his Published Writings had been received from all over the world, over 100 from Iceland alone.

His *Sýnisbók Íslenzkra Rímna* (Specimens of the Icelandic Metrical Romances) was published in three volumes in 1952 and the Supplement to the Icelandic Dictionary in the summer of 1957. He died on 2 September of the latter year, twenty days after his ninetieth birthday.

When Craigie joined the staff of the *New English Dictionary* in 1897, the form of that work and the methods used in its preparation had long been settled by Murray, and for the excellence of Murray's achievement Craigie's admiration was unbounded: 'Murray's system', he said, 'proved to be adequate to the end, standing the test of fifty years without requiring any essential modification.' According to Craigie, it was in fact Murray's introduction of what we now call 'the slip system' (which obviates both the labour and the errors of recopying) and the closeness with which the printer pressed on the heels of the editor, that made the production of the *New English Dictionary* at all possible—and no one who is in a position to express an opinion will disagree with him. (His own innovation on the slip system, made in his Scottish Dictionary, was not to prove a very happy one.) But though Murray supplied the mechanics of lexicography, Craigie brought to the work many assets of his own: among these were his unrivalled knowledge of other languages, his uncanny instinct for solving problems at sight, and his equability of temperament, which never knew dismay either at the magnitude of a task or the intractability of the material. To his staff he was a constant source of inspiration, not only by his own tireless industry and quiet enthusiasm, but by his generous appreciation of all that was good in their work. Though he revised everything that was prepared by his assistants, correcting what was wrong and improving anything that could be better expressed, he never changed a definition for the mere sake of changing: the justness and the restraint of his editing were always evident; and this encouraged everyone to give of their best.

His work was never limited to merely correcting or touching up what had previously been roughed out by others for he did a

great part of his articles from start to finish himself, and he was constantly active in the collection of fresh material. A vast amount of the quotations for his American Dictionary came from his own reading, and a still greater proportion of those collected for his Scottish Dictionary; and though he often got others to write or type the slips, scores of thousands were transcribed in his own clear hand.

Another great asset was his immunity to distractions. No interruption, whether it was caused by his university duties or by visitors seeking his advice or merely calling to see him, ever put him out of his stride. He was always readily accessible to everyone, and would give his attention to their affairs as if he himself had no other concerns for the moment. And after any such interruption he simply resumed where he had left off, without haste and without further loss of time. I once asked him whether noise did not impede his working—there happened to be a lot of noise going on at the time. He smiled and said 'not necessary noise'.

His actual output was consistently less than that of Bradley, simply because he refused to have a bigger staff than he could effectively supervise (and it may well have disappointed Cannan, for by 1906 he was casting about for a fourth editor). And his most important contribution to the *English Dictionary* was completely unnoticed, both at the time and afterwards, and even, I may add, by himself. Yet it was eminently characteristic of the man: at once unobtrusive and climacteric.

Much of Bradley's output was not seen by the editor himself until it was in first proof. Craigie, on the other hand, not only read every definition and every selected quotation with care, but he also read the rejected quotations, which were on the average twice as many as the selected, in case anything of value were being overlooked. Thus it was that he noticed one day that some quotations, which he had seen in the 'copy', were missing in the first proof; and he proceeded to find out what had happened to them. It was only then that he discovered that there was one man in the Dictionary Room whose business it was to ensure that all the 'copy' sent to the printer was right for scale. The scale originally agreed on was ten times that of the edition of Webster current in 1879—the 1869 Webster, if my memory is to be trusted. Having salvaged some of his own missing quotations and some of Bradley's which had met the same fate, he showed them to Bradley who, till that moment, had had no idea that this rigid scaling of the 'copy' was going on. It was as

obvious to Bradley as it was to Craigie that this Procrustean treatment of their work was intolerable, and from that day all adjusting of the scale ceased. The ultimate effect of this was that the second half of the dictionary expanded to seven volumes instead of the five that had been originally planned.

