THOMAS FREDERICK TOUT

1855–1929

THOMAS FREDERICK TOUT was born in London on 28 September 1855. His father, Thomas Edward Tout, whose father, a Somerset man, had settled in London, did not enter much into his life and little is known of him. He would seem to have been a jovial, easy-going and generous man, popular among his business associates, but not of the kind which makes a success of domestic life. Thomas Frederick's mother, Anne Charlotte Finch, who was born in January 1821 and was married at Old Lambeth Church in March 1845, is well remembered. Mother and son were devoted companions. His solicitude for her in later years, a trait which impressed old friends in London and Manchester, repaid her earlier care and anxiety for him. In Manchester, where she kept house for him before his marriage, she is remembered as an outspoken and rather disconcerting, even formidable, old lady, but her vigour and independence, qualities which she transmitted to her son, had never failed. They had been tried and had sufficed during the years of his boyhood, nor did he ever forget the debt which he owed her. One who used to visit him and his wife soon after their marriage remembers the old lady very vividly, how she used to sit by the fire with a long paper-knife, cutting the pages of some recent historical work and turning over in her mind recollections of her son's school and college days, and how the son was ever ready with thoughtful and tender attentions.

In 1869 Thomas Frederick entered St. Olave's Grammar School, Southwark, of which the Rev. Andrew Johnson was at that time the head master. Under Mr. Johnson's rule this Elizabethan foundation was brought into line with contemporary educational movements and began to send boys to the universities in greater numbers. Mr. W. F. West-

brook, late of the Colonial Office, remembers that, when he went up to try for a scholarship at Oxford in 1879, he found several old boys, in addition to Tout, of St. Olave's. It is pleasant to learn that at school Tout, in addition to becoming head boy and winning the Warden's Prize for an essay upon the British Constitution, received the long row of *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* as a prize, given on the vote of the boys to the one who had been most kind and helpful to other boys during the year, and that he took the part of Demea in the *Adelphi* of Terence. That he left a strong impression upon the mind of the head master may be inferred from a story told by another old boy who entered the school some years after Tout had left (1874). One day in 1892 when Mr. Johnson was taking the sixth form in the Greek Testament, the old man dozed, and waking up with a start, ejaculated 'Go on, Tout'.

In November 1874, at his second attempt, Tout won the Brakenbury History Scholarship at Balliol College. He came into residence in the following January. In 1877 he was placed alone—*unus*, *solus*, *totus*, as Stubbs remarked—in the First Class in the Honours School of Modern History. In the same year he was *proxime accessit* for the Lothian Prize with an essay on 'The Place of Iceland in the History of European Institutions'. In his time the men who read history at Balliol were sent to J. F. Bright, tutor and afterwards master of University College. With a few others, including the late J. H. Round and Sir Richard Lodge, Tout had the privilege of receiving tuition from Stubbs, for it was part of the professor's duty, as chaplain of Balliol, to take a limited number of pupils. Tout always regarded Stubbs as his master. In later years he liked to describe the ritual observed at the professorial lectures in the Taylorian Institute, when those who attended were still required to deposit their fee in a bowl on the professor's desk. He generally walked home with Stubbs after the lecture. The younger man won the confidence and affection of the elder. Stubbs revealed his mind in a characteristic little note,

written in 1889: 'the older we grow the more difficult it becomes for me to write a testimonial for you. In fact I think our positions are reversed.'

Although his influence is not so easy to trace, T. H. Green would seem to have cast his spell on Tout, who, after he had taken his Schools in History, read in the School of Literae Humaniores, and was placed in the second class in 1879. Tout was not a philosopher and was rather shy of showing his interest in philosophical speculations; but he was undoubtedly affected later by the *Principles of Political Obligation*, and was attached to Green's memory. It is not fanciful to see some connexion between Green's example and teaching and Tout's constant preoccupation, at Lampeter and during his earlier years in Manchester, with social interests and local affairs. Occasionally he would go further. I remember a remark of his to the effect that if he had to begin the study of medieval history over again he would start with the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. He always felt much more deeply about philosophical, as about religious, matters than he spoke. Indeed, he rarely allowed one to know what had stirred him most. I was so unaccustomed to hearing him refer to influences of this kind that I was unreasonably surprised when he told me that Seeley's *Expansion of England* had been a revelation to him. The pupil is apt to forget that the master also has need of revelations.

At Balliol Tout was one of a remarkable group of future historians. Round was a commoner, already keen on genealogical problems, Sir Charles Firth came up a year later, and other contemporaries were Sir Richard Lodge, Mr. F. C. Montague, Dr. R. L. Poole, and Arnold Toynbee. Tout's friend and protégé, the late Sir William Ashley, followed him from St. Olave's. If he made few friends at Balliol, they were very good ones and were lifelong. He was very shy, awkward, and though ambitious, still uncertain of himself. His powers of self-assertion grew very rapidly after he left Oxford, but in Balliol they do not seem to have been remarked, or if

remarked were not yet linked with his still stronger genius for friendship. In addition to Firth, always his closest historical companion, his chief friend was C. E. Vaughan, afterwards Professor of English Literature at Leeds. One of the reasons why Vaughan chose to end his days in Manchester was his desire to be near Tout, with whom he consulted freely on all kinds of things. At Balliol Vaughan is said to have been 'idolized', and his friendship with Tout was a matter of some surprise to his other friends; but all who knew Vaughan, however slightly, know that he always and instinctively saw beneath the surface.

