



T. PARRY

THOMAS PARRY

1904-1985

SIR THOMAS PARRY was born on the 4 August 1904, at Brynawel in Carmel, a village on the slopes of Mynydd Cilgwyn, one of the foothills of Eryri or Snowdonia, from which there are breath-taking views of Caernarfon Bay with Yr Eifl (The Rivals) on the extreme left and Holyhead and Mynydd Parys on the extreme right, and in between, Caernarfon Castle to the right, nor far from the site of the old Roman fort, Segontium, and to the left Dyffryn Nantlle, the vale of Lleu, with Dinas Dinlle, the fort of Lleu, in front. Lleu is not the only hero of the Mabinogi who has left his name on this landscape and the near synonymous *Dyffryn* and *Nant*, *Dinas* and *Din*, reflect the fact that the Welsh language has been spoken in these parts from time immemorial. *Dinlle(u)* preserves the same linguistic elements as the better known continental place-names *Lyons* and *Leyden*.

Sir O. M. Edwards visited Carmel on a fine afternoon in April 1913 and, reacting to the charm of the place and its people, remembered the lines

Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains, each a mighty voice,
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty.

The village owes its existence to the slate-quarries which were opened to meet the need for slate as roofing material, a demand which reached its peak at the turn of the century, and which drew men in their hundreds to work and settle in north Caernarfonshire. It owes its name to the Nonconformist Chapel (in this case, Calvinistic Methodist) which was built together with two others to serve the religious needs of the community formed by these workers.

Carmel did not change much until after Thomas Parry's youth: the slate-quarries began to contract rather than to expand, and there was little cause for any influx of newcomers.

Neither was there any incentive to travel except for the men to look for work when the quarries closed for some reason or other. There was no train service connecting Carmel directly with the outside world. The nearest main line was about one and a half miles away, in Groeslon: there one could get a train to Caernarfon—and beyond to Holyhead or London—or, in the other direction, to Pwllheli or by the Cambrian Coast line to Welshpool or to Aberystwyth. The Welsh Mountain Railway, built first to carry slates, but then modified to accommodate passengers, had one terminal in Dinas, a little nearer to Carmel than Groeslon, the other in Porthmadog, and it ran via Waunfawr, Rhyd-ddu, and Beddgelert. Caernarfon was the nearest town. Before the first 'bus' service was started, using a converted lorry as a bus, two 'brakes' used to take the villagers to Caernarfon every Saturday.

In these circumstances village life was fairly self-contained. There were only a few shops and each one catered for diverse needs, as diverse as food *and* clothing, and there were only a few craftsmen by trade; the quarrymen were versatile and some could build a wall and roof a house as well as any builder.

Reflecting on Carmel in old age, Thomas Parry described it as a village where people had to work extremely hard to make a decent living, the men-folk in the quarries, the women-folk at home, and where, face to face with hardship, people soon learnt to practise the virtues of neighbourliness and co-operation.

The paramount influence in people's lives was religion of the Nonconformist variety represented by the chapels. Although it was in some ways a constricting influence, in other ways it was liberating: it gave meaning and dignity to lives spent in constant labour and it produced a community culture through which most individuals could develop and give expression, although only in a modest way, to their talents: in the arts, poets, reciters, and singers ranked high; on a more humdrum level, the organizers, the public speakers, and the day- and Sunday-school teachers were greatly respected. Undoubtedly there were some black sheep among the villagers, but these were offset by men and women of a genuinely saintly type. Carmel produced a considerable number of Nonconformist ministers and, as time went on, an even greater number of schoolteachers. Life there was not very different from that of the neighbouring villages of Rhosgadfan and Rhostryfan, a life vividly portrayed in the short stories and novels of Kate Roberts, or that of the neighbouring village of Groeslon, well mirrored in the plays of John Gwilym Jones.

Thomas Parry, we can safely assume, was given the Christian name of Thomas after his paternal grandfather, Thomas Parry of Gwyndy, Carmel, who was married three times and had children by each marriage. Welsh-speaking Wales has reason to remember all three marriages, for it owes to them three of its principal benefactors in the twentieth century. Of the first marriage was born the father of R. Williams Parry, University and Extramural Lecturer, and a poet whose art at its best was described by Sir Idris Bell as 'unerring', making him 'as great a master of the sonnet as of the *englyn*'. Of the second marriage was born the father of Sir T. H. Parry-Williams, described by the same authority as 'a scholar of international standing, . . . a delightful essayist, a good critic, and one of the leading poets of his day'. And of the third marriage was born the father of Sir Thomas Parry, University Professor, Librarian of the National Library of Wales, and University College Principal, the subject of this memoir. Sir T. H. Parry-Williams's father had succeeded in becoming the headmaster of the primary school at Rhyd-ddu and he was especially ambitious for the academic success of his children, but in the cultural climate prevailing at that time in the quarry-districts of North Wales, one can assume that he was not in that respect very different from the two half-brothers we have mentioned, the fathers of R. Williams Parry and Thomas Parry.

Richard Parry, Thomas Parry's father, worked for most of his life in the Dorothea Quarry—*Twll Coch Dorothea*—some two miles from Carmel, but before settling down to a quarryman's life, he had felt the call of the sea and had sailed twice round Cape Horn to San Francisco. In all probability he would have remained at sea had not the death of his father brought him home to help his widowed mother. The experience, however, must have given him an outlook on life slightly different from that of his fellow quarrymen, and, no doubt, this, together with the fact that he had been brought up on a farm, persuaded him that he should not depend entirely on the quarry but should also have a *tyddyn*, a smallholding, i.e. a house with a few acres of land on which to rear a couple of cows, some pigs, and hens. He was not entirely exceptional in working a few acres of land as well as working in the quarry. Carmel was made up of a number of such smallholdings, of a number of free-standing houses with a sty to keep a pig or two, and of some terraced houses. He built on land belonging originally to his father's farm, Gwyndy, a house (Brynawel) for himself and his bride, a young lady called Jane Williams, who had come to work in Tal-y-sarn, a village not far

from Carmel. This was in 1900. In 1917 the pair moved to Gwyndy, Richard Parry's old home, in 1922 to Gwastadfaes, and in a few years, back to their original home, Brynawel. By that time, Jane's health was failing and it was becoming obvious that Richard's health was not sufficiently robust to cope with the additional land he had acquired since starting off in Brynawel.

Mrs Jane Parry was a strong and forthright character. It is characteristic of her and her times that when Thomas Parry contracted scarlet fever and pleurisy at the end of the first term of his second year in College and had to be kept in isolation for several weeks at home—there was no isolation hospital in the vicinity—it was she who, single-handed, nursed him back to health and then sent him to recuperate in her mother's home in Llangwnnadr, Llŷn. She had a reputation for 'speaking her mind' but she had a most generous heart and this weighed a great deal with her friends and neighbours, as was shown by the wealth of their floral tributes to her when she died. She was as proud as her husband that together they had been able to give their three sons a university education and perhaps she contributed more than she ever thought to their culture. For she came from Llŷn, which had retained more of its agricultural character than Arfon, and the 'holidays' which her children enjoyed there with her mother gave them the experience of a different life-style and a wider horizon. It is, perhaps, not surprising that her youngest son, Gruffydd, went to Llŷn to live and wrote a fascinating description of its landscape and people.

If Jane Parry could on occasion be too eloquent, her husband seems to have been a man of few words. The hours of work in the Dorothea Quarry varied with the four seasons. In summer he would get up at 5.15 in the morning to start out at 6.15 on his walk to the quarry to arrive at the work-face at 7 o'clock. He would work then until 5.30 and arrive home at 6.15 in the evening after a twelve-hour absence. After a meal—*swper chwarel*—he would go out to do whatever needed doing on the smallholding until it was dark. He was a regular church-goer but never chose to become a full member of the Calvinist Methodist Chapel at Carmel, although he was throughout his adult life a highly-esteemed Sunday-school teacher. This explains the fact that he had a collection of Biblical commentaries, a Biblical Dictionary (William Davies's), and one of the four volumes of *Hanes Methodistiaeth Arfon* ('The History of Methodism in Arfon'), by William Hopley, the one containing the history of Carmel Chapel. These books together with a copy of the Welsh Bible and

the Welsh Hymn book comprised the family library. The two periodicals which came to the home, *Cymru'r Plant* and *Trysorfa'r Plant*, provided fare for the children rather than the adults. He was also a member although never a very active one of the North Wales Quarrymen's Union: it was characteristic of the Union and of the times that its secretary wrote to congratulate Richard Parry's son when he was appointed Principal of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth.

