

JOSEPH WRIGHT

1855-1930

JOSEPH WRIGHT was born on 31 October, 1855, at Thackley, a village three miles north of Bradford. His grandfather James Wright, was a tenant farmer who combined the cultivation of about forty acres of land with the hand-loom weaving which was one of the staple industries of the district. Dufton Wright, the third of his five sons and the father of Joseph Wright, deserted weaving for quarrying which was the other local industry. 'My father', said Joseph Wright, 'was a cheerful, good-tempered chap, singing snatches of songs, very kind and friendly, never quarrelsome.... He was fond of poaching, and always kept a dog however badly-off we were, but he never wanted to work.' He found employment at the ironstone mines near Middlesbrough in 1861, and left his wife and children to the charge of the parish, though he returned later, and died at home in 1866.

Fortunately his wife, Sarah Anne Atkinson, was a woman of strong will and untiring industry. She found a one-roomed cottage which would hold herself and her four children, and set to work to bring up her family by her own efforts. Joseph Wright, the second son, was a wage earner from the age of six. He began as a donkey-boy, carrying quarrymen's tools from the quarry to the blacksmith, for which he got eighteenpence a week from the smith, and a penny from each of the quarrymen. When he was seven his mother took him to Sir Titus Salt's mill at Saltaire, where he became a 'doffler', that is a boy whose duty was to remove full bobbins from the spindles of a weaving frame and replace them by empty ones. He earned at first one and sixpence, rose later to three and six per week, and earned a few pence more by odd jobs. As a half-timer he worked from 6 to 12.30 one week, and from 1.15 to 5.30 the next, and began his education at the factory school for

half-timers, where he learnt the alphabet, some arithmetic, and a few scraps of scripture or moral verse. When he was thirteen he left Salt's mill for a new one built by Wildman at Bingley. His wages rose to nine shillings a week, but the doffer's job was a blind alley, so his mother apprenticed him to wool-sorting which offered a better prospect. By skill as a sorter he came to earn between twenty and thirty shillings a week, for it was the best paid work in the mill, and it was piece-work. He handed his wages to his mother, and since his father died in 1866, and his elder brother had gone to sea, he became the main-stay of the family. In 1869 they moved from the one room hovel in which they had lived to a cottage with five rooms, and Wright was able to furnish it from his earnings. He was now, as he put it, the main-stay of the family. 'Father, husband, son, and companion' to his mother and 'plunged, when a mere child into the severest battles of life'. 'My mother and I', said Wright, 'struggled hard for the sake of my two brothers, who were then little children. We were determined that their lot should not be so hard as ours, so that we did manage to give them some schooling. . . . In fact, they could read and write long before I ever dreamt of such luxuries.'

About this time Wright began to educate himself. He heard men in the mill talking about the war between France and Germany: it excited his curiosity, and he learnt to read the newspapers. When he had taught himself reading and writing he attended a night-school, where he picked up some French, and later a little German. Later still he attended classes in Arithmetic, Euclid, and Algebra, at the Mechanics Institute at Bradford, though it meant a three mile walk each way twice a week. He took lessons in shorthand too, and in April 1875 obtained a certificate for his knowledge of Pitman's system.

Side by side with his thirst for knowledge his instinctive desire to teach developed itself. In 1873 he set up a class at his mother's house in the evenings; sometimes there were

a dozen boys in it, each paying twopence a week, and he added later a more advanced class for their seniors.

Wright's favourite studies at this time were mathematics and languages. A temporary stoppage of the mill in February 1876 gave him a holiday. He had saved forty pounds, and he resolved to go to Germany. It was then that he left his home and his mother for the first time. 'We both knew how necessary it was for me to go; for my future development, I felt that I must go to that country of scholars, and I went.'

