



KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

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Kathleen Mary Tillotson

1906–2001

KATHLEEN TILLOTSON, née Constable, was born on 3 April 1906 of Quaker parents in Berwick-on-Tweed where she and her two younger siblings, Denis and Jean, passed their early childhood. Her father, Eric Arthur Constable, a graduate of the University of Durham, was a journalist on *The Berwick Advertiser*. It was thanks to him, she gratefully recorded in the preface to her *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, ‘that I grew up among the classics of the last century’. Her mother, Catherine Hannah Davidson, was born in Fritchley, Derbyshire. She attended The Mount School in York and subsequently studied at the University College of Aberystwyth. After his First World War service in the Friends’ Ambulance Unit, where one of his colleagues was F. R. Leavis, Eric Constable moved his family to Birmingham where he had obtained a job on *The Birmingham Gazette*. His wife, who had herself become a journalist during the war, was for many years editor of *The Birmingham Soroptimist*. Kathleen Constable’s Quaker upbringing and education, first at Ackworth School in Pontefract and subsequently at The Mount, exercised a profound and lasting influence upon her, instilling into her a high regard for truthfulness in all aspects of life, concern for the welfare of others, modesty about her own achievements, a preference for plain living, and a marked distaste for all forms of self-promotion.

In 1924, she went up to Somerville College, Oxford, as an Exhibitioner to read English. Her tutors were Charlotte Young and Helen Darbishire, the eminent Wordsworth and Milton scholar of whom she was in after years to write a warmly appreciative memoir for *The Dictionary of National Biography*. In it she recalled that Helen Darbishire ‘was quick to recognise and foster any genuine response to literature, however

immature', and commented on how the 'slow-growing, durable influence' of her teaching was 'sustained by the continuing example of her own disciplined and disinterested scholarship', a phrase that very much applied to Kathleen herself. She had a distinguished undergraduate career, winning a major university prize, the Charles Oldham Scholarship for Shakespeare Studies, in 1926 and the next year was awarded a first-class honours degree in English, and was elected to Somerville's Shaw Lefevre Scholarship. She then enrolled in the B.Litt. course, recently reorganised by David Nichol Smith, Percy Simpson and others so that it now included courses in textual criticism, bibliography, palaeography and the history of English scholarship. Among her fellow-students were three who, like herself, were destined for great scholarly distinction, namely John Butt, J. B. Leishman, and her future husband, Geoffrey Tillotson. During the B.Litt. course she had become particularly interested in Elizabethan poetry and her thesis took the form of a variorum text of Drayton's sonnets with a critical study of the differences. She was awarded the degree in 1929, having also held the post of Assistant Lecturer in English at Somerville during the last year of her course.

Between 1923 and 1928 she reviewed regularly for *The Birmingham Gazette*. All her life she was a keen theatre-goer (a list she compiled of books read during 1922–3 included numerous plays) and, at a memorial gathering held at the University of London to celebrate her life and work, Professor Richard Cave recalled that no fringe theatre venue in London had been so obscurely located as to deter her from seeking it out if, for example, it was staging a play by Harley Granville Barker whose work she greatly admired. For the *Gazette* in the 1920s she reviewed many Birmingham Rep productions as well as others by the New Shakespeare Company at Stratford. At the Rep she saw some outstanding actors, for example Laurence Olivier whose *Uncle Vanya* she described as 'a performance of great beauty and power'. On a Stratford production of *Coriolanus* she commented, having found the music somewhat intrusive, 'The orchestra needs to be very reticent in the Roman plays.' Among her numerous literary reviews was one of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* which she called 'a brilliant, beautiful and important book', and another of a volume of Chesterton's poetry, the boisterousness of which delighted her. 'There is not enough shouting poetry nowadays,' she wrote, 'not enough of the gusto that is to be found in our ballads and in Byron and Browning.'