One of the son's finest poems is a tribute to his father on his death:

FY NHAD

(Bu farw Mawrth 20, 1942)

Côstio am dipyn, wedyn hwylio ar led,
Yn llanc, yn llawen, ac yn gryf dy gred.
Troi'n ôl i'th fryniog fro a chroeso'i chraig
A'i charu a'i choledd, megis gŵr ei wraig—
Dringo i'r bonc; datod y clymau tyn
A roed pan blygwyd y mynyddoedd hyn;
Rhoi rhaw yn naear ddicra'r Cilgwyn noeth,
A phladur yn ei fyrwellt hafddydd poeth—
Troi dy dawedog nerth, aberth dy fraich,
Yn hamdden dysg i ni, heb gyfri'r baich.

Ni thorraist fara nac yfed gwin y Gwaed,
Ond cyfarwyddodd Ef dy drem a'th draed.
Difyrrwch pell dy fore, byd nis gŵyr,
Na diddan ludded d'orfoleddus hwyr.
Ni chanwyd cnul na llaesu baner chwaith
Pan gododd llanw Mawrth dy long i'w thaith,
Ond torrodd rhywbeth oedd yn gyfa o'r blaen
Mewn pedair calon chwithig dan y straen,
Wrth iti gychwyn eto i hwylio ar led,
Yn hen, yn hynaws, ac yn gryf dy gred.

Thomas Parry always spoke affectionately of his parents, of his early days and upbringing, and he paid tribute to the part which the smallholding had played in enabling his parents to send him and his two brothers to grammar school and to university. Characteristically, and unlike most Welshmen who shared his background, he did not harbour any resentment towards the quarry where his father had had to work extremely hard with hundreds of others for very little reward, eventually losing his health in the process.

He visited Dorothea Quarry when it had just closed down after being worked for more than two hundred years, and had started to fill with water. His thoughts were of the fine men who had worked there, of their Nonconformist culture and their spiritual resources. He did not need to be reminded that the mountains of Eryri had never been an easy place to make a living; indeed, only a very hardy breed of men could survive there, and it is no wonder that the men of Arfon claimed it as their right in olden times to lead the van in the hostings of Gwynedd. 'Mwyngaled' is a term traditionally applied to Arfonians—they are regarded as *hard* (*caled*) and *gentle* (*mwyn*). Thomas Parry combined both qualities in his character—he could be both hard and gentle, hard in his opposition to every form of injustice, and gentle with any one who needed assistance or encouragement.

I have dealt at some length with Thomas Parry's background because unlikely as it may appear as the starting-point to such a fine academic career, it was not atypical in the Wales of that period and, although it offered but few material advantages, it was culturally invigorating.

As Carmel could boast only an infant school Thomas Parry had to attend the primary school of Penfforddalen at the nearest village, Groeslon. The Elen (or Helen) in the name of the school is said to be that of the heroine of *Breuddwyd Macsen*, the 'Dream or Vision of Maxen', the Helen confused in Welsh tradition with the mother of the Emperor Constantine and with the Helen of the *Discovery of the True Cross*. At Penfforddalen he met a boy of his own age from Groeslon who was to be his companion until the end of his college days and to be his life-long friend thereafter, John Gwilym Jones. John Gwilym, as he is affectionately known throughout Wales, has made a name for himself as a literary critic, a prose-writer, and a dramatist of distinction, and he would be the first to admit that he owes a great deal to the encouragement of the friend from Carmel whom he met for the first time at primary school.

Thomas Parry does not seem to have been fired by any burning ambition to do well at school and college. According to him there was a time when he seemed to be drifting along like a leaf on a river. He delighted in learning to do things with his hands. While on holiday in Llŷn he was fascinated to see how the local blacksmith made horseshoes, and would have tried his hand at making them himself had he had the opportunity, just as he tried and succeeded in putting new soles and new heels on his

boots after observing the local cobbler at his last. He retained an interest in carpentry throughout his life. But, although he was not very ambitious, he seems to have been conscious that he had the ability to do whatever he put his hands to, and indeed the impression he gave at school and throughout his life was that he enjoyed what he was doing and did what he enjoyed. This in spite of the fact that he was to say in later life that the choice of subjects offered to him and his fellow pupils at the County School at Pen-y-groes was limited, that he was never given a lesson in art or music, although he was deft with his hands and had a very good ear for music. Indeed, he used to complain sometimes that he could remember a song far better than a poem and could hum scores of musical airs while he could recite from memory only a few poems. That he could have benefited from a course in music is shown by the fact that he taught himself to play the harmonium while he was still a boy and took up the recorder when he was a young man and had far too little time to practise, and more particularly by the fact that he won a prize for composing a hymn-tune at a local eisteddfod while he was still at school.

In Caernarfonshire at that time pupils had either to win a place at the County School or pay for it. The number of places to be won by doing well in the 'scholarship' examination were few, but both Thomas Parry and his friend John Gwilym Jones succeeded, thus relieving their parents of the burden of paying school-fees. Needless to say, they had to pass the 'Junior' at the end of two years, and at the end of four years to 'matriculate', i.e. to pass in a combination of subjects set down by the University of Wales in the 'Senior' Examination, and then to pass the 'Higher' at the end of a further two years: at that time the Examining Body was the Central Welsh Board. For both pupils, the most exciting and intellectually stimulating years at school were those in the Sixth Form. The Headmaster, D. R. O. Prytherch, seems to have had a flair for appointing good teachers, and Thomas Parry was fortunate in having Alexander Parry to teach him Latin, David Davies to teach him English, and Miss P.K. Owen to teach him Welsh. Both boys had special praise for Miss P. K. Owen. She encouraged them to criticize and to appreciate Welsh literature. Thomas Parry recalls that he wrote in the Sixth Form a long critical essay on the anthology of Welsh poems edited by Annie Ffoulkes, *Telyn y Dydd*. He also won a prize for a poem at the Bryn-rhos Eisteddfod, Groeslon. John Gwilym Jones recalls that his first play was written for Miss P. K. Owen. The mention of 'eisteddfod'—the popular local name was 'cyfarfod llenyddol'

(literary meeting)—reminds us that although neither of these boys came from 'literary' or 'bookish' families, the Welsh culture which the Nonconformist chapels fostered laid great emphasis on the literary art, especially the art of poetry, and in accordance with the Welsh literary tradition accorded considerable respect to the poet or bard (*bardd*).

Apparently Thomas Parry at first intended to enrol as a student at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, but it was the University College of North Wales, Bangor, that awarded him an Entrance Exhibition and it was to Bangor that he went in October 1922 to read as his first year subjects Welsh, Latin, Greek, and Philosophy. The last-named subject was compulsory for first-year Arts students at that time and Greek would have been the ideal 'accessory' to an Honours Latin Degree. The Professor of Latin was E. V. Arnold, the author of *Forum Latinum*, and the lecturer in the Department was Joshua Watmough, who was later to become Professor at Harvard University and an authority on Gaulish (Celtic) dialects.

The Welsh Department had two professors: John Morris-Jones who had written the standard grammar of the Welsh language (1913), a masterly treatment of the work attributed to Taliesin (1918), traditionally the earliest Welsh bard, and was busy completing his definitive description of Welsh metrics (*Cerdd Dafod*, 1925); and Ifor Williams who had been given an *ad hominem* chair for his editions of early Welsh prose and verse, including the verse of Dafydd ap Gwilym, and was still to publish his major works, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (1930), *Canu Llywarch Hen* (1935), *Canu Aneirin* (1938), and *Canu Taliesin* (1958). These two professors were assisted by R. Williams Parry, Thomas Parry's cousin, but he was part-time intramural and part-time extramural. It should perhaps be noted that both professors were knighted for their services to Welsh language and literature, and that Thomas Parry, who succeeded them, was also given that honour.

