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George Lyman Kittredge

Bartlett Jere Whiting

The fifty-fifth Anniversary Edition of *Chaucer and His Poetry* by George Lyman Kittredge is to be published later this year by the Harvard University Press. In his Introduction to this edition, Professor Whiting, after suggesting reasons for the continued and steady demand for the book, has attempted "to depict Kittredge as he lives nearly thirty years after his death in the memories of his devoted students." For permission to print this portion of the Introduction here, the BULLETIN is deeply indebted to Professor Whiting and to the Press.

EDS.

SCHOLARS frequently reflect, wistfully or smugly, that the lives of persistent scholars, at least in the humanities, rarely contain episodes attractive to the lively biographer. George Lyman Kittredge was no exception. His private life was happy and uneventful; his public life, if it may be called that, was confined to the classroom and the lecture platform. Letters, once the core, and sometimes the upas tree, of the academic's biography, were not his customary way of communication. A postcard, rarely filled, served his need, and here he followed F. J. Furnivall rather than F. J. Child.

Kittredge was born in Boston in 1860 of what Clough calls "the New England ancient blood," but the truly formative days of his youth were spent in Barnstable on Cape Cod. Barnstable, then a small, cohesive community of year-round residents, was the home of his mother's people and here, in addition to frequent shorter visits, he lived from his thirteenth to his fifteenth year. From Barnstable came his lifelong interest in the early history of New England, its records and its folklore, tales more than twice-told of Dark Days and moon-cursers, of doctors, ministers, and soldiers, of ghosts, witches, and wizards, and in such tangible relics as arrows of Indians and their skeletons. One massive segment of Kittredge's writings may not unreasonably be traced to Barnstable: his studies in Colonial history and, notably, *The Old Farmer and his Almanac* (1904), that most readable

and eclectic preface to an older New England, and the magisterial *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (1929). Barnstable's present did as much for the boy as its past, because, unlike Boston, it was a classless society with but the faintest barriers between families and between youth and age, so that he came to know ordinary people, as ordinary and ordinary as New Englanders can be. His later life, for that matter, was spent in a one-class society, but the class was as artificial as it was admirable, and Kittredge would never have had the understanding of human nature which leavened his criticism, written and above all in the classroom, had it not been for Barnstable, where he was to spend almost every summer and where he died in 1941.¹

The family returned to Boston and Kittredge went to the Roxbury Latin School (1875-1878) and then to Harvard (1878-1882). That the first scholar in his class at Roxbury should major in the Classics at Harvard and be again the first scholar in his class was natural enough. Less predictable was his popularity among his fellows and his active part in clubs, feasts, and periodicals. He was a witty after-dinner speaker, a ready writer of parody and burlesque, and a facile rhymester. Almost forgotten is the fact that in 1895 he gave the annual Phi Beta Kappa poem entitled "Philosophy the Guide," an effusion which he did not see fit to print. Almost as obscured by time is his spirit of playfulness. Like his undergraduate teacher and lifelong friend, Le Baron Russell Briggs, he understood the meaning of *dulce est desipere in loco*. As a child he projected a publication to be called *Poetry and Fun*; as a man he delighted in quoting Artemus Ward. His after-dinner remarks, often off-the-cuff, were marked by comic learning and inoffensively facetious personalities.

If there is such a thing as a genuine turning point in a man's life, that time came to Kittredge in the fall of 1880 when he enrolled in English 4, Francis James Child's course in Middle English. Child's *Ballads* keep his name alive, even if some of those who could not work without him damn him with faint praise, but, partly because his life was never written, the man and teacher have become shadowy. Today, despite our horde of political and evangelical professors, it is not easy to realize the love and reverence in which Child was held far beyond his accustomed course between Kirkland Street and the College Yard. From what used to be called humble origins, his father a sailmaker and

¹ An affectionate picture of Barnstable in the 1960's is by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Welcome To the Monkey House* (New York, 1970), pp. 1-6.