She began teaching part-time at Bedford College for Women, University of London, in 1929 and had a 'room of her own' in the base-

ment of a house in Bedford Square, Bloomsbury, that was mostly divided into bed-sits. Bloomsbury landladies had at that time, she later recalled, a reputation for 'dubious morals' but hers was eminently respectable. For some time she continued to teach part-time in Oxford also, both at Somerville (where she began a close and lifelong friendship with Mary Lascelles, who was Tutor in English there from 1931) and at St Hilda's. But already by 1930, she said later, she had begun to feel herself to be a Londoner who did some teaching in Oxford rather than an Oxonian doing some teaching in London (among her papers is a letter of this period from Charlotte Young at Somerville begging her not to commit herself to London, now that she has had her 'Bohemian fling', since there was a strong likelihood that she would shortly have a good chance of getting a Somerville Fellowship). During the politically troubled decade that followed, her left-wing sympathies led her to join some of the London protest marches and demonstrations like those stirred up by the Spanish Civil War and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (it was at an earlier such march in Birmingham, she later recalled, that she had first noticed how the police used horses to break up a crowd). Life was not all work and politics, however. She was, for example, a founder member of the London Film Society, which had been organised by Professor Jack Isaacs of Queen Mary College to show screenings of avant-garde Continental films, and she was to retain a great interest in film in later years. Both she and Geoffrey Tillotson became great Antonioni aficionados in the 1960s and as a Fellow of the British Academy she was a strong supporter of the move to bring film studies within the purview of that body.

John Butt took up a full-time post at Bedford in 1930 and in the following year Geoffrey Tillotson was appointed to an Assistant Lectureship in English at University College, London. Kathleen and Geoffrey fell in love and their marriage in 1933 was the beginning of an ideal partnership which proved to be for both of them a deep and unflinching source of happiness and mutual support, both personal and professional, that continued unabated until Geoffrey's untimely death in 1969. They began housekeeping in the basement flat in Bedford Square before moving first to Millman Street and then to Tanza Road, Hampstead. The happiness of their private life was greatly enhanced by their two adopted sons, Edmund and Henry.

Kathleen's work on Drayton had brought her to the notice of the American scholar J. William Hebel and she became good friends with him and his wife. Hebel was working on a full-scale scholarly edition of Drayton's works, three volumes of which were published by the

Shakespeare Head Press before his unexpected death in 1934. Kathleen was asked by the publisher, and by Hebel's widow, to complete the edition, working jointly with Bernard Newdigate. Hebel had finished all the textual editing but introductions and annotation remained to be supplied for all the poems so far published, i.e., Drayton's entire oeuvre apart from the *Poly-Olbion*. Kathleen undertook this large and taxing task while Newdigate undertook the annotation of *Poly-Olbion* and the writing of Drayton's life with which Hebel had planned to conclude the edition. Her work appeared as Volume 5 of the Shakespeare Head Drayton in 1941 and may be called truly magisterial. Her crisply authoritative introductions are thoroughly illuminating in their detailed contextualisation and analysis of the poem in question while the formidable range of scholarly knowledge—historical, Biblical, literary—so succinctly deployed in the explanatory notes looks forward to what John Carey was to call the 'sumptuous rigour' of her annotation in Volume 4 of the Pilgrim Edition of Dickens's letters. Her outstanding achievement in the Drayton volume was recognised in 1943 by the award of the British Academy's Rose Mary Crawshay Prize.

In 1936 F. P. Wilson, 'the most learned Elizabethan scholar of his generation' (*DNB*), became Hildred Carlisle Professor of English at Bedford and three years later Kathleen was at last appointed to a full-time lectureship there. At the same time came the Second World War and the evacuation of Bedford College to Cambridge where Kathleen with her mane of beautiful red hair was a striking figure as she cycled around the streets with baby Edmund safely stowed in the bicycle's basket. Her wartime visits to London, where Geoffrey was working at the Ministry of Aircraft Production, are commemorated in his poem 'Homage to Tennyson, 1940', dedicated to her and published in his *Criticism and the Nineteenth Century* (1951). The poem was inspired by an episode that occurred during an air raid when she had acceded to his wish to hear her read some Tennyson to him (Geoffrey always loved the sound of her voice which he described as *contralto*).

With Bedford re-established in Regent's Park after the War, Una Ellis-Fermor succeeded Wilson as Hildred Carlisle Professor in 1947 and Kathleen Tillotson was promoted to a University Readership. By this time the focus of her research interests had moved away from the literature of the sixteenth century to that of the nineteenth, and in 1954 the Clarendon Press published her *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, based on a series of intercollegiate lectures given in 1949. At this time in Britain (the situation was very different in the United States) university English