There is a suggestion that Thomas Parry found the atmosphere of the Latin Department less than congenial and that this persuaded him to read Welsh Main Honours with Latin Accessory Honours rather than vice versa, but one cannot help feeling that the attractions of the Welsh Department at that time were so great that it would have been difficult for a student of his kind to resist them. At the same time his knowledge of Latin and Greek made him a very desirable student for the Welsh Department; it enabled him to take full advantage of Morris-Jones's expertise in

philology and morphology and of Ifor William's genius in lexicography. In addition to all this he had the usual affection for Welsh that a person has for his mother-tongue and for the language which he has used in his first attempt at creative expression.

By today's standards the University College of North Wales was a small institution, but it had the advantage that the students could get to know each other and that they found it easier to do so not only because of their small number but also because they came from fairly homogeneous backgrounds: they were generally Welsh and mostly Welsh-speaking. Candidates for the Nonconformist ministry were a prominent element in the student body, and they were not only almost exclusively Welsh-speaking but also eager to increase their mastery of the Welsh language, and, if they were so inclined, to make a name for themselves as poets as well as preachers for, as I have said, poets held a high place in public estimation, almost as high as that accorded to preachers, and if one could say that one was a poet as well as a preacher, all the better. In these circumstances it was natural that the students should be intensely interested in literature and poetry, especially poetry in the strict metres peculiar to Welsh. In imitation of the annual National Eisteddfod, the Intercollegiate Eisteddfod offered a chair for the best *awdl* or ode in the strict metres and a crown for the best long poem in normal accentual verse. The most coveted of the two prizes was, needless to say, the chair. One could and can be a fine practitioner of the *cynganeddion* without being a good poet, just as it is possible to be a fine poet without being a good *cynganeddwr*. However, it is as easy to lose sight of the distinction between a versifier and a poet within as without college. If a student had a facility for either the 'free' or the 'strict' metres in the Bangor of those days he was encouraged to cultivate it for all he was worth, with the result that some students became poets for the first and last time in their lives, while others even learnt to talk to each other in *cynganedd*. Even English students with no knowledge of Welsh caught the fever. One English student produced the *cynganedd sain* line:

A beautiful dutiful daughter
ul ul
d t d t.

Thomas Parry was influenced by all this. He won the crown at the Intercollegiate Eisteddfod in 1923 for a 'free'-metre poem on

'Llyn y Morynion' (The Lake of the Maidens), and won the chair and the crown at the same eisteddfod in 1924. (It is worth remembering that R. Williams Parry, one of the two cousins already mentioned, had won the chair at the National Eisteddfod in 1910, and that the other, T. H. Parry-Williams, had won both the chair and the crown at two National Eisteddfodau, 1912 and 1915.)

Thomas Parry's literary achievements were all the greater since he was, as I have suggested, one of many students who had literary talent as well as literary ambitions. This is shown by the quality of the poems published in the College magazine, among which was Thomas Parry's 'Y Llais' (*The Magazine of the University College of North Wales*, xxxi, June 1923), and by the fact that an anthology of poems written by students was published in 1924—*The Bangor Book of Verse. Poems English and Welsh written by students of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, 1923-4*. This anthology contained seven poems by Thomas Parry, of which one seems to have been an extract from the crown-winning poem (*prydest*), 'Llyn y Morynion'. With so many of his poems published, he could afford to have confidence in his literary judgement, and in 1925 he published a critical essay 'Barddoniaeth Dic Huws, Cefnllanfair' in the national periodical, *Cymru*.

In the meantime his undergraduate career had suffered a setback. On Christmas Day 1923, it was found that he had both scarlet fever and pleurisy, and he had to be kept at home in isolation for some weeks and to remain there for several more weeks to recuperate, with the result that he was unable to return to College until October 1924. Before his illness he had become a member of the College Welsh Dramatic Society and his friend John Gwilym Jones remembers visiting him during his illness to keep him informed of the society's activities. He resumed his interest in the society as well as in other societies after returning to College, and he must have convinced his fellow students that he had the makings of a good administrator, for they elected him President of the Student Representative Council for the year 1926-7, a post normally held by a student during his Teacher Training Year. He was not, however, to take up this post nor to join the Teacher Training Course, because he graduated with a brilliant First Class in 1926, and came under pressure from Professor Ifor Williams to pursue research, if possible under Professor Rudolf Thurneysen in Bonn.

It is not altogether clear that he had in fact decided to do research, for he was in Caernarfon on teaching-practice in

preparation for the Teacher Training Course and was taking a walk on the quay during the midday break when he met his cousin T. H. Parry-Williams, who told him that the authorities of the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire, Cardiff, were advertising for an assistant lecturer in Welsh and Latin. He applied and was interviewed for the post and he must have satisfied both the Professor of Welsh and the Professor of Latin, for he was appointed and commenced his duties in October 1926.

An academic appointment immediately after graduation has its disadvantages as well as advantages. The advantages are obvious. The graduate can begin his academic career without any delay and without spending years on work irrelevant to his subsequent career. One of the disadvantages is that he is deprived of two or three valuable years devoted completely to research and has to fit his research work from the beginning within a programme which may involve a heavy lecturing load.

Thomas Parry's lecturing load was all the heavier since he had to lecture on Latin and Welsh to students who were pursuing honours courses and to some students who were older, if not more mature, than himself. However he worked hard and developed a style of lecturing which succeeded in adapting the material in such a way that the students could easily assimilate it and which at the same time left them with the impression that they were being treated as the lecturer's intellectual peers. He was always an excellent communicator, and it would be right to assume that the foundations of this excellence were laid at Cardiff.

Any spare time that he had was spent in research and he wisely chose a subject which utilized his knowledge of Latin as well as his knowledge of Welsh—the 'Life and Work of Siôn Dafydd Rhys', a Renaissance scholar whose *magnum opus* was a grammar of the Welsh language with a description of Welsh metres, all written in Latin. Thomas Parry's dissertation was of such excellence that he was awarded the degree of MA with Distinction and was able to publish its substance almost as it was first written, in five articles, three in *Y Llenor* ('Siôn Dafydd Rhys', ix (1930), 157–65, 234–41; x (1931) 35–46) and two in *The Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* ('Gramadeg Siôn Dafydd Rhys', BBCS vi. 1, Nov. 1931, 55–62; 3, Nov. 1932, 225–31).

But the years in Cardiff were fruitful in other ways as well. The Professor and Head of Department was W. J. Gruffydd, then at the height of his powers and exercising considerable influence on the political and literary scene in Wales in virtue of

his position as editor of *Y Llenor*. It was in later years that Thomas Parry came to know Gruffydd well but the fact that Gruffydd used his position as Professor of Welsh and as editor of the *Llenor* to voice the grievances of the Welsh-speaking population of Wales was not lost on him, and in this he was to emulate him to some extent, when he had attained a position of influence.

The lecturer in the Welsh Department at Cardiff, and Gruffydd's successor, was G. J. Williams. With him Thomas Parry established an immediate rapport. G. J. Williams was an 'all-rounder'. Although most of his research was on Welsh literature, he lectured almost exclusively on the Welsh language, and his single-hearted devotion to Welsh scholarship and to teaching set his stamp on the Department and made it in some ways different from the Welsh Department at Bangor, most significantly perhaps in the greater emphasis it laid on the history of Welsh literature during the Renaissance and in the modern period. As we shall see, one of Thomas Parry's innovations in the Welsh Department at Bangor was to ensure that no period of Welsh literature was neglected.

