



ALFRED WILLIAM POLLARD

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1859-1944

ALFRED WILLIAM POLLARD was a scholar. But like many of his countrymen who have earned that title he had much more than scholarship in him; and though it is with his scholarship that this memoir must be mainly concerned, it would be seen altogether out of focus if it were not seen as only one aspect of a man more than usually many-sided and complete. Indeed, he might perhaps have contributed nothing at all to learning but for an accident: the bad stammer he caught from an elder brother at the age of three and was never afterwards able to throw off.

As this stammer was the first thing one noticed about him, a word upon it will be appropriate at the outset. For mere acquaintances a sore let and hindrance to intercourse and understanding, once you got to know him it was felt as almost an added grace, since it lent pleasing ripples to the current of his talk, and ever and again an engagingly explosive force to some wise or witty remark. His lectures were generally read for him by a friend; but he sometimes ventured to speak in public, especially after the death of his two sons in battle had inspired him with new courage and energy. The second fell in October 1915; and in November Pollard was at Cambridge for his Sandars Lectures. They were delivered by Stephen Gaselee; but as an experiment he spoke himself for five minutes at the beginning of the course, and for another eight minutes at the end; 'quite successfully', he wrote to me at the time, and added:

It may interest you to know that I think I can trust myself to speak without risk of a breakdown on three conditions:

- (i) I must be quite sure that what I have to say is reasonably worth saying.
- (ii) I must be quite sure of the order of my ideas.
- (iii) I must leave the words pretty much to the inspiration of the moment.

It was like him to think it all out clearly and set it down in this systematic fashion; and a great many 'unscripted' speeches by non-stammerers would be the better if they followed these simple rules. They worked so well in his case that after his appointment in 1919 as honorary Professor of Bibliography in the University of London, he managed to conduct a class at

King's without difficulty and very much to the benefit of the students. But his greatest triumph of the sort, and one of the bravest acts of his life, was the personal delivery in the Great Hall of the same college on 23 April 1923 of the Annual Shakespeare Lecture of this Academy. As A. W. Reed, who was present, writes:

It was a wonderful feat for him to perform before a crowded assembly in a large hall. He raised his voice to about the pitch at which a minor canon intones the Litany and almost monotoned the lecture. When he checked I did not feel embarrassed; nor did he look it; he simply made a little cadence and resumed his note again.

Though he did not know it, Reed was himself partly responsible for the success of this incantation; for, as another friend tells me, Pollard afterwards remarked, 'On my way there I thought: if I manage it, it will please Reed. And then I was quite happy.'

Pollard's pen was as ready, articulate, and direct as his tongue was halting; the one a compensatory effect of the other. Certainly as a writer he was an almost incredible combination of facility, good humour, and exactitude. He could write too under practically any conditions: a good deal of his bibliographical journalism was, I believe, composed in the train between Wimbledon and Waterloo, as also was his book on 'practical morality';<sup>1</sup> and when the line became electrified he found the oscillation a distinct stimulus to invention. It was the stammer also which made him a librarian, and hence, for a man of his active mind, a bibliographer and a scholar. The Pollard that came out in conversation at his ease, with friends who knew when to supply the obstructed word and when to let it find its way of itself, was one who might have been a famous judge, an eminent doctor, a saintly bishop, a great statesman, or even a successful man of business, but not I think a distinguished professor; since, though but for the stammer a born teacher and greatly admiring born teachers like W. P. Ker and Walter Raleigh, he was less academically minded than any other learned man I have known; while his wide-roving curiosity, his intense and passionate interest in every phase of modern life, would very soon have driven him from 'parochial' Oxford had he begun by settling down there. Thus, if there are few names on the roll of our deceased Fellows more likely to retain the permanent respect of scholars than his, scholarship was not the first or even the second thing in his life,

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 275, 302.

while he was inspired by no ruling ambition, like his friend Housman, 'to build himself a monument'.<sup>1</sup>

He worked hard at scholarship, with as much zest as any, and with greater skill, knowledge, and urbanity than most; but it was always something of a game, which he found himself unable to take quite seriously, while it amused him, at times even saddened him, to watch others offering it their heart's worship. He was, in fact, in the strict sense of the word, an amateur. When I first realized this it came as a shock. I was speaking enthusiastically of a very learned and very elaborate book on a subject of great interest to us both, when he broke in: 'Yes, b—but rather b-b-Byzantine, don't you think?' Coming from the Hon. Secretary of the Bibliographical Society and our leading authority on fine books, the sentiment took my breath away. Yet it was characteristic, and not in the least caused by a 'superior' attitude. 'A very self-effacing person,' as Sir Frederic Kenyon describes him, and humbly conscious of his own imperfections and shortcomings, none of them very evident to his friends, what surprised him was that people he considered far more gifted than himself should devote their lives exclusively to erudition. And when someone once called him a scholar of international reputation, he replied, 'Do you know what *that* means? Six old men in various countries of the world know my work, and don't approve of it.' A few words upon matters he ranked higher than scholarship will be found at the end of this paper. He did not often speak of them. 'No one', he writes, 'has any business to talk about the big things of life unless he is really feeling them in his bones.' But he gave much time and thought to them, and their effect upon his character was felt by all with whom he came into contact.

In 1934 Pollard reached the age of seventy-five and his friends, after much debate among themselves which he was finally called in to decide, commemorated the occasion by presenting him with a select bibliography of his writings. He was fond of telling the story of a man who bought himself a top-hat as a birthday present for his wife, so that she might have the pleasure of admiring him in it. The story of this seventy-fifth birthday present is similar. For it is clear that he proposed a bibliography in order to give his friends pleasure, while it presently appeared that it was to be prefaced by an autobiographical sketch designed to save them trouble, since (as he confided to me at the time) 'it ought to be of service some day to the fellow who has to write

<sup>1</sup> *A. E. Housman*, by A. S. F. Gow, p. 15.



one of those bothersome Academy memoirs'. He never got beyond 'My first fifty years', because he fell on the back of his head from a pair of steps while cutting off a bough in his garden in 1935, which made concentration, and therefore written composition, exceedingly difficult for the rest of his life. But a brief summary of his later career, 'From Fifty to Seventy-Five', was added by Dr. (now Sir Henry) Thomas, the two were printed with the Bibliography, and a specially bound copy of the little volume was on 6 July 1938 presented to its principal author by Gaselee in the Board Room of the British Museum. Those familiar with it will recognize how much it has been of 'service to the fellow' responsible for the ensuing memoir; and I only wish that the autobiographical portion, which I shall refer to as the *Sketch*, full of humorous and revealing touches as it is, were not too long to be quoted in full. For the rest, as will appear, I have drawn upon the memories of friends, upon two penetrating appraisements by Mr. F. C. Francis, referred to below, and upon a packet of letters Pollard wrote me, mainly between the years 1915 and 1919, when I was living at Leeds.

In 1916, for example, I find we were exchanging family histories, and this academic life of him, after stating that he first saw the light of day at 1 Brompton Square, Kensington, on Sunday, 14 August 1859, shall begin with an unacademic quotation.

My dear Dad was born in 1808, the son of a stumpy little schoolmaster, who kept a very swagger private school on the site now occupied by Brompton Oratory, and the grandson of another schoolmaster, who was master of the Green Coat School, Westminster. My father was a Doctor and a fine simple hearted Englishman, who till the year of his death at 81 was full of vigour. In his prime he was hot-tempered and not always a wise parent, but as I was the youngest I knew him only in the mellow age. He was a good Doctor and loved his fellow creatures as a good Doctor should. He married imprudently when quite young, and had six children by his first wife. . . . Then when he was about 43 he married my mother, who was about 25, the daughter of a Woodbridge man, who owned ships, and traded in corn and coal and other things and made a small fortune, and lost the better half of it by the failure of a bank, without being greatly concerned, as he was a dear old-fashioned saint; and my mother was her father's daughter.

And in a later letter he relates that his mother

had a stroke when I was 15 and died just as I finished my examination for Greats. Trying to be a comfort to her was an education to me during those six years, but I wish I remembered more of her before her illness.

In all this there is much, both of nature and of nurture, which

throws light upon the mature Pollard as his friends knew him. Thus one of his staff, who came to know him very well, writes: 'Pollard at first surprised me by talking of *loving* certain men, mostly younger men, whom he helped; and I only once heard him speak severely of any man.' On the other hand, the unwisdom of his father above hinted at, concerned religion, like the unwisdom of many English parents in the second half of the nineteenth century: the good Doctor of Brompton was in fact 'an intolerant Protestant, who only learnt wisdom slowly', with the result that all four children of his second marriage became Ritualists, and the youngest a hater of sectarianism, who dreamed of a church in which all might delight to worship.

Pollard's schooling was significant of the future also. After a couple of years at a dame school he entered, at Easter 1870, King's College School, then housed in the basement of the building next to Somerset House, which King's College still inhabits; and so began a lifelong association with both institutions. Twenty-seven years later, the school having in the meantime moved from the Strand to Wimbledon Common, he and his wife and his children 'followed it and took the nine years' remainder of a lease of 10 Lauriston Road, within five minutes' walk of the school', to which his elder boy was then sent, and of which he himself later became a governor; while he was made a Fellow of the college in 1907, attended innumerable meetings there of the Shakespeare Association, Early English Text Society, and other bodies, conducted classes within its walls as honorary Professor of Bibliography, and delivered the British Academy lecture above referred to in its Great Hall. The school too gave him the interests which in due course brought him to a fellowship of this Academy. For, though Richard Morris, Middle-English scholar and Skeat's collaborator, 'did not talk about Chaucer' to little Alfred Pollard, who was at first placed in his form, 'English was very well taught' by another well-known scholar, J. W. Hales, and through his tuition he presently gained a school exhibition in the subject. To Hales also, he tells us, he owed his love both for Chaucer and for Shakespeare.

For Chaucer he gave me so much enthusiasm that in April 1876 I walked to Canterbury in what I imagined to be the track of the Pilgrims, their slow progress of about fifteen miles for each of the four days just suiting my modest powers as a pedestrian.

These powers had already been well exercised for six years, as King's is a little over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Brompton Square where

his father lived, and the boy had 'formed the useful habit of walking there and back, up to Hyde Park Corner, through the Green Park, and along Pall Mall and the Strand'. A Londoner born, a London schoolboy, London and Wimbledon remained his headquarters and generally his home for the rest of his life, if we except the four years he spent at Oxford.

Classics was of course the main school subject. A year earlier than the exhibition for English, and 'just before I was 16, I was awarded the School scholarship for classics . . . the first of several occasions on which I did far better in an exam. than on my knowledge I had any right to'. And then follows in the *Sketch* a paragraph about examination successes at Oxford which must be quoted in full.

In November 1876 I tried my luck for a Balliol scholarship, with the pleasant reward of beginning a long acquaintance with A. C. Clark, one of the successful candidates. The following Midsummer I got a scholarship at St. John's College, Oxford, thanks to having read the early numbers of the *Nineteenth Century*, in which the setter of the Essay paper seemed also to have been interested. Alfred Housman won the other scholarship at the same election, and to my great profit we were given rooms on the same stair. His friendship was the best thing I got from Oxford. I was not expected to achieve more than a second in Classical Mods., but by attention to set books and a little polish conferred on my proses (verses I gave up!) by an excellent coach, C. H. Gibson of Merchant Taylors, I secured a First, to the pleased surprise of my tutors. When 'Greats' was drawing near I was perturbed by an invincible habit of falling asleep whenever I tried to read any treatise on philosophy, especially if by T. H. Green, then the leading Oxford philosopher. One day, in the Undergraduates' library at St. John's, I took down a bulky volume by a disciple of Herbert Spencer: John Fiske. To my surprise I kept awake and soon found myself provided with a handful of formulas which could be applied without much difficulty to a considerable variety of topics. Thus at Midsummer 1881 I was placed in an unusually small First Class. When during 1882 I tried in succession for two 'prize' fellowships at Queen's and Jesus, the examiners were more exacting. An opinion obtained for me from one of those at Jesus was that I might make a good journalist.

Nor is that the end of the story. As Oxford found no use for this 'double first' with a stammer he returned home; and in due course obtained from the Archbishop of Canterbury, through the instrumentality of his godfather the vicar of Brompton, a nomination to compete for a place in the British Museum. Whereupon, to continue in his own words,

I attended at the Secretary's office at the Museum to fill up a form in

which I had to state what languages I could offer, and was persuaded by a friend there 'just for the sake of appearances' to add to my meagre stock of languages, Latin, Greek, and French, a fourth language—Italian, in which I had read a few cantos of the *Divina Commedia* with the aid of a crib. In November (1882) I was warned that I should be examined in the following January, and that translation from Italian would be one of the subjects. Others were Geography, Arithmetic (including Civil Service Tots), and Algebra, in all of which I was pretty rusty—more so in Algebra than I realized, as at half time I had only answered  $3\frac{1}{2}$  questions out of 13. Fortunately I pulled myself together and nearly finished the lot, while having made a diligent study of Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* in the intervening weeks, I got a higher percentage in translation from Italian than I dare mention. It was my last examination, and my old luck carried me through.