departments were paying scant attention to Victorian literature. At Cambridge F. R. Leavis had, in 1948, famously and influentially excluded from his 'Great Tradition' of the English novel all early and mid-Victorian novelists apart from George Eliot (with just one novel by Dickens, *Hard Times*, being allowed in, as an appendix). Meanwhile, at Oxford the undergraduate syllabus simply stopped at 1830, Lord David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists*, published in 1934, being still the standard work of reference for those interested in the subject. When touching on the 'social problem' novel of the early Victorian period, Kathleen had to go even further back, and to another country, to find any substantial earlier discussion of the genre. Louis Cazamian's *Le Roman Social en Angleterre* (1904) was, she noted, 'still the standard survey of the field'.¹ Her own book was hailed by the *TLS* as 'the most distinguished contribution so far to the animated new discussion of the Victorians'.² The first half of the book, called 'Introductory', consists of a survey, exhilarating in its width and depth, of the fiction published in this decade, demonstrating why it was such a fruitful and important one for the development of the English novel—how, for example, writers in the 1840s enjoyed much greater freedom with regard to choice of subject-matter than they did in the later decades of Victoria's reign. This formed part of Kathleen's contention that the time had come 'to break up "the Victorian novel" into manageable fragments . . . by concentrating upon a decade or so at a time'.

Replaced in their original context of time and opinion, the novels may be found to make better sense, to take on new values to us, which modify or substantiate the old. At the same time, in attempting to recover something of the contemporary eye, the perspective of distance need not be rejected. My ultimate purpose has been to learn more about particular novels and their time, and about the novel as a 'kind', by looking rather more closely than has been customary at the novels of an early decade, the eighteen-forties.³

One of the most impressive and enlightening features of the book is the great extent to which it draws upon the work of nineteenth-century critics and reviewers and indeed it may be said to have initiated that whole process of rediscovering the critical discourse of the Victorians which so much enriched our understanding and appreciation of their literature during the second half of the twentieth century. Routledge's

¹ *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford, 1954), p. 123.

² *TLS*, 23 July 1954, p. 472.

³ *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, p. 1.

valuable 'Critical Heritage' series (for which Geoffrey Tillotson, together with Donald Hawes, edited the Thackeray volume) provides a notable illustration of this process.

The second part of *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* focuses on particular novels. Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* are all closely and illuminatingly studied in their biographical and historical context. The whole book is written throughout in that beautifully clear style, uniting precision with elegance and with feeling (also showing the same remarkable facility for apt and witty quotation that was such a feature of her conversation), that characterises all Kathleen's prose, even down to such things as her comment on a highly impressionistic piece of work by a student who had clearly not done his or her homework: 'an ingenious and imaginative essay untrammelled as it is by the burden of fact'.⁴

In 1956 she was invited to deliver the British Academy Warton Lecture on English Poetry and chose as her theme 'Matthew Arnold and Carlyle'. The lecture took the form of a sensitive and rewarding investigation of Arnold's complex response to the poetic qualities of Carlyle's writing and of the effect this had had upon his own poetry. Arnold, like Tennyson, and indeed Carlyle (as poet rather than as prophet), was one of her abiding enthusiasms and by 1956 she had already published in *The Review of English Studies* two substantial exploratory studies of his work, 'Yes: in the Sea of Life' (1952), and 'Rugby 1850: Arnold, Clough, Walrond and *In Memoriam*' (1953). The former essay was singled out for particular praise by Professor Barbara Hardy when speaking of Kathleen as a critic of poetry at the University of London memorial celebration. It was, she said, an outstanding example of literary scholarship combined with textual comprehension and appreciation, 'a model of scholarship which has sensibility'.

Kathleen's discussion of *Dombey and Son* in *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* makes detailed reference to Dickens's preliminary outline of the novel and his 'number-plans', that is, working notes for the monthly numbers in which it was originally published. Three years earlier an essay entitled '*Dombey and Son*: Design and Execution' had appeared in *Essays and Studies*, jointly written by Kathleen and John Butt (who had moved to a chair at Durham University in 1946). This represented the first-fruits of their shared interest in studying the genesis and textual history of

⁴ Quoted by Dr Geoff Britton in his tribute to K.T. at the celebration of her life and work held at the Institute of English Studies, University of London, 28 Sept. 2001.

Dickens's novels through scrutiny of the documentary evidence in the form of the surviving manuscripts, number-plans and corrected proofs. All this material had lain, principally in the Forster Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, virtually undisturbed by Dickens students until now when Butt and Tillotson (and also Sylvère Monod, a French scholar, working independently) began to investigate it. Butt and Tillotson's ground-breaking *Dickens at Work*, published by Methuen in 1957, opened up a whole new area of Dickens studies, one that revealed him as a much finer craftsman and a more painstaking artist than had ever been previously recognised. In their introduction the authors observe that 'despite some excellent interpretative criticism and much zealous biographical enquiry, Dickens studies have hardly passed beyond the early nineteenth-century phase of Shakespeare studies; while the study of his text seems arrested in the early eighteenth century'. The allusion to 'zealous biographical enquiry' is a nice glance at the Ellen Ternan scandal, as is also Kathleen's comment at the end of her chapter on *Pickwick Papers*: 'with *Pickwick*, Dickens embarked upon his lifelong love-affair with his reading public; which, when all is said, is by far the most interesting love-affair of his life'.