His contacts in Cardiff were not confined to the College. There was then as now an active Welsh-speaking community in the city and he was made welcome not only in the Welsh societies but also in Welsh homes and it was in one of these that he found the young girl who was to become his wife—Enid, the only daughter of Mr and Mrs Picton Davies. Mr Davies was a Carmarthenshire man and a journalist, editor of *The Weekly Mail* and *Cardiff Times* after being sub-editor of *The Western Mail*, while Mrs Davies came originally from Caernarfonshire and was before marriage a schoolteacher. In addition to a broad general culture, the family enjoyed a musical interest which was both extensive and deep, and it was almost inevitable that Enid Picton Davies, as she then was, should enrol as a student at University College in Cardiff and graduate with honours in both Welsh and music. I have already mentioned Thomas Parry's genuine interest in music: it must have played a part in drawing them together—this was before she became a student—, but if he could share her interest in music, she could participate in his concern for Welsh and all things Welsh, and of all the fortunate events in Thomas Parry's life, the most fortunate was his marriage to her. They both prized seriousness, straightforwardness, and personal integrity. They both shared the same Christian values and ideas and this gave them a solid foundation for a common and deeply-shared attitude towards life. They eschewed eccentricities, quirks, and

foibles. Enid's contribution to the marriage cannot be exaggerated: rarely has a wife adopted her husband's interests so completely, rarely has she identified herself with his career so passionately. As we shall see, Thomas Parry had three careers. Each career made different demands on his wife—but she fulfilled them all with rare accomplishment.

Many a guest will recall their hospitality at Peniarth, Bangor, and at Hengwrt and Plas Pen-glais, Aberystwyth. None appreciated it more than the young students who visited their professor and his wife at Bangor, sometimes after a formal invitation, but frequently without any invitation. They always found that their hosts had plenty of time to listen to their problems with genuine sympathy, to give helpful encouragement to the disheartened among them and sound advice to the bewildered and confused.

In 1929 Professor John Morris-Jones died and the Welsh Department at Bangor needed an addition to the staff. R. Williams Parry was given the opportunity to become a full-time lecturer but for various reasons he preferred to remain part-time. The vacant post was advertised and Thomas Parry was appointed.

Although 1929 does not seem to be very long ago, it does need an effort of the imagination to realize the different conditions which obtained in the universities at that time, and not least because the universities are entering a period of penury which some might think similar to that of the twenties and thirties. But the similarities are superficial, the dissimilarities profound. Then there were few lecturers and fewer professors. Senior lecturers and readers were unheard of. Whoever was lucky enough to be appointed a lecturer, if he was sensible, would make much of his good fortune, and if he was so inclined, he could settle down to some solid research side by side with his lecturing and teaching.

This Thomas Parry did in all earnestness and with the utmost enthusiasm. No doubt he could feel confident that he would succeed Sir Ifor Williams in the fullness of time, but this does not explain the fervour with which he devoted his energies to teaching, to research, and to administration, nor the remarkable successes he achieved in all three fields. I had the good fortune to be one of his students in the early thirties, and it is significant that neither I nor any of my fellow students had any idea that he was working so hard—such was his ability and efficiency.

The Welsh Department at Bangor was at the height of its renown under John Morris-Jones and Ifor Williams in the twenties, and it enjoyed a reputation second to none in the

University of Wales. But it would not be unjust to say that its reputation rested mainly on the researches of these two professors and to a lesser extent on the literary renown of R. Williams Parry. I have already mentioned some of the *magna opera* produced by these professors. Morris-Jones's, *A Welsh Grammar*, *Taliesin*, *Cerdd Dafod* had already been published. Sir Ifor Williams's major works were to come in the thirties—his *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, *Canu Aneirin*, and the much later *Canu Taliesin*. Teaching was not neglected but it took second place to research. Indeed, much of the teaching went on hand in hand with the research. Ifor Williams used to arrive in the classroom with the text of the *Black Book of Carmarthen* or *The Book of Aneirin* under his arm—the students, if they were lucky, would have copies of the printed text before them, or if not, copies which they had written out themselves—and he would proceed to explain the text, drawing on his prodigious memory and spurning the aid of notes. One of the delights of Sir Ifor's lectures was to hear him retrace the way he had solved the problem of the meaning of some obsolete word. But it was a delight which not all students could share to the same extent, although the enthusiasm and the wit of the lecturer succeeded in concealing this fact from all except the very weakest. In a way Sir Ifor's procedure was dictated by necessity. There were no annotated editions of the texts mentioned and there could not be any until the necessary research, the 'spadework' had been done. Annotated editions of such prose texts as *Breuddwyd Macsen* and *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys* and of such verse texts as the poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch had been produced by Ifor Williams and a few fellow workers, and their pioneer work in this respect was of paramount importance and deserving of the highest praise. If there was any fault, it lay in the fact that the emphasis of the whole course in the Welsh Department at Bangor was almost exclusively on the language and on its earliest literature. The result was that it was heavily weighted in favour of the linguistically orientated student—it offered little to the student whose main interest was literature. The prejudice against language studies was not as strong among students then as it became later, but it is no exaggeration to say that at that time Welsh literature as such received very little attention at Bangor.

It is tempting to assume that, had Thomas Parry been appointed to the Welsh Department at Bangor immediately after graduation, he would have proceeded along the same lines as those already being followed. Ifor Williams had certainly fol-

lowed the lines laid down by John Morris-Jones except in two respects—he had lectured through the medium of Welsh rather than through the medium of English and had shown greater concern for fulfilling the need for annotated texts. But, as we have seen, Thomas Parry was appointed to the Welsh Department at Cardiff, and the indications are that his experience there—perhaps in the Latin as well as in the Welsh Department—convinced him that the needs of the students would be better served if greater attention were given to literature and to teaching generally. Whatever the ultimate reasons, Thomas Parry concentrated more on teaching than his predecessors and more on teaching literature, with the result that a wider spectrum of students benefited from the curriculum. Literature was taught as it had never been taught before in the Department. More extensive reading was required, more essay writing, and more literary appreciation and critical awareness were expected. Naturally Thomas Parry was popular with the students. Whereas John Morris-Jones and Ifor Williams had been idolized from afar, Thomas Parry was treated with the warm affection and the respect earned by an excellent teacher and educator, as much concerned with his students as with his subject.

John Morris-Jones and Ifor Williams had not shown much interest in the administration of the College and only the necessary modicum of interest in the administration of the Department. Soon after Thomas Parry was appointed, Ifor Williams left almost all the administration in his hands, and when Thomas Parry was appointed by the non-professorial staff to represent them on Senate, Ifor Williams's interest in administration became minimal. On the other hand, as a member of the Senate, Thomas Parry became more and more interested in College administration. When the Registrar became ill, he was invited to act as secretary to the Senate and, when the Registrar died, he was offered the vacant post.

But Thomas Parry's supreme achievement was that he was able to combine an extraordinary amount of research with his teaching and administrative work, research work of fundamental importance and of the highest standard.

I have already referred to the lack of properly annotated editions of classical Welsh texts. It should be remembered that Welsh had not been taught as a university subject until the University of Wales was established in 1893. There had been some desultory teaching of the subject at the Welsh colleges before that date, and it had been a part of the course in Celtic

given by Sir John Rhÿs at Jesus College, Oxford. J. Gwenogvryn Evans, in conjunction with Sir John, had embarked on editing a few important facsimile texts. John Morris-Jones, Sir John's ablest student, had published a facsimile text of the *Llyvyr Agkryr Llandewivrevi* and an edition of the Welsh classic *Gweledigaethu y Bardd Cwsc*. Ifor Williams, together with other scholars of his generation, had produced textbooks suitable for university and secondary schools.

The demand for such textbooks in the secondary schools had not been great, for it should be remembered that, even after the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act in 1899, when the 'County Schemes' came to be drawn up, the Welsh language had been given only a very subsidiary place in the school curriculum. The position of Welsh in the primary schools was, of course, equally unsatisfactory, but it had less direct bearing on its position in the university. However, with the demand for annotated texts came the supply. We have already mentioned the Welsh verse texts which included the poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym, Iolo Goch, and their contemporaries. Excellent as these were at the time of their publication, they were far from definitive and final. Their editors had to work on a limited number of MS texts, for, until the National Library of Wales had been founded and had established itself as the natural repository for Welsh MSS, no one had a very clear idea of what manuscripts there were and what they contained. A good start had been made with cataloguing through the publication of the *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language*, Vols. 1 and 2, compiled by J. Gwenogvryn Evans for the Historical Manuscripts Commission, but some of the large manuscript collections there catalogued were still in private hands and, until they and others like them were deposited in libraries, catalogued, and subjected to the close attention of trained experts, all scholarly work involving manuscripts would be handicapped.