This tale of the Lucky Examinee's Progress was obviously written by a man of unusual humility who enjoyed a more than ordinary sense of humour; an auspicious endowment for one destined to have much dealing with Chaucer and Shakespeare. It is also clear that an important cause of this uninterrupted series of examination triumphs was the readiness of pen already spoken of, combined with that capacity for intense application, that intellectual alertness and grip, which enable a first-class journalist or barrister to size up a problem or a situation and set down its essentials on paper with attractive simplicity and in the shortest possible time. And if we add to humility and humour and a quite exceptional mental agility, other qualities which proceed therefrom, such as a self-effacing administrative ability of a high order, a complete lack of pompousness or fuss in dealing with others, and a literary style at once 'delightfully informal' and engagingly personal, we have most of the characteristics which were later to bring him honour with the officials of his department and in the world of scholarship.

But at the time he wrote Pollard had a special reason for these reflections about examinations. After the fall in the summer of 1935 which virtually put an end to authorship for him, he only managed, as far as I can discover, two pieces of continuous composition, apart from letter-writing, the *Sketch* from which the reflections are taken, and 'Some Reminiscences of A. E. Housman', contributed to a memorial number of *The Bromsgrovian*, the magazine of the poet's old school. And since the *Reminiscences* were chiefly of Oxford days, it was inevitable that they should include some comment upon Housman's amazing failure in Greats, the same Greats in which Pollard had himself scored

a First Class, though he says nothing about this last to the Bromsgrovians. As one of Housman's two most intimate undergraduate friends, he was naturally asked by the bewildered Oxford world of 1881 if he could suggest any explanation. How had it come about that on some of the papers Housman had hardly attempted to offer any answers? What had he been doing with himself beforehand?

The only explanation I could offer at the time was that I believed he might have occupied himself too much with the text of Propertius, and that remained the only explanation I could offer to myself or to anyone else, until in the emotion caused by the news of his death I realized that for a man who was, if not already a great scholar, at least a great scholar in the making, it was psychologically impossible to make the best of his knowledge on subjects in which he had lost interest.

Evidently success in examinations belonged to 'journalistic' minds like his own which were prepared 'to make the best of' any subject the authorities required, and if they were also favoured with a stroke or two of luck they might even secure a First.

Fellow scholars in the same year at St. John's, living on the same stair for three years, and during the fourth sharing rooms out of college with another undergraduate, Pollard and Housman enjoyed at the most critical period of their lives a close friendship which must have been a tremendous experience for the lad from Brompton, who, cut off from the world by his stammer, a day-school boy, and early robbed by her illness of a mother's attention, had probably never before known intimacy with a fellow human being. And the intimacy soon ripened into affection on both sides, which lasted the rest of their lives, though for reasons presently to be explained they drifted apart after 1881. That Pollard admired Housman and regarded him as a great man goes without saying. Yet, while he paid full honour to his friend's powers he could not help regretting the use he put them to. Not being a classical scholar I never heard him speak of the Manilius, but I do not doubt that he considered it 'Byzantine'. Of *A Shropshire Lad*, the title of which he was proud to think had been suggested by himself, he often spoke, as it was for a time one of my favourite books of poems; but, highly as he placed it for craftsmanship, he could only groan in spirit over the gallows and graveyards which formed its principal themes. What then did these two young men, so utterly different in temperament and outlook, talk about in the second quad at St. John's and later in the rooms in St. Giles'? Not much, it seems,

in the latter, which they shared with Moses Jackson, the Mercutio of the trio (whom Housman's biographer describes as 'a scientist and an athlete whose contempt for letters was unconcealed'),<sup>1</sup> seeing that with his finals before him and conscious that close application was his only hope, Pollard after Hall 'mostly retired to work by myself in the lower room, leaving the other two on the first floor'.<sup>2</sup> But it is an easy guess that during the first three years poetry and religion provided them with their chief topics. Housman's 'favourite English poet in these early days', the *Reminiscences* inform us, 'was Matthew Arnold, whose *Empedocles on Etna* he recommended to me'. This recommendation was an important event for Pollard. I find several references to Arnold's poetry in my letters of 1916; and in one he observes:

I think some of it has entered more deeply into my outlook on life than any other poetry. Alfred Housman used to say that the lengthy song of Empedocles contained 'all the Law and the Prophets', which isn't true. But it does contain a much better version of Ecclesiastes, while the piece which begins 'In the deserted moonlit street' (I never can remember the title) does almost rise to prophesying.

He defends this verdict in a later letter by exclaiming: 'You don't realize what it was to grow up between Huxley and Herbert Spencer'; and in a later letter still, written in reply to one preferring the claims of Robert Browning, he develops the point as follows:

Yesterday evening I read *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Empedocles on Etna*, and *Saul*, one after the other, and think all three of them very wonderful. I grant you that *Saul*, and *Rabbi ben Ezra* too, are much bigger than *Empedocles*, and yet I think that personally and in my own life the feeling of strength and certitude I have derived from Arnold has been of more practical help than the hope and consolation I have got from Browning. So there!

'Strength and certitude from Arnold!' I can hear the modern critic cry; and 'What a thing to say of poetry anyway!' On which I can only observe irrelevantly that, by the time I reached the age which Pollard was in 1916, I had come to agree with him.

One more point about his friendship with Housman before I leave it. Bewildered and grieved at his brilliant friend's failure at Oxford, with its obvious effect upon his spirits, and ashamed at his own success in the same examination, 'I got it into my head', he records, 'that the sight of me reminded Housman of his troubles, and was unwilling to thrust myself on him more than he might welcome.' And so—though he occasionally saw him

<sup>1</sup> A. S. F. Gow, *A. E. Housman: a Sketch*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bromsgrovian*.

after they began life in London, he at the Museum and Housman at the Patent Office; helped him unobtrusively whenever he saw a chance; got him to contribute three verse translations for a volume of *Odes from the Greek Dramatists* (which I suspect was partly devised in order to draw his friend out); persuaded Kegan Paul to publish *A Shropshire Lad*; and even wrote him a testimonial in support of an application—the intimacy ceased. As Housman lived in rooms with the cheerful and ebullient Jackson, the sacrifice was probably mostly on Pollard's side. But selfless self-effacement and a delicate consideration for the feelings of others were part of his nature. The story, however, has a joyful ending, which shall be given once again in his own words:

After 1897, when I moved from Kensington to Wimbledon, I saw still less of Housman, though occasionally we corresponded, and there was a jolly interlude when Jackson, who had left the Patent Office for the Headship of a native college in India, was home on leave, and he and Housman dined and slept in my house. When I retired to rest I found an apple-pie bed awaiting me and I think the Professor of Latin was a fellow victim, though I'm not quite sure he wasn't an aggressor. Anyhow, we became very youthful and light-hearted. In 1911 I went up to Cambridge to hear his inaugural lecture in his second Professorship and was richly rewarded by the cry of pleasure with which I was greeted when he caught sight of me after it. I think that somehow my presence seemed to him a recognition that he had reached his haven at last.

Pollard was twenty-four years old when he joined the British Museum, and four years later he married Alice England, a teacher at the Manchester High School for Girls, who had previously taken the Natural Science Tripos at Cambridge, an unusual feat for a woman at that period. Mrs. Pollard was indeed a remarkable woman. Of strong intellectual bent and with pronounced views on many subjects, a friend of the Pankhursts and keenly interested, as was her husband, in the movement for the emancipation of women, she was very far from being either a blue-stocking or a mere feminist. From first to last he was very much in love; and his admiration was almost as great as his affection. It was in many ways an ideal union; none the less so perhaps that she had her own circle of friends and would pay them long visits while delicate health often took her abroad. Each was happiest in the other's company and shared to the full each other's intellectual interests; yet they lived their own lives and were not in any way forlorn when one was absent. Indeed from the time they were married it was a matter of principle for them to spend at least a fortnight in the year apart.

They often 'disliked it very much', but stuck to it. The first ten years of marriage were passed in London, where their three children were born: Geoffrey in 1888, Joyce (now Mrs. Charles Roberts) in 1889, and Roger in 1891. They moved to Wimbledon, as I have said, in 1897 in order to be near King's College School, and inhabited two houses there in succession, the second of them being 40 Murray Road, which remained Pollard's home from 1906 until he died. Both homes were close to the common, which was good not only for the children but also for their father, who, a walker from youth, could take a 'breather' almost from his front door at the end of a stuffy day, or a stuffy week, at the Museum. The move also brought him close to one with whom his name will be associated as long as men continue to take an interest in Shakespearian scholarship. For a mile or more across the Common lived Walter Wilson Greg.

I never saw the Pollard family as a whole. But I came to know three members of it intimately; and doubt whether the suburbs of London at the beginning of the twentieth century could show a household happier, saner, richer in intellectual and spiritual values, or more conscious of its social responsibilities in the widest sense, than that at 40 Murray Road, Wimbledon. It was also typically English. When war, which ended the Pax Britannica of a hundred years, broke out on 4 August 1914, Geoffrey was twenty-six years old and a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, which he had entered from Woolwich six years earlier. By 22 August he was near Mons with his battery, the 119th, and after two months' incessant fighting was killed on 24 October, a very gallant officer, and mentioned as such in dispatches. Roger, on the other hand, was in August 1914 just down from Oxford, where he had been a classical exhibitor at Merton, and had made up his mind to serve his generation by devoting what from all accounts were considerable gifts as a teacher to work in an elementary school. But he at once joined up, was shortly after given a commission in the 5th Battalion of the Royal Berkshires, crossed to France on 31 May 1915, and was killed fighting with the utmost bravery on 13 October, not many miles from where his brother had fallen almost a year before. Some idea of what the country lost through the sacrifice of these fine spirits can be gathered by those who are fortunate enough to possess two little books which Pollard printed in their memory: *On Active Service: Letters of Geoffrey Blemell Pollard* (1915), and *Two Brothers: Accounts Rendered* (1916).

His own personal loss affected him in a way at once surprising



to his friends and yet entirely in keeping with his character. In 1915 he was fifty-six years old, prepared, I have been told, to descend by easy stages into the vale of old age, becoming a little of a valetudinarian, even beginning to fancy walking was bad for him, and more and more engrossed in his books to the exclusion of other interests. His boys' heroic deaths rejuvenated him; he felt that he must do what in him lay to take their place in the world, forgot about his flat-footedness, and threw himself with the utmost vigour into all sorts of social and religious activities. Of these his membership of the Anglican Fellowship and of the committee of the Central Library for Students were perhaps the most conspicuous examples; the one a small body of active-minded Anglicans of every shade of churchmanship who combined devotional fellowship with the untrammelled discussion of religious problems; the other, one of Albert Mansbridge's offspring, at that time struggling to get on its legs, though now a national institution well known to all as the National Central Library. Many individuals as well as societies also found gain in his loss. One of them was the writer of this memoir, who was bereaved of his father in the same twelvemonth as Pollard was bereaved of his sons. It seemed natural that we should adopt each other. He was helped by it, I believe; and I received more grace from that adoption than from anything, except one, that has happened to me in life. It is perhaps worth noting that this friendship had nothing originally to do with Shakespeare at all; our partnership in that adventure did not begin until two years afterwards, and was for me an uncovenanted blessing. It is, I think, due to his memory to record also that the example of unflinching courage which he set in 1915 proved a great inspiration when a single ordeal of the same kind as his double one came to me a generation later.

One last point to complete the outline of this epic. The dreadful year 1915 was the year in which he thought out and wrote out two of his principal contributions to Shakespearian scholarship, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates*, the Sandars Lectures delivered at Cambridge within a few weeks of Roger's death, and *King Richard II: a New Quarto*, published early in 1916. The second, with its elaborate tabulation of the errors and corrections in the four successive Quartos before 1623 and the folio of that date, involved more sheer drudgery than any of his publications before the *Short Title Catalogue* which was also completed at a time of bereavement. 'It's dogged as does it' is a good anaesthetic for a broken heart.

Pollard's career as librarian began on 22 February 1883 when, the *Sketch* tells us,

I presented myself at the British Museum, inflicted on the Principal Librarian (as he was then called), Sir E. A. Bond, one of the two worst stammers I have ever achieved, and was then escorted to the Department of Printed Books. . . . The Department had not always been a happy place, but it was certainly a happy place to me during the 41½ years I worked in it, and though the pay in my early days was so meagre (£120 per ann., with an annual increment of £10) that it needed a lot of work after official hours,<sup>1</sup> besides a little private income to supplement it when a family had to be supported, I can't imagine any other means of living out of which I should have got so much interest and pleasure.

It is always difficult to write the life of a great civil servant, because what goes on behind the closed doors of a government office is of necessity private for some time after his death. But the Academy has two of Pollard's immediate colleagues among its members, and when asked they readily responded to a request for impressions of his official career. First, then, Sir Frederic Kenyon, who as Director of the British Museum, 1909-30, was Pollard's chief for seventeen years, writes as follows:

As a colleague at the Museum, Pollard combined the maximum of helpfulness with the minimum of self-assertion. He had an active and enterprising mind, fertile in initiative, but unobtrusive in advocacy of his proposals. He had a gift of persuasion without violence, and hence he generally got his way without offence. He won the entire confidence and friendship of my predecessor, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, and I need not say that I was always grateful for his advice. Moreover he was the most self-effacing of public servants. There would have been great advantage to the public service if he had succeeded to the Keepership of Printed Books several years sooner than he did, but he was unwilling to be promoted at the expense of an older and deserving colleague, preferring to continue his work unobtrusively in a lower capacity. It is no wonder that all his colleagues were his friends, and his eventual retirement after a short term as head of his Department was much regretted by all.