At one time Tout had thoughts of the Civil Service, and he gained a place, but fortunately for the study of history he decided on a career as a teacher. The way was not open to him in Oxford, and after spending a year or two in private tutoring, he applied for and obtained the chair of History in St. David's College, Lampeter (1881). Two years later he won a prize fellowship at Pembroke College, Oxford. But henceforth his life as a teacher was passed in Wales and Lancashire.

During nine happy and intensely active years at Lampeter Tout found himself.[1] The man remembered with admiring affection by his friends and pupils at Lampeter is the man whom we knew in Manchester. He went exactly at the right time. St. David's College had been incorporated in 1828 for the purpose of training clergy for the ministry of the Church in Wales. In 1852 it was granted power to confer the degree of Bachelor of Divinity, and in 1865, by a third charter, to confer the degree of Bachelor of Arts. In 1880 it was affiliated to Oxford, in 1882 to Cambridge; that is to say, its graduates, if they proceeded to Oxford or Cambridge, were permitted to sit for honours after two years' study. But, until the appointment of its second principal, F. J. Jayne, afterwards bishop of Chester, the

[1] I am indebted to a memorandum written by Tout's old friend and colleague, Professor Hugh Walker, and to conversations with Sir Charles Firth, for information about the years at Lampeter.

college had not succeeded in maintaining the reputation expected of it. 'At one juncture, indeed,' says Mr. Walker, 'what was best in the College seemed to unite with what was worst to bring it to the verge of destruction. I have known no higher or purer spirit than Rowland Williams, Vice-Principal from 1850 to 1862. But Rowland Williams was a contributor to *Essays and Reviews*.' In 1880 a new period began, and it is interesting to reflect that the vigorous developments of the next few years were contemporary with the addition of the university colleges of Bangor and Cardiff as companion foundations to that of Aberystwyth, which had been founded in 1872. The success of St. David's was due in the main to three men, the principal, the late John Owen (a later principal, and afterwards bishop of St. David's), and Tout.

Mr. Walker gives an admirable summary of Tout's work at Lampeter:

> 'He was making himself all the time.' These words were spoken of Walter Scott, but they are no less true of Tout at Lampeter. In the College Library during term and in the British Museum in the vacation he laid broad and deep the foundations of his scholarship in history; in the Lampeter lecture-rooms he prepared himself for the wider stage of Manchester; and what better training in administration could be conceived than that which he found in facing the problems which arose in the process of reconstituting and reviving the almost moribund little College?

At Lampeter Tout, by unremitting and detailed labour, learned his craft as a historical scholar. Much of his work was of the popular or 'pot-boiling' kind, published lectures, contributions to the *Dictionary of English History*, and to *Celebrities of the Century*, edited by Mr. Lloyd Sanders, and a text-book of English history in three volumes, written in conjunction with York Powell; but much more was the result of original investigation. He could never live in a district without interesting himself in its history and antiquities, and at Lampeter he acquired a knowledge of medieval Welsh history which was maintained and extended in later years, and was even more important in guiding the

studies of others than it was in his own work. His paper on 'The Welsh Shires', published in 1888 in *Y Cymmrodor*, revealed his power of getting straight to the heart of a subject and treating it with force and lucidity. Many of the lives of Welshmen in the *Dictionary of National Biography* were written by him. As always, he desired to relate local or provincial or national history to contemporary history as a whole, and the great Dictionary edited by Leslie Stephen gave him his chance. Between 1885 and 1890 he wrote for the volumes iii–xxiv biographies sufficient to fill a whole volume; he used to say that he had written a volume of the Dictionary in the college library. It is hardly too much to say that some of our best scholars got their training as contributors to the Dictionary. The preparation of detailed articles inevitably brought with it a minute and critical acquaintance with the printed sources of British history. Tout continued to write for the Dictionary until 1910, when the last volume appeared.

Hence his pupils at Lampeter had a teacher who was working all the time himself. The result was remarkable. Needless to say it was not the professor's duty to give advanced instruction; it was his business to increase his knowledge of general history and to show his pupils what the study of history really involves; but Tout's pupils soon discovered that their master was no mere purveyor of information from text-books. He was both a kindly companion and a merciless critic, who made them, almost unconscious of what was happening to them, feel at home in the period of their study. The little school of history began to be talked about; several of its members won scholarships and exhibitions at Oxford; one of them succeeded Tout as professor. His experience at Lampeter was still more important for Tout himself. He became a vivid, confident teacher and talker, and acquired a knowledge of general history which was not only exceptional in its range but was also always at his command.

From the first Tout concerned himself with college

business and local interests. It is significant that the first volume to bear his name was an edition of the college calendar (1882). He acted as librarian and was one of the leaders in the social life of the staff and in their academic deliberations. He had a large share in the foundation of the College School, which, first started to provide a matriculation class, rapidly became one of the chief schools for boys in South and Central Wales. Perhaps his most original role was played in municipal politics. Before 1884 Lampeter, an ancient borough in name, was actually a village, ruled by a Portreeve and a local board. The college was making it one of the most important places in Cardiganshire, and mainly through the energy of Jayne, the principal, it was at last raised to the status of a borough with mayor, aldermen, and councillors. As the ancient capital, to quote Mr. Walker, was situated in the extreme southern corner of the county and most inconvenient of access, Assizes, Quarter Sessions, and ultimately the County Council came to meet in Lampeter. Tout's knowledge of institutions had been of service during the time of transition from township to borough, and he was made one of Lampeter's first four aldermen. He frequently presided on the council in the absence of the mayor and tradition suggests that he took, as one would expect, a lively share in its proceedings. Once, when he protested that a councillor was wandering from the business and not speaking to a substantive motion, his angry colleague replied, 'I maintain it is a very substantial motion, and I will not be insulted by Professor Tout or anybody else'.