The Clarendon Press could not fail to notice the departure from the prescribed scale, but that they never learned the reason for it is shown by the late R. W. Chapman's mention of the matter on page 7 of his James Bryce Memorial Lecture, *Lexicography*, of 1948: 'He [Charles Cannan] remarked that the Dictionary "went wrong" when Henry Bradley fell into a *mud hole*. By this he meant that the Dictionary departed, at that juncture, from the scale laid down.' But it was near the beginning, not near the end, of the letter M that the departure began.

Worse was yet to come. The main part of U consists of the compounds of *Un-*. The final sorting of these was done by Mrs. Craigie: this was her 'war work' as she afterwards proudly recalled. All the compounds for which there was only one quotation were taken out and used by Craigie for the introductory article; the rest were all included in their alphabetical place. The result was that the scale, previously much more than ten times that of Webster, now soared to much more than twenty times. The publishers protested strongly, but Craigie stood his ground, and a compromise was eventually reached with the help of the printer. The departures from the style of the rest of the Dictionary which the Un- section shows are a permanent record of Craigie's refusal to allow a mechanical process of scaling to damage the quality of his work.

The stark simplicity of his plan for *Un-* was characteristic both of his work and of the man himself. He began his editing at a plain deal table, without even a drawer, and would have gone on using that indefinitely, had not one of his assistants decided that an editor ought to have a knee-hole desk, and presented him with one. But whether he worked at table or desk, he never allowed it to become untidy, keeping no more on it than the slips he was working at and a very small pile of unanswered letters. Everything else was carefully arranged and put tidily away in its proper place. Until well after his eighty-fifth year he preferred, when in his own study, to sit on a backless wooden seat; and he always used a steel pen, which he would clean with his pocket knife when it got clogged with dry ink.

In all the practical concerns of life he depended on the shrewd sense and judgement of his wife as implicitly as his friend, the

Sheriff of Reykjavík, trusted the judgement of his horse. She was more demonstratively Scotch than her husband, and loved to ask her Oxford butcher for a *gigot* of lamb. She found much satisfaction in entertaining his students and his many visitors and friends alike in Oxford, in Chicago, and at Watlington. She was his constant companion on all his travels, and is still remembered in Iceland for the strong protests she made when she was there in 1910 at the wastage which was then being permitted of the island's natural hot water. Ten years later it was being utilized for growing vegetables, fruit, flowers, and even vines. It was she who designed Ridgehurst, the home of their retirement on the Chilterns above Watlington, combining the interior arrangements of American houses with a Scandinavian exterior. But her influence extended to more than the external arrangements of his life. She was also mainly responsible for his leaving Oxford and going to Chicago in 1925, for she felt far more strongly than he ever did, or could, feel that Oxford had failed to give him the recognition which was his due.

It can hardly be denied that throughout his long life Craigie was constantly doing the work of two, if not of three, men. This capacity of his had alarmed his tutors at Oriel without cause. But other feelings were aroused when he combined his editorship of the *New English Dictionary* with his tenure of the Rawlinson and Bosworth Chair of Anglo-Saxon. Yet he discharged the duties of both these offices not only conscientiously but brilliantly. Of his teaching Professor C. L. Wrenn, the present occupant of the chair, writes (*The Times*, 9 Sept. 1957):

> To have made one's first steps in the study of an Anglo-Saxon or an Old Norse text under Craigie, was to acquire almost imperceptibly the ambition to become a keen and exact puzzle-solver. In his small seminars . . . many were stimulated to lifelong interests. He would make each student produce a careful short paper on a given problem or text, and then, after only the kindliest criticism, give his own view in precise and clear language enlivened by an occasional very Scots reminiscence; and his summary presentation and solution of the question at issue invariably seemed right and final.

Of his lexicography the whole world can now judge. The cause of the breach with Oxford was that, when the university revised the stipends of professors round about 1920, account was taken of the salary which Craigie was receiving as editor and the stipend of his chair was left at £600 odd. Craigie himself blamed Joseph Wright for this decision, as Wright's influence was then

paramount in the English Faculty. To his wife it was as if the university had said 'your husband may do two jobs, if he so chooses, but he is only to get one salary'.