What was the impression Pollard left on the minds of his juniors at the Museum? For an answer to this question I applied to Sir Henry Thomas, his successor, the first to be known as Principal Keeper of Printed Books, from whom some time ago I received a letter marked 'the first dictated and typed letter ever issued from this department', which taught me that Pollard's

<sup>1</sup> Shorter then (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) than now.

pen, which seemed ever-busy out of office hours, must have been even busier during them. In reply to my inquiries Thomas writes:

When I entered the B.M. in 1903, G. K. Fortescue was Keeper of Printed Books, and under him there were three Assistant Keepers—afterwards called Deputy Keepers—W. R. Wilson, A. W. K. Miller and G. F. Barwick. Fortescue's great interest was his Subject Index; Wilson, an old man with poor sight, who had retired from the position of Superintendent of the Reading Room, potted with correspondence and light duties; Miller, a fine scholar, edited the General Catalogue; and Barwick superintended the Reading Room.

Pollard (helped by Proctor in his special line) had been in charge of the Antiquarian work of the Department, for which his own interests and his Bibliographical Society experience naturally fitted him. When I joined the B.M., Proctor had just been lost in the Alps, and Pollard had to assume full charge of the Incunabula. It was he who shaped the purchasing policy of the Department, with its concentration on fifteenth century books and English Books to 1640, though of course in published statements he attributed the policy to his chief, Fortescue. With his practical experience of book-making, and his knowledge of the ways of printers and publishers, he was always the one to plan the Department's extraordinary publications.

His Museum work and his work for the Bibliographical Society played into each other's hands. Hence the strengthening of the B.M.'s collections of Incunabula and of English Books to 1640, leading to the Museum's Catalogue of XV Century Books and the Bibliographical Society's *Short Title Catalogue*, both planned by him. He also organized most of the special exhibitions and planned and wrote much of the various catalogues and guides for them—Shakespeare and Bible centenaries, for example. Also the Catalogue of the Huth Bequest, which he mainly negotiated.

In all his special tasks he liked to associate with himself such of his young men as showed willingness and aptitude. He encouraged those who displayed a predilection for studies of their own choice. Others, both within and without the Museum, he started on productive careers; and they would probably never have made good without his help, though none but his intimate friends would be aware of this.

His Keepership was a short one—5½ years—made difficult by the aftermath of war. He was interested in the members of his staff of all ranks, and tried to do the best for them, as well as to get the best out of them. He was the first Keeper I knew who planned the spacing out of his staff to ensure a reasonable succession in key posts, both for the good of the Department and for the satisfaction of reasonable ambitions. But gaps and jams caused by the war years make planning difficult, and there were no doubt disappointments. A man of his mental calibre naturally found it somewhat difficult to suffer fools gladly. He could be

stirred to occasional flashes of temper. As a corrective he developed a love for his fellows as part of his philosophy, or rather his religion, as one would expect of the anonymous author of *Life, Love and Light*.<sup>1</sup> He is the only man I know who showed his respect for the young men who had fallen in the first world war by raising his hat every time he passed the Memorial inscription at the entrance to the Museum. Yet some of his young men have criticised him for confusing them and their names when they came back temporarily or finally from the war; an uncharitable selfishness, for the memory of a Keeper with a staff of nearly 150 is heavily taxed, and Pollard was also bearing the burden of the loss of his two sons, and of some fine young men, their contemporaries, on his staff.

It must be admitted that his memory did show signs of being overburdened in his last years at the Museum—an indication of what proved to be his weak point and his worst affliction after his accident.

Thomas adds that some of Pollard's juniors complained that he was inclined to be 'schoolmasterish', and suggests that this was probably 'a natural result of his attempt to organize and tighten control over the upper as well as the lower staff'. He then concludes:

I never noticed anything to justify the complaint, but I expect those who complained were those who most needed a little schoolmastering. However, they must have had some justification, for Pollard himself recognized his tendency, and I know he asked some of his senior advisers, when he became Keeper, to warn him if he became 'too schoolmasterish'.

'The need of supplementing' the meagre salary from the Museum, the *Sketch* relates, 'led to pleasant jobs and still pleasanter friendships.' The friends included the publisher Charles Kegan Paul, F. J. Furnivall, and D. C. Lathbury, editor of the *Guardian*; and the principal jobs, before Pollard became involved with the *Library* and the Bibliographical Society, were the editing of Chaucer and writing about the fifteenth century generally, books and articles on early printed books, and at first review-work and later occasional leader-writing for the *Guardian*. Of these the most important both for Pollard and for scholarship was his editing of Chaucer, culminating in the *Globe Chaucer* produced in 1898 with the assistance of three collaborators, a volume which by some strange oversight is not even mentioned in the *Sketch*. But on this side of activities I can fortunately quote the testimony of his friend and sometime pupil, Stanley Bennett of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who writes:

Pollard's great services to bibliography, and his remarkable work on Shakespearian bibliographical problems, have tended to obscure the

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 302.

services he rendered to English Medieval literature. His first published paper was on 'The Gilds of the Middle Ages' (1876), and much of his early career was devoted to the study of the literature of the 14th and 15th centuries. As a result, from 1886 a series of volumes edited by Pollard gave students of this period much needed help. First we may take his work on Chaucer. His little *Chaucer Primer* (1893) was a model of what such a work should be: accurate, concise, and nicely blending information with criticism. Five years later the *Globe Chaucer* appeared under his general editorship, with an admirable general introduction by Pollard, as well as a first-rate introduction to *The Canterbury Tales*. This popular edition was the result of ten years' labour, and took its own line, despite the powerful influence of Skeat's 'Oxford Chaucer' and 'Student's Chaucer'. It at once established itself as a handy, reliable edition of Chaucer's poems. From time to time after this Pollard edited individual tales, and never allowed other interests completely to overwhelm his love for Chaucer.

The second great service he rendered was in presenting texts of the medieval drama. His first venture here was the production of his now classic book of specimens of pre-Elizabethan drama: *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes* (1890). This work, with its admirable Introduction, first made much of our old drama available to the ordinary reader, and it has been re-published again and again since 1890. It is not too much to say that practically everyone has made their first acquaintance with the Miracle and Morality plays in the pages of Pollard's specimens. He also edited *The Towneley Plays* (1897) in conjunction with George England, and later with F. J. Furnivall brought out a text of the *Macro Plays* (1904). Both of these were edited for the Early English Text Society, and gave students a reliable text edition for the first time.

Another valuable contribution to Medieval studies was made in his Introduction to a volume of *Fifteenth Century Verse and Prose*, in a re-issue of Arber's *English Garner* (1903). At this time fifteenth century literature was in a curiously unfortunate position. On the one hand Furnivall and his editors were putting out editions of the work of the 'drivelling monk' Lydgate and of other writers of that period, and were trying to convince readers of their merit, while another body of critics could scarcely find words bad enough with which to characterise the literary output of most writers of this century. Pollard saw that both parties had missed the real contribution made by the century, and drew attention to the wealth of lyric, carol and drama of the period. 'To say that English poetry was dead when verse like this was being written is absurd,' he wrote. 'It was not dead, but banished from court.'

Turning from his early editing and literary work to his bibliographical work of the same period, I now ask another friend, Dr. Victor Scholderer, his close colleague at the Museum, and now President of the Bibliographical Society, to take up the tale.

Pollard's early interests were much more linguistic than bibliographical, and it was probably not until his entry into the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum in 1883 that he gave thought to such matters; even three years later it is recorded of him that he had not yet had much to do with early books. But there was plenty of opportunity at the Museum and the easy official hours of those days allowed ample leisure for private work. Pollard's 'first excursion into the gentle art of book-building' was an article 'On Some Old Title-Pages' in the *Century Guild Hobby-Horse* of 1888 and another article on Geoffrey Tory, the famous sixteenth-century scholar-printer, appeared in the same periodical in 1889. Bookmen and publishers soon gave him recognition and by 1893 he was editing a series of 'Books about Books' and himself contributing thereto a volume on *Early Illustrated Books*. It was entirely consonant with the rest of Pollard's personality that he should have conceived for the Italian primitives a youthful enthusiasm which seemed to his elders, as he himself smilingly admitted, to require some damping down, but it had a specially fortunate result in the shape of a monograph on *Italian Book Illustrations, chiefly of the Fifteenth Century*, published in 1894 in connection with P. G. Hamerton's *Portfolio*. It is Pollard's most substantial contribution to a subject in which he never ceased to delight and admirably exemplifies the ease of his style and the lucidity of his exposition.

The year 1892, which saw the foundation of the Bibliographical Society, saw also the entry into the Museum of Robert Proctor. 'His reputation as a specialist had preceded him', Pollard wrote, 'and I remember asking Dr. Garnett (then Keeper of Printed Books) rather dolefully as to whether he would absorb all the antiquarian work there was to do.' That might well have happened had Pollard not been what he was, but although Proctor 'had no love as a rule for working in collaboration' the two soon became fast friends on a firm bibliographical foundation: to quote Pollard again:

The friendship was of a kind less unusual, perhaps, than it may sound. On almost every subject on which it is possible to argue we held diametrically opposite views; but we had so many tastes and interests in common that we had never any time for controversy, but accepted each other quite happily, with a little occasional chaff, and only a very rare explosion when we had unguardedly strayed on a dangerous subject,—after which we went back to books.

Discussions between Pollard, the Liberal Imperialist as he described himself, and the fiery Republican Proctor, who headed his private diary with the words 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' in red ink, were doubtless unlikely to pass off in judicial calm. But their collaboration bore remarkable fruit in the volume of *Three Hundred Notable Books added to the Library of the British Museum under the Keepership of Richard Garnett*, the selection for which was made, the descriptions written and the book passed through the press by the two men in sixty-eight days, so

as to be ready on the day of Garnett's retirement, 20th March, 1899. This piece of work well shows what energy and concentration Pollard, who was much less robust than the tireless Proctor, was always ready to put forth at need. Meanwhile, in 1895, he had suggested to his publishers 'a bibliographical quarterly, the life of which should be limited beforehand to three years', to be edited by himself. The result was the three spacious volumes of *Bibliographica*, the layout of which, including the attractive border reproduced on its covers from an Italian incunabulum, was of course due to Pollard, and for which he wrote on a variety of matters connected with early French and Italian books, together with an article on English book-sales—the whole a characteristic combination of sound book-building with good bibliography.

About the turn of the century what may be called the bibliophilic period of bibliographical studies was coming to an end, and Pollard's attention, like that of the Bibliographical Society to which he was for so many years a devoted secretary, began to turn elsewhere. *Old Picture Books and other Essays on Bookish Subjects*, which appeared in 1902 and consisted almost entirely of reprints of articles already published, is in some sort a valediction. About the same time he was engaged in a last collaboration with Proctor on the magnificent Catalogue (published in 1907) of the early printed books in the Pierpont Morgan Library, he himself editing the whole and describing the illustrated books, while Proctor described most of the rest. There can, however, be little doubt that Pollard's subsequent contribution to the study of early printing would have been much smaller than it actually proved had not Proctor perished in the Austrian Alps in September, 1903. The publication in 1898 of his *Index*, that great landmark in the study of the subject, had induced the Trustees of the British Museum to call for 'a full-dress catalogue' of the incunabula under their care and Proctor had been actively engaged on the preliminaries at the end of his life. The task now suddenly devolved upon Pollard and constituted for ten years the bulk of his official work; the entry 'Catalogue of Incunabula' is first found in his departmental diary in April 1905, and almost at once becomes normal. He spoke of being 'burdened' with this task

for which I had no natural equipment. Out of loyalty to the Trustees and to Proctor's memory I did my best, and was taught by the work as it went on. . . . I am sincerely thankful for the strenuous mental discipline which it imposed on me. . . . If I have made any useful contribution to the bibliography of the English Bible or of Shakespeare it has been due to the task imposed on me of determining what does, and what does not, constitute a valid proof of the country, town, printer and date to which an anonymous piece of printing can be assigned.

And, in turn, to listen to Pollard himself going straight to the heart of some problem of early printing, marking out the precise limits of fact and conjecture and putting the result with the clarity, succinctness, and, often, humour, to which the impediment in his speech gave a peculiar

quality was for his juniors a 'mental discipline' of the first order. The words 'no natural equipment' refer to a certain impatience with repetitive detail, but the precision with which he kept the wood in focus could prove uncommonly disconcerting to a disciple bemused with the multitude of trees.

The first volume of the Catalogue appeared in 1908, and Pollard prefixed to it an introduction setting forth the scope and methods of the work in some 15 large quarto pages. This is a model of its kind. The proneness of the subject to turn into a labyrinth of technicalities is masterfully repressed, and perfectly clear writing springing from perfectly clear thought ('limpid' was his own word for this desideratum) carries the reader along without interruption, nor is there any lack of those stimulating obiter dicta which Pollard could always slip into his argument. His share in the routine work of the Catalogue grew less as time went on, but when in 1913 the third volume concluded the descriptions of the German incunabula, he contributed to it a general introduction dealing with their subject-matter and the trends of contemporary thought revealed thereby, which was a new departure and returned a highly specialized study to much needed contact with wider issues. Pollard wrote this *con amore*, in a remarkably short time and with a minimum of 'looking up'; once again those powers of concentration which had enabled him to put into shape a whole book of 'practical morality for men and women' amid the quotidian unquiet of suburban train journeys stood him in good stead.