Butt and Tillotson identified the need for a full critical edition of Dickens's novels which should take account of all surviving manuscript material and corrected proofs as well as all editions published, whether in serial or volume form, during Dickens's lifetime and in which he might be supposed to have had a hand. In 1958 Oxford University Press committed itself to the project by appointing them to be Joint General Editors of the Clarendon Dickens. In 1958 also Kathleen Tillotson succeeded Una Ellis-Fermor as Hildred Carlisle Professor at Bedford College and in the following year delivered her outstanding inaugural lecture, 'The Tale and the Teller', a thoughtful and wide-ranging (as well as very entertaining) consideration of the richly varied uses made of the author's voice by the Victorian novelists. Characteristic of Kathleen was the peroration in which she urged the merits of William de Morgan, a Victorian novelist *après la lettre*, so to speak, and now in her view unjustly neglected. Another novelist who, for obvious reasons given its theme, figures prominently in the lecture is Thackeray, whose work was a particular enthusiasm of Geoffrey Tillotson's (his *Thackeray the Novelist* had appeared in 1954 and his 'Critical Heritage' volume has already been mentioned). The great Thackeray biographer and editor of his letters Gordon N. Ray was one of the Tillotsons' closest American friends, another being Gordon S. Haight, the editor of George Eliot's letters. In 1963 the Tillotsons

collaborated on the Riverside Edition of *Vanity Fair* with Kathleen contributing, in the second half of the Introduction, a fascinatingly detailed history of the planning and writing of the novel, as well as exemplary annotation of the text itself. In the same year she made a notable contribution to the study of another mutual favourite of hers and Geoffrey's in her James Bryce Memorial Lecture at Somerville. The lecture, 'Tennyson's Serial Poem', is a fascinating account of the genesis of *The Idylls of the King* which she describes as a 'life-work', long meditated and 'slowly perfected' by the poet, 'taking shape partly in sight of his readers' so that the process 'may fairly be called serial publication though of an uncommon kind'.⁵ Two years later Somerville elected her to an Honorary Fellowship. It was in 1965, also, that she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy and published, jointly with Geoffrey Tillotson, a collection of their reviews and essays entitled *Mid-Victorian Studies*. Included in this volume was Kathleen's massively researched and highly enlightening essay 'Donne's Poetry in the Nineteenth Century', first published six years earlier in a volume honouring F. P. Wilson. The year 1965 also saw the completion of the first volume of the Clarendon Dickens, and was very much a year of honours and achievements for Kathleen but it was greatly saddened for her towards its close by the death of John Butt. And only four years later she suffered a still more grievous loss when Geoffrey Tillotson also died, after a short illness from which he had been confidently expected to recover. In her preface to his posthumously published *View of Victorian Literature*, which she prepared for the press, she movingly refers to this expectation as 'not groundless but unfulfilled'.

Kathleen served as a member of the Council of the British Academy from 1968 to 1971 and as Vice-President from 1968 to 1969. She was also very active for many years in nominating people to give the Warton Lecture and also the Chatterton Lecture on Poetry. Peter Brown, former Secretary of the Academy, remembers her as 'a steely person, of great charm but strong resolve' who 'always put us right when we did wrong'.

Her work with John Butt on the Clarendon Dickens proceeded steadily from the late 1950s onwards. Their grand project was to establish a critical text of each novel, 'free from the numerous corruptions that disfigure modern reprints' and with an apparatus of variants that should record Dickens's progressive revision of the text, 'accompanied by all

⁵ 'Tennyson's Serial Poem' was reprinted in Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson, *Mid-Victorian Studies* (London, 1965), pp. 80-109. I quote from the opening words of the lecture. The volume also includes her Bedford College Inaugural Lecture.

