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ANDREW GEORGE LITTLE

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1863-1945

ANDREW GEORGE LITTLE was born on 28 September 1863. He was the second of the three sons of Thomas Little, the rector of Princes Risborough. His mother was Ann Wright, a woman of great charm, whose home had been at Chalfont St. Giles. Thomas Little was the very best kind of parish priest. The eldest of eleven children, he was born and brought up at Corrie, six miles from Lockerbie in Dumfriesshire, and had the good fortune to be taught at the village school by a Mr. Monsey, one of those inspiring dominies who have shaped Scottish boys and sent them on to the universities. The stories told about Thomas as boy and man are singularly consistent. He had a remarkable influence upon others, whether he knew them well or made friends with them in a casual meeting. His memory was long cherished with gratitude and affection in Princes Risborough.

Andrew lost both his father and mother when he was about thirteen years old. On medical advice the rector went with his wife to Italy—the boys were at school—but had to leave owing to an illness contracted by Mrs. Little. She died suddenly at Paris on the way home, and her husband, a sick man, never recovered from the shock. He died a few months later, in November 1876. The three boys were given a home by their uncle, Dr. David Little of Manchester, one of the leading ophthalmic surgeons of his day. Many years later, in November 1902, two days before the doctor died Andrew wrote to his aunt: 'I have felt for many years very deeply and the present circumstances bring it home to me still more nearly what an enormous lot we three owe to Uncle David, ever since the day of my Father's funeral when he took charge of us and rescued us from the danger of slack surroundings and brought us back into the bracing atmosphere of work and duty.' All the same, life in Manchester was dull for Andrew and his brothers until Dr. Little married a lady nearer their own age than he was. Then, in a house with a good garden in Victoria Park, they were very happy with the doctor and his wife, whom they called by her Christian name and regarded as an elder sister, and, as the years passed by, with the children. One of these cousins, Miss Dora Little, writes:

I always loved Andrew from a small child upwards, but, alas! never

saw enough of him. His wit and tremendously hearty laughter will always remain vividly in my mind. Our old nurse had the greatest admiration for 'Mr. Andrew'. . . . He was always so delightful with children and my mother remembers him saying that the greatest hell on earth would be never to see a child. . . .

And, referring to later years, Miss Little speaks of his instinct for doing 'charming little things'. In 1887 the three nephews had Mrs. Little's portrait painted 'as a token of gratitude for the happy home my father, as their guardian, had given them, and for all he and my mother had been to them. It was Andrew's idea and he who chose the artist, Sir William Richmond.'¹

Andrew was sent by his parents to a preparatory school, Durham House (better known later as The Grange) at Folkestone. His brother Frank recalls that the headmaster, the Rev. A. L. Hussey, had no great opinion of Andrew's abilities. He thought that he was very slow and that he did not make much effort to learn. If this were so Andrew certainly woke up at Clifton, where he went in 1878, two years after his father's death. In May of this year Dr. Percival, then headmaster of Clifton, had offered the post of master of the upper fifth to Charles Edwyn Vaughan, a young man of twenty-four, afterwards well known as a writer on English literature and political thought and as professor of English language and literature in Cardiff, Newcastle, and Leeds. Andrew Little owed more to Vaughan than to any other man. His influence upon him during his Clifton days and afterwards was profound. He gave him both the stimulus and the wider outlook which he needed and made him aware of the mental and spiritual values which came to mean most to him. Among other things he taught him that writing is the surest refuge from boredom and that something of philosophy is indispensable for a fruitful knowledge of history. In 1882 Andrew went up to Balliol, just bereft of the presence but not of the influence of Vaughan's cousin, T. H. Green. And his first teaching post was at Cardiff, close to Llandaff, where Vaughan's uncle, the famous dean, was still at work with his pupils in the companionship which Dr. Coulton has described so well.²

At Oxford Andrew read for honour moderations in classics

¹ Mrs. David Little survived Andrew, and died in November 1946.

² After Vaughan's death in 1922, Little prepared for the press his *Studies in the History of Political Philosophy before and after Rousseau* in two volumes (Manchester University Press, 1925). He prefixed to this work a fine memoir of his friend.

and then turned to history, in which he took a first class in 1886. He had adequate means, made friends easily, and worked steadily. Riding, until he gave up his horse in 1918, was his only recreation. From his undergraduate days until he left Cardiff he hunted, generally riding to hounds once a week during the hunting season. His interest in politics was strong. A letter written on 8 February 1885, just after the news of the fall of Khartoum had reached England, shows deep feeling controlled by the good sense always so characteristic of him. After he had taken his degree he decided to study in Germany. He told Bishop Stubbs that he 'intended to go into *Domesday Book*. Stubbs chortled and said it was much more important to get out of it', and foretold that nothing would come of it. The prophecy was justified, for Andrew, in his own words, found himself in a Serbonian bog. He attacked a difficult subject in the wrong way and in the wrong place; but he learned a great deal from his experience.