Officially Pollard was called upon to deal with a quite exceptional situation when Alfred Henry Huth died in October 1910, and was found to have bequeathed a free choice of fifty books, manuscript and printed, from his superb library to the Museum. The selection had to be made promptly from the five large volumes of Huth's catalogue, and whoever has had occasion to weigh against each other the claims of a number of almost equally desirable books will appreciate the burden thus laid upon Pollard. With what success he discharged his task is shown by the Catalogue of the Huth Bequest published for the Trustees early in 1912, but the price paid was a temporary breakdown through over-exertion. The same year, nevertheless, also saw the publication of a most attractive volume on *Fine Books* in the Connoisseurs' Library, containing an account of the invention of printing which in a brief compass could hardly be bettered and forms a useful corrective to the heroics of many of Gutenberg's countrymen. Pollard reverted to the subject in the congenial paper on *The Human Factor in Bibliography* which was his presidential address to the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society in 1923, and a short quotation from this may serve to show the insight with which he related purely technical information to its wider significance:

I have a distinct mental picture of [Gutenberg] as a rather thriftless inventor, without any driving power or business ability, producing (when he wanted to borrow money) a small sample as a proof of



what he could do, but never doing it. I see Schoeffer as a lad with a gift for cutting type, and Fust, the goldsmith, as a shrewd man of business, sizing up Gutenberg and sizing up Schoeffer and at last losing patience with Gutenberg . . . and starting with Schoeffer's help . . . to print the 42-line Bible which is commonly called Gutenberg's. Interpreting the evidence on strictly business lines, I believe that to be the only possible conclusion. On the other hand, the 'business man' . . . may always lose some of his business habits, and a violent quarrel between Fust and Gutenberg on a purely personal question, if evidence of it ever came to light, might make my reconstruction . . . much less probable.

Pollard's final contribution of any length to these studies took the form of a paper on *The Building Up of the British Museum Collection of Incunabula*, read to the Bibliographical Society shortly after his retirement from the Keepership of Printed Books in 1924.

This is perhaps as good a point as any for saying something of Pollard's connexion with the United States, since it was originally a continuation in a still more intense form of his labours on the incunabula at the Museum. Though he is well known in America, as is shown by the honours there accorded him towards the end of his life; and though he was for many years a close friend and active co-worker with the eminent American scholar Miss Henrietta Bartlett,<sup>1</sup> an enduring monument of their partnership being the delightful *Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*, 1916, 'published under the auspices of the Elizabethan Club, Yale University'; he only once crossed the Atlantic, and might as well not even have done that for all he saw of America and Americans when he got there. The episode, though he can hardly have enjoyed it at the time, provides one of the most entertaining incidents of his life, which he recounts in the *Library* for December 1920 with his own inimitable blend of tenderness and humour, under the guise of an obituary notice of General Rush C. Hawkins, a private collector of 'fifteeners', as the Americans prefer (so wisely) to call incunabula, who after publishing a book on the *First Books and Printers of the Fifteenth Century* in 1884 began about twenty-five years later to pay frequent visits to the Museum, evidently in the hope of securing someone there to catalogue the collection he had been getting together meanwhile. For a time he had hovered about Robert Proctor. But—to continue in Pollard's words:

when Proctor met his death and I took up his work, as best I could, the

<sup>1</sup> Miss Bartlett tells me she possesses a large collection of his letters, written between 1914 and 1935, which she proposes to bequeath to the University Library at Yale.

General came more frequently to me, and after a little while began asking me to recommend him some one who would catalogue his collection. My recommendations were not received favourably, and at last the old man (he was already 77) told me he wanted me to come myself. I must already have been very fond of him, as the ease with which he persuaded my unadventurous self to carry over half my 1908 holidays to 1909, cross the Atlantic (I am a very bad sailor) and locate myself for six weeks of furious work in Providence, where I did not know a soul, still surprises me when I think of it.

I wish I could go on quoting, for it makes an excellent story. But readers who want more must be referred to the *Library* article. Summing up the whole experience in retrospect, Pollard wrote in the *Sketch*:

I never concentrated all my brains on any piece of work with the intensity I needed to get through my job in the six weeks I was in Providence, and it is an abiding regret to me that I only found out the best shop for cream ices on the day before I left. Of the kindness I received, more especially from George Parker Winship, then Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library, at Providence, I haven't words to say enough.

It seems only right, therefore, that Mr. Winship should have the last word upon it. Here is a passage from a long and interesting letter he was good enough to send me the other day; a passage which has a relevance wider than the episode of General Hawkins, though I do not suppose everyone will agree with the views it expresses about Proctor's methods.

I think he found me useful, because I dropped in at his work room, virtually every late afternoon, as he was finishing the day's stint, and it gave him a listener, who understood the lingo, with whom he could check up the day's results, go over doubtful conclusions, and take stock of the way the work was going. Then we would go for a walk, in directions where we would be sure not to meet anyone whom I would have to introduce to him.

This was where I came closer to understanding him, strength and weakness. He spoke almost daily of his lack of Proctor's brilliance of intuition and apparently limitless store of type details. But after he left and I began to think things through, I came to realize that Pollard with his pedestrian plodding, was making fewer mistakes to plague successors than Proctor with his epochal brilliancy. It seemed to me that Pollard, as an incunabulist, was hamstrung by the Museum's commitment to the Proctor legend. He gave the very best of his years to the B.M. Catalogue of Fifteeners, doing it in ways he did not really believe in, and was not temperamentally equipped to do effectively—as a loyal effort to co-operate with a German opus. It was a tragic sacrifice.

The visit to Providence had one compensation, which you may be able to use. My impression is that this was the very first time that Pollard had spent so many days on end with fifteneers—or any books perhaps—that were intact, just as they came out of hiding. Time and again he would refer to the fact that at the Museum he was surrounded with priceless treasures, occasionally unique specimens, which were nearly all showcase copies out of famous collections, but virtually all of them dolled-up (or is that an Americanism?) having lost most of the sidelights on flyleaves and original covers when re-covered in gilded morocco with squared edges.<sup>1</sup>

Pollard's work for the *Library*, for the Bibliographical Society, and for the text of Shakespeare all hang together and are best considered as one continuous story. What he did by way of helping us to understand the origins and development of the Authorized Version of the Bible, though not the least of his triumphs, was in the nature of a digression, and was undertaken for a special occasion. Nevertheless, it could only have been accomplished by one who was at once thoroughly conversant with fifteenth and sixteenth century literature and an expert bibliographer, so that it forms a kind of link between the one and the other, though it belongs chronologically to a later chapter of Pollard's career. Sir Frederic Kenyon sums up his achievement in this field as follows:

The Tercentenary of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1911 brought an invitation from the Oxford University Press to contribute a bibliographical introduction to their reproduction of the original Bible of 1611. Characteristically, Pollard did not content himself with the story as already set out in existing works, meritorious as some of them were, but set himself to re-examine the original records. In this examination he found himself, as he said, 'constantly hampered by the lack of a collection of original documents'. Many had never been printed in full; others were only with difficulty accessible. He accordingly suggested to the Press the preparation of such a collection; and his suggestion was cordially accepted. The result was a volume entitled *Records of the English Bible* (Oxford 1911), consisting of 'original documents relating to the making, printing and publishing of the English translations of the Bible, from Tyndale's New Testament of 1525 to the appearance of the version of 1611', to which was prefixed an introduction of 76 pages, putting together the results in a continuous story. A good deal of new light was thrown especially on the attitude of the authorities to the several translations; the identity of the real first edition was established beyond dispute; and the whole story was placed on a firm

<sup>1</sup> This, Sir Henry Thomas notes, applies mainly to the Grenville Library and, in a lesser degree, to the King's Library.

foundation of fact which is not likely to be shaken. The whole work, introduction as well as documents, besides being published separately, was prefixed to the folio facsimile of the first edition of 1911, and the introduction by itself to the octavo edition. In addition, Pollard wrote the description of the printed editions for the *Guide* to the Museum Bible Exhibition on the same occasion.

No detailed account need here be given of Pollard's work as contributor to and editor of the *Library* or of his activities as Hon. Secretary of the Bibliographical Society, since we have his own history of the *Library* down to 1930, while the present Hon. Secretary has twice dealt with the Society's debt to his predecessor, once in the obituary notice in the *Library* for 1944 and more fully still in the admirable opening chapter of *Studies in Retrospect* (Bibliographical Society, 1945). Adhering then to my purpose of trying to make this memoir a portrait rather than an official record, I shall content myself by noting a few personal traits which the foregoing accounts reveal.

Scholderer observes above that though Pollard knew very little about bibliography or early books when he entered the service of the Museum, by 1888, five years later, he was producing his first-fruits in this field. During the same period he had evidently managed to persuade his chiefs of his bibliographical proficiency, for when J. Y. W. MacAlister, librarian of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, was about to launch a periodical called the *Library* in December 1888 and consulted Pollard's immediate superior, Richard Garnett, for the name of a competent person to help him run it, an introduction followed as a matter of course and thus began Pollard's connexion with a journal to whose destinies he was linked for nearly forty-six years. During the first ten years or so, while it remained a monthly and more or less tied to the Library Association, he contributed to each number 'short reviews of any books of bibliographical interest on which I could lay my hands'; and, he tells us, 'thereby contracted a habit of writing descriptive notices of any book on bookish subjects whether I could claim to possess the particular knowledge required for expert criticism or no'.<sup>1</sup> To which piece of information, written in 1930, he added the following footnote:

From the frequency with which the initials A. W. P. appear at the end of notices in every number of the present series of the *Library*, it is obvious that the habit continues. But specialist reviewers are hard to find.

<sup>1</sup> The *Library*, 4th ser., x. 402.

Three of my friends edit other quarterlies which partly overlap our subjects, and where the subject touches literature or libraries they have a better claim to the best man.

It is not difficult to guess that one of these friends was McKerrow, who was at this time struggling with some difficulty to get *The Review of English Studies* on to its feet. Pollard, one of the busiest men in Britain, was always particularly sympathetic towards others in a similar, or, as he liked to believe, a more desperate, predicament. Thus all his retrospective references to MacAlister emphasize two points: that he was terribly over-worked, and that therefore it was his, Pollard's, duty to do all in his power to save him trouble. I suspect, in fact, that Pollard became virtually co-editor of the *Library* long before 1899 when, with the beginning of the second series, his name appeared as such on the cover and title-page, and that from 1899 onwards MacAlister had very little indeed to do with the journal directly except to retain responsibility for the financial side of it, a responsibility which of course came to an end when the Bibliographical Society took it over in 1920. In saying this I should wrong Pollard if I in any way appeared to detract from MacAlister's merits. He was, I do not doubt, everything that Pollard claimed him to be; and it seems pretty clear that, quite apart from his remarkable achievements as medical librarian, he was the true father of modern English bibliography, since he not only founded the *Library* but was a prime, if unseen, mover in the foundation of the Bibliographical Society. Had he not, however, been fortunate enough to find in Pollard a kindly nurse for both these babies, almost from the day of their birth, they would probably have perished in the cradle.

'Engaged as I am', writes Mr. Francis, 'in the day to day business of the Bibliographical Society, I find it hard to realise that I met Pollard on only two occasions, so deeply and vividly do I seem to feel his personality in every department of its activities. There was a sureness and a familiarity, amounting almost to virtuosity, in the way he handled the Society's affairs.' The 'Bibliographical Society' was in fact his child in everything but its begetting; for though founded in July 1892, it did not come under Pollard's direction until October 1893, and he had deliberately refrained from joining it earlier. It is not difficult to guess why. In his account twenty-one years afterwards<sup>1</sup> of the Society's origins he writes charmingly, if with the suspicion of

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. of the Bib. Soc.*, 1913-15.

a twinkle in his eye, about W. A. Copinger, its founder and first President. But, to judge from the extracts given by Mr. Francis,<sup>1</sup> his letters to Copinger in 1893 and 1894 were not intended to charm, though of course entirely polite. They make it clear that he undertook the secretaryship with the greatest possible reluctance and at a time when he was already so busy he scarcely knew how to turn round; that having undertaken it he was determined to run the Society in his own way; and that, realizing his President had a thoroughly woolly mind,<sup>2</sup> he adopted towards him from the outset the sharp and pointed style to which alone wool might be expected to respond. Talbot Baines Reed the first Secretary had fallen ill, and Copinger wrote to Pollard at the beginning of August offering him the secretaryship. Pollard left the offer a month unanswered, and, when, in response to an urgent appeal from Baines Reed he at last replied, his letter, almost brusque and exceedingly business-like, named the terms, and concluded: 'I am quite aware that you may think these conditionings arrogant, but my time is my one valuable possession and I can't risk having to imitate Talbot Baines Reed in taking a six months' holiday.' As Pollard's salary at the Museum was at that date still less than £250 p.a. and he had a wife and three children to keep, what he says about the value of his time was only the bare truth. But he knew very well that Copinger could not do without him, and he made up his mind to have the whip hand of him from the outset. To what effect he used the whip may be seen from Mr. Francis's other quotation, this time from a letter about a year later. Copinger had promised a paper on incunabula for his presidential address in December 1894, and then changed his mind; upon which his Hon. Secretary writes:

I am bitterly disappointed at the proposed subject of your address at the Annual Meeting. As I have already told you, I have set my face against all schemes, plans, suggestions for work, treatises on method etc. During its first year the Society produced nothing but these and did not get on in consequence. To have to announce a Presidential address on 'Work for Authors with a Bibliographical Tendency' is a personal rebuff, and a great disappointment to me in my work. I am neglecting my private business in order to further the interests of the Society, and

<sup>1</sup> The *Library*, 4th ser., xxv. 83-4.