such assistance as Dickens himself supplied in the shape of prefaces, descriptive headlines, illustrations and cover designs from the wrappers of the monthly part-issues, which often foreshadow the drift of the novel as Dickens originally conceived it'.⁶ The first volume in the series, *Oliver Twist*, appeared in late 1965, shortly after Butt's death. Kathleen had chosen to edit this novel herself in view of its peculiarly complex bibliographical and textual history, some aspects of which she had explored in a 1962 lecture to the Bibliographical Society.⁷ She subsequently made some notable discoveries concerning the novel's textual history, showing that the first American edition must have been partly printed from uncorrected proofs. As for other textual witnesses, the manuscript survives only in part while the many editions printed during Dickens's lifetime range from the instalments in *Bentley's Miscellany* (1837–9) to the Charles Dickens Edition of 1867. Kathleen's choice of the very extensively revised (even with regard to its system of punctuation) monthly-part edition of 1846 for her copy-text caused some controversy but in the Introduction to her edition she makes what would seem to be an irrefutable case for choosing this particular text based upon the argument that until 1846 'Dickens was still writing his novel'. Eight further novels were to appear in the Clarendon Dickens during her lifetime, either under her sole General Editorship, or under that of herself and Professor James Kinsley, whose sudden death in 1984 left his *Pickwick Papers* edition to be completed by her (she also contributed a fine obituary of him to the *Proceedings of the British Academy*). All the Clarendon volume editors testify warmly in their respective acknowledgements to the prodigious amount of invaluable advice, information and general support received by them from her at all stages of their work. One of them, Dr Elizabeth Brennan, editor of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, speaking at the memorial gathering, referred to her as 'a marvellously selfless general editor' who 'shared our joy in what we brought to light'. Even after Professor Pamela Dalziel had, to Kathleen's great satisfaction, succeeded her as General Editor in 1997, she continued to take a close interest in the progress of the series (of which seven further volumes are currently in active preparation).

The other great scholarly enterprise with which Kathleen Tillotson's name will be forever associated is the Pilgrim Edition (from Volume 8 called The British Academy Pilgrim Edition) of Dickens's letters. This

⁶ 'Preface by the General Editors' (1965), first printed in the Clarendon *Oliver Twist*, published a few months after John Butt's death.

⁷ 'Oliver Twist in Three Volumes', *The Library*, 5th series, 18 (1963), 113–32.

project was initiated by Humphry House, 'the pioneer of modern literary-historical scholarship of Dickens'.⁸ Kathleen was deeply involved in the project from the start as a member of the original editorial board and from her vast knowledge of Victorian literature and Victorian literary and social history made a huge contribution to the detailed historical and biographical annotation of the letters. This annotation, evoking as it does 'the Dickens world' in all its tumultuous detail, was quickly seen to be one of the great glories of the Edition. She enjoyed a particularly close personal and working relationship with Humphry's widow Madeline House whose death in 1978 was a great sorrow to her. Volume 4 of the Letters, published in 1977, was edited solely by Kathleen, with her long-time and much-valued research assistant Nina Burgis (a considerable Victorian scholar in her own right) as Associate Editor. From 1981 onwards she was one of the General Editors and in 1988 the British Academy awarded her the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize for the second time in respect of her work for the edition. For the last four volumes (1997–2001) she acted as Consultant Editor and continued to be very much involved in the work in spite of increasing health problems, which had necessitated her moving into a retirement home in 1996. Here, at Guinness Court in St John's Wood, she embarked upon what was to her a deeply pleasurable re-reading of the whole of Henry James, and in the afternoons received a constant flow of visitors. Among the most regular of these was Margaret Brown (Assistant Editor for Pilgrim Vols. 9–11 and Associate Editor for Vol. 12), whose visits were a continuation of the almost weekly editorial meetings she had been having with Kathleen for the previous twelve years or so. Writing about her in *The Times* for 13 June 2001, Margaret Brown gives a memorable description of one of her very last visits to Guinness Court: 'In March, almost blind and very frail, she insisted on hearing a piece of annotation in which she was particularly interested, and gave her opinion with her usual deep insight and sharpness of mind undiminished.' In the final volume of the Edition, proofs of which Kathleen had seen, or which had been read to her, the Pilgrim Editors say of the volumes, for which she had been Consultant, that 'her authority, knowledge, and insistence on the truth, are evident on every page'. She died very peacefully on 3 June 2001.