He went first to Dresden where he studied German with Fräulein Gottschalk, well known to Oxford scholars as a teacher. He then went to Göttingen where he worked for about a year, from the spring of 1887 to the spring of 1888, under Ludwig Weiland, the disciple of Waitz, and one of the editors of the volumes of 'constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum' published in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Weiland was a good scholar and a stimulating teacher. In one of his letters to Mrs. David Little (28 April 1887) Andrew writes:

This evening at 6 o'clock took place something which I have looked forward to as a vague possibility for two years now, it ought to be something great, oughtn't it? It was a discussion between students and professor on the principles and practices of the critical examination of original historical documents—a pretty heavy and dull affair to have on one's mind 2 years! Weiland was the professor; he is quite splendid—only spoke today generally—of methods etc, and quoted a few screamingly funny examples of documentary falsifications. I did not know the subject was capable of such a treatment. Next Friday we begin real work on original documents. I am afraid my pleasure will be a little spoiled when I have to make a speech in German—but never say die! He is going to examine some of the English documents this term and I shall try to show then that even an Oxford historical student doesn't get all his knowledge at secondhand.

Andrew obviously got what he felt that he needed in Göttingen. He enjoyed the discipline in historical method. He talked

German with an old lady, Frau Dr. Hummel, who was exceedingly kind to him and, when the tête-à-têtes in German became wearisome, proceeded to teach him Italian. As he acquired proficiency in the language he entered more easily into the interests of his companions. One day he read a paper to the historical society, and won much approval, though the paper was 'somewhat too highpitched for the rather beery atmosphere that pervades a *Kneipe*'. He found good friends. He wrote: 'It made me really very dismal to leave Göttingen: people were very good to me and seemed very sorry that I was going. One gets up a lot of affection for a place where one has been for a year. I felt too that my time there was very well spent and that an era of my life had come to an end.' At times he had not been happy. The subject which Weiland had suggested to him was not congenial and, as the professor ruefully admitted, he had led him on a wild-goose chase. It made him feel that he was stupid and dispirited him. And he was depressed by the news of his greatest friend, Charles Warrack, who was seeking health in vain in Italy and Algeria. His happiest time was when Vaughan came to stay with him. Vaughan helped him to carry the four big folios of *Domesday Book* from the University library to his room, and read to him bits of his history of political philosophy.

Weiland was impressed by Little and testified to his capacity to treat historical problems 'even of a difficult sort, thoroughly and according to the scientific methods'. The outcome of his researches was a note in the *English Historical Review* for 1889 on 'Gesiths and Thanets'.

On his way home Little went to Berlin to see the body of the Emperor William lying in state before his funeral. He wrote a detailed and vivid description of the scenes in the city and of the crowds, and added an appreciation of the new emperor, Frederick (13 March 1888):

The funeral takes place on Friday and ought to be very imposing. I shall try to get a decent place somewhere. The new Emperor will probably not take part in it—the weather is too unfavourable. There is a report that he was in Berlin today; but I don't believe it. The more one hears of him the more one hopes he may live. There is an old prophecy said to date from the 16th century to which the old Emperor is said to have attached importance (as he certainly did to others of the like kind) that an Emperor would arise who would restore the Empire to its old might and conquer all its foes, and would live longer than any of his predecessors; he would survive his son and hand on the Empire

to a weak grandson, under whom, however, the Empire would rise still higher. Who knows whether this may not have depressed the Crown Prince? A new spirit is visible already in the Emperor's decrees—in the mourning-decree that he would leave the time to the people themselves in their various localities; and in the Manifesto to the People that appeared yesterday—also in [a] letter to Bismark. One sees a reverence for the Constitution worthy of an Englishman, which Emp. Wilhelm and Bismark have not shown. Everything is not, it would seem, to be ordered from the head-centre, not to depend on a few men, but Government is to become the business of the people; they are not to have everything done for them, but are to do things themselves, and feel their own responsibility. The mention of Arts and Sciences in the Manifesto is very remarkable, and I should think quite original in a document of this kind. I don't know whether the Germans will in their hearts agree with the very peaceful character of the policy sketched out—with the truth, which every paragraph of the Manifesto would seem to bring out—that 'Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war'. The German youth of the present day seems to me to be distinctly war-loving.

After his return to England Little spent four fruitful years in research in Oxford and London. He deserted *Domesday Book* and the Anglo-Saxon laws for the friars. A casual remark made by his tutor, A. L. Smith, had already aroused his interest: 'Read Brewer's introduction to *Monumenta Franciscana*; you would like it.' He *had* read it, and now he determined to devote himself to ecclesiastical and academic history, and especially to the history of the Grey Friars or Franciscans or Friars Minor.¹ He lived mainly in London, but spent a good deal of time in Oxford. One letter, written from Oxford to Mrs. David Little, describes 'a great thing' which had happened to him on 12 November [1890], the day on which the letter was written.

Just as I was starting for a ride, a youth came up to me and said, 'The G.O.M. is coming to tea with me today: do you care to come?' It is needless to say that I did care to come. There were only four of us—the other three being undergrads. and younger than myself. We waited, not expecting that the old man would turn up as it was raining hard. Presently Mrs. G. turned up and we hailed her joyfully as an earnest of better things to come. Soon after the well-known head appeared in the doorway. He looked beaming but very muddy and

¹ 'Fratres Minores is the best Latin translation of Grey Friars. *Fratres grisei* is occasionally found as a popular and non-official translation, e.g. *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. Wright (R. S.), i. 256: "Inter fratres griseos sic est ordinatum.'" (MS. note by A. G. L.)

said he had a tragedy to tell. Coming along the High [to Magdalen] with his umbrella in front against wind and rain, he had fallen over some sacks of coal on the pavement (that is rather characteristic of Oxford streets by the way, in the dark). He was none the worse and seemed to regard it as a huge joke, but it might have been very serious. He is extraordinarily young—really blessed with eternal youth—the youthfulness of the soul. He merely frivelled, humbugged his wife, and talked about the historic significance of pork, which he had discovered was of great ethnological importance, especially in relation to Homer and the Phoenicians. He had just met Burdon Saunderson for the first time and was tremendously impressed by his appearance; it was evidently a problem to him how a vivisectionist could look so magnificent. I did so want to talk politics but thought it better not to begin; they were not mentioned.