<sup>2</sup> Scholderer (*Studies in Retrospect*, p. 40) notes that Copinger's chief contribution to bibliography, the *Supplement to Hain* (1895-1902) 'came in for severe but just reprehension' in Pollard's *Bibliographica* (vol. ii) 'as a compilation insufficiently critical of its sources and therefore likely to be rather an obstacle than a help to progress'.

I take it very hardly that you can not make time to knock up a paper on the excellent subject you proposed some time back.

The letter illustrates not only the forceful side of Pollard's character but also his general attitude towards bibliographical and literary problems. He was interested in getting things done, and not much in general theories about the nature and purpose of bibliography; in bibliographical works rather than in the bibliographical faith. Yet when driven by stupid misrepresentation to defend the activities of a fellow bibliographer, his 'lovable and inspiring friend' Robert Proctor, he could already in 1903 recite a bibliographical creed which implied, if its modest wording did not actually express, most of the claims since made for it. A Mr. J. D. Brown, Borough Librarian of Islington, annoyed that the Bibliographical Society was not making itself useful to borough librarians 'by providing students of all kinds with complete or selective bibliographies of every useful subject, properly annotated and indexed', foolishly consented to pour forth in the pages of the *Library* his scorn of those who frittered away their time in quarrelling over blank leaves, printers' signatures, the typographical mysteries of the fifteenth century, and such-like 'egotistical hobbies'. Pollard's reply is still fun to read, and must have delighted Proctor and the Society when it appeared in April 1903. But its main interest for us now is what he says about the purpose of Bibliography. 'The business of the bibliographer', he states, is 'primarily and essentially the enumeration of books. His is the lowly task of finding out what books exist, and thereby helping to secure their preservation. . . . When the bibliographer has brought books to light and printed lists of them, whether chronologically . . . or under their authors, I submit that he has done a great part of what can reasonably be expected of him.' This, which is obviously inspired by Proctor's classical work on incunabula, was in turn to inspire Pollard's own classical *Short Title Catalogue*. Upon 'what remains over when this great part has been accomplished' he finds space for the mention of two points only: first, that the history of typography, which Proctor was illuminating, was not only important in itself as a contribution to knowledge, but likely to have beneficial effects upon modern printing; and, second, that so long as literature in order to be communicated has to take material form, so long will it be to the advantage of the little world which cares for literature that every point which concerns this material form should be carefully and thoroughly investigated. It may even be that an examination of the 'quads and quoins of Aldus' [a sneer of

Brown's] may possess as much real literary interest as a new disquisition on the relations of Shelley and Harriet Westbrook, or whether George IV did or did not behave shabbily to Sheridan on his death-bed.<sup>1</sup>

This second claim, supported by instances of the bewilderment and pitfalls that beset literary editors ignorant of the elements of bibliography, is, I think, the earliest statement of the right of Bibliography to be regarded as an instrument of textual criticism though to some extent anticipated by the definition of Bibliography as 'the grammar of literary investigation' which is quoted from an unnamed source in Copinger's first presidential address.

But getting things done was always Pollard's main preoccupation, and the first thing was to get the Society going, as Mr. Francis shows.<sup>2</sup> He succeeded, mainly owing to three shrewd moves, which illustrate at once his business acumen and his knowledge of human nature. One of his first steps as Secretary was to induce the Council to announce its intention of closing the roll on 21 May 1894; an action which had the desired effect of causing a large accession of new members, 'the majority of whom would otherwise never have joined' as Pollard explained twenty years later;

seeing that in the case of every society with at all a reasonable programme, there exists a large body of potential members, who have no objection to paying their guineas, but who, as long as they know the door will always be open, continue to sit outside, with the placid intention of walking in a little later on.

A second cause of the Society's success was its Illustrated Monographs, which were apparently largely if not entirely of Pollard's design,<sup>3</sup> were of course expensive to produce, but were well worth the cost since they furnished members with a number of very fine volumes as tangible evidence of the benefit of belonging to the Society. And lastly there was the *News Sheet*, which Pollard, directly he became Secretary, substituted for the postcard on which notices of meetings had hitherto been announced.

This characteristic Pollard production [writes Francis] exhibits in a charming fashion his urbanity, his ready pen, his easy familiarity. He carried on the *News Sheet* uninterruptedly from February 1894 to January 1920, only giving up when the Society, by taking over the *Library*, provided itself with a regular means of communication with its members.

<sup>1</sup> The *Library* 2nd ser., iv. 161-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Retrospect*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> The earliest of them, which set the model for the rest, 'gave me', he tells us, 'an opportunity for a pretty piece of book-building' (*Sketch*, 12).



It was his 'own idea' to start with and it was his sole responsibility (he wrote 138 out of the 140 numbers) from first to last. He was rightly proud of it and laid it aside with regrets that there was not a monthly 'News Sheet evening' during five months of the year.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century Pollard's foster-child the Bibliographical Society, now nine years old, could boast of a full roll of members and a noble row of Illustrated Monographs, together with other publications, including five volumes of *Transactions*. At the same date, the *Library*, after completing its tenth volume, had started a fresh series with Pollard's name on the title-page as co-editor. Thus, largely under his inspiration and guidance, though he himself owed much in inspiration and instruction to his daily intercourse with Robert Proctor, the preceding decade had seen a great advance in bibliographical studies in this country and particularly the accumulation in the publications just named of a considerable amount of fresh or freshly interpreted bibliographical material. So far, however, from resting on these laurels, he made the year 1900 the occasion for issuing a new challenge to the Society's members. In retrospect, thirteen years later, he remarks that, though at this time in a very flourishing condition, the Society had 'one undeniable and very awkward fact . . . to face. It had issued nine Illustrated Monographs, which had cost about half its income, and not one of these had been concerned with an English subject.' And in its other publications, he continues, 'our English work was meagre and miscellaneous, in fact almost scrappy'.<sup>2</sup> It was with thoughts like this in mind, no doubt, that he had written in the *News Sheet* for June 1900:

So many of the Society's publications have dealt with foreign subjects, that papers on points of English book-lore would be especially welcome.

Upon which Francis comments:

By good luck or good management—looking back it is difficult not to believe that good luck followed on good management—the Society was able to change its course into channels which have led directly to the fields of its greatest successes.<sup>3</sup>

The challenge in the *News Sheet*, and the response it met with, undoubtedly mark the turning-point in the development of bibliographical studies. Pollard's 'good management' of a decade was now crowned by a stroke of great 'good luck'. For we may

<sup>1</sup> The *Library*, 4th ser., xxv. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, xiii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> The *Library*, 4th ser., xxv. 85.

be pretty sure that what he wrote in June 1900 had some relation to the fact that a year before a young Cambridge man of 24, named Walter Wilson Greg, had submitted for publication by the Society *A list of English Plays written before 1643 and published before 1700*, to use the title under which the list was published early in 1900. Pollard indeed himself implies it, when he writes in his *Sketch*:

If I remembered the day on which the offer was received it ought certainly to be printed in red both in my private calendar and in that of the Society, which up to that time had concerned itself almost exclusively with foreign printing and book-illustration. Thanks to Dr. Greg and his Cambridge friend, Dr. McKerrow, who just then was in Japan and joined the Society a year or two later, the work of the Society thenceforth became predominantly English.

Yet Greg, discussing the same historical point, hands the laurels back to Pollard. Remarking that 'the importance of bibliographical investigation for literary and particularly textual studies' was not fully recognized 'till the early years of the present century', he continues:

I think that the real pioneer of this movement was A. W. Pollard. He was probably the first instance of a scholar versed in the editing of English texts who was also a trained bibliographer; but though it was inevitable, or at any rate natural, that realization of a fruitful connexion between his two lines of study should come to him, it seems to have come almost unconsciously. Cautious and conservative,<sup>1</sup> he never flaunted it as a new discovery; but he quietly impressed on others the need in all textual matters of never losing sight of the actual pieces of paper or parchment upon which the words of an author had been preserved, or of the material processes of transmission.<sup>2</sup>

'Britain', a foreigner once remarked to me, 'is the only country where two men will pause at a doorway, each waiting for the other to go first'; and the truth surely about this doorway, which happens to be the main entrance to modern English textual criticism, is that Pollard and Greg went through it arm in arm with McKerrow immediately behind.

As undergraduates in the 'nineties at Trinity College, Cambridge, Greg and McKerrow had discussed together the editing of Elizabethan drama and the textual problems involved, discussions which 'often lasted into the small hours' and were continued 'on the Grantchester grind'.<sup>3</sup> What first led them to

<sup>1</sup> On this see below, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Retrospect*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ronald Brunlees McKerrow', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1940, p. 49.

contemplate that particular line of study Greg does not tell us in his memoir of McKerrow. But it is a fair guess that the example of Aldis Wright, their own Vice-Master and the presence in the college library of one of the finest and richest collections of Shakespearian Quartos in the world, backed by a very useful if miscellaneous body of fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century English books, provided one incentive; and that another came to them from London in the *Library* and the publications of the Bibliographical Society. The very fact indeed that the latter had up to then been mainly concerned with incunabula and foreign printers would of itself suggest to eager and youthful scholars, with the spirits of Capell and Aldis Wright prompting them, that great things might be in store for those who carried bibliographical inquiry forward into the age of Shakespeare. Not that the harvest of the earlier field was yet carried. Its extent and variety had only recently been revealed in Proctor's *Index* (1898); and after Proctor's untimely death in 1903, Pollard's main official task for the next ten years, as we have seen, was that of 'planning and directing the early volumes of the great *Catalogue of Books printed in the XV Century now in the British Museum*'.<sup>1</sup> How much Greg's conception of bibliography and his achievements in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century bibliography owe to Proctor, Pollard, and the *Catalogue* for which they were in the main responsible, appears from an eloquent paragraph on the subject in his chapter of *Retrospect*, which culminates in the sentence 'It was the work of the incunabulists, and of those who followed their lead, that transformed bibliography from a study the main interest of which was artistic to one governed by the method of scientific enquiry.'<sup>2</sup>

One way of writing Pollard's life would be to consider it as a series of friendships with scholars younger than himself. Sometimes he had two or three of such friendships going at the same time; and almost always, while his chief function was discussion and encouragement of the scholar's particular problems in the light of his own wide general experience, he took a hand at some time or other in the attempt to solve them. And in the matter of help, as one who received much of it well expresses it to me, 'not only did he respond, he initiated, i.e. he made opportunities for those younger friends of his, and for their work, before they asked: he *thought* about them and their work, transferring to them what he might have concentrated on his sons.' Of such friendships those with Robert Proctor and W. W. Greg were far

<sup>1</sup> *Sketch*, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Studies in Retrospect*, p. 27.

the most important and productive, both for himself and for English scholarship. By a strange fatality it happened that he lost Proctor very shortly after he first came to know Greg, so that Greg was in a sense Proctor's successor. McKerrow, moreover, returning from Japan in 1900, and settling in London, made up the famous trio, who spent much of their life at the Museum; and, in Professor F. P. Wilson's words, 'made that library and its neighbouring restaurants—especially during the summer migration from America—the best centre for Elizabethan studies in the world'; while, as the same writer notes, 'so close was their co-operation, so frequent their consultations, that in their early writings it is sometimes impossible to disentangle the work of one from that of another'.<sup>1</sup>

Pollard seems to have been led to take a hand himself with the problems of Shakespeare's text by two distinct occurrences. First, two 'charming little fat volumes' arrived from different sources at the British Museum, one in 1902 and the other in 1906, both belonging to the early seventeenth century and containing nine Shakespearian or pseudo-Shakespearian Quartos; and these volumes were so strikingly similar in appearance as to suggest to the trained eye of Pollard that someone sometime before 1623 had made an attempt to issue a collected edition of the plays in anticipation of the appearance of the First Folio. Secondly, the Oxford University Press published in 1902 a facsimile of the First Folio with an ignorant and magisterial introduction by Sidney Lee, which provoked Greg to a severe review wherein the real nature of the problems involved in an attempt to define the copy of Shakespeare's original texts was for the first time envisaged, if only in part. Pollard put his discovery about the nine Quartos on record together with a tentative explanation in the hope of obtaining, he tells us, further evidence on the matter. He received not only further evidence but further facts as well, which last were pointed out, in the main by Greg, and so led to the framing of a more satisfactory explanation of the publication, now accepted by all as one of the main pillars of Shakespearian textual theory. It was, too, Greg's remark on the 'copy' for the Folio in his review of Lee that obviously set

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Retrospect*, p. 76. I should like to take this opportunity of acknowledging my debt, both in the compilation of this brief memoir and in my general understanding of the origins of the bibliographical study of Shakespeare, to this masterly historical essay. If what I have to say here bears a slightly different emphasis, it is because I have to view the subject mainly from the angle of the senior partner of the trio.