Although Tout's reputation grew during the Lampeter days, it naturally did not keep pace with the esteem of his colleagues and pupils. He never failed to arouse criticism, and doubtless had his critics in Wales, but his departure was generally deplored as a disaster. His forceful colleague, Canon John Owen, as he then was, expressed his confidence in Tout's future in vigorous terms. In letters written during the first years of Tout's career in Manchester, Owen frequently diverged from technical discussions upon the

reorganization of the Welsh Church by Archbishop Pecham and from reflections upon the historical knowledge of that fiery young patriot, Mr. Lloyd George, to exhort Tout to make certain of the recognition which he deserved. He should write a big book and justify to all men the unshakeable belief in him of his friends. Owen regarded Manchester as a stepping-stone and no more. Happily for Manchester, Tout, after one or two unsuccessful applications for Scottish chairs, found satisfaction and full scope for his energy where he was. Manchester was fortunate in keeping him, and so was he in staying.

When Tout went to Manchester in 1890, the Owens College was already a centre of historical study. History had been taught by two great scholars, Copley Christie and A. W. Ward, the new principal, whom Tout succeeded. Many men who were to win distinction as historians or teachers had studied there.[1] One of these, James Tait, was already a member of the staff. This development was part of a movement which had made the college, always more concerned with men than with buildings, the home of a vigorous life, cheerful, optimistic, and earnest. There were some weak spots, but nobody who shared in this life could separate the interests of his own department from those of the college as a whole or fail to see that the success of the one was bound up with the success of the other. Tout was by nature aware of this, and, as a matter of course, he realized possibilities which, after his experience in Lampeter, were not strange to him. He was never concerned

[1] In addition to Professor Tait, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, Professor Whitney, the late Robert Dunlop, Dr. W. A. Shaw, and Professor Holland Rose had studied at the Owens College. For Christie, Professor of History from 1853 to 1866, see *Selected Essays and Papers of R. C. Christie*, edited with a memoir by W. A. Shaw (1902). For Ward in Manchester, see Tout's obituary notice in the *Manchester Guardian* for 20 June 1924, and his memoir in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* for 1926, xi. 427–40, reprinted with additions and corrections in pp. ix–xxx of *Bibliography and Memoir of Sir A. W. Ward* (Cambridge University Press).

with elaborate plans. He was a man of vision and ideals, but he pursued the best as it was suggested to him by his daily experience.

A few clear principles of action, and a bundle of instinctive preferences and aversions, were sufficient for him. If he had to work in a university, he must try to make it a really efficient house of learning. If he were helping to manage a school, he must set his mind on seeing that the teachers were happy in their work, and not overdriven, regarded as friends, not as machines. He was a healthy opportunist, in the best sense of the term, with an uncanny ability to keep to the right path. In action he was always ready, giving the impression, as one of his friends puts it, of 'a kettle bubbling over a brisk fire'. He took his pupils as he found them, made friends with them, was solicitous about them, and would talk with them by the hour, but he never wasted their time and his by needless anxieties about them. He did not shut himself up to prepare carefully wrought lectures, but, unless a detailed study of authorities was required, he made sure of just enough for his purpose and then let himself go. He seized the available hours for writing his text-books and reviews or an occasional learned article, but he was no recluse. Hence he was always fresh and ready for the transaction of college business and social intercourse and the multifarious duties which he undertook, whether as one of the founders and the first chairman of the University Settlement in Ancoats, or as an Extension Lecturer, or as chairman of the governing body of the High School for Girls. Perhaps his happiest trait was his firm belief, almost an instinctive belief, that what he did was worth doing. He believed in the place, in his work as a teacher, and in his students. Sometimes people speak of the Manchester history school as though it were a piece of deliberate invention, finished and shaped in all its parts, imposed from without by a powerful personality and achieving results which can only be regarded as surprising. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The department of history

grew gradually; a conscious tradition was but slowly realized. The school was not an institution, but a little community, led by two fine teachers, and dominated by a strong, but very human, personality. Its success was the outcome of this companionship, in which every member had the opportunity of feeling that he had a share. The young people of the north who read history were taken seriously. Tout and his colleague assumed that they meant business. That they might not be worth guidance never occurred to them. If Manchester could produce physicians, chemists, and engineers, it could produce historians. Indeed, it had already done so. Lancashire people respond to this sort of treatment. I imagine that the irresponsive could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Nearly all in various ways gave the response expected of them and found something which they never forgot. In course of time the school became conscious of a living tradition. It had never been a mechanical society, but had grown and changed from decade to decade. It developed after the war and is developing still, a witness to Tout's administrative skill but yet more to his confidence in his work and his pupils.