Little had his share of interruptions and domestic anxiety, but his life was uneventful, placid, and happy, and its story is soon told. In the autumn of 1892 he became the first independent lecturer in history in University College of South Wales at Cardiff. In July 1898 he was made professor. In 1901 he resigned his chair on account of the bad health of his wife, whom he had married in 1893. In 1902 he settled in Sevenoaks in a house called 'Risborough' in recollection of his father's and his own early home, and there, on 22 October 1945, he died. His wife was Alice, the daughter of William Hart of Fingrith Hall, Blackmore, Essex. He had first met her in 1882 at her aunt's home, Waltons Park, a beautiful place on the borders of Essex and Cambridgeshire, where Andrew and his brothers and the Hart family were wont to spend some of their holidays. 'We had a married life', writes Mrs. Little, 'of great happiness, in spite of my frequent indifferent health, which Andrew bore with unflinching and amazing, kindest patience.' How much he, in his turn, owed to the companionship and to Mrs. Little's encouragement is known to all their friends. They had a full life. Little was a good citizen, deep in many academic activities, in frequent touch with scholars at home and abroad. The envelope of a foreign letter which he once sent to me was addressed, I noticed, to 'The University, Risborough'; and in a sense Little did build up a 'school' of his own in his Kentish retreat.

He had been a good professor. As a teacher at Cardiff he set a high standard and enlarged the scope of his subject. This involved him in controversy with the 'patriots', which seems to have come to a head in the senate in 1900. His refusal, which caused some debate, to draw rigid distinctions and to provide

independent instruction in the history of Wales at the expense of other subjects, was probably wise at the time and certainly did not imply indifference to Welsh history. He wrote a capital little book on *Mediaeval Wales* (1902) which, though it appeared after his retirement, was the outcome of a course of popular lectures given in 1901, and found an immediate welcome in the other colleges of the University of Wales. He brought to Cardiff, young though he was, a mature judgement and the influence of wide historical movements in scholarship. The memory of his work still lives in Wales. He was always so much more than a learned man. After the establishment of the University of Wales in 1893, and especially after his promotion in 1898, his quiet influence was felt throughout the academic life of the country. He inspired trust and affection. One of the advantages, stressed by the Principal of the college in Cardiff, of his appointment as professor was that he henceforth would have a place on the Senate. I cannot do better than quote the testimony of Vaughan, who had been made professor of English and History in 1889 and had surrendered the teaching of history to his new colleague, but old pupil and friend, three years later. Vaughan left Cardiff in 1898, but after Little's retirement he wrote an appreciation of him for the college magazine. Here are a few excerpts:

For the last nine years he has been inseparably bound up with all that is best in the life of the College; with its social intercourse, with the working of its various Societies, with the transaction of its business; and, above all, with its intellectual energy. And it is no small thing for the College to have had, during that time, a man of such wide sympathies and so sound a judgement, as well as of such deep learning and scholarly training, on its Staff. . . . Though he had started life with no intention of becoming a teacher, he soon took to the work like a duck to the water. . . . His distinction as student and teacher is but a small part of what he has contributed to the life of the College. Where, for the last nine years, would the College have been without his disinterestedness, his energy in extending his influence, his sound judgement, his keen interest in individual students, his self-sacrificing devotion?

Except for an application at Edinburgh in 1899, Little made no attempt to get another chair; but he was not a recluse. In 1901 he accepted an invitation from Professor Tout to teach palaeography to graduate students who were engaged in research work in Manchester, and, after the necessary arrangements had been made he began in 1902 those weekly or fortnightly visits to the northern University which continued with few breaks during the greater part of each academic year until

1928. He was not the first to lecture or give instruction in palaeography in a British university, but I think that he was the first to gather about him, in a systematic though informal way, groups of students who, as members of a school of history, were trying to learn how to write history. Neither Tout nor his colleague Tait believed in 'spoon-feeding', but they did believe that graduate studies are as important as undergraduate studies in any academic society which professes to advance learning; and Little, with his vivid recollections of all he had looked forward to as an undergraduate and all he had learned in Göttingen, was just the man to supplement the guidance given by the professors to their pupils. He took much care. He prepared collections of facsimiles of manuscripts ranging from Carolingian minuscule to Tudor script and distributed them, at a ridiculously low charge, to the members of his class. He was patient and precise in the exposition of technicalities, but he also made his pupils realize the significance of the texts as historical documents, and encouraged them to write papers on the manuscript sources upon which each of them might have to rely. Above all, he made them feel that they were his fellow workers, whatever their particular interests might be. The hours which some of us spent in Little's class were some of the happiest and most stimulating in our lives as students of history. His accuracy and learning won our immediate respect; his gentleness and humour and personal interest made him our friend.