To economize his money, Wright walked from Antwerp to Heidelberg, and studied mathematics and German there for eleven weeks. When he returned he did not go back to the mill, but became a schoolmaster. From September 1876 to April 1879 he taught at Springfield School, Bradford, at a salary of £40 a year for five days every week, returning home for week-ends. During the same time he contrived to attend classes at the Yorkshire College of Science at Leeds, and prepared himself for the London University Matriculation. He passed that examination on July 24, 1878, and was placed in the First Division. He took English, French, German, and Latin, besides Mathematics and Chemistry.

In April 1879 Wright became a resident master at Grove School, Wrexham—a well-established Wesleyan School—and remained there about two years. He then spent a short time at Roubaix to improve his French, giving lessons in English and Mathematics to maintain himself. Next he was an under master at a school at Margate with a salary of £100 a year, but finding the boys lazy and the discipline bad, he quarrelled with the head master, and left in a few months.

1882 was the turning point in Wright's life. He passed the Intermediate examination for the London B.A. in that year, but resolved to go no farther, and to complete his education by studying at a German university. Accordingly he matriculated at Heidelberg in the spring of 1882, intending

to study mathematics, but he was fascinated by the lectures of Professor Hermann Osthoff, and resolved to devote all his time and energy to Comparative Philology. He felt that his earlier studies had been a useful training for the new one. 'Everybody who would be a philologist', he said, 'must have done mathematics, or be capable of doing mathematics.' But philology was not entirely new to him. 'Long before I thought of going to study in Germany I had made myself intimately acquainted with the works of Grimm, Schleicher, and Curtius.'

His progress was rapid. In his examination for the degree of Ph.D., which he obtained *insigni cum laude* in the summer of 1885, his thesis was *The Qualitative and Quantitative Changes of the Indo-Germanic Vowel System in Greek*. The comparative philology of the Indo-Germanic languages, the grammar of the Germanic languages in detail, and Anglo-Saxon language and literature were his principal and secondary subjects.

In 1886 Wright matriculated at Leipzig in order to extend his knowledge of languages, phonetics, and German literature. Under Leskien, whom he regarded as 'the great light' of the university, he studied Lithuanian. 'From a linguistic point of view I love the Lithuanians more than any race under the sun' was his conclusion. He was also delighted with Zarncke's way of teaching. 'I shall learn from him as to the manner a seminar ought to be conducted.'

While he was at Heidelberg Wright eked out his savings by teaching mathematics at Neuenheim College—a boarding school for English boys in the suburb across the Neckar. But both at Heidelberg and Leipzig he found time to enjoy the social life of German Universities. He made many friends amongst his fellow-students, joined a club, and though he had never touched beer till he came to Germany, became as expert a judge of the various brews of Munich as he was of wool. He also went to the theatre occasionally, and took long walking tours with his friends in the

vacations. Now he was able to earn money by his pen as well as by teaching, and he entered into a contract with the publishing firm of Julius Groos of Heidelberg to examine and revise educational books in four modern languages at a fixed annual salary. During his long connexion with the firm he supervised the issue of about thirty books. He also undertook to translate at so much per sheet the first volume of Professor Brugmann's *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*, under the supervision of its author. He had learnt to know Brugmann during a term spent at Freiberg in 1883, and was himself classed with the group known as Jung-grammatiker, who adopted the principles of Osthoff and Brugmann.

His translation of the 'Grundriss' appeared in the spring of 1888, some months after he had left Germany.

Wright spent the winter of 1887-8 in London. Max Müller, who had heard Wright's history in the north, and believed that poverty and hard work were the making of a scholar, got him to come to Oxford. 'You will soon be a made man, if you can keep your own counsel', he told him. One result of his support was that early in 1888 Wright was appointed lecturer to the Association for the Higher Education of Women in Oxford, to teach Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and Old German. At Easter 1888 a more lucrative post followed. A. A. Macdonell, who since 1880 had been German Lecturer at the Taylor Institution, wished to get time to work at his *Sanskrit Dictionary*, and Wright acted as his deputy for the next four terms, at £50 per term. As he also did some teaching at the Girls' High School, and some examining for the Oxford Locals, Wright felt opulent. 'Since coming to Oxford', he told a friend in July 1888, 'I have spent £60 on books. How thankful and pleased I am to be in a position to purchase the necessary tools.' He proved himself such an efficient teacher that in June, 1890, when his employment as Macdonell's deputy ended, the Curators of the Taylorian created a special lectureship in Teutonic Philology for Wright's benefit. The salary was only £25

a term, but Wright said: 'It gave me the first real start in life, and that was the reason for my long devotion to the Taylor.'