During his first ten years the Owens College was still a constituent part of the Victoria University. The association with Liverpool and Leeds had been fruitful; it had created common standards and helped to establish the work of each college on a broader foundation. But further development was felt to be impossible without independence. Tout joined whole-heartedly in the fight for independence. Opinion was divided, and some friendships were endangered for a time, for Tout was a hard fighter. The creation of the University of Manchester began a new period which lasted until the end of the war and Professor Tait's retirement. Freedom gave the opportunity for advance in all directions, and Tout was quick to seize every occasion. In University affairs he joined Sir Alfred Hopkinson and others in framing the new Faculty of Theology. He was primarily responsible for the establishment of the Manchester University Press, and acted as

chairman of the Press committee until his retirement. He was one of the representatives of the University upon the board of governors of the new John Rylands Library, and helped to maintain its close association with the University, which has been of incalculable advantage to advanced students. The growth in the number of students had in the meanwhile justified expansion within the department. These years saw the successful culmination of the efforts to secure an increase in the staff, including the creation of a chair for Mr. Tait and the foundation of chairs in Economic and Modern History. The curriculum could now be dealt with. Although the main lines of the course—the insistence upon a broad general knowledge of ancient, medieval, and modern history, supplemented by a more detailed study of British history, especially of English institutions, and at the end by a careful study of selected special subjects—were never changed, important modifications were gradually introduced. The requirement of an essay or 'thesis' in connexion with one of the special subjects had excellent results, and the reduction after the war of the special subjects from two to one was justified by the success of this exercise. The 'thesis' has been criticized, and is certainly not suited to the systems of Oxford and Cambridge with their enormous schools, but at Manchester it gave genuine intellectual satisfaction to the students and prepared the way for those who wished to proceed to advanced study. The organization of advanced study indeed naturally followed. Much had already been done since the beginning of the century. The allocation in the new University Library of a special 'Freeman Library' to hold the books of E. A. Freeman had provided a workshop which had hitherto been lacking.[1] The University Press and the

[1] Freeman's books were bought and presented to the Owens College after his death in 1892. A catalogue was compiled by Mr. Tait. At first they were housed in a lecture-room adjoining the old library; but after the new Christie Library was built, a large room suitable for purposes of study was provided for them.

Rylands Library had given facilities for the post-graduate work which, though always encouraged, had hitherto been rather casual. The appointment of Dr. A. G. Little as reader in palaeography had enabled advanced students to learn their way from the most delightful of teachers. In the years after the war still more provision was made for advanced instruction and for the recognition of advanced work as a natural and integral part of the history school. Moreover, the endowment of the Philip Haworth research library, founded by Mr. and Mrs. Haworth in memory of their son killed during the war, gave the advanced students a definite home inside the department. When Tout resigned, he had the satisfaction of feeling that, so far as external equipment and the influence of a strong personal tradition can give it, the history school at Manchester had an independent life of its own.

The Manchester history school is best known for its work in medieval history, yet it would be a mistake to conclude that Tout and his colleagues regarded it as exclusively a school of medieval studies. Such concentration as there was on medieval history came slowly and without premeditation. It naturally attracted the attention of Sir Paul Vinogradoff, one of the first to give public expression to the discovery that interesting things were going on in Manchester, and Tout's increasing absorption in his own field inevitably strengthened the impression. But Tout himself did not regard his academical work in this way. While he believed that a good grounding in medieval history was the best preliminary to historical investigations in later periods, he was far too well aware of the rich variety of interests which lay open to the student, and especially to a student bred in the industrial north of England, to drive his pupils into medieval history. Manchester owed an incalculable debt, during the years of Tout's greatest activity as a teacher of medieval history, to the work of the late George Unwin, one of the brightest spirits who ever cast his light on dark places and opened up new horizons to his pupils. Tout and

Unwin were in many ways as unlike each other as two men can be, but they were alike in their belief in history, and in their capacity to inspire. The volumes of the University Press testify to Unwin's influence as they testify to that of Mr. Ramsay Muir and the late H. W. C. Davis, successive holders for brief periods of the chair of modern history. The possibilities of advance in all directions were, as they remain, very great, a fact which their past experience must have driven home to the two men, Tout and Tait, who for so long had borne nearly the whole burden of teaching and advice. It is worthy of record that two of the most distinguished medievalists in England spent the greater part of their teaching life in Manchester as lecturers on non-medieval subjects. Professor Tait was throughout responsible for most of the teaching in ancient history, and at times took a share in the lecturing on modern history. Tout, until the last nine or ten years, paid more attention as a teacher to modern than to medieval history. Indeed, it says much for the ardour and keenness of both men that they were able during this time, as an outcome of their own more private investigations, to direct the interest and the studies of so many young men and women in the investigation of problems of English history in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was done quietly, even casually, but it was done. Yet their general attitude was wider, and is perhaps best revealed in the volume of *Historical Essays*, written by past and present members of the Owens College, which they edited in 1902.[1] This volume, gathering together the associations with the teachers and students of the past, and prophetic of the development of the future, was issued on the eve of the emergence of the independent University of Manchester. In their preface the editors declared in general terms their hopes for the progress of the School of History in the years to come. The contributors ranged from Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, who had been a student in

[1] Afterwards re-issued as the sixth volume of the Historical Series of the Publications of the Manchester University Press (1907).

1867, to graduates of two years' standing; the essays began with one on Caesar-worship and ended with one on Napoleon at St. Helena and with papers on the teaching of history in schools. The work as a whole was a most effective manifesto.

Tout's concentration upon the teaching of medieval history was made possible by the creation of the chair of modern history in 1912. But his impetus came earlier from the gradual discovery of the subject by which he will mainly be remembered as a scholar. He was always alert to the tendencies in continental scholarship in the history of institutions, and to the corresponding opportunities for advance in English history. His review of Viollet's *Histoire des institutions politiques* (vols. ii, iii) in 1906 (I remember how at this time he carried this book about with him when he journeyed by train) shows him thinking about the comparative study which later gave us his Rennes lectures on *France and England* (1922). His edition, published in the same year, 1906, in collaboration with Miss Hilda Johnstone, of the State Trials of 1289 to 1293, illustrates his readiness, while he was at work on hand-books and text-books, to follow up and see the significance of new material. As Maitland wrote of this same work:

> 'One of the virtues which is placing Mr. Tout in the very front rank of our historians is his determination to leave no stone unturned, no thicket unbeaten. Out of the thicket may fly a bird worth powder and shot. Under the stone may lurk a toad with a jewel in its head.'