His public spirit made him a familiar figure in much wider circles. His high sense of duty was combined with wide human sympathies; and he was a source of strength to learned bodies, the Royal Historical Society, the Canterbury and York Society, the Historical Association, and, after his election as a Fellow in 1922, the British Academy. On the whole he was able to relate his special interests in Franciscan history to his furtherance of educational and learned enterprises. His frequent contributions to the *English Historical Review*, the sixteen biographies which he wrote between 1890 and 1895 for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, his accounts of the friaries of various orders in Lincolnshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Dorsetshire, Yorkshire, and Kent which, between 1906 and 1927, filled more than 150 closely packed pages of the *Victoria County Histories*, and a score or more casual essays and papers, in books, magazines, and local periodicals, all either extended or popularized knowledge of the history of the friars, and of the English Grey Friars in particular. They were to a large extent preparations for what was to have

been his greatest work, a history of the Franciscans in England. On the other hand, his sense of duty was responsible for his failure to fulfil this purpose. The secretaryship of the ecclesiastical section of the International Congress of Historical Studies held in London in 1913 or the co-editorship of the volume of essays presented to Professor Tout in 1925 might be taken in his stride, though they involved much correspondence and other labour; but his work in the War Trade Intelligence Department (1916-18) during the first world war,¹ his preparation for the press of Professor Vaughan's big book on political philosophy (1922-5), and his devoted service as President of the Historical Association (1926-9) made serious inroads on his time and energy. He undertook the last responsibility only after much hesitation, but as a former chairman of the publications committee and as a warm advocate of the aims of the Association he felt that he must accept the nomination. It meant that he would have to attend many meetings and travel among the local branches, and it came just when he was ready to settle down to his comprehensive history. Then, in 1928, his friend Paul Sabatier died, and he found himself committed to the preparation for the press of the famous scholar's new edition of the *Speculum Perfectionis* (2 vols., 1928, 1931), a labour of love, no doubt, but also a most tiresome and perplexing task. After this the state of his health enabled him to do little more than finish various pieces of work which he had in hand and to put together some of his earlier papers. He had already had one operation in April 1916. In 1937 he had to undergo a much more serious one. Throughout the second world war he lived in a dangerous area in a time of incessant anxiety, and without the domestic help upon which his wife and he had always been able to rely. He worked hopefully in his house and garden, kept in touch with local life and his old friends, made new friends of those who were given a place in his home, and published a collection of papers. His last work, not yet published, is a revision in an English form of his edition of Eccleston.

He had been a Fellow of the British Academy since 1922. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from the

¹ H. W. C. Davis, the vice-chairman of the department, admitted him with reluctance. He observed, 'it is like cutting wood with a razor'. A report on the iron and steel resources of Austria and Germany is said to have won warm praise from Earl Balfour; but most of his work was done as one of the editors of 'Daily Notes'. He left the Department in November 1918 and received a grateful letter from Davis for his care and thoroughness in this uncongenial task.

University of Oxford in 1928 and from the University of Manchester in 1935.

At first sight Little's historical work may seem narrow and to lie outside the main field. He was not so widely known as some of his contemporaries were, either at home or abroad. He received no foreign distinctions, although he devoted his life as a scholar to the poor man of Assisi. Yet this way of looking at him is most misleading. His first book, *The Grey Friars in Oxford* (1892), has the same sort of importance in English historical literature as had those other Oxford books, R. L. Poole's *Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval Thought* (1884), and Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (1895), and it probably had a more immediate and continuous effect than they produced. It gave fresh and wider significance to medieval history, submitted a neglected subject to the standards of exact scholarship, greatly broadened our knowledge of unpublished material, and linked with learning, some of which was his own, but more of which lay hidden in the treasure-house of western thought and endeavour, a theme of perpetual charm and interest to the spirit of man. As his powers grew and his range broadened, Little's work became in itself a source of inspiration, not alone for students of his subject but for all who wished to see the barriers between this and that field of learning broken down. Never forgetful of the early influences under which he had learned history and always ready to advance them, he was one of those who can explain the unity of life in the past, and in doing this make a great library a less mysterious place. The man was not lost in the scholar. Those who knew him well would be inclined to agree with his oldest contemporary, who wrote after his death that Little, since Maitland, came nearest to the idea of what an historical scholar can be.

Most of Little's work consists of studies in critical scholarship. Its range and intensity can best be realized by an examination of the bibliography printed with the address presented to him in 1938. Its value as a contribution to medieval history can only be estimated by specialists. A mere detailed summary of it would be tedious and unsatisfactory. Some general observations, however, should be made before I refer to Little's outstanding books and papers. From the first he saw the Franciscan movement as part of a wider development in religious, ecclesiastical, and educational life. He was no naïve enthusiast devoted to the *Poverello*. Indeed, I fancy that his concern with the lives of St. Francis and his disciples was mainly due to the efflores-

scence of Franciscan studies which followed the publication of Paul Sabatier's famous book shortly after his own *Grey Friars in Oxford*. Inevitably and eagerly he took his share in a movement of which he can hardly have been aware when he began; yet he regarded the history of the mendicant orders as a whole, and of their academic activities in particular, as his subject. From one point of view his work was an expression, suggested by his special interests, of his belief in the value of local history and of his desire to make more accessible to the general student and to specialists the technicalities of his craft. It was connected with the influence which he exerted, as a leader in the Historical Association, in the promotion of the study of local history and in the preparation of annual bibliographies of current historical literature, and with his wise and skilful direction of the committee which prepared, for the Institute of Historical Research, a report on the way to edit documents. The publication, early in his career, of his *Initia operum latinorum*, to which I shall return, was the finest example of a natural quality which, throughout the history of learning, has blessed scholars of generous and gracious minds—the wish to share with others the profits of their labours. Little, like the late P. S. Allen, regarded our academic society as an unselfish brotherhood with no frontiers except the frontier imposed by the duty to maintain a high standard.