During these years he began the publication of his primers. The Clarendon Press at first rejected his *Gothic Primer*, which did not appear till 1892, but it published his *Primers of Middle High German and Old High German* in 1888. He earned also a great reputation as a teacher. 'It would be impossible', declared the two secretaries of the Women's Association, 'to find a more thorough, clear, or methodical teacher, or one with more enthusiasm for his subject.' Wright attributed his success largely to the fact that he was self-taught. 'When I came to teach these things I was able to present the difficulties to my pupils in an entirely new way, because I knew exactly where my difficulties had been.' Before he had been three years in Oxford he knew every one interested either in English or in the science of languages, gained general respect by his character and his knowledge, and made some lifelong friends. He used to say later that Oxford was 'the most cosmopolitan University in the world'. . . . 'A man could make his way there if he had the will: it did not depend upon birth or social status, but upon work.'

Fortune provided the opportunity he needed. Mr. Sayce, who had been deputy to the Professor of Comparative Philology since 1876, resigned at the end of 1890, and Wright became a candidate for the post. 'I could not wish for a better Deputy', wrote Max Müller, while Murray, Napier, and other Oxford authorities reinforced by their personal evidence the eulogistic testimonials of German experts. Wright was elected in February 1891. The statutes required him to give twenty-four lectures a year, but during the ten years for which he held the post he never gave less than forty-two, besides a large amount of private instruction. He lectured now on the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-germanic languages in general, and also on Comparative Greek and Latin Grammar. At this time his intention

was to make 'a big Comparative Greek Grammar' his *magnum opus*, and he had already written out the phonology of the vowels for press. But this Greek Grammar would require many years for its completion, so Wright turned first to a lighter task. He was wont to say that he knew many languages, but that the only one of which he was really master was the dialect he had spoken for the first fifteen years of his life. Having learnt the first principles of linguistic science in Germany he proceeded to apply them to his native speech, and began to put together in 1886 his *Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill in the West Riding of Yorkshire*. The Dialect Society published the volume in 1892.

It contained a glossarial index, and a series of specimens in verse and prose phonetically rendered. Scholars welcomed it enthusiastically. One German professor declared that it was 'epoch-making in the history of English dialect research'; another said more simply that 'after a flood of dialect works of little value an Englishman had at last shown his countrymen how they ought to work in that field'.

One result of the publication of this book was to divert Wright's efforts still further from his big Greek Grammar. Ever since its foundation in 1873 the English Dialect Society had projected the production of a Dialect Dictionary. For some time past Wright had been pressed to take it in hand. The story of its origin is told by Professor Skeat—'the father and real originator of the work'.

After meeting with much success in the collection of dialectal words, by the help of the English Dialect Society, founded and for many years presided over by myself, the work came at last to an absolute standstill, owing to the impossibility of finding an editor capable of compiling a dictionary from the materials. It was soon perceived that no one but an accomplished phonetician could hope for any success in preparing such materials for the press, and in superintending the issue of the work in a final and intelligible form. After the work had thus been at a standstill for at least a couple of years . . . I was so fortunate as to discover in Dr. Wright the only man capable of undertaking this task.