Pollard thinking along lines leading in the end to the publication in 1909 of his *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, which Methuen commissioned him to write as an Introduction to the facsimiles of the four Shakespeare folios that they issued shortly afterwards. The observation or establishment of facts and the framing of a provisional theory to account for them; the discovery of additional facts irreconcilable with this theory; the framing of a better theory to cover the better-known textual situation: such is the path things took at the beginning and the path they have gone since—the path of all scientific development. But while Pollard and Greg thus played into each other's hands, they did so the more successfully because of the difference in their spirits and the diversity of their gifts, a difference and diversity which help, I think, to explain the problem which some have found puzzling, of their respective shares in the preparation of the last-named book, which, appearing under Pollard's name in 1909, was at once recognized as epoch-making to use a much abused term, and, though some of its conclusions have since been modified, will always rank as the *Instauratio Magna* of modern English textual criticism.

As to the book itself Pollard acknowledges in the Preface his 'deep obligations' to his friend 'for constant help and sympathy', and continues:

In some sections of this study Mr. Greg and I have been fellow-hunters, communicating our results to each other at every stage, so that our respective responsibilities for them have become hopelessly entangled. In others he has been distinctly my leader. If it had not been for his ungrudging permission to use his work as my own, I should have been hampered at every turn. For the final presentation of my case I alone am responsible, but he has spared no pains to keep me in the right path, and without his comradeship I should never have finished my task.

When we view the acrimony and jealousies which have characterized so much of English scholarship in the past, these words are as revolutionary in temper as the chapters that follow them are in their conclusions. Pollard, ever ready to help others without stint, was equally anxious when himself a borrower to give full credit for the debt. Yet we must not abuse his generosity and habit of self-effacement by pressing his words too far. I did not know him in 1909; but we had endless talks later about things Shakespearian, in which *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, for which I did not disguise my admiration, was of necessity often referred to. And he never gave me the slightest indication that

(apart of course from the chapter on the Quartos of 1619, in which his obligations to others are laid bare step by step as the argument proceeds) the book as a whole was not his in form and substance and conception, as a man of his frank and generous nature must have done had matters been otherwise. That in writing it he was inspired to some extent by Greg's review of Lee in 1903, which probably first revealed to him the weakness of Lee's position,<sup>1</sup> is unquestioned. But that review contains no treatment of the old copyright system, except a confession that 'we know very little about it', no hint of the capital distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Quartos,<sup>2</sup> and no discussion of Heminge and Condell's preface to the Folio, which are the principal topics of Pollard's book. And, when all is said, no one who knew Pollard's mind can doubt that the book is his or fail to recognize, as his also, the robust humanity which breathes from it. To repeat words I wrote twenty-three years ago:

If I were asked to say how the new criticism chiefly differs from the old I should not think first of bibliographical methods, or of the way in which our accumulated knowledge of the Elizabethan theatre has been brought to bear upon textual problems; I should single out something much simpler and more fundamental. It is that belief in the essential integrity of ordinary human nature which, like the English law, regards a man innocent until he has been proved guilty. Acting on this faith, Mr. Pollard has refused to believe three gloomy doctrines of the old criticism: (1) that all the quartos printed before 1623 were stolen and surreptitious; (2) that most of the textual idiosyncrasies of the Quarto and Folio texts were to be put down to drunken aberrations of Elizabethan and Jacobean compositors; and (3) that Heminge and Condell were either knaves in league with Jaggard to hoodwink a gullible public, or else fools who did know how to pen a preface. And by refusing to believe these things he has rediscovered Shakespeare's manuscripts for us and much besides, at which as yet we can only guess.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pollard's friendly welcome to the Oxford facsimile in 'Notes on Books' (*The Library*, Jan. 1903) shows that he was at first unaware of the misleading character of Lee's introduction, which he had probably merely glanced at. Lee was a distinguished member of the Bibliographical Society, which explains the Hon. Secretary's request that the review should be 'polite', though I can see a twinkle in his eye as he made it, since Greg was at that date the *enfant terrible* of English scholarship and had recently served up Churton Collins as a Thyestean repast to readers of the *Modern Language Review*.

<sup>2</sup> Pollard was, I think, quite unconscious that he had been partly anticipated here by Halliwell-Phillipps, who was himself unconsciously following Capell, or that Halliwell-Phillipps had been before him in a discussion of Heminge and Condell's preface.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 76-7, *Studies in the First Folio*, 1924, ed. by Sir I. Gollancz.

That still seems to me, and, I believe, to many other scholars, what *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* stands for in the history of Shakespearian criticism; and if it does not speak the whole truth about the book and its origins it undoubtedly reaches the heart of the truth.

One of the difficulties of writing the history of a rapidly developing branch of research, like the transformation of Shakespearian studies by the 'new bibliography', or indeed of writing history of any kind, is that fresh advances or significant events generally look very different in retrospect from what they seemed at the time; and yet it is often their impact upon contemporary minds which determines their real place in the chain of causation. Some of Pollard's textual theories are now superseded by better ones or have been put out of court by the discovery of facts which he could not then have known. Yet many of these even, by stimulating research in new directions or provoking healthy discussion, have played their part in the rearing of that structure which is taking shape as modern textual scholarship. In this slight attempt to estimate what he did for his generation it may therefore be useful, and is certainly only fair, to see how he stood in the eyes of an authoritative critic ten years after the publication of the book just mentioned. Here then is what Greg wrote in 1919; and it serves better than any words of mine to round off this section of my memoir.

It was the year 1909 that saw the publication of Mr. A. W. Pollard's handsome volume on *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, by far the most systematic and critical work that had yet appeared on the subject and one that marked the opening of a new era in Shakespearian studies. This was hardly recognized at the time, since much of the material was descriptive merely and few perceived that the Author's acute criticism of the Good and Bad Quartos upset many of the most cherished superstitions of Shakespearian editors. For Mr. Pollard, once his innate conservatism has been overcome, proves himself one of the most revolutionary of bomb-throwers, and the considerations, thus unostentatiously advanced, forced us to reconsider all traditional views regarding the transmission of Shakespeare's text, while the author was probably aware, though he was too modest to say, that this purely bibliographical problem of transmission is nine-tenths of the battle in textual criticism.

For some years after this no work of first-rate importance appeared, but investigation was nevertheless quietly proceeding in several directions. It was in 1916 that this bore fruit. In the purely descriptive field Mr. Pollard and Miss Henrietta Bartlett, in *A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto*, did for Shakespeare Quartos what Sir Sidney Lee had done years before for the First Folio. Of greater significance, however,

was a little square volume that appeared the same year containing a facsimile of *A New Shakespeare Quarto: Richard II, 1598*, in an elaborate introduction to which Mr. Pollard made some very pretty textual investigations, and incidentally directed fresh attention to the admirable pamphlet on *Shakespearian Punctuation* compiled in 1911 by Mr. Percy Simpson with the assistance of Mr. R. W. Chapman.

Meanwhile in 1915 Mr. Pollard had delivered at Cambridge four lectures as Sandars Reader in Bibliography . . . printed in the *Library* for 1916 and republished the following year as *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates and the Problem of the Transmission of his Text*. In these at once sober and brilliant papers Mr. Pollard pursued his investigation of the Good and Bad Quartos, dealing with the occasion and extent of piracy, the form and condition of dramatic manuscripts, and the nature of the copy for the Shakespearian Quartos. The central conclusion to which he leads his readers is nothing less than the probability that some at least of the first quartos of Shakespeare's plays were set up from Shakespeare's own autograph manuscripts, and the certainty that the majority are at least very much nearer to those manuscripts than critics have generally suspected or editors ever allowed. The far-reaching consequences of such a conclusion will be obvious to all. . . .

Another event upon which those interested in Shakespeare may congratulate themselves was the delivery by Mr. Pollard of a course of bibliographical lectures at King's College, London. This gave him the opportunity of piloting a small class through several interesting problems in the bibliography of Shakespeare, and some of the more important and permanent results achieved were set forth in two articles on 'The York and Lancaster Plays in the Folio Shakespeare', which appeared in September 1918 in *The Times Literary Supplement*. The same journal further published in January and March 1919 three important articles headed 'The "Stolen and Surreptitious" Shakespearian Texts' in which Mr. Pollard and Mr. Dover Wilson, working in collaboration, attacked the problems why and how some of Shakespeare's plays were pirated and illustrated their contentions by an investigation into the text of *Henry V*. In August and September appeared two further articles dealing with the *Merry Wives* and *Romeo and Juliet*. . . .

Scores of able critics in the fields of classical and sacred literature, and a few in that of English, have attacked the problems, and to some extent explored the principles, of text-transmission. But what has seldom been fully realised, and never, I believe, explicitly stated, is the fact that both text-transmission and even certain features of the so-called higher criticism are at bottom a purely bibliographical problem, to be attacked by strictly bibliographical methods, and only to be solved by an adequate understanding of bibliographical conditions. Herein lies the importance of Mr. Pollard's work; for it is only when the true nature of a problem is apprehended that systematic investigation can replace more or less fortuitous, even if acute, guesswork; and once the conditions of the



problems are laid bare all sorts of lines and methods of investigation suggest themselves, which could never previously have been suspected.

The science of Critical Bibliography has been fortunate in having for its founder one to whom years of official work and private adventure have made the technical details of bibliography a second nature; whose mind, if diffident of entering on novel speculations, pursues any trail on which it sets out with remorseless logic and unflagging ardour, yet with constant balance and candour; and who possesses a literary style in lucidity and flexibility admirably fitted for the exposition of minute and often complicated argument.<sup>1</sup>

Much has happened and many new things have been discovered since this was written; yet I doubt whether the writer would wish to alter the general lines of his appreciation if he were asked to bring it up to date. The only point I would question is the reference, twice made, to Pollard's innate conservatism; and I can remember being slightly amused at the time when the article was first published by a passage elsewhere in it which represented the reverend Keeper of Printed Books, as Pollard became in 1919, being led into dangerous courses by a headstrong disciple called Dover Wilson. I have heard him *talk about* his conservatism in a quizzical fashion; but I never saw any signs of it. And I find more than one of his friends would agree. An Elizabethan scholar, who was probably more intimate with him than I was and certainly saw more of him during the last twenty years of his life, writes:

I never knew anyone of his generation less given to conservatism of mind than he was or more ready to grasp and respond to a new idea. Intellectually he was too robust to be conservative; he did not need to be; and he had too much humour.

Anyhow, though I should find it hard now to distinguish his ideas from mine in the work we did together during 1918-19, I am quite certain that Safety First was the motto of neither partner. But then I only knew him after the death of his sons had taught him that if one wished to get things done in this imperfect world, even in the narrow field of bibliography, one must take risks, often great risks. In our joint attack upon the problem of the Bad Quartos (for he was deeply involved in the second of two articles on *Hamlet*, 1603, which appeared under my name in the *Library* for 1918, as well as sharing in the *Literary Supplement* articles above mentioned), we took such risks with our eyes open. The theories we then advanced, except for a stray suggestion here and there, are now as dead as mutton. Yet

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Language Review*, xiv. 383.

when in 1919 Robert Steele hailed those published in the *Supplement* as 'the most important advance in Shakespearian textual criticism yet made', and Greg agreed in the article I have quoted above, their praise, though rashly enthusiastic, was not altogether beside the mark. For I think it is fair to claim that, themselves owing much to Greg's edition of the 1602 Quarto of *The Merry Wives* (1910), they proved the main stimulus to far greater advances in this particular sphere. I refer to Greg's classical monograph on *Alcazar and Orlando* (1923), which he did us the honour of dedicating to us, to Alexander's notable *Shakespeare's 'Henry VI' and 'Richard III'* (1929), and to a later and I think scarcely less important essay, *The 'Bad' Quarto of Hamlet* (1941), in which G. I. Duthie, a former student of mine, 'thoroughly demolished', once again to quote Greg, who wrote a preface to the book, 'the elaborate structure erected with such superabundant subtlety' twenty-three years earlier. By 1941 Pollard had mostly given up reading books; but I was able to tell him about this one and its author. It pleased him to hear he had a promising grandson and to think that the field in which we had sown wild oats in 1918 was producing such excellent wheat.

In June 1919 I found myself committed to the preparation of a complete edition of Shakespeare for the Cambridge University Press. I should certainly not have added this burden to an already heavy load of official duties had I not felt that Pollard was behind me. I consulted him at every step, and still have letters from him on the problem of abbreviations, which was being bedevilled at the moment by the metrical theories of a wild man called Bayfield, with whom (because he was a lonely soul) Pollard had struck up a friendship, and on the more difficult problem of translating the punctuation of the original texts into a form acceptable to the general reader; while I find among my papers a typescript copy of my Textual Introduction with three or four alterations and additions, all later incorporated, in Pollard's handwriting: evidently he then accepted its various sections as fair statements of the position as understood at that date. I also possess an earlier letter written to me shortly after I received the proposal from Cambridge, from which I may quote a few sentences, as an illustration of his common sense.