No doubt Ifor Williams was as conscious as anyone of the deficiencies of the early editions which he and his fellow workers had prepared for schoolchildren and students, but it was characteristic of him that he was captivated more by the problems of elucidating the text of the poetry of Aneirin, traditionally dated to the end of the sixth century, than by the problems presented by later poets, just as it was characteristic of Thomas Parry that he should be fascinated by the work of establishing which were the genuine and which the spurious poems among the MS poems attributed to Dafydd ap Gwilym, arguably the greatest poet ever

produced by Wales. At any rate, this was the task which Thomas Parry set himself. The magnitude of the work may be imagined if one recalls that with three exceptions there is a gap of a century between Dafydd ap Gwilym's death and the date of the earliest extant copy of his poetry, and that only some eight manuscripts containing his poetry can be dated before 1500. (Mr Daniel Huws, Keeper of Manuscripts, The National Library of Wales, has suggested that Dafydd's *englynion* to the Chester Cross found in the Hendregadredd MS could be in the poet's holograph, but if that is so, it is the only example of his holograph that we have.)

Needless to say, with the best will in the world, Thomas Parry could devote only some of his time to research. He was soon invited to deliver the Annual Welsh Lectures at Bangor. Originally they were delivered on three successive nights; later, they were given during three successive weeks. Thomas Parry chose as his subject *Baledi'r Ddeunawfed Ganrif* ('The Ballads of the Eighteenth Century'). His lectures were published in 1935 and have recently been reprinted after a 50-year interval. Everyone would agree that they were worth reprinting: they show that the author had complete mastery of his subject, knew instinctively what was important and what was irrelevant, had a thorough command of the resources of the Welsh language and a special gift for the stylish presentation of scholarship.

A more serious interruption to the work on Dafydd ap Gwilym was occasioned by the war. Thomas Parry was a convinced pacifist and remained so throughout his life. The war years could have proved a very frustrating, even an extremely bitter, period for him. In the event, it proved otherwise. If he was a pacifist, he was also a nationalist and with others he had determined that Wales should survive the war as a cultural entity, if that were at all possible. He showed his commitment to the people of Wales by helping individuals in untold ways, by writing to newspapers and periodicals, and by serving the National Eisteddfod of Wales as an adjudicator and as editor of its transactions. He showed his commitment to the future of the Welsh people by his services to the nation's children. He contributed articles to *Yr Athro* ('The Teacher') and he edited with E. Curig Davies, *Gwybod, Llyfr y Bachgen a'r Eneth*, and with Cynan (A. E. Jones), *Cofion Cymru at ei phlant ar wasgar* (April 1941–March 1944). The first number of *Gwybod* ('Knowledge') appeared in January 1939. The original intention was to publish four volumes over four years and to produce thereby a periodical which aimed at presenting the

secrets of the world and of life to Welsh children in a methodical and interesting manner. In an editorial under the title 'Rhyngom ni a'n gilydd' (*Entre nous*), Thomas Parry urges children to travel (*teithio*). He distinguishes between travelling and wandering (*crwydro*) and urges children to travel with a purpose and to get acquainted with their own regions, to look for the remains of old Roman roads, to visit old churches built centuries ago, the much younger chapels that have played a part in the history of Wales, and the birthplaces of famous writers, preachers, and philanthropists. The series, *Cofion Cymru at ei phlant ar wasgar* ('Wales remembers her scattered children') was intended to keep the young people of Wales serving in the Armed Forces in touch with their cultural heritage.

The articles in *Yr Athro* showed that he had set his mind on another project, now that the war had made it almost impossible to visit libraries and consult manuscripts in search of Dafydd ap Gwilym material, namely the writing of a history of Welsh literature. *Yr Athro* has a series of questionnaires compiled by him and designed to stimulate and enlarge a child's knowledge of Welsh literature. He was himself increasing his knowledge of Welsh literature by lecturing on all aspects of it in College and by discussing in depth with his students the books which illustrated those aspects. It should be noted that it was after he had started to lecture on literature and to set essays on literary subjects that the Departmental Society was established, called *Cymdeithas Llywarch Hen*, in honour of the poetry of the pseudo-Llywarch Hen, a corpus recently 'unearthed' by Ifor Williams. The results of all this activity came to light when Thomas Parry published his *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg Hyd 1900* in 1944.

Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg Hyd 1900 was subsequently translated into English with the addition of a chapter of his own on the 1900–1945 period by Sir Idris Bell: *A History of Welsh Literature by Thomas Parry, D.Litt. Translated from the Welsh by H. Idris Bell*. In his 'Preface' Sir Idris writes,

Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg Hyd 1900 was at once hailed as an event of major importance for Welsh literary history. For the first time Welsh readers had at their disposal a comprehensive survey of their literature, from its beginnings in the sixth century until the year 1900, a survey written by a scholar of high distinction and drawing on the latest results of the most rigorous scholarship. The book could not have been written without the preliminary labour of many others and of the author himself, but all earlier works on Welsh literature were either summary sketches, like that in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, or studies of particular periods or classes of literature.

Sir Idris also tells us that the English translation of *A History of Welsh Literature* was 'in a sense, a new edition', different in some important respects from the original. As the introduction informs us,

(a) Since the appearance of the *Hanes* Thomas Parry has modified his views on some points and detected one or two minor errors. The necessary corrections have been introduced into the translation, which is therefore, in a sense, a new edition.

(b) The chief difference is in regard to Dafydd ap Gwilym. During his work on his edition of the poet Thomas Parry came to the decision that several poems quoted or referred to in the *Hanes* must be rejected from the canon. Such references and quotations have been deleted and new ones substituted.

It should be noted that Thomas Parry wrote another book bringing the history of Welsh Literature down to 1945, *Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg 1900–1945*, and that it was published in 1945, a year after the *Hanes*. Dealing as it does for the most part with literature produced during the author's lifetime, the approach is altogether different from that in *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg Hyd 1900*. It gives the author greater scope to show his critical acumen, and, as it deals in greater depth with a much shorter period, it shows to advantage his ability to discriminate between the important and unimportant and to illustrate in a few words the artistry of the poet and the craftsmanship of the prose writer, be he novelist, short-story writer, or dramatist.

Thomas Parry was also to write a short school textbook based on these books, *Hanes ein Llên, Braslun o hanes llenyddiaeth Gymraeg o'r cyfnodau bore hyd heddiw* (1948) ('A History of Our Literature . . . from the earliest times to the present'). It is as different from his other two books on the history of literature as they are different from each other. In *Hanes ein Llên* he writes simply and directly, and does not lose sight even for a moment of the fact that he is writing for teenagers, but as a *tour de force* of compression it is rewarding reading for both the expert and the amateur.

But Thomas Parry's greatest work of research and scholarship was still to come. It was published in 1952. *Gwaith Dafydd ap Gwilym* is a remarkable work of scholarship in more than one way. It was produced before the days of the photocopier and the microfilm reader and is the product of months, or rather years, of patient copying from manuscripts of all degrees of legibility, of months of comparing MS readings with each other to establish the relationship between the various copies, and of as much time

again evolving the means of establishing whether a particular poem is genuine or not. Thomas Parry's *saith maen prawf*, his seven tests of authenticity, are familiar to all scholars who have studied Dafydd ap Gwilym's work. Some 358 pieces are attributed to the poet in the manuscripts. Of these only 150 were ultimately included in this edition. The editor would be the first to admit that there may be a few poems wrongly included or excluded, but of the genuineness of the vast majority included there can be no doubt.

Students of this edition were able to appreciate the true greatness of the poet's work, to assess his debt to tradition, to appreciate his originality—all for the first time. It opened up new ways of research to a new generation of researchers and the latter have not been slow to come forward—the names which spring to mind are Dr Rachel Bromwich and Professor D. J. Bowen.

Like all substantial works of scholarship it produced its own parerga: 'Twf y Gynghanedd', *Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion* (1936), 143–60; 'Dosbarthu'r Llawysgrifau Barddoniaeth', *BBCS ix. 1* (Nov. 1936), 1–8; 'Pynciau Cyghanedd', *BBCS x. 1* (Nov. 1939), 1–5; 'Datblygiad y Cywydd', *THSC* (1939), 209–31; and last, but not least, *Mynegai i weithiau Ifor Williams*, 1939, pp. viii, 68.