In June 1887 Skeat tentatively suggested the task to Wright, and in January 1889 Wright told his friend Holt-hausen that if he could get 'something permanent and worth having' in England he should settle down to dialect work, and edit the projected *Dialect Dictionary*. His appointment as Deputy-Professor gave him the required position, and in the summer of 1891 he took a house in Norham Road, Oxford, to hold himself and his materials. Twelve large cases weighing about a ton, and containing a million slips were sent him by the Dialect Society. On examination he judged that another million slips would be necessary. By circulars, public addresses, and the formation of Local Committees he got together 600 voluntary helpers, and accumulated the additional evidence needed. He also collected dialect books to the value of six hundred pounds, and in 1894 began to experiment in the printing of specimen pages.

No obstacle daunted Wright. 'The real pleasures of life', he once said, 'were derived from overcoming difficulties.' But there was one difficulty that seemed insuperable, and that was how to provide for the cost of publishing the *Dictionary*. At the end of 1889 the balance in the hands of the Dialect Society was only sixteen pounds. The Delegates of the Clarendon Press refused to publish the book: the *New English Dictionary* was too great a drain on their resources. The Cambridge Press also refused. Other publishers who were approached: John Murray, Black, and Frowde, all declined. The only expedient left was for the editor to publish the book by subscription at his own risk. The Delegates of the Clarendon Press were so afraid of responsibility that they would not allow their agents to collect subscriptions, lest they should seem committed thereby 'to some kind of guarantee with regard to the appearance of the work'. But fortunately they proved willing to let Wright a couple of rooms at a nominal rent, and he transferred the books and slips from his house to this workshop in the summer of 1895.

Wright took the responsibility of financing as well as editing the Dictionary. He put all the £2,000 he had saved into the enterprise, collected subscriptions himself, and applied for government aid. In March 1896 an interview with Mr. Balfour was arranged. By that time Wright had obtained 920 subscribers, and the application was supported by a strong memorial. Mr. Balfour was convinced; he made a grant of £600 from the Royal Bounty Fund, to be paid at the rate of £200 a year during the next three years, and promised that when that period ended he would consider the question of a pension. Wright performed his task with punctuality. The first instalment of the *Dictionary* came out on 1 July, 1896, followed at regular intervals by parts which increased in size as the work progressed. In July 1898 a Civil List Pension of £200 a year was granted to the editor. By that time the work had reached the Letter F. Z was published in February 1905. The *English Dialect Grammar* which came out in the following September was not merely an introduction, but an independent work, and in Wright's opinion, 'philologically far more important than the Dictionary'. The six volumes contained 5,000 pages, and included about 100,000 words, explained by some 500,000 quotations. The total cost of production was estimated to be £25,000.

Wright was wont to describe the *Dictionary* as 'the work by which I hope to be remembered'. Its production had occupied him from the fortieth to the fiftieth year of his life. At the end of those ten years he might have said as Chapman did when he completed his translation of Homer:

The work which I was born to do is done.

It was undertaken at the right moment; delay for another generation would have made the task harder. 'Pure dialect speech', wrote Wright in 1895, 'is disappearing even in country districts, owing to the spread of education and to modern facilities for inter-communication.' Thirty years

later he found it almost impossible to collect reliable phonographic specimens of dialects.

In Yorkshire and in England generally it is very difficult to find people who can speak a dialect without being seriously mixed up with the so-called standard language. There are thousands of working people who speak their dialect properly so long as they are talking among themselves, but so soon as they come to speak with educated people, especially strangers, they become hopelessly mixed in their pronunciation.¹

Wright was the fittest man for the undertaking. For the first fifteen years of his life he had spoken only his native dialect. To that advantage he added a scientific training in philology and phonetics which few Englishmen had acquired. He combined with this equipment all the qualities of character needed for a great enterprise; energy, foresight, courage, and singleness of purpose. Long and hard experience had developed his mastery of detail, and taught him to make the most of every hour and every penny. He had also the genial enthusiasm which secured the co-operation of other men, and skill to organize systematically the labour of his helpers and subordinates.