His Franciscan studies widened Little's circle of friends both at home and abroad. He did not labour, like P. S. Allen, under the pleasant compulsion to make a systematic survey of manuscript sources in foreign libraries, but he was familiar with the chief collections and made some important discoveries, and, like Allen, he had ties, sometimes very close ties, with fellow scholars in the west of Europe and Italy. Numerous letters to him from Sabatier and the Franciscan brothers in Quaracchi, notably Father Livarius Oligier, show how the discussion of minute points of scholarship was enlivened by warm personal regard and the memories of happy visits. He spent a summer in Paris during his Cardiff period, was in Florence in 1895, in Rome, Assisi, and Florence in 1909, in Florence, Assisi, Siena, Ravenna, and Venice in 1922. Co-operation with continental scholars became a matter of course after the publication in the *English Historical Review* in 1902 of a long review of recent researches into the sources of the history of St. Francis, a paper which was translated into Italian by Professor R. Casali for the *Miscellanea Francescana*. The French and Italian periodicals devoted to

Franciscan studies sought contributions from him. As his correspondence reveals, he was regarded by scholars in related fields of study as a source of information about manuscripts. His work on Roger Bacon provides a good example of this and of his ability to bring scholars together. His account of Bacon in the *Grey Friars in Oxford* was the first expression of an interest to which he returned throughout his later life. He gave vigorous encouragement to, and for many years prevailed upon the British Academy to support, Mr. R. R. Steele's *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, the first fascicule of which appeared in 1905. He organized the commemoration in 1914 of the seventh centenary anniversary of the traditional date of Bacon's birth (1214). A volume of essays was compiled and a memorial stone was erected on an old wall which is regarded as a remnant of the medieval friary in Oxford. While he was preparing the volume of essays, Little approached the distinguished scholar, Pierre Duhem of Bordeaux, who, in the course of his labours on his great cosmological work, *Le Système du monde*, had already published an unedited fragment of the *Opus Tertium*. Duhem ultimately sent to Little his essay on 'Roger Bacon et l'Horreur du vide' (*Commemoration Essays*, pp. 241-84), but at first had thought of writing on Bacon's early *questiones* on the *Physics* of Aristotle. Little lent him rotographs of the important manuscript at Amiens (Amiens no. 406) containing most of Bacon's earliest work, which had not been thoroughly examined since Victor Cousin had described it in 1848 in the pages of the *Journal des Savants*. After Duhem's death in 1917 another Baconian scholar, the Franciscan Ferdinand M. Delorme, who then lived in Limoges and had used the rotograph lent to Duhem, begged for another copy. Little had no other copy and that lent to Duhem had disappeared. Father Delorme, however, succeeded in finding it and used it, in co-operation with Mr. Steele, in his edition of the *questiones* published in the *Opera hactenus inedita* (Fasc. xiii, 1928).¹ During these years Little did much work on Bacon. In 1928 he delivered to the British Academy the masterly lecture in which he summed up the results of all recent work on this 'master mind'.

At this point we naturally come to his best-known enterprise, the formation of the British Society of Franciscan Studies, for

¹ Letters from Duhem and Delorme, and information from Mrs. Little. Little had first examined the Amiens MS. about 1907 and in 1928 seems to have had it sent for his use or for Mr. Steele's to the British Museum. The rotograph was later given, with other rotographs, to the British Museum.

three of the twenty-two volumes issued by the Society between its reconstitution in 1907 and its dissolution in 1936-7 contain editions of works by Roger Bacon. The Society was originally founded in September 1902 as a British Branch of the International Society established by Paul Sabatier in the previous July. Sabatier was its honorary president until his death in March 1928. The desire to give more emphasis to the publication of texts and studies and to provide money for the same led in 1907 to the reconstruction of the Branch as a British Society with a higher subscription. The story of its activities has been told by Little himself.¹ It is a part of the history of Franciscan studies and only concerns us here in so far as it throws light on Little as organizer, editor, and scholar. Throughout his was the leading spirit. From 1905 he was chairman of the committee as well as honorary general editor and, after Sabatier's death, honorary president. He arranged the preparation of all the twenty-two volumes published for the Society, was the author of two, one of the authors of three, and contributed papers or bibliographies to seven of them. Then there was his revision in two volumes of Sabatier's edition of the *Speculum Perfectionis*. Moreover, with the enthusiastic support of his friend Dr. Walter Seton, who was secretary of the Society from 1923 until his early death in January 1927, he was actively concerned in two commemorations, one the celebration at Canterbury on 10 September 1924 of the seventh centenary of the coming of the Franciscans to England, the other the arrangement of a course of lectures in University College, London, in October 1926 to mark the seventh centenary of the death of St. Francis. The lectures with other papers, edited by Dr. Seton, were published by the London University Press under the title *St. Francis, Essays in Commemoration, 1226-1926*. They comprise, in addition to F. C. Burkitt's study of the sources and other remarkable works, a survey by Little of the first hundred years of the Franciscan school at Oxford, always the theme closest to his mind and heart. The Society came to an end, in accordance with a resolution passed at a general meeting on 31 October 1936, with the publication of two fine volumes on *Franciscan Architecture in England* (1936) and *Franciscan History and Legend in English Mediaeval Art* (1937), due respectively to suggestions made by Sir Charles Peers and Mrs. Bardswell. The decision was taken with reluctance, but lack of funds and support, the consciousness