his playground the Boston wharves, he came to be the first internationally recognized American scholar in the humanities and a man of whom William James could say, "He had a moral delicacy and a richness of heart that I never saw and never expect to see equalled," and "I loved Child more than any man I know." Child was a short, stocky man, called "Stubby" by half a century of students, with a full head of light, curly hair. Despite his quiet, unassuming manner he had an infectious enthusiasm that drew people to him and to the things with which he was concerned. Once when he agreed to add extra hours to his exposition of Chaucer and said that his students might, if they liked, invite friends, the auditors swelled the course to the capacity of what was then Harvard's largest lecture room. Along with books and people his great passion was for roses and his garden was filled with hundreds of bushes which he tended, often cigar in mouth, with the loving and respectful care he gave to ballads. Modesty toward himself and affection toward others were the hallmarks of his character. In a late letter he wrote, "I should have been more of a producer, if I had not spent about half my life in loving people."

In 1880 Child had been a member of the Harvard faculty thirty-three years and since 1876 the first Professor of English, for which post he had relinquished the Boylston Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory and with it most of the drudgery of theme correcting. Except for a course in advanced composition and another in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature, both given by Adams S. Hill, Child was responsible for the English offering. He needed recruits, and either that year or the next Kittredge became an obvious choice for a younger colleague. Kittredge's reverence and affection for Child were intense and lasting. Not only did he assist materially in preparing the last sections of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* for the press, but he spent untold hours sorting and mounting the vast collection of Child's letters and manuscript materials now in the Harvard College Library. His feeling for his master was admirably expressed in his answer to a student who asked why a passage in Shakespeare was explained in one way by Kittredge and in another by an editor, "Because *he* did not have Mr. Child to tell him what was right." The association was postponed when, after his graduation, Kittredge went to Phillips Exeter Academy, where he taught Latin for five years. In the interim Child directed Kittredge's private studies, encouraged him to take a

year out to study in Germany, where, like Child before him, he attended courses but did no work toward a degree, and in 1888 brought him back to Harvard. By that time the Department included Briggs and Barrett Wendell, and, between then and Child's death in 1896, George P. Baker, Jefferson B. Fletcher, Fred N. Robinson, and Charles T. Copeland, along with a few more transient figures.

In the decade after 1888 Kittredge offered instruction in Old Norse, Anglo-Saxon, historical English grammar, Middle English, the metrical romances, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, the English Bible, Bacon, and Milton. The list is formidable and no less impressive when we remember that the teacher had had the benefit of prior instruction in but few of the subjects. Kittredge acquired languages readily — he once said that a reading knowledge of most modern tongues could be picked up in a hammock during an otherwise idle summer — and he was a compulsive reader.

The extent of Kittredge's reading is hardly to be exaggerated. Another Comestor, he read rapidly and attentively and, despite his phenomenal memory, he obeyed the injunction, "When found, make a note of." At the age of fourteen he put together a collection of quotations not found in Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, drawing from such authors as Philip Bailey, John Taylor the Water-Poet, Dante, William of Wykeham, John Dyer, Shakespeare, George Herbert, Samuel Butler, Robert Herrick, William of Malmesbury, Thomas Moore, Byron, Watts, F. J. Child's first collection of *English and Scottish Ballads* (a prophetic choice), Chatterton, Longfellow, Whittier, and Henry Wotton. To suspect that some of his excerpts came from volumes of selections is not to detract from the impressiveness of the list. We miss Chaucer, but in an essay of the same year (1874) he quotes from the Canon's Yeoman's Tale, with a line reference to a nineteenth-century edition of Tyrwhitt's text. Two years later he compiled a list of "Words not in Webster's Unabridged," which included *vomiture*, *shard*, *alabareh* and *bareem* ("probably a variant of *barem*"). In 1878, his freshman year, he began the first of a long series of folio commonplace books, the indexes to which were ultimately combined in an *Index Rerum*. This first volume, with mottoes from Herbert and Donne, has passages, frequently long and always out of complete editions, from Ennius, Thomas Wright's *Songs and Carols*, Defoe's *Political History of the Devil*, Walter Mapes, John Webster, Sir Thomas Browne, Landor (in more than one place), William of