The List of his Published Writings provides conclusive evidence of this breach, even if we did not have his own account of it. *The Pronunciation of English* (1917), *A First English Book for Foreign Pupils* (1920), and *English Reading made Easy* (1922) were published by Oxford; *Easy Readings in Anglo-Saxon* (1923), *Specimens of Anglo-Saxon Prose* (1923–9), *Specimens of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1923–30), *Easy Readings in Danish* (1923), *Easy Readings in Old Icelandic* (1924), *An Advanced English Reader* (1924), *A First English Reader* (1927), and *Systematic Exercises in English Sounds and Spelling* (1927) are all published by Hutchen, Edinburgh—and Hutchen was, of course, his wife's maiden name. Craigie came to regret this change of publisher. Many years later, after his many S.P.E. Tracts (1937–46) had indicated his second thoughts, with reference to the Hutchen publications, he observed to me rather ruefully 'they were not published'. It was an unfortunate occurrence for all concerned mainly because of the loss involved to English, Anglo-Saxon, and Scandinavian Studies, for they form an excellent series of booklets, as full of life and interest as the teaching of their author. Those who knew Craigie best realize that in this episode he seemed to depart from his real character: the most discerning will be reminded, not that the Craigies were Scotch but that theirs had been a childless marriage.

By 1928 even the desire of his wife that his merits should be recognized was amply satisfied: he had been made an Hon.LL.D. of St. Andrews as early as 1907 and an Hon.D.Litt. of the University of Calcutta in 1921, when he lectured there in the course of his trip round the world; in 1925 Iceland made him a Knight of the Order of the Icelandic Falcon (and in 1930 a Knight Commander); but when the English Dictionary was completed in 1928, in one and the same month of June he received an Hon.D.Litt. from the University of Oxford, an Hon.Litt.D. from the University of Cambridge, and the culminating honour of Knight Bachelor; in the same year Oriel College made him an Honorary Fellow, and the Royal Society of Literature did likewise. Other honours and distinctions were to follow: in 1929 he was made an Hon.Litt.D. by the University of Michigan, in 1931 a Fellow of the British Academy, and in 1946 an Hon.D.Phil. of the University of Iceland. The range of his interests is shown by his having been President of the English Place-Name Society from 1936 to 1945, President of the Scottish

Text Society from 1937 onwards, and President of the Anglo-Norman Text Society from 1938 onwards. His support of the efforts of the Frisians to revive their language was recognized by making him an Hon. Member of the Frisian Academy when that was formed in 1938. For him a presidency was not a sinecure. For the Scottish Text Society he had done yeoman service: he edited *Bellenden's Translation of Livy* in two volumes (1901 and 1903) and between 1919 and 1925 he produced *The Maitland Folio Manuscript* in two volumes, the *Maitland Quarto Manuscript* in one volume and *The Asloan Manuscript* in two volumes, making seven S.T.S. volumes in all.

His proposals for Period Dictionaries had been communicated to the Philological Society on 4 April 1919, and published in the Society's *Transactions* in 1925. These included the *Dictionary of American English*, the *Older Scottish Dictionary* (down to 1700) and the *Modern Scottish Dictionary*. He had decided to do the *Older Scottish Dictionary* himself because, to quote his wife, 'he was sure that if he did not do it someone else would do it after he was dead, and do it so badly that he would turn in his grave'. Now, in 1925, he was being invited to Chicago to do the American English one. The late William Grant, who was then Convener of the Scottish Dialects Committee, decided that he would do the *Modern Scottish Dictionary*. He got in touch with Craigie and eventually spent two weeks with him at Ridgehurst to discuss the project. Grant's exuberance did not impress Mrs. Craigie: 'He might have learned something', she afterwards declared, 'but he did all the talking; my poor husband could hardly get a word in edgeways.' But Craigie did in fact tell Grant all he needed to know about Murray's wonderful 'slip system' and his own ill-fated innovation. (This was to use the same quotation slip three or four times instead of making three or four copies of the same passage. Thus a quotation like 'short cuts are often longest' would be given three headwords, CUT, LONG, and SHORT, would be sorted first under CUT, and as soon as that article was in type, would be taken out and resorted under LONG, and so on.) Grant rejected the slip system out of hand, thereby more than doubling the labour of producing the dictionary; but he did take over from Craigie some ideas for his forthcoming Appeal for Subscribers. He got his Appeal out before Craigie's was ready, and Craigie was profoundly shocked to find that Grant had coolly appropriated his title, *The Scottish National Dictionary*. Craigie's words, when he mentioned the incident later, were unusually severe: 'Grant stole my title,' he said, 'after all, Scotland was a nation