Her work on Dickens for both Clarendon and Pilgrim was the primary concern of Kathleen's scholarly life from the late 1950s onwards,

⁸ Robert Newsom, entry for House in *The Oxford Reader's Companion to Dickens* (Oxford, 1999).

fuelled as her work on Dickens had always been by her admiration of, and unending delight in, his art which no amount of familiarity with his writings could ever diminish. She was a long-serving Vice-President of the Dickens Fellowship as well as a much-valued contributor to the Fellowship's journal *The Dickensian* and in 1970, the centenary year of Dickens's death, she gave the first of a series of lectures organised by the Fellowship at the Royal Society of Arts. Entitled 'The Middle Years from the *Carol* to *Copperfield*', it is a masterly and thoroughly illuminating study of a crucial period of Dickens's artistic development, seen as 'a series of turning points, pauses, as it were, at crossroads; and at the same time an underlying, perhaps unconscious, sureness of direction'.⁹ But, if Dickens was her prime concern, she was also generous with the time and support she gave to bodies concerned to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of other writers whose work mattered greatly to her. For twenty-five years she was very much a working member of the Wordsworth Trust, an activity which linked with the passion she and Geoffrey shared for walking in the Lake District where, accordingly, most of their brief vacations were spent (in London they rejoiced to live on the edge of Hampstead Heath, another part of England very close to their hearts). She was also an active member of the Charlotte M. Yonge Society and a Vice-President of the Brontë Society, twice delivering the latter society's Annual Lecture (1966 and 1986). But it would probably be fair to say that it was above all Tennyson, first read by her with a child's enthralled delight at the tender age of seven, who claimed her allegiance next after Dickens. She was a leading member of the Tennyson Society, giving the Annual Tennyson Lecture (on Tennyson and Browning) in 1974 and the Tennyson Memorial Address in 1983. For many years she served on the Society's Publications Committee along with Professor Leonee Ormond, who vividly recalled at the London University memorial gathering her 'down-to-earth response to anything that seemed to her pretentious or sub-standard', something that was very much in keeping with her bedrock belief that a scholar's first duty was to his or her subject.

Kathleen Tillotson retired from the Hildred Carlisle Professorship at Bedford in 1971, having spent thirteen years as an extremely hard-working, conscientious and caring Head of Department. She was sometimes perceived as rather an austere and remote, indeed rather formidable figure, especially by those who had perhaps never experienced the warmth of her

⁹ Published in *Dickens Memorial Lectures*, a supplement to the September 1970 issue of *The Dickensian*, The Dickens Fellowship (London, 1970).

wonderful smile, or her own special brand of dry humour, or her zestful enjoyment of unmalicious professional gossip (nothing pleased her more than to surprise people with news items of which they were ignorant). At times her manner could certainly be acerbic, and even brusque, but it was remarkable how many acts of personal kindness on her part were recalled by former colleagues and students at the celebration of her life and work, and how warmly many of them spoke of the extent to which she invariably concerned herself with every student as an individual. Her prodigious memory meant that she never forgot any of them and indeed kept in touch with a surprisingly large number long after they had graduated. This can be seen from her carefully preserved correspondence files which are now deposited, with her other papers and those of Geoffrey Tillotson, in the archives of the Royal Holloway College, University of London. Bedford was very much at the centre of her life and it was a great sadness to her, as well as a source of anger against those governmental policies towards the universities which had brought about the event, when her college ceased to exist as a separate entity within London University and was merged with Royal Holloway.

Retirement from administrative and teaching duties meant, of course, that she had more time for her work on the Clarendon Dickens and the Pilgrim Letters, and her unmistakable figure with its crown of snow-white hair was to be seen almost every day working away at her accustomed desk in the old North Library of the British Museum. If not there, she was most probably to be found delving into the stacks at her beloved London Library, or else at one of the auction houses, meticulously checking the texts of any unpublished Dickens letters that happened to be coming up for sale. She was also able to devote more time to her work for the various literary trusts and societies already mentioned. Moreover, she continued, as long as she was able to do so, her long-standing service as a board member of the Theodora Bosanquet Trust, which provides bursaries for women graduate students. Like her great loyalty to Bedford College, and to the University Women's Club, her years of devoted work for the Bosanquet testified to her lifelong strong sense of solidarity with other women engaged in higher education.

Kathleen Tillotson was the recipient of many honours during the course of her long and distinguished career. Some of these have been already mentioned, others followed after her retirement from Bedford. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Queen's University, Belfast, in 1972, and by the University of Oxford in 1982 and by the University of London also in 1982. She was made an OBE in 1983 (raised

to CBE in 1991), and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1984. Most richly deserved were all of these honours for she was without doubt one of the greatest and most influential, not to say inspirational, scholars working in the field of English literature during the second half of the twentieth century.

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