The 1952 edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym's work comprised 607 pages of text and notes, and over 200 pages of introduction. In the 1963 edition the introduction was reduced to 55 pages.

The administrator, the teacher, and the scholar were all kept very busy but they did not succeed in silencing entirely the creative writer. Sometime during the summer of 1931 Thomas Parry had gone to Liverpool to spend the day with a friend, a native of Carmel like himself, but at that time a medical student. In the afternoon they went to see Epstein's 'Genesis' on exhibition in the Bluecoat School under floodlight in a windowless room against a black back-cloth, the figure of a pregnant woman big with child and haggard with pain. For reasons he himself found hard to explain, the sculpture had a strong disturbing effect on Thomas Parry: it haunted him for days.

Later in the summer the subjects for the literary and other competitions in the Aberafan National Eisteddford were published. The subject set for the *awdl*,—the ode in 'strict' metres—was 'Mam' ('Mother'). It appealed to Thomas Parry and he was tempted to compete and to make use of his experience of Epstein's 'Genesis'. There was, however, one snag. One of the adjudicators was T. H. Parry-Williams, his cousin, and the rules

of the Eisteddfod laid down that no one was to compete if any of the competition adjudicators was a relative. Thomas Parry hesitated but eventually succumbed to the temptation. And, as he himself said afterwards, with the worst possible result. T. H. Parry-Williams was in favour of awarding the chair to the author of the ode which drew on the inspiration of Epstein's 'Genesis', the other two adjudicators, the Revs J. J. Williams and J. T. Job, thought that the ode in question was too obscure and awarded the chair to another competitor—the Rev D. J. Davies, of Capel Als, Llanelli—and their view prevailed. However, Thomas Parry's ode was published separately and, although it was too avant-garde for some tastes, it was a public demonstration that the author could handle the strict metres with much more than average competence and had a genuine poetic talent, and it established his claim to be considered worthy to adjudicate in the competition for the chair and the crown at future National Eisteddfodau—a task which he was called upon to perform frequently in subsequent years.

When he was completing his edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym, he wrote a verse translation of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (1949). It will be remembered that his lifelong friend John Gwilym Jones had developed a passion for drama and had become an established playwright as well as an excellent producer. By this time Thomas Parry had become Professor of Welsh and Head of Department (1947) and, as one of his concerns even before his appointment had been the success of the Welsh Dramatic Society as well as of the other Welsh societies, he had enlisted the services of his friend both as playwright and as producer to ensure that Welsh drama should flourish in the College. Most of John Gwilym Jones's plays were written in the first instance for the College's Welsh Dramatic Society, and no doubt the fact that Thomas Parry could have his translation of Eliot's play produced under the supervision of his friend was an additional incentive for him to undertake the translation, but I like to think that the familiarity with medieval life which resulted from his study of the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and others had something to do with his resolve to translate Eliot's play: it is certain that familiarity with the language of medieval Welsh poetry had a great deal to do with the rich verbal texture of the translation and with its success. *Lladd wrth yr Allor* ('Murder beside the Altar'), to give the translation's Welsh title, is one of those rare cases where enough has been added to the original to compensate for the losses unavoidable in the process of transla-

tion, and where the translation becomes another classic. The translator was amused when I told him that an American student of mine had approached T. S. Eliot while he was on a visit to Harvard and had congratulated him on his success in translating Thomas Parry's play. When I asked the student what Eliot's comment had been, the reply was: 'Nothing except "Oh, yes!"'

Thomas Parry's success with the translation of *Murder in the Cathedral* encouraged him to write an original historical verse play, *Llywelyn Fawr* ('Llywelyn The Great', 1954). Although it has not been very popular with producers and dramatic societies, it is an extremely fine piece of writing which has not had the attention it deserves, either from the literary critic or from the common reader.

Neither the urge to write creatively nor the urge to research was ever completely suppressed in Thomas Parry even when he was all but submerged in administration. It was in 1962 that his anthology of Welsh verse from the earliest times was published. *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* is the only satisfactory anthology of its kind and it required a great deal of editorial work since it included a number of poems taken from unedited and others from imperfectly edited texts.

However, in 1953 a turn of events occurred which was to alter Thomas Parry's career: the administrator won precedence over the scholar and the writer. That year two posts, that of Principal of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and that of Librarian of the National Library, also at Aberystwyth, had become vacant. Professor Parry's name was mentioned in connection with both, but eventually Goronwy Rees, of All Souls, Oxford, was appointed to the former, Professor Parry to the latter—much to the delight of the staff of the National Library, much to the disappointment of his colleagues and students at Bangor.

Professor Parry occupied the post of Librarian for five years with remarkable success. They were eventful years in the history of the Library, and not least because they included two significant celebrations: one of them, in 1955, the opening by HM The Queen of the section which completed the plan of the building as envisaged by the architect 46 years previously, 44 years after the laying of the foundation stone; and the other, in 1957, the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Library's foundation (1907–57). The latter gave the Librarian the opportunity to survey the achievements of the period—namely the two obvious ones, the completion of the Library's imposing building and the

acquisition of a vast, ever-increasing collection of books and manuscripts, the latter ranging from the important personal papers of a prominent Welsh statesman to the seemingly unimportant personal diary of an obscure quarryman or coalminer.

Dr Parry—he had been awarded the degree of D. Litt. by the University of Wales in 1953—claimed that the Library had won the right to be regarded as the national repository for all manuscripts and documents relating to Wales. His claim was justified, but perhaps he was rather too optimistic. Although the Library ‘has become a national repository in the full sense of the word’, it has had to fight against the characteristically Welsh centrifugal tendency which, never completely eradicated, has manifested itself these days in the various attempts made by County Archivists to claim all MSS concerning their areas.

The National Library of Wales is one of the few copyright libraries in the land, i.e. it is one of the few libraries with a right to a copy of almost everything published in the United Kingdom. When Dr Parry took office, there was a tendency among some minor publishers to ignore this right, and, as there was a danger that if they were successful in evading their obligation, others would be tempted to follow their example, it was decided to take them to court. Just before the case was to be heard, one of the barristers representing the defaulting publishers approached the officials of the Library and advised them to withdraw; otherwise, he said, the publishers would make known some facts which would make the Library the laughing-stock of the country. Dr Parry’s reply was prompt and decisive. Under no circumstances were they prepared to withdraw. If they had done anything of which they should be ashamed, they must take the responsibility. In the event, the barrister was shown to be bluffing and the Library won its case without difficulty. Dr Parry would have welcomed the recent action which has abolished the restrictions set on the National Library of Wales’ rights of legal deposit and thus secured for it the same privileges as are enjoyed by the National Library of Scotland, the Bodleian and others.

Dr Parry’s predecessor as Librarian of the National Library of Wales, Sir William Ll. Davies, had tended to discourage the staff from pursuing their own research and even from engaging in any sort of writing, even creative writing. Dr Parry thought that this was wrong and he expressed his views at the celebration of the Library’s fiftieth anniversary in unequivocal terms:

I have now mentioned the two most easily discernible developments

that have taken place in the National Library during the fifty years of its existence, viz., the various stages in the erection of the building and the accumulation of the Library's stock. There is another development, which is less conspicuous to the layman, but which is really the most fundamentally important of all, and that is the recruitment and training of a suitable staff. The Vice-President has said that the Library has acquired a reputation and a degree of prestige at centres of learning far afield. Such a reputation would never have been gained by a magnificent pile of buildings or by an extensive collection of books and manuscripts, however valuable. The reputation of the library has been made by the men and women who work in it.

There is still an impression lurking in some quarters that library work is a refuge for the otherwise incompetent. I need hardly say to this gathering that it is a highly specialist vocation, and that the true librarian is a specialist in two fields. He has first of all a certain technical ability to deal with books or with documents as the case may be, and to classify and schedule them so as to facilitate the work of scholars and other readers who may wish to use them. He has also his own personal interest in some topic of scholarship which he, favourably placed as he is, is best qualified to pursue. This dual specialism should be the aim of the authorities and of every servant of every great library. Every member of the staff of a library like ours should be encouraged and inspired to indulge his own predilection and to chase any whim of scholarship to which he may become addicted.