¹ *Franciscan Essays* II (1932), pp. vii-xii. This volume is the third in the Extra Series of the Society.

that, though much more remained to be done, most of the sources of primary interest in Franciscan history had been published, and the difficulty of finding a successor to Little as editor made it inevitable. As Little says, in the preface to the concluding volume, 'there are fashions in historical as in other movements'. In concluding this brief account of the Society, I must note how much it owed to Little's association with the University of Manchester and its press. Until 1915, the volumes of the Society were published by direct arrangement with the Aberdeen University Press, but from 1918 through the agency of the Manchester University Press. Little's friendly relations with the publications committee in Manchester must have spared him much anxiety. It had already undertaken his *Initia Operum* and his Ford lectures, and was to publish his last collection of essays (1943). It has in hand his last work on Eccleston. His Manchester friends would comment that the advantage was theirs and that the prestige of the University has been enhanced by the loyal co-operation of its former reader in palaeography.

Little was always at work, quietly, steadily, placidly, but with unflinching thoroughness. And it should not be forgotten that he inspired or improved as much work by others as he wrote himself, not only books prepared under his direction while he was engaged in advanced teaching in Manchester, like Miss Margaret Toynbee's *S. Louis of Toulouse*, and Miss Decima Douie's *Nature and Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli*, but the work of fellow scholars who relied on him for advice, for assistance in the search for and handling of manuscripts, and in countless other ways. Whether they knew him personally or not there can be few of his contemporaries and none of his juniors interested in the history of medieval thought or education or ecclesiastical institutions who have not learned of him. Everything that he wrote is straightforward and to the point, and so wisely related to the criticism of texts. It would be hard to distinguish between his learned and his popular essays or lectures as sources of influence, for the learned work is so easy to follow and the popular work is so free from padding, reflecting the best of his thinking and expressing with more freedom his disciplined feelings. As I have said, he returned again and again to the subject of his first book, both in learned and popular studies. One of his most important pieces of work is the long paper on 'the Franciscan School at Oxford in the thirteenth century', which Father Oligier induced him to write for a special number of the periodical of

the Quaracchi fathers, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* (vol. xix, 1926, pp. 803-74). This includes a revision of the lives and writings of the earlier Oxford scholars dealt with in *The Grey Friars in Oxford* (the articles on Pecham and Duns Scotus are notable) but it also contains a masterly account of the teaching given by the famous secular master Robert Grosseteste and of the academic exercises in early Oxford. It leads naturally to the book which Little prepared, in collaboration with his friend Dr. F. Pelster, S.J., for the Oxford Historical Society in 1934, *Oxford Theology and Theologians c. A.D. 1282-1302*. Four years before, the two scholars had discovered that both were working on the same manuscripts, and in particular on Assisi 158 (*quaestiones* at Oxford and Cambridge 1282-90) and Worcester Cathedral Library Q 99 (*quaestiones* at Oxford, 1300-2). They joined to describe these *questiones* and to add a precious section on the university sermons preached at Oxford in 1290-3. The outcome is a strong and practical study, enriched by texts, notes, and biographies, of academic life in the last years of the thirteenth century. I do not know a better introduction to life in a medieval university. An outcome of Little's work on the Grey Friars at Oxford was his edition of Eccleston's *Tractatus de adventu fratrum minorum in Angliam* published in Sabatier's *Collection d'études et de documents* (Paris, 1909) and his edition of the *Liber Exemplorum* or practical manual of illustrations for the use of preachers, contained in a Durham Cathedral manuscript (British Society of Franciscan Studies, i, 1908). In the former he established and annotated a well-known text, first edited by J. S. Brewer in 1858; in the latter he broke new ground,¹ and notably promoted the literature, now greatly extended, about medieval preaching. These books, with his various studies in local Franciscan history and his numerous papers, prepared him for his more comprehensive and best-known book, the Ford lectures, *Studies in English Franciscan History*, delivered in 1916, just before his first operation, and published by the Manchester University Press in 1917. During the thirty years which have since gone by, many readers and university students, in their successive generations, must have learned from Little's lectures what the coming of the Minorites meant to England and how a fine and sympathetic scholar can throw fresh light on the

¹ At first Little thought he was the first to discover this manuscript. He wrote ruefully to his wife in 1904, while he was examining in Oxford, that W. P. Ker had called his attention to a study of it by a French scholar. This scholar was Paul Meyer.

society of the past by the skilful arrangement of scattered evidence. Dr. Coulton, who had made Little's acquaintance some years before and had sent him notes upon the Eccleston and the Exempla, read the proofs with warm appreciation. He began a series of critical jottings with the words, 'I have read, enjoyed and (I hope) profited; I congratulate you on your sweetness and light.' The lectures have won and will long retain a place in our historical literature undisturbed by changing fashions and enthusiasms, for they are firmly rooted in knowledge and humanity. How far removed is the spirit of the following passage from the fleeting vogue of the Fioretti:

It would ill become a Balliol man lecturing in the Hall of Balliol College to maintain that the Franciscans were exclusively devoted to schemes for the maintenance of their own Order. It is well known that Franciscans took an honourable part in the foundation of Balliol, and for more than two centuries were associated in the government of the College. And there are other instances of Franciscan confessors directing their penitents to apply their property to the advancement of learning—notably in the case of Pembroke College, Cambridge. But these instances, so far as I know, are too few and too exceptional to allow us to alter our general conclusion that the necessity of maintaining themselves on alms impaired the social usefulness of the friars, and their spiritual force. The pressure of material needs was too insistent. The cares of poverty proved as exacting and distracting as the cares of property.