One of his collaborators was his wife. Miss E. M. Lea had been his pupil whilst she was a student at Lady Margaret Hall (1887-90). Under his supervision she produced a grammar of the Northumbrian Dialect, based on the Northumbrian version of the gospels, which was printed in *Anglia* in 1893. She was then appointed, by his recommendation, tutor in Old English and Middle English to the Association for the Education of Women in Oxford. Miss Lea became engaged to Wright on the day when the first part of the *Dictionary* appeared and they were married on 6 October, 1896, after the preparation of the second part had been completed. 'Had it not been for you', he told her, 'nothing in the world could have induced me to undertake what seemed an impossibility to everybody else.'

Mrs. Wright helped with the clerical work throughout,

¹ ii. 424, 12 Oct. 1926.

and acted as sub-editor of the text of the *Dictionary*. She took a still larger part in the production of the *Dialect Grammar*, and was specially thanked in its preface. Her name appears on the title-page of many of Wright's later grammars as part author. Separately Mrs. Wright published in 1913 *Rustic Speech and Folk Lore*.

Financially Wright was now a prosperous man. While the *Dictionary* was still in progress he had been elected to succeed Max Müller as professor of Comparative Philology (1901), and had thus an assured position in the University. However, it was some years before he obtained the full salary of the professorship. When the approaching completion of the *Dictionary* relieved him from the heavy responsibility he had assumed, he bought an acre of land in north Oxford, and built himself a house there. He called it 'Thackley', and roofed it with stone brought from a quarry near his old home. He purchased the building materials and hired the workmen, instead of employing a contractor, and saved a considerable sum by this plan, as he had done by undertaking the publication of the *Dictionary* himself. He adopted the same method in publishing the grammars he subsequently produced.

As Wright had now more time at his disposal, he was able to take a larger part in University affairs. He was a member of the Hebdomadal Council from 1908 to 1914, and vigorously supported Lord Curzon's projected reforms, but he went much farther than the Chancellor. His chief service was the preparation of a scheme for professorial pensions, and though the measure for that purpose introduced in 1913 failed to pass, the evidence he had collected proved of use ten years later.

Wright's view of the functions of professors was based on his observations in Germany. His theory is set forth in a memorandum written for the University Commission in 1920 and was exemplified by his practice.

A professor's most important duty was to teach others the subject he professed, and it was part of it to remedy the

defects of existing text-books by writing better ones. 'Continental professors', he told the Commission, 'attach very great importance to the provision of first-rate text books on their subject, but here it is generally thought to be beneath the dignity of a Professor to write such books, whereas it is in reality only a Professor who knows his subject from all points of view, who is in a proper position to do work of this kind.' As soon as he was free from the *Dictionary* he set to work to revise the primers for beginners which he had already written, and started a new series of grammars on a larger scale, and accordingly a second edition of the *Old High German Primer* appeared in June 1906, followed by a third in 1917. The *Gothic Primer* had reached its second edition in 1899: in 1910 it was converted into a *Gothic Grammar*, with the Gospel of St. Mark, and other selections from the Bible added.

The larger series of historical and comparative grammars began in 1907 with the *Historical German Grammar*, which was a substantial volume of over 300 pages. In 1908 appeared the *Old English Grammar* which reached a second edition in 1914, and a third in 1925. The third of the series was the *Comparative Grammar of Greek* which Wright began in 1892, and brought out at last in 1912.

Next came the question of professorial teaching. The statutes of the University usually defined the duties of a professor as the delivery of a certain number of lectures per annum computed according to the amount of his salary. Wright did not underestimate the importance of lectures. 'It used to take me a dreadful long time to write a good set of lectures', he once said; yet for many years he gave more than the number the statutes required. By itself, however, he thought lecturing an inadequate method of teaching, and held that professors should supplement it by holding classes and giving instruction for several hours a week.