This is an ideal to be attained with time and tradition. It is an aspect of the mellowness which well-established institutions like the British Museum and the Bodleian Library have achieved. Our National Library is young in comparison, but its record in this respect is very gratifying. Most of the present members of the staff are in this room at this moment, and I will not embarrass them. . . . But it is fair to point to the notes and articles published by them in the *Journal* of the Library over the last eighteen years, and very substantial contributions to *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig* (the Dictionary of Welsh Biography). This service to Welsh scholarship is a Library activity of which I personally am very proud and which I hope to see extended.

Dr Parry used his position as National Librarian to further also the interests of county and local libraries and did everything in his power to produce the right conditions for a prosperous book trade, especially a Welsh book trade. Publishing in the Welsh language was an extremely hazardous business in the early fifties and the problems connected with it exercised the minds of many public figures, some of them librarians. People were encouraged to form Book Societies and to join together to form a Union of Book Societies. Dr Parry played a prominent part in the development and in its extension, the establishment of The

Welsh Book Council. The late Mr R. Alun Edwards, successively the County Librarian of Cardiganshire and of Dyfed, has described how he and Dr Parry travelled throughout Wales in every kind of weather to address meetings and to persuade people of influence of the need for such a Council. Dr Parry usually drove the car to these meetings and was invariably the principal speaker. There can be no doubt that, had he not brought his authority as National Librarian, his prestige as a scholar, and his enthusiasm for Welsh culture, to assist the movement, the Welsh Book Council, which is today the envy of all Celtic and other countries with minority languages, would not have come into existence.

In 1958 the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, was again looking for a principal.

The events which led up to the resignation of Goronwy Rees, who had been appointed principal in the same year in which Dr Parry had been appointed National Librarian, have been described in some detail and with scrupulous impartiality by the College historian, Dr E. L. Ellis, in *The University College of Wales 1872-1972* and need not be repeated here. It will be sufficient to say that the events started with the publication of five articles in *The People* on Guy Burgess, 'the greatest traitor in all British history', written 'by his most intimate friend—a man in a high academic position', none other, so it transpired, than Goronwy Rees himself, and to add that these articles and the events connected with them left the College, both staff and students, deeply divided and thoroughly unhappy.

It was obvious that the College needed a period of calm and peace to recover from its troubles and that it needed as its new principal a man who would be certain not only to command the respect of all connected with it but also to bring to the task of uniting all sections of staff and students a knowledge of its recent history, a strong personality with more than average wisdom and patience. It was quite obvious that the College needed to know much more about the new principal than it had known about Goronwy Rees before proceeding to appoint him.

Both needs were fulfilled when Dr Parry was appointed. As National Librarian he had been a member of the College Council and had been intimately connected with College affairs, a fact which might have proved a disadvantage, but by his tolerance and circumspection, and above all by his manifest desire to put the welfare of the College above sectional interests and all other considerations, Dr Parry soon brought back a

feeling of solidarity to the College community and a renewed confidence and optimism regarding its future.

He continued to take a deep interest in the National Library. As Librarian he had been an *ex officio* member of the College Council, now as Principal of the College he was an *ex officio* member of the National Library Council. He continued to play an active part in the Library's affairs and it is not surprising that when he retired from the principalship he was made President of the National Library in 1969 and remained President until 1977.

His experience in the National Library also made him the obvious choice for the office of chairman of the sub-committee set up by the University Grants Committee in July 1963, to study the functions and the future of university libraries. The Committee's report was completed and published in 1967.

It is an important document and Dr Parry contributed a great deal to ensure that it would command the utmost respect. He visited the United States and studied on the Committee's behalf the structure and organization of eight university libraries (Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Michigan, Princeton, Wayne, Yale) and of the National Library of Medicine in Washington. The knowledge he thus accumulated together with his experience as the National Librarian of Wales gave him even more influence than that usually exercised by a chairman in the drafting of the final form of the Report, and to all who knew him, that influence is plainly visible in the Report. It is not without justification that it is commonly referred to as the Parry Report.

The first four chapters deal respectively with 'The Library Scene', 'Co-operation', 'Inter-Library Loans' and 'Nature of Collections'. One of the most significant chapters is the seventh which deals with 'The National Library', i.e. the British Library. Still more important is the final chapter (XIII), 'Summary of Main Recommendations'. The recommendations are, as one would expect, detailed and far-reaching, and had they been fully implemented, they would have transformed the library scene in the country for generations.

As Principal, Dr Parry became a highly respected and much valued member of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals and served on several delegations, including one to Europe and another to Australia and New Zealand. He also played an important part in the history of the University of Wales, serving for two periods as Vice-Chancellor, 1961-3 and 1967-9.

He had always taken an interest in the University of Wales Press Board and when he was made its chairman, he was able to bring his experience as author and as librarian to its deliberations. Needless to say, he was anxious to see the Press achieve the highest standards in book production and in scholarship, and showed the same impatience with the authors who wish to rewrite their books in proof—he himself was one of those authors whose typescript was always a model of neatness and accuracy, and very seldom did he have occasion to change anything in proof—as with those presses who by their shoddy compositing double an author's labours.

Even more important than Dr Parry's part in the development of the University Press was the part he played in preserving the University of Wales and its federal structure. This was the period of university expansion, and it was perhaps inevitable that as all the constituent colleges of the University grew in size and as further expansion had to be envisaged, the continued existence of the federal structure of the University of Wales should be called in question by some people, and more particularly by some members of the senates of the individual colleges.

In December 1960, the Court of the University of Wales appointed a Commission to review and report on the functions, powers, structure, and future status of the University and its constituent colleges.

Ultimately fourteen members of this Commission signed a Report that favoured the creation of four unitary universities in Wales, and twelve members appended their names to a Second Report that recommended the continuance (with some modification) of the existing federal University. Dr Parry issued a separate statement which argued that the Commission had exceeded its term of reference in the recommendations, and expressed the opinion that the proper course should have been for the Commission to have presented one Report signed by all members and presenting the choices to be considered by the Court. Eventually, the second, i.e. the minority Report, was accepted by the University Court, and the survival of the federal University of Wales was assured. Although the corporate opinion of the College at Aberystwyth was never formally expressed, such evidence as there is suggests that there was less support for the dismemberment of the federal university at Aberystwyth than at any other college: the Aberystwyth students voted strongly in favour of the retention of the existing structure in 1961, and men and women with strong Aberystwyth affiliations

were prominent among the influential 'Friends of the University of Wales'. Both students and 'Friends' could claim that they were following the lead of the Principal of the College.

Needless to say, the Principal's leadership had a more direct bearing on the College than on the University and it is shown more particularly in the College response to the Robbins Committee's Report published in 1963. Among other things that report recommended that provision should be made for 390,000 places for full-time students in all branches of higher education by 1973/4 (the existing number was 216,000) and for 560,000 places by 1980/1, of which 350,000 were to be in institutions of university status.

The Government of the day accepted this recommendation regarding student numbers and exhorted all existing universities to expand as rapidly as possible. 'So far as Aberystwyth was concerned, it meant that in 1970 there were just a thousand more students at the College than there were in 1960.' (E. L. Ellis, *The University College of Wales 1872-1972*, p. 302.)

Aberystwyth University College had already embarked on a building programme which catered for some expansion and it was fortunate in that it had a site which allowed for still further expansion, the magnificent site given by a former student, Joseph Davies Bryan. Now it had to embark on a building programme unprecedented in its history, the implementation of which was to transform it from being the College by the Sea to being the College on the Hill. Many problems had to be solved, two in particular: how to develop the site in such a way as to make the most economical use of the land, and how to build in such a way that the buildings and the terrain matched each other to the best possible aesthetic effect. Dr Parry and his colleagues were well aware of the nature of these problems and took the best advice available to ensure satisfactory solutions. There can be no doubt that the present Pen-glais site, with its library, its halls of residence, and arts and science buildings, is among the best developed in the country.

Dr Parry was more than sceptical about the apparent enthusiasm displayed by the Government of the day in accepting the Robbins Committee's Report. He regarded their promises of action on it as

just another example of the hypocrisy, born of a union of pigheadedness and incompetence, which, unfortunately, far too often characterises politicians. (*Principal's Report*, 1963)

He realized that the Government's refusal to accept the advice of the UGC at the beginning of that quinquennium would result in a whole generation of students being taught under very difficult conditions and in circumstances which would make the maintenance of the usual standards almost impossible.