Malmesbury, Massachusetts Colony Records, Jacques Delille, Cotton's Montaigne, R. H. Wilde of Augusta (Georgia), John Oldham, the *Chester Plays*, Skelton, Drayton, Joseph Hall, William Chappell (three songs with the musical notations), William Drummond, Donne (at much greater length than any other poet), Rowlands, Beaumont and Fletcher, Delder, Middleton, Ford, Peele, Jonson, Kyd, Thomas Heywood, Glapthorne, Tourneur, Marston, Burton, and others. Few students, one suspects, approach their first formal classes in English with such informal preparation. Other undergraduate folios are filled with Greek and Latin, and by the time he was at Exeter he was systematically combing Old French romances. In addition to the commonplace books he had what F. N. Robinson called his Catalogue of Universal Information, a large, twenty-four drawer cabinet filled with indexed and cross-indexed cards from which he could extract references for himself and for other scholars. All these, be it noted, in his own small yet legible hand. He never used a typewriter or in any ordinary sense of the term a research assistant. When we remember that his reading in prose fiction was extensive, and that even from the detective stories he liked so well he snapped up trifles unconsidered by others, it is remarkable that a mere eighty-one years contained the necessary time. For one thing, he kept late hours and had the happy faculty of closing his eyes, sleeping soundly for half an hour and returning refreshed and alert to his books. Reading was to Kittredge as natural a process as breathing.

Kittredge met his last class in 1936 and died in 1941; those who remember him in action are now well into middle age and are not infrequently asked, "What was Kittredge like?" In the first place, his appearance was one to catch the eye and cling to the memory. There are few more dispiriting sights than the members of a faculty *en masse*. High imagination is required to believe that a huddle of such generally drab and even scruffy people represents a concentration of learning and wisdom. In that company Kittredge stood out like an egret in a flock of cowbirds. He was a little above middle height, spare, and erect until years brought him a scholar's stoop. His striking feature was a full yet ordered beard, all the more evident because he wore it during the interbarbate period, when "Beaver!" could be a challenging game. This beard, as much the subject of wonder and conjecture among his students as any oriflamme, he had grown while

still an undergraduate.² The reason for the beard was simpler and more human than many of the guesses about it: a tender skin made shaving unpleasant. The beard was at first of a fine brownish red, but it turned early white, and was so unsullied in its whiteness, especially on an habitual smoker of cigars, that some observers maintained that he washed it with blueing.³ The mouth was firm, the nose aquiline, and the blue eyes, when not hooded, piercing. For reading he used pince-nez which he manipulated with gestures of a military precision. The hair on his head, as if put to rout by the splendor of the beard, became sparse, a possible explanation of the hat he wore in so many of his pictures.

Kittredge's fondness for light-colored suits did not diminish his visibility, nor did his habit of carrying a cane, a custom which he abandoned at about the time that age might have suggested its practical utility. While he was not above giving the cane a playful flourish, there is no evidence that he used it to strike at people who were in his way or to knock off hats unwisely worn inside the library. He did indeed raise his cane to stop traffic when crossing a street, but he was never so oblivious of danger as George Herbert Palmer, who would emerge from the Yard and cross Massachusetts Avenue without lifting his eyes from the ground or breaking the steady patter of his felt-slipped feet.

Cigars, his favorite being the Prince of Monaco, furnished one of the elements in which he lived, and he believed that a good thing should be shared. To doctors' orals he carried a pocketful for himself and the candidate, and when one young scholar left the room after a consumption of five, Kittredge said with emphatic admiration, "That man is a smoker! I move that he be passed." Occasionally a student, too timid or too bold, assayed his first cigar in his first oral and came close to losing more than face. More prudent and perhaps more sentimental nonsmokers accepted the cigar as a precious souvenir. His

² Beards were not a students' thing in the 1880's. In his class (1882) of 181 members, mustaches were common, sideburns, occasionally flowering into burnside, not uncommon, and there were but ten beards. These facts, as interesting today as at any other time, were garnered from a hasty run through the Class Album.

³ Students' interest in teachers' hair seems often to have reached the outer limits of fetishism. One group, for example, maintained that the lank, even, and brown locks of John Livingston Lowes, Kittredge's student and colleague, were in point of fact a wig, until a junior Sherlock undermined the theory by seeing Lowes have a shampoo.

generosity was not limited to students. One of the men who came periodically to dust his books said of him, "Some men will say to you, 'Have a cigar?' Not Kittredge. He puts out a box and says, 'Keep smoking.'" To mention another of life's little pleasures, he liked convivial drinking, but was said to have respected Prohibition to the extent of evading direct contact with bootleggers. He took a cocktail in the old-fashioned way, cold and quick — a sip, a reflective nod, and then an empty glass. In lesser men this method can lead to embarrassment, but if such a misfortune ever happened to Kittredge no one present remembered to tell of it.