I don't think you will ever produce a standard text of Shakespeare. I hope you won't, as it would mean giving up too much of your life to it. If the Cambridge Press wanted you to produce a real standard text to cut out the Globe and any rivals to it you would have to give at least

ten years to it.<sup>1</sup> But you ought to be able to produce a provisional text which will be better than anything existing, though not sufficiently demonstrably so to cut 'em all out. Three bits of advice: (1) Don't accept or refuse any fee they offer till you've consulted me; (2) reserve your freedom to produce another text if you please later on; (3) get all the advice you can as to textual principles before starting, but don't try to edit Shakespeare by a committee.

One vivid moment stands out in my recollection of those years. He often spent part of his summer holidays with me and my family. One afternoon we were seated together on the sands at Hunstanton, and I was reading, rather sleepily, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Furnivall facsimile of the Fisher Quarto, when the significance of the mislineation at the beginning of Act V suddenly flashed upon me. We were both instantly awake; and he later translated our glee into seemly 'go-to-press' prose as follows:

Thus we can look over Shakespeare's shoulder, not only when he is in the first heat of inspiration, but also when he is revising, though in truth in this case he seems to have been better inspired in his second thoughts than in his first. Such a nugget is not likely to be found very often, but to have lighted on even one of this size and quality must hearten any literary goldminer to seek for others.<sup>2</sup>

He called the nugget mine; but 'handy-dandy', as Lear says, had he been holding the book the discovery might have been his.

Pollard was appointed Keeper of Printed Books in 1919, and for the next five and a half years he had no time for anything but occasional essays on Shakespeare. 'At present', he wrote to me in October of that year, 'when I am home from the B.M., a batch of business letters usually carries me on to 10 p.m., and then I think it's too late to do anything. How I used to get in an average of 3½ hours a night homework is now a marvel to me.' But there were compensations, for he writes a month later:

I've had two energetic days at the B.M., and was vastly pleased yesterday morning by the news that the Museum Clerks Association had held a meeting and voted to accept my ruling on the overtime question, and had also passed a vote of thanks for the care and trouble I had taken in answering them!!! Today I've held a Committee on which were my three probable successors in the Keepership and obtained their assent to a policy as to the spending of our grant for Bookbinding (now £16,500) which I hope will thus be consistently carried out for the next twenty years!

<sup>1</sup> I think that ten years later he would have agreed that this period was too short by twenty years.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates* (2nd ed.), p. xxvi.

The hard-driven Keeper managed to supply a new Introduction in April 1920 for the second edition of his *Fight with the Pirates*, which appeared as the opening volume of a 'Shakespeare Problems Series' to be published by the Cambridge University Press under our joint editorship. In this he made a brief survey of recent advances in textual criticism, and outlined the procedure we proposed to follow. Once again I quote what seem to me the salient passages.

Some apology is perhaps needed for one who has already written, or helped in writing, four books on Shakespeare bibliography, now taking part in planning a new series of booklets on the same subject. The best plea in mitigation that can be offered is that one bit of work has led to another, often with the help of an idea borrowed from a friend, and that in a research so largely new it is only by taking one step at a time that any sure progress can be made.

And he reinforces this point in his conclusion, which runs:

By dealing with them [the problems of Shakespeare's text] in separate booklets we hope to continue to advance safely, step by step, and to use the experience gained from the problems of one group in dealing with those of another. It is all pioneer work and we ask for the indulgence which pioneers may fairly claim and which up to the present we gratefully acknowledge has been most generously extended to us.

The word 'safely' was, I think, inserted in this second passage as a humorous hint to both editors; and if the younger one has not always taken it, 'Step by step' was his motto from the beginning and still is. One of the volumes in the series was to have contained a thorough revision of the articles on the 'Stolen and Surreptitious Texts', for which Greg's *Alcazar and Orlando* offered a splendid lead in 1923; but we were both busy officials with scanty leisure for scholarship, and the opportunity never came. Pollard, indeed, never again wrote anything on Shakespeare except lectures and articles, including two on the general problems of the text, viz. the British Academy lecture of 1923 and his contribution to *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies* edited by Granville-Barker and Harrison in 1934. Yet his personal influence may be seen or felt in nearly all the new Shakespearian developments of this period. He wrestled manfully with the stubborn spirit of M. A. Bayfield on the subject of versification; he encouraged and believed in J. A. Fort's theory of the Sonnets, with Southampton as the 'fair youth', so that Sir Edmund Chambers's adherence to the Pembroke theory in his *William Shakespeare* came as 'a real blow' to him in 1930 and one he

returned with interest;<sup>1</sup> Muriel St. Clare Byrne acknowledged in the Preface to her *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country* (1925), 'his unfailing encouragement, criticism and help during eight years of Elizabethan research'; similarly Caroline Spurgeon confessed that in the later stages of her work on *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1935), 'the enthusiastic interest and encouragement of my friend Mr. A. W. Pollard have been untold help and support to me, as has also his experienced and wise counsel';<sup>2</sup> he became one of Harold Child's consultants for letters and articles on Shakespeare offered to the *Literary Supplement* and was thus able to assist Signor Orsini in bringing to the notice of English scholars his important discoveries about the use of stenography in the pirating of plays;<sup>3</sup> he secured for the 'Shakespeare Problems Series' *A Study of 'Love's Labour's Lost'* (1935), the first of Miss Frances Yates's essays on the influence of the foreign academies upon Elizabethan literature; and there must be many other students to whom he held out a hand.

But more important than any of these ministrations was the support he lent to two major events in Shakespeare criticism at this period. The preface to *Shakespeare's Handwriting* published by Maunde Thompson in 1916 concludes 'with the fullest expression of my obligations to my old friend and sometime colleague Mr. Alfred William Pollard, whose wide knowledge of Shakespearian bibliography and literature is so willingly imparted to those who seek his help'. Maunde Thompson's claim that three pages in the manuscript play of *Sir Thomas More* (Harleian MS. 7368) were in the hand of Shakespeare himself, resting as it did upon a single, if eminent, palaeographer's 'general impression' of the six indubitable signatures, was unlikely to win assent even with experts, unless it could find support from other lines of evidence. But Pollard at once recognized its capital significance; encouraged me to explore the spellings and misprints of the 'good quartos' to see whether they threw any light upon the problem, with results which were announced in a joint paper read before the Bibliographical Society on 16 December 1918; secured the consent of the Keeper of Manuscripts for the exhibition of two of the pages concerned in a museum show-case with a label containing the words: 'One of these passages, of which the open pages form part, may well, it

<sup>1</sup> See his review of Chambers in the *Library*, xi. 380-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakespeare's Imagery*, p. viii.

<sup>3</sup> *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 Dec., and 11 Dec. 1930; the *Library*, 4th ser. xiv. 313-38, 351-2.

has been suggested, be an *autograph* composition of Shakespeare's; used this exhibition as the occasion for an unsigned article ventilating the whole matter, which appeared in the *Literary Supplement* on 24 April 1919; and finally set to work organizing the publication of a collection of essays illustrating different aspects of the problem which appeared in 'Shakespeare Problems Series' in 1923, with contributions from himself, Greg, Maunde Thompson, myself, and above all from R. W. Chambers, who wrote a brilliant chapter on 'The Expression of Ideas—particularly Political Ideas—in the Three Pages and in Shakespeare', which did more to convert the ordinary Shakespearian than all the palaeographical and bibliographical arguments put together. Not that the scepticism which greeted the original statement of Maunde Thompson's thesis was altogether silenced. Indeed, Pollard claimed no more for the book than that its object was 'to strengthen the evidence'. Yet as time went on the claim seems to have been accepted by a wider and wider circle of scholars, and the appearance of *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of 'Sir Thomas More'* is seen to have been almost as great a landmark as that of *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* fourteen years before. Once again Pollard had got things done.

The other outstanding contribution to Shakespearian studies in this decade has already been mentioned, viz. Mr. (now Professor) Alexander's *Shakespeare's 'Henry VI' and 'Richard III'* (1929), which likewise appeared in the Shakespeare Problems Series and with an Introduction by Pollard. The book was, like others of its kind, an expansion of a preliminary investigation printed, doubtless on Pollard's recommendation, as two articles in the *Literary Supplement*<sup>1</sup> of 9 October and 13 November 1924. These articles, writes Pollard in the Introduction to the book, 'started a correspondence between us on 1-3 *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, with a view to a joint study of them as one of the "Shakespeare Problems" in this series. In the end the book has been written by Mr. Alexander alone, under a fire of criticism from myself, and my task is reduced to writing this introduction.' What history lies behind these words only Professor Alexander could tell us. For my present purpose it is enough to note that nothing shows more clearly the suppleness and resilience of Pollard's mind—the terms 'conservative' and 'revolutionary' are equally irrelevant

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Greg's *Alcazar and Orlando* was preceded by a similar kite in the *Literary Supplement*, which under the editorship of Sir Bruce Richmond played an important part in presenting the 'new bibliography' to the general literary public.

because both imply mental rigidity—than his ready acceptance of Alexander's views, and the Introduction he wrote in support of them. For in protesting against Malone's assertion that Shakespeare began his career as a dramatist by revising the plays of other men, Alexander laid his axe at the root not only of a basic assumption upon which most scholars had proceeded since Malone's day, but of one of the main props in the hypothetical structure Pollard and I had together erected in our attempt to explain the Bad Shakespearian Quartos.

If Mr. Alexander is right [the first section of Pollard's Introduction concludes], we must . . . argue from the text of 2 and 3 *Henry VI* as it stands in the Folio and from nothing else, and with no prepossession whatever in favour of the theory that Shakespeare was in the habit of rehandling other men's plays. We must in fact start afresh.

And having thus recalled us all to scratch, he proceeded to get quick off the mark himself by launching forth into an entirely new theory of Shakespeare's activities before 1594. That, partly owing to *my* innate conservatism, I have hitherto preserved an agnostic attitude towards this theory and have not followed Alexander as far along the road as he did, only makes me more conscious of his open-mindedness and ever-young buoyancy of spirit.

Yet as it happened this Introduction was the last thing but one he was to write on Shakespeare or on any subject apart from a few reviews and the *Sketch* and *Reminiscences* above spoken of. And even this was in the nature of an aftermath. By 1929 he had reached his seventieth year, and though in conversation his mind seemed as fresh and as active as ever, it clearly grew less productive, as the entries in the *Select Bibliography* show. The year 1926 in fact probably marks the end of a phase; for in June of that year he lost the inspiration and support of his wife Alice; and then, turning as ten years before to sheer drudgery as an anodyne for pain, he carried through to completion the great book by which his name is best known throughout the world, *A Short Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books printed abroad, 1475-1640*. Either event, each after a different fashion, was an experience that might have aged any man. *S.T.C.*, as it became known from the first, was originally projected by him in a paper entitled *Plans for Bibliographical Work on the Sixteenth Century*, read before the Bibliographical Society on 21 January 1918. As usual in retrospect he made light of the affair after his humorous fashion. 'The Hon. Secretary, having failed to find anyone else to read a paper

on this afternoon, had been obliged to produce one himself.' He accordingly announced a subject, 'but his energies having just been rather exhausted in ransacking the Printed Books Department at the British Museum for rarities to be conveyed to the place of safety from air-attacks' the material for the paper turned out to be 'much less copious than he had anticipated'. So the Preface to *S.T.C.* opens and then goes on:

Very little was said as to the results of his incomplete researches; it was easier to occupy fifty minutes in plans for future work, so he demonstrated, readily enough, that with the catalogues already in print, if only information as to the early English books in the Bodleian could be made available, the way lay open for a 'short-title handlist' of extant English books of the sixteenth century, 'leaving a full-dress catalogue to be produced when we know enough to make a good one.' There was an interesting little discussion, and the Secretary went home, secretarially satisfied that he had done his duty in filling a gap, but personally a little ashamed at having ambled off on a rather old horse from the subject announced.

This account, readers will observe, is a continuation of the Tale of the Lucky Examinee quoted at the beginning of the memoir. But on this occasion the award for intellectual alertness and readiness of pen was no longer the grant of a scholarship or a First Class to the scholar himself, but a generous gift to his fellow-students and a 'heavy rod', as he admits it to have been, for his own back. By promising to assist the enterprise up to £600, to lend it half his time, and to accommodate its apparatus of notes and documents at his own house, G. R. Redgrave, Vice-President of the Society and chairman of the meeting at which Pollard's paper was read, at once made the project feasible; it was approved at a meeting in the following April; and at the next annual meeting (20 January 1919) Pollard was able to announce that the collection of material was well under way, and held out hopes of 'the completion of the copy of the "Short-Title Catalogue" within the next three or four years'. Actually, from first to last, it took between eight and nine. As ever, Pollard was careful to make most scrupulous and full acknowledgement in the Preface to his numerous helpers, without whom the task could never have been accomplished, and printed the names of a dozen of them on the title-page. Yet it was generally recognized at the time, and should be made clear to posterity, that he was in more than formal sense editor-in-chief from the outset, and during the final stages himself shouldered the bulk of the work involved.