This responsive activity found a direction two years later, in the course of investigations suggested by Monsieur Déprez's short study of the privy and secret seals. Tout realized as never before the connexion between diplomatic and administrative studies; still more, he realized that here lay an opportunity for using the calendared, printed, and unpublished treasures of the Public Record Office in a systematic way to bring together his own studies and his more advanced instruction. In their third year his students could study printed texts; those who were able to go further

could proceed to the Record Office; and all the while he could, with nothing but happy results in his teaching, concentrate upon what might be his *magnum opus*. So it was that during the next twelve years, in spite of the reduction of numbers and all the pain and distraction caused by the war, he was able to inform the School of History as a centre of medieval study with a clearer purpose, to harmonize his activities as teacher and scholar, and to be ready for the changes which he supervised, as Director of Advanced Study, in the last five years of his professorship. His concentration steadied, but did not monopolize his activities. He did not force his interests upon others. He liked to see his colleagues doing their share in their own way, working with the victims, as he would put it, of their bow and spear. His own pupils by no means adopted his peculiar interests as a matter of course. He was far too good a teacher to insist upon that. But he now saw clearly how the department might be directed, and what a school of history might be; and his strength was increased by the growing appreciation of the world outside and by his intimate and far-reaching relations with scholars at home and abroad. Fellow historians looked to him for counsel, and younger men and women outside Manchester turned to him for advice and stimulus. He had come to his own.

Sir Charles Firth has observed that Tout possessed in an unusual degree the qualifications required for success in post-graduate teaching: wide knowledge, sound judgement, insight into character, and practical ability. A man who combines such qualities as these has no need to submit himself and his pupils to a rigid system; and indeed Tout was quite incapable of thinking of his work with his pupils in the academic terms of 'graduate instruction' or 'seminars'. He was thoroughly English and realistic in his outlook on history, both in his more elementary teaching and in his supervision of advanced work. From the moment of his entry into the school until the day when he could see his name on the title-page of a substantial book, the student

who had run the whole course felt that he had been in a close personal relation with a teacher who had never confused the means with the end, or mechanism with stimulus. In the light of this experience it would be quite impossible for me to try to draw from his scattered addresses and papers upon the matter any systematic description of his views and 'method'. He would stress one theory at one time, another at another, as he saw occasion or as recent experience had prompted. He did not worry much about consistency. A man of strong common sense and very human affections, he knew how different people can be from each other. We had long desultory talk with him, quarrelled with him, were one day happy in the security of his warm encouragement, another day sore and bewildered after a touch of 'the rough side of his tongue', or the uncomfortable experience of being 'shaken over the pit'. But all the time we knew that we were safe. Perhaps that intimate sense of safety, as one went away after a long evening by the fire, with the memory of a comfortable study filled with great books, of gossipy wandering talk in which one was made part of a wider world, was the greatest of his gifts to his pupils. He could be severe, even rather brutal, and his hot temper could make him unjust. At times he was even fussy and irritable, but he never made us forget that we were his fellow-workers. He never tried to impress or to envelop himself in a cloud of learned words. What mattered was, not what this or that learned person said, but what had happened and our own judgement about what had happened. And so we came quite naturally to feel about history as we felt about the interesting things and people of whom he talked. We learned to go our own way, and could safely be left to ourselves, for we knew that he was always there.

Needless to say, Tout felt very differently about different people, just as he aroused a strange variety of emotions about himself. The kind of man whom he admired and could like most was a man like Mark Hovell, who was killed in France in August 1916: a man who had struggled

against difficulties, had simple straightforward interests in life, was shrewd, clear-headed, humorous, and sharp-tongued, with no nonsense about him, and was blessed with the sort of self-confidence which rapidly sheds conceit. It is characteristic of Tout that he felt so strongly attracted to a Lancashire boy who had no desire to work at medieval history; it is a tribute to him that he retained as a matter of course the confidence as well as the affection of an able man who must very soon have outstripped his teacher in the particular study which he had made his own. After Hovell was killed, Tout laid aside his own work and spent many laborious months in finishing and preparing for the press his pupil's book on the Chartist Movement. The memoir which he wrote for this little volume is at the same time a memorial to his influence as a teacher. He lives in the memory of his other pupils, whether they only knew him casually through two or three years or were admitted to his more intimate friendship, by his kindness and geniality and eager interest in their welfare, by his continuous recollection of them, by his hatred of shams and pretentiousness, by his boundless energy, his uncertain moods and eccentricities, his vigorous, quaint, and absorbing lectures, his gift of racy narrative and anecdote, his alertness to everything that was going on both in the world of historical scholarship and in public affairs.