Two other books call for attention, the *Initia Operum* and Sabatier's new edition of the *Speculum Perfectionis*. One of the projects of the original or branch Society of Franciscan Studies was the compilation of a catalogue of Franciscan manuscripts. Though Sabatier warmly encouraged this proposal, it fell to the ground, but Little had begun to compile a catalogue of Franciscan manuscripts in Great Britain. His preliminary studies grew into the more general *Initia Operum Latinorum quae saeculis xiii., xiv., xv. attribuuntur* (Manchester University Press, 1904). The interleaved volume of 275 pages, containing close on 6,000 *incipits*, is now very rare and costly. Little made extensive additions in his own copy, now in the possession of the Institute of Historical Research, but no second edition has ever appeared. The list is obviously provisional; it was primarily intended to help Franciscan students; but Little cast his net wide and produced a book which is still the only attempt of a general kind to cope with a crying need. Since 1904 much other work has been done, notably in Vatasso's *incipits* of writings printed in

Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, in the *Catalogue of the Royal Manuscripts in the British Museum*, in the catalogue of *incipits* of medical manuscripts, and in other more limited ways. An exhaustive work, to comprehend every kind of medieval Latin literature, would be quite impracticable; but a catalogue of the *incipits* of theological and philosophical texts, which would take account of all discussions and identifications during the last fifty years, might well be undertaken by an international group of scholars. Nothing could be a better memorial to A. G. Little.

The *Initia*, of course, was of inestimable service to Little himself. He could proceed more surely with his investigation of manuscripts. In 1910 he had the pleasure of discovering among the Phillipps manuscripts (no. 12290) one precious text, which he was able to purchase. It is now known as the Little MS. His full description of the text, first in 1914 in the first volume of the *Collectanea Franciscana* published by the British Society of Franciscan Studies, and later in the *Opuscles de critique historique* edited by Sabatier (fasc. xviii, 1919), is an important contribution to the study of the sources for the life of St. Francis.¹ He later discussed its relation and the relations of other recently discovered Franciscan documents to the *Second Life* by Celano and the *Speculum Perfectionis*, in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1926. By this time the problem of the sources was known to be more complicated than Sabatier had thought in 1898 when he issued his edition of the *Speculum* or was yet disposed to think, and the drift of opinion among Franciscan scholars was opposed to his conviction that the *Speculum* was written *d'un trait*, less than a year after the death of the saint. He accepted the date, 1228, given in the Mazarin MS. and was not shaken by the discovery of the colophon of the Ognissanti MS. at Florence, where the MCCXXVIII of the Mazarin MS. becomes the more likely MCCCXVIII. Hence when, after his friend's death in 1928, Little undertook to arrange Sabatier's materials and bring out the second edition of the *Speculum*, he was faced by a delicate and difficult task. The first volume (1928) contains the text, the second (1931) Sabatier's account of the manuscripts and the greater number of his long notes prepared some time before 1914 for a projected but unpublished *Étude critique du*

¹ Little gave this and other manuscripts and his working copy of *The Grey Friars in Oxford* to the Bodleian Library. It is now MS. Lat. th. d. 23. The latest study of the place of the text among the sources will be found in J. R. H. Moorman's *The Sources for the Life of S. Francis of Assisi* (1940), pp. 90 ff. and 134-5.

Speculum Perfectionis, followed by an appendix of documents and other matter which, so far as Little could discover, Sabatier had intended to publish, the index of biblical citations in the text, and a comprehensive general index, including, *inter alia*, and in a condensed form, an elaborate *répertoire des termes*. Only a careful student, who has mastered Little's Introduction to the second volume, can appreciate the amount of labour which the preparation of all this material had involved, and the punctilious loyalty with which Little discharged his obligation. The critical study in the second volume gives the considerations which had led Sabatier to the view that, even if the date 1228 in the Mazarin MS. was a scribe's error, the early date of the *Speculum* and the close intimacy of its author with St. Francis was proved by internal evidence. Little himself was convinced. 'I think', he wrote (II, p. xxviii), 'that Sabatier's penetrating criticism proves that a great part of the *Spec. Perf.* was written by Brother Leo soon after the death of St. Francis. . . . In one of his sketches for the unwritten Introduction to this volume Sabatier has the heading, "La victoire de frère Léon". When the long struggle over the historical value of the *Spec. Perf.* is ended, I have no doubt that the result in essentials will be "la victoire de Paul Sabatier".' If we stress the words 'in essentials' this judgement has on the whole been vindicated. Sabatier's book was criticized, even violently criticized, notably by Father Michael Bihl, and, as we all know, 'internal evidence' can be a very tricky thing; yet scholars now seem to agree that, although the *Speculum Perfectionis* as a separate work was compiled in 1318, and is not an original work at all, but incorporates material collected a few years earlier, the greater part of this material is derived from the *Scripta Leonis*, the lost rolls and schedules submitted by Leo and his companions in 1245-6 as contributions to the *Vita Secunda* of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano. This material is embedded in collections discovered by the Franciscans, Leonardus Lemmens and Ferdinand Delorme, and by Little himself. So, in Dr. Moorman's words, 'Sabatier was perfectly right to see in the *Speculum* a work which clearly emanated from the circle of the Saint's intimate friends.'