Early in 1924 [the Preface tells us], the lay-out of the catalogue was the subject of frequent consultations with Mr. Frederick Hall, the Controller of the Oxford University Press, and when the Keeper of Printed Books was superannuated in August of that year he returned to the Museum, after a brief holiday, to work as a 'reader' in the final revision of the catalogue and passing it through the press;

a task, he adds, 'which has taken two years—more than twice as long as was anticipated'. Yet its sequel, in the form of a rearrangement of the entries in chronological order, was already hinted at in the Preface, while the difficulties involved were being enlarged upon in a paper—once again knocked up by the Secretary, he tells us, because somebody else had failed at the last moment—read to the Bibliographical Society on 21 November 1927. But though *The Annals of English Printing* was planned out and the work on it got going, our Ulysses was not to reach this new port.

An account of the honours that came to him, during the eleven years separating the retirement which ended his official career from the accident which ended his career as an author, is given in Sir Henry Thomas's brief summary entitled *From Fifty to Seventy-Five*, written in 1936, from which I now quote.

During his Keepership, Dr. Pollard's work began to be recognized and rewarded by academic and national honours. He had long before, in 1907, been made a Fellow of King's College in London, a fact which he modestly omits to record in his *Sketch*. In 1921 he received the honorary degree of D.Litt. from Durham University. In 1922 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, and in the same year was awarded the C.B. Next year he was made an honorary Fellow of his old college in Oxford, St. John's. His work was also pleasantly rewarded in America. In 1921 he was made an Honorary Foreign Corresponding Member of the Grolier Club in New York, and he is also an Honorary Member of the Club of Odd Volumes in Boston.

Then, after speaking of the 'numerous interests and activities' that he carried forward with him into his retirement, Sir Henry continues:

These he increased in 1930, when, in succession to Dr. Furnivall and Sir Israel Gollancz, he became Director of the Early English Text Society. Since then, however, advancing years and the need for concentrating on many tasks undertaken but not finished, have compelled him gradually to reduce his commitments. In 1932 he resigned the professorship of Bibliography at King's College. In 1934 he handed over the editorship of the *Library* and the Hon. Secretaryship of the Bibliographical Society to Dr. McKerrow, who had for more than twenty years acted jointly with him in the Secretaryship. On his

retirement from Office he was made an Hon. Member of the Society; he had already been awarded its gold medal for his services to bibliography. That same year 1934 he was one of three representatives of the library world to receive the honorary degree of Litt.D. in the University of Cambridge on the occasion of the opening of the new University Library. The esteem in which he is held in the United States of America may be gathered from the fact that he was recently elected an Honorary Member of the Bibliographical Society of America, and that he is the only non-American to be so honoured.

I am proud to remember that his last publication, probably his last piece of writing to be printed, always excepting the *Sketch* and his reminiscences of Housman, was an article on Shakespeare in which we collaborated together once more. It was, I have said, a habit of ours to spend a week or so together in the summer; and the pitch selected for our joint holiday in 1934 was Malvern and its Festival, where incidentally we had an entertaining encounter with Bernard Shaw, who after an introduction by Barry Jackson engineered by Mrs. Shaw, lectured to us for about a quarter of an hour on the exact structure of the Elizabethan stage, his notions being wholly derived to the best of my recollection from a visit to Oberammergau some years earlier. Just before this holiday Miss Katherine Garvin, collecting a team of essayists for a projected volume on 'The Great Tudors', had invited us in turn to contribute the chapter on Shakespeare, and each in turn, pleading pressure of work, had suggested an application to the other. This led to a protest on her part against such cat-and-mouse treatment which reached us at Malvern; whereupon we decided to make amends by writing the thing together. It was roughly planned out on the spot, so that we could later compose sections of it alternately, passing the draft to and fro by post. Everything went like clock-work; when the last sentence was finished we found that we had written almost exactly the number of words required; and if anyone ever read it I doubt whether he would have been able to guess how many sections there were, assign them to their respective authors, or detect the points at which the pen changed hands. When his heart was inditing of a good matter Pollard's pen was as ready as ever, down to the accident of August 1935.

At the beginning of 1936 I moved to Edinburgh and became much absorbed in a new life; and though I now had an excuse to go and stay at 40 Murray Road whenever I was in London, those occasions could not be frequent, so that I did not see him more than two or three times in the year. The war came in 1939

to make visits far more difficult both for me and for his daughter, Mrs. Roberts, whose home was in Bath, while for one reason or another nearly all his friends left the neighbourhood; all in fact, I believe, except Henry Thomas, who, tied to the British Museum, stuck out the blitz at Wandsworth Common and continued to visit him right up to the end. 'His last years', a friend wrote at the time of his death (8 March 1944), 'must have been rather miserable and dreary, I'm afraid.' Lonely they certainly were; and one often thought of him sleeping in that little house in Murray Road, while the Nazis bombed South London. Yet, though he confessed in a letter written on 10 August 1942 that he was growing 'tired of excess of solitude', I doubt whether he ever found life dreary, still less miserable, except perhaps during the last ten days, when he suffered pain from his thigh, fractured by a second fall; and even that was eased, one is thankful to think, by long periods in which the mind was wandering or unconscious. I spent a night with him in April 1943, and found him his own cheerful self, though ever since the crash in 1935 his mind had been apt to play him tricks, chiefly in the form of small lapses of memory. What he complained of was, not solitude, but excess of solitude. Always, as I have noted above, something of a recluse, because cut off from others by his stammer, he was, as he once told me, 'much more contented with his own company than most people'.

But contentment was not merely the fruit of habit, and solitude did not mean to him, as it means to many, vacancy of mind. For he had an inner life to retreat to. Scholarship, I repeat, was not the first or even the second thing with this scholar. What stood second was what he called 'practical morality' or his duty to his neighbour; what stood first was religion, which was in his eyes 'practical' too if it was anything at all. In 1911 Macmillan published an anonymous book under the title of *Life, Love and Light: Practical Morality for Men and Women*. Addressed to a generation which still implicitly accepted the utilitarian philosophy, it opened by asking them to reconcile these assumptions with the historical accounts of three deaths cheerfully accepted, that of Byrhtnoth and his loyal companions at the Battle of Maldon A.D. 991, that of Father Damien on Leper Island A.D. 1889, and that of Socrates in Athens 399 B.C.; these deaths being selected as supreme examples of the three ideals of conduct most admired by civilized men and women, viz. Courage, Self-sacrifice, and the pursuit of Truth. After this the writer, who was of course Pollard, as he publicly admitted later in an article on 'The Faith

of one Layman' which appeared in *The Guardian* on 19 October 1916, went on to discuss with penetration, sympathy, and wisdom, and with complete lucidity and candour, the chief moral problems that confront human beings in modern society as they make their way through life. Roger, youngest of his three children, came of age the year after the book was published, and as it was dedicated 'To the writer's domestic critics', the year of publication was no doubt a father's choice. But, as he explains in the Preface, 'the idea of the book dates back some thirty years to the time when the author was preparing for that finest of all examinations, the old (unspecialized) school of Literae Humaniores at Oxford', to the time in fact when he himself stood on the threshold of life like his children, two of whom were never to pass beyond it.

It is hoped [the Preface continues] that it is none the worse for having been kept simmering for a good many years, during which the author has had his share of the common joys and sorrows of life.

Before he came to write *The Guardian* article just mentioned, the soil of Europe had been drenched with blood and the world's burden of sorrow become almost unbearable, his own share being heavier than most. Yet he could still say:

While I believe I have learnt much during the last few years, I do not think there is anything in the book I want to disown, though I hope now for more than I hoped when I wrote it.

*Life, Love and Light* was the work of a Darwinian, who was always ready to remind himself and others that he entered the world in the same year as *The Origin of Species*, and writes (again in *The Guardian* for 19 October 1916):

A great part of my intellectual life has been spent in trying to harmonise with the doctrines of the Church of England a whole-hearted belief that man has ascended to his present stage of development through a series of lower forms during tens of thousands of years.

And when he said 'a great part' he meant it, surprising as it may seem to those who have followed his crowded life up to this point of the memoir. A devoted and devout son of the Church of England, for whom a daily service was as necessary as daily bread, he felt nevertheless that some of her doctrines and formularies were out of keeping not only with modern cosmology but even with Christianity itself as understood by the modern conscience.<sup>1</sup> One form taken by this discontent was an attempt

<sup>1</sup> He once told me he could find very few psalms appropriate for use in an office of Christian worship. But he rejoiced in the Athanasian Creed.

to find light by studying the religions of others. Accordingly, some time before 1910, he joined The London Society for the Study of Religion, founded in 1902 by von Hügel, Claude Montefiore, and others, with a restricted membership consisting in fairly equal proportions of Moslems, Jews, Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Free Churchmen. Pollard was a regular attender, often wrote papers (I can remember reading a paper for him), the last recorded under his name being one on Idolatry in 1932, while he remained a member down to 1937.<sup>1</sup> The Society's proceedings are not published; and it is noticeable that apart from *Life, Love and Light*, his intense interest in religion only finds expression in print after the death of his sons, and that between 1915 and 1925 a number of pamphlets and other publications on religious matters appear among the books and articles on Shakespeare and bibliography in the *Select Bibliography*. Most of these were written for or in connexion with the Anglican Fellowship, of which, as noted above,<sup>2</sup> he became a member after 1916 and a member of committee in 1918; from whose meetings he derived very great stimulus and encouragement, both in his personal life and in regard to his ideas of prayer-book reform; and which brought him the valued friendship of men like Clutton Brock, Percy Dearmer, and Kenneth Mozley. Here is no place to discuss this section of his writing; nor does it touch more than the periphery of that inner life which, I believe, occupied his thought more and more after 1915, and of which it would be still more inappropriate to speak here, even had I the knowledge to do so. Yet the portrait I have been trying to draw would be incomplete and untrue without some indication of its existence. Perhaps I can best supply it by relating another incident of our holidays together.

One wet evening in the summer of 1915, only a couple of months after the death of Roger, we found ourselves, owing to circumstances beyond our control, at a 'concert party' on the pier of a sea-side resort. It was a deplorable show, cheap in every way, and full of equivocal jests about the men in the trenches. I was in agony for his sake, the more so that the large audience enjoyed every moment of it; and having no opportunity of a word with him after it was all over, I went to bed thinking how dreadful an experience it must have been for a man who had just lost two sons at the front. I little knew him. Next morning I no sooner began to stammer out my shamefaced

<sup>1</sup> I owe some of these facts to the Rev. Professor Cook, at present Secretary of the Society.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 268.

words of dismay than he cut me short by declaring that he had spent a very pleasant and instructive evening.

'You see', he went on, 'it set me thinking. The Church will never be right until it can attract big audiences like that, and give them as much pleasure. And, thinking this as I went to sleep, I dreamed; and in my dream I saw the universal Church. It was made up of three distinct Orders. The first, to which the vast majority of people belonged and whose votes determined everything, called itself the Order of the Children of God. Two rules only were required of its members: to have a good time, and never to do anything which might prevent other people having a good time; which last,' he added, 'if you think of it, embraces almost the whole of practical morality. The second, to which only a small minority belonged and which possessed very little power, was the Order of the Disciples of Christ; and they had to live up to the Sermon on the Mount. No hanky-panky! Live up to it!'

I can still hear the fierceness in his voice as he said 'Live up to it!' He stopped, and I thought for a moment he had forgotten the third order. But presently he went on, almost shyly, in low tones, 'And there was another order with no power at all; for there was no Pope in this Church. They were very few indeed, and no one even knew who they were. People called them the Passionates, and they took upon them all the sins and sorrows of the world.'

I cannot, of course, reproduce his exact words; but what I have written is not far out, for I remember those moments well. And when I thought of him in his last lonely years, lying night after night on Wimbledon Ridge while the Nazis rained their bombs from the sky all about him, I used to wonder whether he had joined the Passionates.

J. DOVER WILSON

#### CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

p. 264. *Housman's failure in 'Greats'*. For another and I think more persuasive explanation see an article by Mr. A. S. F. Gow in the *Oxford Magazine* for 11 November 1937.

p. 277 (foot). *a German opus*. Dr. Scholderer writes: 'If Mr. Winship means the *Gesamtkatalog*, that runs on totally different lines and did not begin to appear until Pollard had practically ceased work on the incunabula.' See next note.

p. 286 (add to n. 2). As Dr. Greg points out to me, one of the main interests of Pollard's career is that this transformation took place in his person: he began as one interested à la William Morris in 'fine books'; the example of Proctor and above all Proctor's death, which obliged him to carry on his work, transformed him into a first-class scientific bibliographer. Greg thinks Winship's diagnosis (p. 277) completely wrong.

p. 288 (l. 19). *Instauratio Magna*. One critic objects that Pollard 'makes no pretence at laying down general principles as Bacon did'. But I was thinking, not of Bacon, but of his title; and still hold that 'The Great Regeneration' is a not inapt description of what *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* did for English textual criticism.

p. 289 (end of n. 1). As Greg's review of Lee appeared in July 1903 and that of Collins's *Greene* not until April 1906, this last inference is incorrect, though I can still see the twinkle.

p. 297 (end of n. 1). This note, entirely correct as regards Sir Bruce Richmond, is incorrect as to Greg's *Alcazar and Orlando*, the preliminary sketch of which appeared in the *Library* for October 1919, not in the *Literary Supplement*.