Tout's colleagues were all aware, although it was not easy for his pupils to realize the fact, that, while he gave to the work of his department time and energy enough to exhaust an ordinary man, he was one of the leading figures in the University and in the educational life of the city. Only when one sat with him in the Senate and committees did one begin to understand his influence. Some of his qualities had a double edge, and in a lesser man might well have obstructed his usefulness. In Tout they were, in a curious way, part of the physical basis of his strength. He was by nature a responsive man, and could be most tactful and sympathetic. His helpfulness in counsel, whether in

private talk or in committee, struck all who had to do with him in normal and casual intercourse; and as the years passed he became an impressive as well as a vigorous 'elder statesman'. But in earlier years he was more formidable. When once roused he lost all sense of self-consciousness. He would show impatience without reserve at the dilatoriness or irrelevancies of others, while he exercised little restraint upon himself. If opposition was steady he was apt to lose his temper. Yet this masterful energy was combined with an unusual ability to disarm criticism. He had a very shrewd understanding of men and was anxious to make his position quite clear. He would begin with intimate, wandering conversations in the common room, and continue them as he walked home in the evening through the unlovely chain of villages in South Manchester, where talk was punctuated by the deafening clangour of the passing tram, and he would often end them over a pipe by his study fire. In debate he usually got his way, not by oratory, but by careful pungent exposition and good-humoured pertinacity. He learned to take his lapses of temper with equanimity and soon forgot all about them, so that others got into the way of doing the same. Whatever was said or thought about him, no one could doubt the largeness of his interest in the University nor fail to be influenced by his instinctive good sense and freedom from the meaner prejudices and passions of academic life. He was never deterred from a practicable reform by pedantry or vested interests. As he used to say of his politics, he was a conservative for radical reasons. His mind was very agile, and, however much he might wander, his thoughts were on the heart of things, on what really mattered. 'Provoking little malice and bearing none, he preserved from first to last a direct and positive attitude to life which no difficulty could change into a defensive and which left no room for affectation or pettiness in any form.' [1]

[1] From an anonymous appreciation which appeared in *The London Mercury*.

Tout felt the strain of the war intensely. He and his senior colleagues kept the school going—some of the best of his women students were trained during these years—but his interests were elsewhere, and he deplored what seemed to him to be inaction. In 1919 Mr. Tait retired and, with the close of this long and fruitful partnership, a new period began in the history of the department. Tout became professor of history and director of advanced studies in a reconstituted school. In 1925 he retired, the date coinciding with his seventieth birthday. I doubt if anything in his academic life gave him more pleasure than the volume of essays in medieval history which was presented to him at this time, with its contributions from colleagues and pupils and from some of the foremost among his contemporaries, Liebermann, Bémont, Langlois, Pirenne, Poole, Haskins, and others.[1] The dutiful zest with which he read the essays was hardly less keen than his boyish delight in poring over the long list of subscribers.

The Owens College Essays of twenty-three years before had shown what Manchester had already done in the study of history. This new volume showed what Tout had done for Manchester. And it recognized his position as one of the leading scholars of Europe. The four years of his happy retirement in Hampstead were a time of still wider influence and recognition. They were not really years of retirement, but rather of activity in a wider field. For some time he had been a very prominent Fellow of the British Academy, which he served on the Council for more than one period of office, and as the second President of the Historical Association he had some years before enlarged his acquaintance with the teachers of history in English schools. In London he was free to extend these interests and to add to them. He was keenly interested in the Institute of Historical Research; indeed, two or three years before he left Manchester, he had instituted, on a plan more suitable to local conditions, a

[1] This was the only occasion, I believe, at which Langlois could be persuaded to contribute to a volume of the kind.

conference of teachers and research students suggested by Professor Pollard's Thursday evenings. He was now able to show a more continuous sympathy with the aims and work of the Institute. In 1926 he was elected President of the Royal Historical Society, and in his first address from the Chair, in February, explained very characteristically that he had made it his first duty to 'look into the history' of the Society. 'I should have been false to the principles of a lifetime', he said, 'if I had not pursued these investigations in the original sources, and particularly in the record sources, the Minute Books and the Archives of the Society.' This habit, so natural in him, of mastering all the bearings of any undertaking, gave him at once a position of influence rarely acquired by an elderly man who comes to London from active life in what, to use another phrase of his, are sometimes quaintly termed the provinces. When his last illness seized him, he was especially concerned with problems of organization, the future of the historical publications which he had directed, since the death of Sir Paul Vinogradoff, for the British Academy, and the work of the Union of Academies, and of the National Committee of the International Historical Congress. He was no novice in the direction of publications, and was familiar with the organization of conferences. He had presided over the medieval section of the Congress held at London in 1913, and was one of the leading figures at the Congress held at Brussels ten years later. He had also, with Vinogradoff, represented the British Academy at the meetings of the Union Académique. At first he had been disposed to be sceptical about the possibilities of this kind of development. When, however, he had once realized that, under the guidance of men like his friend Professor Pirenne, practical things could be done, he threw himself into the movement with his usual thoroughness. He made it the subject of one of his presidential addresses to the Royal Historical Society. He became president of the National Committee, and was ready to discuss with younger votaries of the cause all the

difficulties and prospects of its schemes. 'All were treated', says Professor Baxter, writing of one of his conversations with Tout, 'with a kindly and understanding carefulness, a wide insight that at once grasped the essentials of each case and with no more than a gentle irony separated what was sound in it from what was merely sounding.'

In the spring of 1928, after the third and fourth volumes of his big book on medieval administration had been seen through the press and were ready for publication, he went to the United States to deliver the Messenger Lectures at Cornell University. His friendship with many American and Canadian historians, and his own love of travel and of new experiences, made it inevitable that this visit should develop into a prolonged tour. He gave lectures in more than thirty places and was fêted wherever he went. In addition he and his wife delayed their return so that he might spend a few quieter weeks in the inspection of the manuscripts in the Huntington Library at San Marino, near Pasadena in California.[1] Yet, although he may have over-exerted himself, he felt all the better for his arduous holiday. He returned in September 1928 cheerful and rejoicing in what he had seen and done and in the honours which had been poured upon him. During the following months he worked closely at the fifth volume of his book, and completed the part which he had planned for himself. In May he had to undergo an operation, which left him too weak to hope that his cure could be completed. His great desire was to see the book finished. After a gallant rally, he supervised the revision of his own work and made arrangements for the completion of the volume. He died on 23 October 1929.