before 1700: it ceased to be one in 1707.' Craigie's own Appeal for what he now had to call *The Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* was an abysmal failure. Out of some 500 Scottish, Caledonian, St. Andrews, and Burns Societies all over the world to which it was sent, only two took the trouble to reply; and they both expressed their regret that they did not see their way to subscribe. There the matter rested until the University of Chicago Press came to his rescue by undertaking the publication.

Whether the failure of this Appeal should be connected with his loss of admiration, and even respect, for Robert Burns it is difficult to say. What can be said is that it was from his comments on the complete lack of interest which the Scottish societies showed in his Dictionary that I first learned that his early interest and regard for Burns had been outgrown. Burns is probably a young man's poet. For Scott, on the other hand, Craigie's admiration endured.

Craigie's innovation on the 'slip system', mentioned above, originated in a desire to save time in the preparation of his material. He wanted to start the writing of articles at the earliest possible moment. At first sight the method seems to be suitable for a dictionary being done single-handed, with the printer pressing on the heels of the editor. But in the long run it saves no time at all; and the trouble with Craigie's Dictionary was that the printer ceased to press on his heels. Having reached the end of the letter D, Craigie could prepare E, without the collaboration of the printer, but when he reached F, some of his material would be locked up in the unprinted 'copy' for E, and when he came to G, still more of his quotations would be inaccessible in the 'copy' for both E and F. This was the situation that led him to suspend work on the Scottish Dictionary. Had it not been for this, it is not impossible that he might have lived to finish it, for he would have felt no temptation to undertake the Supplement to the *Icelandic Dictionary* or the Selection of *Rímur*. But there was something appropriate in his giving the last years of his life to the language and literature of Iceland.

His first contact with that country had been made during his stay in Denmark in the winter of 1892–3; his first visit to Iceland itself was made in 1905; his last in 1948. Between these dates he made several other visits to Iceland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. On all these visits he contrived to combine sightseeing with research work and lecturing, and the cultivation of old, and the making of new, friendships with the scholars of the country concerned. In 1921 he made a trip round the world.

lecturing in Romania, India, and the United States, and visiting China and Japan. He paid a second visit to Romania in 1929, returning via the Danube and the Rhine. It was on this occasion that his knowledge of Romanian enabled him to come to the rescue of the Englishman who had transported Prince Carol's baggage from London to Sinaia by a devious route (made necessary by the political situation), did not know a word of Romanian, and had lost his ticket on the way.

Notable among his many friendships was that with Dr. P. Sipma, the Frisian scholar. Craigie had taken up the study of Frisian seriously because of its kinship with English, and in 1909 he went to Veenwouden to see P. de Clercq. He met Sipma in de Clercq's house. The Frisian revival was then in full swing, and Craigie's enthusiasm for the movement was aroused. It was he who persuaded Sipma to write his *Phonology and Grammar of Modern West-Frisian* in English, and arranged for it to be published in Oxford by the Philological Society. His active interest and support contributed to the ultimate success of the movement, which was marked by the foundation of the Frisian Academy in 1938.