But he was also unhappy with regard to the Report itself. He regretted that the Committee had capitulated to the popular clamour for university degrees in preference to other qualifications, and was not in favour of enabling people to gain higher degrees by attending institutions which were not universities.

Another weakness of the Report was that it seemed to be inordinately enamoured of mere magnitude.

I am convinced that there is and always will be a place for the smaller university, but only if that university thinks out very clearly its own vocation and its own destiny, and resolutely refuses to ape the bigger institutions, whose functions and potentials are of an entirely different nature. One thing a small institution must on no account do, and that is, regard itself as belonging to a depressed class that exists on sufferance. It must have a firm philosophy and a penetrating vision of what it can accomplish, and then apply itself to achieve its own ends regardless of what anybody else may be doing. It is the lack of this sort of philosophy and an inclination to emulate a nebulous university pattern that may well bedevil the efforts of our Welsh Colleges today. It is my earnest hope that we at Aberystwyth will set a reasonable ceiling figure for our total student numbers, and proceed to shape our own future in accordance with our size, our location, and our resources. (*Principal's Report*, 1963)

Expansion in student numbers posed special problems to the Welsh university colleges, and to Aberystwyth College in particular. Dr Parry's report for 1960 indicates that the overall increase in student numbers during the preceding five years had been 30 per cent, that the increase in the number of students from Wales had been 11.2 per cent, while the increase in the number of students from other parts of Great Britain had been 126 per cent.

Two facts seem to be indicated by these figures. In the first place, assuming that the state of affairs in the other three Colleges is similar to what it is in Aberystwyth, it appears that facilities for University education in Wales during the next ten years will be substantially more than what pupils from Welsh schools will require. Secondly, it follows that to achieve the expansion envisaged, the Welsh colleges will have to rely on recruitment from over the border. (*Principal's Report*, 1960)

In his 1964 Annual Report, Dr Parry expresses concern at the number (43 per cent) of pupils from Welsh schools who elected to go to a university other than the University of Wales, but in his Annual Report for 1966 he draws some consolation from the fact that the proportion of intake of Welsh school pupils at Aberystwyth was nearly one half (49 per cent) of the whole.

There were other disadvantages in the implementation of the Robbins Committee's Report, disadvantages of an academic kind. With all the universities increasing their staff from a pool of candidates which had not had time to expand with the needs of the times, there was a danger that candidates with lower qualifications than before would be appointed.

In his Annual Report for 1960 Dr Parry states that an unusually large number of new members were appointed to the staff at the Assistant Lecturer and Lecturer Grades. 'They amount in all to 44, of whom 31 are new appointments. . . . I can assure the Court that, in spite sometimes of a small number of applications, I am perfectly happy about the qualifications of the men and women appointed.'

The 1967 Annual Report shows that the Principal is somewhat unhappy with the staffing situation which has resulted from the expansion of the universities.

The new, and somewhat disturbing feature of staff mobility is the ease and frequency with which young lecturers move about. In the golden past a highly qualified young scholar, if offered a university post, would jump at it. In the steely present not so highly qualified young men offer themselves to three or four universities, and accept appointment on their own terms. After a few years—possibly two or three—they are restlessly looking around for other opportunities. Such opportunities are not lacking.

The mentality which some (I repeat some) university teachers develop these days, can only be compared with the worst trade-union mentality, which sets personal advancement and the amount of the monthly cheque far above the welfare of the institution, and lacks the sense of loyalty to the department and the students, without which there is no difference between a profession and a mere occupation.

The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, did not escape the wave of unrest which enveloped students in Britain as well as in the USA and other countries, but in Wales and especially in Bangor and Aberystwyth the unrest showed itself in a peculiar form and affected not so much the general body of students as its Welsh members, who felt that what they had regarded as their

university was becoming more and more like an English provincial university and that the position of their language in the university colleges, at best precarious, was becoming even more marginal. The result was that some Welsh students went on hunger-strike and others resorted to violence against property in a demand that the use of Welsh should be extended rather than diminished. Their actions produced an equally strong reaction from some members, especially some English members, of the staff.

The Welsh students expected to be supported by Welsh members of the staff and especially by the Principal, who was such a prominent member of the establishment in Wales. Dr Parry's position was not an enviable one, being exposed to criticism from the English as well as the Welsh 'extremists'. Characteristically, he held to the principles which he had consistently followed since the beginning of his academic career. He talked to the students as he had always talked to them, as adults and as equals. He appealed to them not to use any means inconsistent with the democratic character of the community of which they were members. He made the same appeal to the more reactionary members of the staff and asked that toleration should be shown by each side to the other. The essential wisdom of this approach was demonstrated when it was continued by Dr Parry's successor as Principal, Sir Goronwy Daniel, and its correctness was justified by its results. The College came through that period of student unrest with very little damage to its image as the home of a civilized community and far more successfully than its sister college at Bangor.

Dr Parry retired from the Principalship in 1969, two years before the end of his term, to the general regret of both students and staff, and returned to his native county, Caernarfonshire, and to Bangor, the city where he had been successively student, lecturer, and professor. The University of Wales bestowed on him the honorary degree of LL.D. The National University of Ireland had awarded him the honorary degree of D.Litt.Celt. in 1968 and he had been elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1959.

He did not allow himself much leisure even in retirement: he continued to help friends and former students by editing their manuscripts for publication and by writing the occasional introduction. One of the last tasks he undertook was to check all the Welsh language-related entries for the *Oxford Companion to Welsh Literature*. He discharged two particularly onerous tasks when he

edited, in conjunction with Mr Merfyn Morgan, the bibliography of Welsh Literature, *Llyfryddiaeth Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg*, and when he acted as the literary editor of the new Welsh translation of the Bible—a task he had almost completed before he died, although the translation is not to appear until 1988, the fourth centenary of the appearance of the first Welsh translation of the Bible, that of Bishop Morgan, in 1588.

I have already referred to Dr Parry's Presidency of the National Library of Wales from 1969 to 1979. There were other presidencies and vice-presidencies. He had been chairman of the Council of the National Eisteddfod during the years 1958–60 and it was almost inevitable that he should become the President of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1978–82.

The two great honours that were bestowed upon him in his final years, the *Cymmrodorion Medal* in 1976 and a knighthood in 1978, were more than richly deserved and truly appreciated, for he believed in serving his country and his fellowmen, and nothing was more alien to his idealism than the mentality which measures everything in terms of the money it earns. After the illness he suffered during his second year as a student he was to enjoy excellent health until his last two or three years. He had to undergo surgery in 1983, and, though the operation seemed to be successful, it brought only relief and a respite; it did not restore him to health. Further operations followed and a great deal of physical weakness which he bore with dignity, fortitude, and courage. He died in his sleep on 22 April 1985. Both he and his wife, who nursed him after he had returned home to die, drew great consolation and strength from the intimate partnership which they had enjoyed from the beginning of their marriage.

Tall, well-built, erect in bearing, sturdy in stride, and determined in step, with penetrating eyes and always with the slight shadow of a smile over his well-trimmed moustache—this is the picture which all his numerous friends and students will carry of him, a picture which they will never forget because it embodies for them so many of the ideals which he taught them to cherish.

The Festschrift which was presented to Sir Thomas in 1977 contains a bibliography of his works to that date and the following dedicatory *englynion* by Derwyn Jones, a former student; for those who understand Welsh they sum up admirably the most essential of his qualities as a man and a scholar:

Am werth gair, am wyrth geiriau—y sieryd
A'r llais oer, digwafrau,
A'i eirio moel yn trymhau
Yn oludog folawdau.

Athro mawr â threm eryr,—a chadarn
Warcheidwad didostur;
Ond i aelwyd llawn dolor
Pwy yw hwn ond cyfaill pur?

Of the value of the word, of the miracle of words—he speaks
With cool, unquavering voice
And the plain enunciation gradually deepening
Into richness of eulogy.

The great teacher with an eagle's gaze—the strong
Unsparing defender,
But to the family racked with pain
Who is he but the best friend?

J. E. C. WILLIAMS