During his last years Tout gathered in the harvest of a long life of unremitting labour and of service to others. He was sure of the old friends; his genius for friendship brought him many more. Others who had known him imperfectly came with warm appreciation to know him better. He felt

[1] The Huntington Library has since bought Tout's own fine collection of books.

none of life's ennui or disillusionment and took a frank pleasure in recognition, especially in the doctorate conferred upon him by his own University of Oxford. The friends who worked with him in earlier days, while they shared his pleasure, felt, and still feel, that these distinctions have a somewhat fugitive interest, when set beside their jealously guarded recollection of the years spent in Manchester, where a more intimate and permanent memorial was slowly raised in the human companionship of the History School. And as I turn back for a moment to this, I cannot omit some reference to the home which was always generously open to his friends and pupils. Tout found great strength and happiness in his domestic life. Five years after he went to Manchester he married Miss Mary Johnstone, one of his pupils, daughter of Mr. Herbert Alison Johnstone, of Stockport. Both husband and wife were inspired by the same public spirit. She fully shared his academic and literary interests, and gave freely of her energy and enthusiasm, as he did, in the service of the social and educational life of the city. In his home he found relief from the labour and incidental worries of the daily task, a fresh centre of inspiring activity, and a long and devoted companionship of which, for all that it meant to them, his friends will always retain a sense of gratitude. Tout had the satisfaction of having as fellow-workers in his own studies those who were nearest to him. His sister-in-law, Professor Hilda Johnstone, and his daughter, Dr. Margaret Sharp, were his pupils, both destined to win distinction as medievalists and to have a share in the last volume of the book which he had nearly finished.

Tout's historical work speaks for itself. The great book upon which his fame will mainly rest is a positive and unadorned contribution to knowledge, so massive that none can fail to realize it, so intelligently related to the facts of life that none can afford to neglect it. But whatever he wrote—lectures, articles, reviews, text-books, treatises—was concrete, vigorous, unaffected, and direct, even conversa-

tional, its merits obvious, its blemishes unconcealed. His master, Stubbs, was the outstanding constructive force in the historical scholarship of his time, and Tout, perhaps even more than the more brilliant and versatile Maitland, carried on this positive and energetic tradition. No critic, knowing what Tout did, need have the slightest hesitation in admitting his defects. He lived in a generation of very fine medievalists. He did not possess the finished scholarship of this scholar, nor the acute penetration of that, nor the fastidious, remorseless pertinacity of a third. He was an untidy builder; but he built, and his work stands, firm and four-square. He worked with a kind of deliberate fury, and very quickly, always going straight to the texts and manuscripts if he were engaged upon a piece of original work. He believed, and he insisted on this in advising his pupils, in mastering the published texts first and in reading them continuously as texts, not in consulting them as collections of raw material. He knew the pleasure of reading a chronicle in his easy chair. If he was not so thorough in his consideration of all the modern authorities, he knew where to look and rarely missed anything of significance. He wrote hard, not troubling much about form, but getting at the essentials with the pungent, vivid, direct, adjectival exuberance of his oral speech. His best writing, as in some of his published lectures (which remind one of Freeman), and in his survey of the character and policy of King Richard II, is very like his best speech. He was methodical in big rather than in small things, so that his work required drastic revision, a dreary task which taxed his patience. Hence he owed very much, during the preparation of the last volumes of his big book, to the expert and methodical scholarship of his secretary, Dr. Dorothy Broome, whose help received his warm and generous recognition.

Until late in life, Tout did not work very systematically. Some people have regretted the time and energy which he put into his text-books. On the other hand, these

undoubtedly made it more possible for him to do his later work. The concentric series of text-books on English history (1902–6) which were planned from a definite point of view upon the teaching of history in schools—he believed in the gradual intensification of the teaching of outlines rather than in the teaching of disconnected subjects and periods[1]—brought him a steady addition to income which made research easier, and in his case did not come too late. He had both the necessary vigour and the scholarly habits formed during a lifetime of incessant study. His numerous contributions to the *Dictionary of National Biography* gave him an unusually extensive acquaintance with the vast range of printed texts, both literary and official, which are the material for English medieval history. His sojourn in Wales directed his attention to the significance of local history in the organization of the shires, the part of the Marcher lordships in the general political life, the details of military administration and methods of warfare, the importance of the ecclesiastical administration in a political settlement. The preparation of his biography of Edward I for the series of 'Twelve English Statesmen' (1893), the most finished of his works, helped to focus his interest in the administrative developments of the later Middle Ages. From time to time these aspects of history absorbed his mind. One interest is reflected in his essays on the Welsh shires and the earldoms under Edward I (1894) and his map in the Oxford Historical Atlas, and returns in his address on the history and records of Flintshire (1911) and his lecture on Medieval Town Planning (1917). Another is seen in his papers on the 'Fair of Lincoln' (1903), the tactics of the battles of Boroughbridge and Morlaix, neglected fights between Crécy and Poitiers (1905), in the long paper on firearms in England in the fourteenth century (1911), and the lecture on medieval and modern warfare (1919). His old concern with Archbishop Pecham finds a counter-

[1] See, for a more general expression of this view, the paper 'Outlines versus Periods' in *The University Review* for March 1907.