But for much the greater part of his long life Iceland was his spiritual home. There was a natural affinity between him and the scholars and poets of this northern island, which he had experienced when he first met Jón Stefánson, Valtýr Guðmundsson, Þorsteinn Erlingsson, and Finnur Jónsson in Copenhagen in 1892. Articles on, and translations from, Icelandic were among the earliest of his publications and it may be doubted whether he greatly regretted the conjunction of circumstances which diverted him from the *Scottish Dictionary* in the early years of the war to his latest contributions to Icelandic studies. His edition of *Skotlands Rímur* (Icelandic ballads on the Gowrie Conspiracy) in 1908 set a new standard for the editing of *Rímur* and has been the model for all subsequent editions. Many of the editors of these availed themselves of the advice and help which he always gave so gladly and so freely to all who ever consulted him. For though Iceland has produced many distinguished editors and scholars of her own, these have as a rule specialized in limited periods: Craigie's work has ranged over the whole six centuries of *Rímur*, and his supremacy in the whole field is generously acknowledged by all who know his work. He has written verses in different rímur metres himself, which his Icelandic friends pronounce technically perfect. He was largely responsible for the founding of the Rímur Society (*Rímnafjelag*) in 1947; and when

he gave his last address, *Nokkrar athuganir um rímur*, in Iceland in 1948, in his eighty-first year, his audience filled the largest hall in the university, and were kept spell-bound for an hour.

But the joy which he found in his intercourse with the people of Iceland was not wholly, perhaps not even mainly, due to a community of interest in their literature or to the appreciation which the Icelanders felt and showed for his services to Icelandic scholarship; it was based on something far deeper and much more elemental than that. In Iceland more than anywhere else Craigie found a life and a literature firmly rooted in nature and reality—for poetry is still a natural and vigorous growth there—and a capacity to recognize and appreciate genius which was as free from envy and affectation as his own. It was inevitable that such men should take him to their heart, and he them to his, with that spontaneity of love which no language can express, and which, indeed, needs no words for its expression.

The help and encouragement which he gave to other lexicographers and scholars was very great. Apart from the many who worked for him for longer or shorter periods, Geir T. Zoëga in Iceland, Dr. P. C. Schoonees in South Africa, and Dr. Wijeratne in Ceylon were all indebted to him. Many others got their ideas for research from his ever-fertile brain. Warrack not only got the original suggestion for his *Scots Dialect Dictionary* from Craigie, but as long as he was engaged on it he used to call at the Craigies' home at 15 Charlbury Road, Oxford, every Friday evening at eight o'clock with the week's queries and unsolved problems; and he never called in vain. The help Warrack received is fittingly acknowledged in the dedication and the preface of his dictionary; and many other prefaces bear grateful witness to Craigie's help and inspiration.

The latest and perhaps the most systematic utilization that was made of Craigie's learning and genius for solving problems and his constant willingness to help others was that made by the late Dr. J. J. Munro in the preparation of his edition of Shakespeare, which appeared in six volumes in 1958—*The London Shakespeare*. Munro went to live in Watlington for the sole object of being near Craigie, and during the ten years or so that he was engaged on this project there was a standing arrangement that he visited Craigie every Tuesday afternoon and Craigie visited him every Thursday afternoon, and at all these meetings he got Craigie to help him with his current problems of reading and interpretation. *The London Shakespeare* thus owes to Craigie a debt which the death of Munro, at a time when the Preface was still

unwritten, has apparently left unacknowledged, and the extent of which can never be properly assessed.

Craigie himself would wish this to be mentioned for he was not only punctilious in such matters himself, but he expected others to be so too. Other people have noticed this trait in his character, and it was brought home to me very convincingly in 1952. Magnus Maclean had inserted four of Craigie's verse translations of Gaelic songs in the 1904 edition of *The Literature of the Highlands*, without permission, and without a word of acknowledgement. Craigie seems to have done nothing about this at the time, but forty-eight years later, when the List of his Published Writings was being compiled, he specially asked that his authorship of these four songs should be vindicated. All that he then remembered about them was that he had published them in the *Scotsman* some time between 1897 and 1904. When he eventually read the entry 'Gaelic Jacobite Songs: 1901 *The Scotsman* 1 Feb.' in the printed List he said, 'Well, I'm glad we've got that cleared up.' That it had been cleared up was not so obvious to others, but Craigie was satisfied.