It is in just this method of coming into direct contact with the men in classwork and in private intercourse that a professor can exercise that stimulating influence upon men which encourages

them to take a keen interest in their studies, and to aspire to a higher and wider standard of knowledge than is usually required for examination purposes. It is only in this way that men can be taught how to work for themselves in a scientific and scholarly manner, and to be in a position to pursue their studies further after they leave the University.

Wright practised this doctrine. He possessed a remarkable knowledge of the character and capacity of his students, and his correspondence shows that he continued to advise and help them in dealing with problems of teaching or research in their later career.

He held that another duty incumbent on a professor was 'to take a leading part in organizing the teaching of the subject connected with his chair', as professors did at all continental Universities and at the modern English Universities. In the older subjects which were directly connected with the inter-collegiate system of teaching it was not possible for professors to exert this influence unless they were given statutory powers for the purpose. In English and Modern Languages Wright could employ his zeal and skill. Though the statute establishing an English School had been passed in 1894, the University provided no adequate instruction in English Literature till the appointment of Sir Walter Raleigh as professor in 1904. A Committee was then formed which arranged systematic courses of lectures and classes, devised a plan for raising fees to pay for additional teachers, and established a special library for the use of English students. Wright was throughout one of the leading members of 'The English Committee'. In addition to that he organized in 1913 a special course for foreign students, which promised to become a great success till the war brought it to a premature end.

Wright's greatest service to the University was the organization of the School of Modern Languages. The statute creating that School was passed in 1903. More than half a century before that date Sir Robert Taylor's endowment had provided rooms for lectures, a fine library, and

a small staff of teachers, but neglect, hostility, and the narrowness of the examination system had for many years made the teaching mainly elementary and prevented the development of the study. Wright, who as professor was *ex officio* one of the Curators of the Taylorian, became almost at once their inspiring spirit, and was from 1909 to 1926 the Secretary of the Board. A bold and comprehensive policy was adopted, and consistently pursued by the Curators.

Between 1905 and 1914 two new professorships were founded, and several new lecturers added to the staff, elementary classes were supplemented by advanced teaching, some departmental libraries were created, and an efficient system of instruction in five modern languages was organized. The number of students was more than doubled, and to provide for the necessity of increased accommodation in the future four adjacent houses were purchased for the extension of the building; the funds needed for these purposes were derived from the Taylorian endowment, from lecture fees, from increased University grants, and from Sir Julius Wernher and other private benefactors. Wright himself subscribed very generously towards the purchase of the houses and the provision of new lectureships, and managed the finances of the study with great ability.

The war suspended the development both of the English and the Modern Language Schools. Male students were reduced to a handful, though there were still large classes of women, and the number of teachers was much diminished. No man worked harder during those years than Wright. Besides his own lecturing duties he undertook the work of Professor Napier¹ for the English School, did part of the teaching of German, and finally performed the ordinary duties of the clerk to the Taylorian Curators. He also published in 1917 a third and much enlarged edition of his *Middle High German Primer*.

The revival of studies and the reorganization of the

¹ Professor Napier died on 10 May, 1916.

University after the war added to Wright's labours. He hoped to give evidence before the University Commission appointed in November 1919, and drew up two memoranda to submit to it, but he fell ill before the Commission met, and was unable to appear in support of them. Prolonged overwork and unwholesome diet during the later years of the war had destroyed Wright's robust health. Suddenly taken ill in January 1920 he spent nearly a couple of months in Leicester Infirmary, and underwent a serious operation in the following June. It was not till the autumn of 1921 that he was fit to resume his lectures, and another year passed before he could begin writing again. 'I am now naturally obliged to take care of myself', he wrote to a friend in 1924, 'but for a long time back I have been able to work solidly for 50 or 60 hours a week without being run down or feeling tired.' Three new grammars were published in rapid succession. The *Elementary Old English Grammar* and the *Elementary Middle English Grammar* appeared in 1923, and an *Elementary New English Grammar* in 1924. These, nominally designed for beginners, were something between the Primers and the larger Comparative grammars. He had in his mind a fourth book of the same type to be entitled *Historical English Grammar*. It was meant 'to combine the essential elements of the three previous books, leaving aside in each period of the language as far as possible all side issues and problematic questions, and concentrating on the sounds, inflexions, and native vocabulary which are the basis of living standard English'.