In a fine survey of Little's work Dr. Moorman has included him among the 'excavators' who make possible the work of others, and whose work remains a storehouse when the work of perhaps more famous men is forgotten. Little was certainly an excavator, but, as we have seen, he was also an incessant interpreter. For my part I could not draw a hard-and-fast line

between his writings. His reviews, for example, especially in his later years, are full of learning, sympathy, and wit. Little was always himself. In him, more than in any scholar I have met, the man was inseparable from what he did. And the consciousness of this fact can be felt in all the letters written about him after his death by all sorts of people. I shall not try to illustrate this single-mindedness. I prefer to close this memoir with the words which he spoke on 14 June 1938, when his friends gathered about him in the rooms of the Royal Historical Society to present the slender volume which had been prepared in his honour during his seventy-fifth year. The President of the Society, Professor Stenton, was in the chair at the informal meeting. The address, with more than 200 signatures, and the bibliography of his writings were given to him. Then came Little's reply:

I thank you all very much for the honour you have done me in presenting me with the bibliography and for coming here. Historians are a generously appreciative body. I am deeply impressed with this large and distinguished gathering and by the long list of distinguished names in the book; each one will recall memories. I should like to say how very greatly I appreciate the presence here of representatives of the Franciscan Order and would especially thank my old friend Father Gregory Clery who has come all the way from Dublin. I would add that in the course of my researches I have invariably met with the utmost courtesy and help from the sons of Francis in all countries and in all Orders—Friars Minor, Conventuals and Capuchins. I have been treated as a brother, not as an interloper. . . .

You all know and will remember with relief that I am not an orator and do not 'yoke the Hours like young Aurora to my car'. But when I was young I heard somebody, who wasn't accustomed to public speaking and had to make a speech, say: 'When in doubt talk about yourself.' This seems an appropriate opportunity of trying that recipe—with this book as the text.

The first entry is 1889: *E.H.R.* 1889-1938. I have been contributing to *E.H.R.* for 50 years. I am reminded of the Scottish minister's comment on the passage about there being no marriage or giving in marriage in heaven—'chilling thought, my brethren'. The whole book illustrates a kind of rake's progress—the specialist's progress—learning more and more about less and less till he ends—The end is not quite yet. But I seem to see the lines converging to a point—and one used to learn in Euclid that a point is that which has no parts and no magnitude—is nothing. I see there is a blank page at the end of the book.

I sometimes think that the best excuse for printing anything is that it forms a nucleus for additions and corrections. The most useful book

I ever had printed was printed on one side of the page only in order to catch additions and corrections; *Initia Operum Latinorum* in the later Middle Ages. It made no attempt at being complete. My copy has some thousands of entries added, and is intended for the Institute of Historical Research when I have ceased to enter fresh *incipits*. The late Father Lacombe once talked to me about it, and wanted a complete list. I told him that if he waited for that he would never do anything—and probably quoted to him the saying: 'The best is the enemy of the good.' (It is a dangerous doctrine and only suitable for really conscientious people—such as we all are here.) Vattasso's *Initia*—containing all *incipits* of the *Patrologia Latina*—is much more systematic than mine (they don't cover the same period). I was in Rome soon after they both came out, and I remember Vattasso and I were introduced to each other (I think by [Cardinal] Ehrle) as *Initiatores patrum*. Both Vattasso and I made our compilations during a period of enforced leisure (he was on sick leave from the Vatican)—not a bad way of using temporary unemployment, but it implies holidays with pay or its equivalent.

Turning over the leaves of the bibliography I note 'Authorship of the Lanercost Chronicle' (1916) which also gives me satisfaction—partly because it was written in much pain (and so is a triumph of mind over matter) but chiefly because there is nothing new in it—no new material. All the sources had been printed for many years and were open to everybody: the only thing was to see what the sources meant and put 2 and 2 together: I put 2 and 2 together and made 22—a very good score on a medieval wicket.

Almost all my printed works relate to the Middle Ages—Croce has a dictum that all history is contemporary history. I am not quite clear what it means but am pretty sure it isn't true—like most clever sayings. I will give you another: the only ancient history is medieval history. I do not think that the most valuable function of the historian is to trace back the institutions and ways of thought which have survived, as though we were at the end and climax of history. It is at least as important to retrieve the treasures that have been dropped on the way and lost, which, if restored, would enrich our civilization. There are many of these in the Middle Ages. Even a difference of emphasis may have profound importance. Thus in the Middle Ages most good and serious-minded people worked for the glory of God: now they work for the good of man—or rather of some men—not very successfully, owing to mistaken ideas of what is good. There are two Great Commandments: and unless and until both are kept the world will be a lop-sided place.

I have wandered off the autobiographical track. I will only thank you once more and express a hope that more of my colleagues may have their bibliographies printed; they would be useful and save time and mistakes. This bibliography of mine is due to my wife who has kept from year to year a record of my writings, following the excellent

example set by Mrs. Tout. May I commend this example to others?
There are marriages made in heaven.

F. M. P.

Note. This Memoir is based upon information given by Mrs. Little and Miss Dora Little, upon correspondence, which Mrs. Little kindly put at my disposal, and upon personal knowledge. Dr. J. R. H. Moorman's appreciation, 'A. G. Little: Franciscan Historian', is printed in the *Church Quarterly Review*, vol. cxliv, pp. 17-27. Mrs. Tout kindly sent me a copy of the speech with which this Memoir ends.

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