He had an exquisite sense of humour and an inexhaustible fund of amusing reminiscences and anecdotes, with which he would often delight his visitors and friends. He loved to quote the Dundee acquaintance of his youth who thought the moon was better than the sun 'because the moon shines at night when it is dark, and the sun only shines by day when it is light anyway'. He was very pleased with the now famous last quotation for the word *moron*, when he saw it in the first proof of the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary*: 'I have always maintained,' he said, 'that there is far too little of this kind of thing in the dictionary.' It is interesting to record his own view of the kind of work to which he devoted so much of his life: 'It cannot be denied', he said, 'that dictionary work for most of the time is very dull and boring.' He had contrived to relieve the tedium by making a collection of amusing ambiguities, such as 'In Switzerland pines grow to a height of 7,000 feet' (culled from the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*), which in his notebook had the heading 'Tall Trees' and a passage of Middle English, which I cannot now recall, but of which the substance was 'The thing went very well for a time, but of late somehow, we woth not how, it hath gone into reverse' under 'The Motor Car'.

It may be idle to speculate what a man with Craigie's gifts might have done, had he not been drawn into the dictionary pool. That event probably involved less of a change for him than

it had meant for Murray and Bradley. He would still have done his Scottish Dictionary—those additions in the margins of Jamieson assure us of that—but he would have had to do it without the advantage of knowing Murray's system. There would have been more editions of Scottish Writers, more translations of Gaelic songs. No man was ever more successful than Craigie in reproducing the metre and preserving the spirit of the original Gaelic. His felicity can be seen in one of the four songs mentioned above, A. Macdonald's *Call to the Highland Clans*:

> Gladsome tidings through the Highlands,
> Tumult wild arising;
> Hammers pounding, anvils sounding,
> Targets round devising

Equally adequate versions of the even more complicated Icelandic *Rímur* might have come from his pen. And we might have had more of his clear, elegant prose. The first sentence of his *Historical Introduction* to the English Dictionary has a sly humour which reminds us of Scott at his best: 'If there is any truth in the old Greek maxim that a large book is a great evil, English dictionaries have been steadily growing worse since their inception more than three centuries ago.'

He had many interesting affinities with Scott. Both had a strong and deep attachment to their native land; both had read the older Scottish writers with a lively interest; both devoured Froissart with peculiar delight; and both remembered ever after whatever they had once read, and could recollect it in all its detail the moment it became relevant. Both had a keen interest in the supernatural, and both contrived, though in different ways, to manage the business side of their affairs not for the best. Scott was more fortunate than Craigie: he had his children to comfort and sustain him in his misfortunes, and he was left in possession of his library; the hardships which fell to Craigie's lot eventually separated him from his, though it must have been the dearest of his possessions. The 'financial stringency' which compelled him to sell what he had always intended to bequeath cannot now be explained, for he told no one of his troubles. In this he lived up to the requirement of Burke 'that beings made for suffering should suffer well'. It should perhaps be added that the purchasers of his library, the Irish Folklore Commission and University College, Dublin, presented the Icelandic MSS. to the National Library of Iceland, for that was the kind of thing

Craigie himself would have done under happier circumstances.

He had affinities too with Gilbert Murray—affinities which will not be ignored by anyone interested in understanding what constitutes genius. It seems odd that two of the most outstanding men of their day in Oxford scarcely knew each other, though they had so much in common. Both had innumerable friends; both had a remarkable capacity for making strangers feel at ease; both gave the most sympathetic attention to the concern of others; both were incapable of inflicting pain or even embarrassing others; and both seem to have possessed telepathic powers, possibly because both had Celtic blood. Gilbert Murray's demonstrations of telepathy are well known; and it is clear that they involved access to the mind of other persons. It is certain that Craigie also had this power. We have the testimony of Bradley, recorded by Robert Bridges in his *Memoir*, that of all his friends who had got into the habit of finishing his sentences for him when Bradley seemed unable to do so himself, Craigie was the only one who always did it correctly. And though neither Murray nor Craigie would have called themselves Christians, there are many among those who knew them best who would not hesitate to call them both Saints.