Wright resigned his professorship at the end of 1924, hoping that when he was able to devote himself to his own private work he could succeed in completing this *Historical English Grammar*, and add to it historical and philological grammars of other languages 'to serve as text-books for the younger generation of University students'. These schemes were frustrated by the steady decay of his health. The last book he was able to publish was the enlarged and revised edition of his *Middle English Grammar* which came out in

January 1928. In announcing its appearance to a friend, he said 'I have definitely given up all idea of ever writing a new book, or of finishing the one I was writing before my illness'.

The Latin grammar at which he had been busily working as far back as 1912, had been put aside during the War, and postponed again for the sake of the three English Grammars; it was now given up altogether, though much of it was written out in final manuscript for the printer. The epitome of the *Dialect Dictionary*, which he had prepared by Skeat's advice many years previously, was delayed owing to increased cost of printing, and remained also unpublished.

There was one project Wright still hoped to carry out, and that was the extension of the Taylor Institution by building on the site of the houses bought for that purpose in 1909-10. As early as 1917 he began private applications to possible benefactors, and he issued in 1920 a public appeal for subscriptions. About £15,000 had been raised by 1923, of which he contributed over £2,000 himself. Since the war the number of students of Modern Languages had very greatly increased, while three new professorships and a number of scholarships had been endowed. More rooms for teachers, pupils, and books were needed. In May 1927 Wright offered the University £10,000 in order to induce it to undertake the extension at once. The gift was subject to the condition that interest on the capital sum should be paid to himself and Mrs. Wright during their lives, but would have made it possible to build what was primarily essential. After more than a year's deliberation, Council proposed a decree for the acceptance of Wright's offer on 23 October, 1929, but it was rejected by a small majority in Congregation owing to the opposition of rival interests.

The failure of his scheme was a great blow to Wright. A few months later the Local Examinations Delegacy voted £10,000 from its surplus for the purpose of extending the Taylorian, and though building was still for some time

postponed, the extension was opened by the Prince of Wales on 9 November, 1932.

Unfortunately Wright did not live to see his desire fulfilled. He died on 27 February, 1930, leaving to the University of Leeds as a legacy the gift he had offered to Oxford. His portrait, painted by Ernest Moore in 1927, hangs in the Tylorian. It is reproduced in the *Life of Joseph Wright*, published by Mrs. Wright in 1932, which commemorates also their two children who died in childhood, and contains fragments of his autobiography. Wright's character is the key to his story. 'Necessity', he said, 'taught me at a very early age to trust myself.' The lesson was easy for a man of his temperament, and the result was lasting. 'I have never been depressed in my life', he told his friends. A large and generous simplicity inspired his actions. He combined the energy and courage of self-made men with a scholar's love of knowledge for its own sake, and having attained success, instinctively used position and gains for the advancement of his studies.

The value of the work he did was recognized by many honorary degrees and distinctions. He was created a D.C.L. of the University of Durham in 1898, and L.L.D. of Aberdeen in 1902 and of Leeds in 1904, a Litt.D. of Dublin in 1906, and a D.Litt. of Oxford in 1926. He was also an honorary member of the Royal Flemish Academy (1919), of the Utrecht Society (1926), of the Royal Society of Letters of Lund (1928), and of the Modern Language Association of America (1926). He had been elected a Fellow of the British Academy on 25 June, 1904, and to him it awarded in November 1925 its first Biennial Prize for English Studies. To our library he presented a copy of the *Dialect Dictionary* printed on hand-made paper when the Academy moved into its new rooms in Burlington Gardens in July 1928.

C. H. FIRTH.