part in the important introduction, very significant for Scottish history, which he wrote for the Register of John de Halton, bishop of Carlisle, published by the Canterbury and York Society (1913). During this middle period, the period of his text-books, including *The Empire and Papacy* (1898), and a chapter on Germany in the first volume of the Cambridge Modern History (1902), he wrote for 'The Political History of England', edited by Dr. William Hunt and Dr. R. L. Poole, the volume upon the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (1905). Some of the papers already noted and the well-known note upon the 'Communitas bacheleriae Angliae' (1902) were the outcome of his studies in the preparation of this volume.[1] The edition of the State Trials of 1289 to 1293, already mentioned, was also suggested by this work and shows us Tout moving, more or less consciously, towards the systematic study of administrative history which he began two or three years later. The immediate occasion of his choice of a theme, soon appropriated as the object of all his future labours as a historian, has already been mentioned. The first outcome was a paper on the officers of the King's Wardrobe (1909); the first stage in the inquiry was reached when Tout published his Ford lectures on *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History* (1914). In 1920 appeared the first two volumes of *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England.* The third and fourth volumes came in 1928, the fifth after his death in 1930. A volume of indexes is in preparation.

Tout's work illustrates a truth too often neglected, that good realistic history cannot be written unless the historian possesses a powerful and well-disciplined imagination. If we are conscious of seeing, as though for the first time, an old institution at work, or of understanding the signifi-

[1] For further details see Mrs. Tout's Bibliography of Tout's writings included in the volume of essays presented to him in 1925. This has been brought up to date in a note appended to Mr. A. G. Little's memoir in *History* (Jan. 1930).

cance of a group of apparently insignificant officials, it means that imaginative effort has given life to a mass of dreary details. This kind of imaginative faculty follows the facts; it is not the same as the artistic faculty—a much more dangerous thing in the historian—by which impressions are consciously recreated in the writer's mind. Each involves effort, and each is fed by the wide human interests of the writer. Neither is capable of 'dry-as-dust' history, for neither is remote from life. Both make demands upon the reader, but the reader's attention may wander in the one case into misunderstanding, in the other into the realm of illusion. Tout, if he had ever cared to argue about it, would undoubtedly have agreed with a distinguished German contemporary that the science or learning of the romantic or of any other period of enlightenment was more important than its poetry. His work satisfied him in the way in which music or poetry satisfies other men. In this sense of satisfaction he was throughout consistent with himself. He could never quite understand the dissipation of interest which follows a divided allegiance. At Lampeter he was distressed when members of the staff absented themselves from a weekly social gathering started by themselves, and at Manchester I have seen him half-puzzled, half-indignant, if one of us deserted a historical conference for a concert. He had of course other strong interests of his own, especially in travel and archaeology and literature. But he regarded these interests as relaxations which should never distract a man from the daily task. It was interesting to hear him talk about an old building, and he was at his happiest on a historical excursion, when he was describing to a group of students, in his racy and gesticulating fashion, an antiquity like Whalley Abbey or Conisbrough Castle. He always made them feel its interest as an expression of history, and I fancy that he could never quite enjoy a beautiful thing for its own sake unless he knew something about it and had set it in its various periods. Aesthetic pleasure without such knowledge would have seemed ama-

teurish to him. On the other hand he could find real enjoyment in things which the more conventional historical student overlooks or rejects. He took a childlike pleasure in tracing, with his children, the courses of the wretched streams which trickle through the suburbs of Manchester to join the Mersey and the Irwell; and, with the imagination of the scholar, he saw in them the links with the past, when the marshy spaces were dotted with island hamlets, and Manchester was confined to the rocky triangle between the Irwell and the Irk. It was in this spirit of adventure, rejoicing in the details for the significance which could be found in them, that in later years he worked upon the problems of medieval administration. It is given to few men to feel, as the years close about them, the same zest in the bewildering contents of the Public Record Office as they felt in earlier days in exploring the antiquities of Gascony and Provence.

The *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* should be read in the spirit in which they were written. Tout was pursuing no learned by-paths. He was concerned to understand the methods of medieval government, and to adjust the generalizations of the constitutional historian to the salutary experience of men, great men and little men, ministers of state and clerks living their lives of routine among associations now long forgotten. He went back and appropriated the traditions of the great scholars of the seventeenth century, in whose time the medieval institutions of England were still at work, and in whose eyes the methods of chancery and exchequer practice, and the co-operation of the royal household with the state which it supervised, were still of obvious significance. And with opportunities for investigation greater than those open to Spelman and Prynne and Madox, he tried to work out in detail the interplay, from year to year, of administration and policy. The outcome is not all of equal value. It lacks proportion and some of it is not inspired; but it is undoubtedly one of the outstanding achievements of English historical learning.

And here, in the words of the present Vice-Chancellor of his old University and the Master of his college of Pembroke, I may close this tribute to 'that great and excellent historian, whose influence on the study of later medieval history has probably been more potent than that of any contemporary scholar'.

F. M. POWICKE

NOTE.—Mrs. Tout and Sir Charles Firth have kindly given me much information. My obligation to Professor Walker is expressed above. I have depended otherwise upon personal knowledge, and printed notes and recollections too numerous to mention. Special reference should be made to Professor Tait's article in the *English Historical Review*, xlv. 78–84 (January 1930); Dr. A. G. Little's article in *History*, xiv. 313–24 (January 1930), which includes the bibliography of Tout's writings for the years 1925–9; Sir Richard Lodge's address printed in the *Cornhill Magazine* (January 1930); and the obituary notices, with the subsequent correspondence, in the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* (24 October 1929 onwards).