It would be quite wrong to suggest that Craigie held any particular theory of telepathy or ESP, or of the supernatural in any other aspect. No man was ever more level-headed or matter-of-fact than he. He had no theories at all, not even about lexicography: he simply made dictionaries. He was extraordinarily free from what we call 'wishful thinking', and never jumped at conclusions but rather let the conclusions jump at him. But he had what can only be called the makings of a theory of the supernatural. Everyone who saw a lot of the Craigies must have been struck by the number of times his wife mentioned cases of receiving a letter from a friend they had not heard from, perhaps for years, but had been talking about on the previous day. On these occasions Craigie himself always confirmed his wife's statements with a zest that betrayed a very lively interest in these occurrences. Like other couples who remain in love with each other, he and his wife often found themselves thinking the same thoughts. He was greatly impressed too by his friend, the Sheriff of Reykjavík, who depended on the judgement of his horse in all his business dealings (for he was a business man as well as sheriff): 'If my horse takes to a man at once, I know I can trust that man; if my horse does not take to a man at once, I know he is not to be trusted; and my horse has never let me

down.' And with this practical utilization of horse sense he associated the custom of the Icelanders, when they went to rescue sheep buried in deep snow, of using another sheep rather than a dog to guide them. He believed, too, in wraiths, if not in ghosts; but again without having formed any definite theory. He quoted the phantom baker's van his uncle had seen as evidence against the theory of astral bodies. He told the story of the phantom knock he and his father had heard so often in his Dundee home, but simply as an interesting personal experience. And not many years before his death he saw a lady walking in his garden at Ridgehurst, who simply vanished, as the baker's van had, into thin air. When he told me about this experience, a few hours after it had happened, it was clear that he had been strangely thrilled by it; but again he told it simply as an isolated occurrence. If he had been pressed for his explanation, he would probably have said 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio. . .' He shrank from the obvious inference that he himself had any special perceptive power.

Attempts have been made to describe the operations of his mind. Wrenn records that it was once said of him 'the facts seemed to run round and rattle in his head like dried peas, and then suddenly to form a convincing pattern.' But we can perhaps carry the explanation a little farther. To minds untrammelled with any illiberal ambition or distorting theory or restrictive creed, facts and ideas are not the hard, bald, dead things that they appear to normal self-centred worldly minds, but they are invested with a fringe of live and active associations which, like the bonds of chemical atoms, link them together in organic patterns by a natural process of combination, so that the solution of apparently complex and baffling problems is simply the natural uninhibited functioning of the intellect. So it was with Craigie; so it has doubtless been with many other men of genius. In all such men we tend to find that this disinterested love of knowledge is associated with a true humility and an unaffected love for their fellow men.

This was the secret of Craigie's extraordinary intellectual power, for if he had a genius for solving problems he had also a genius for inspiring friendship. To know Craigie was to admire and love him. If he ever aroused envy by his remarkable ability and learning, or a desire to exploit these by his simple trustful nature, the fault was not in him. Men in whom there is no guile have no effective defence against envy and exploitation, for resentment is incompatible with the free working of the mind.

Their bounties, like the rain of heaven, must fall alike on the just and on the unjust.

The same sweet reasonableness marked all his thoughts, words, and actions. He had a humble origin—his father was a gardener—but he never either boasted of that fact or felt it was something he should be ashamed of. He indulged in no speculations about a life after death. He took the simple view that it would be time to cross his bridges when he came to them. He felt no need for any future reward or punishment. Life for him was a full and rich experience by virtue of the intellectual energy he had at his command and the human love and sympathy which he shed around him. He taught us, not by words, for that was not his way, but by the sheer force of his example, that the love which vaunteth not itself (as distinct from its misnomer, sex, which merely degrades and stultifies) is the very staple of genius and the as yet undiscovered mechanism of telepathy. And by all who were worthy to be his friends he will long be remembered with love and gratitude for having shown them what a man may do and what a man may be; perhaps even what a man, without repining, may endure.

J. M. Wyllie

Personal knowledge; D. C. Browning; A. M. Craigie; J. H. Delargy; the late J. J. Munro.