Kittredge's fame as a teacher came primarily from his large course in Shakespeare, and, to a degree lesser only because there were fewer students, from his courses in Chaucer and the *Beowulf*. He did not give set lectures, but read aloud with dramatic vigor, pausing for explanatory and interpretative comments which might be as short as a sentence or take as long as fifteen minutes. Except when reading he would stride to and fro across the platform, a truly peripatetic teacher. His comments were clear and beautifully expressed, touched on every aspect of the text, and explained what the author meant to himself and to his original audience. A phenomenal memory allowed him to recall in paraphrase or quotation the context around a word or phrase given in a question or to teach the *Beowulf* from an unmarked text. He did not ignore the new corn which comes out of old fields, but he had little part in attempts to state what an early author might have had in mind had he known what he could not know. Naturally enough he talked about words and about their histories, but his method was not philological, in the senselessly opprobrious sense of that word. He made his students realize that effort was required to comprehend Chaucer or Shakespeare and he made most of them feel that the effort was pleasant. The exposition was essentially dramatic, in that there was a steady and uninhibited interplay between the poet and the teacher, and neither suffered in the process. It was not Kittredge's fault if the interplay did not include the students as well. He constantly stopped to invite, indeed demand questions, and could become fretful if they were not forthcoming.

Other words than "fretful" have been applied to Kittredge's demeanor in the classroom, and there were undoubtedly some who found it oppressive. His concept of decorous behavior was offensive to the few who could smell permissiveness afar, and his insistence that stu-

dents conform to his ideal caused him to be called a martinet. He sometimes induced conformity by explosions of wrath so spectacular as to be unforgettable and thereby multiplied in tradition. Actually, outbursts were rare and certainly not brought on by every temptation. By comparison with his classmate and colleague, Charles Townsend Copeland, he had no more gall than a dove. His rages were so irregular and sometimes seemed so staged, that there were those who held that he had in his texts such personal directions as "Stir up the animals," or "Exit, pursued by a tantrum." Although attractive, the theory is probably untenable. Certain things affronted his sense of fitness. To him the wearing of a hat in the classroom, or indeed the library, approached sacrilege, and to do so usually received due attention, as did the reading of newspapers during the class hour. Coughing distracted him and his efforts to suppress it were often accompanied by the somewhat self-righteous statement that this was a pernicious habit which he had conquered years since. On the other hand, he was genial with the somnolent and, unlike Copeland, rarely took offense at late-comers who seated themselves quietly in the back of the classroom. Indeed, he sometimes welcomed the tardy by quoting "While the lamp holds out to burn . . ." Failure to elicit any response to a request for questions might lead him to a class list, to direct questions to individuals and perhaps a slaughter of the innocent. Here his terrible patience was often more disconcerting than anger. Sensitive students were occasionally hurt by this public invasion of their intellectual privacy, but, human nature being the sorry thing it is, the rest of the class was more delighted than purged. His rare departures usually came when no one would admit knowing what to him was some simple and necessary fact, and he urged the class to use the remainder of the hour to gain the information. At least once he shepherded the group into Widener to give them a fair start. The overwhelming majority accepted the rules which they had known about before they elected the course and were more disappointed than not if, at the end of the year, their teacher could wear white gloves. It can be, and is, argued that ignorance, recalcitrance, and stupidity are better ignored, but that was not always Kittredge's way. He once said, "I am willing to make a fool of myself for your benefit, and it seems only fair that I should make fools of you now and then for the same purpose." He had, in truth, a strong temper which he could not or would not always control, and which he explained as

inseparable from the temperament which his once red hair made manifest. If on reflection he decided that he had lost it unworthily, he made a handsome and usually satisfying apology.

In his small courses, such as those on ballads or romances, Kittredge's method was anything but dramatic. Whereas in the larger groups his comments, even after many years, seemed spontaneous, associative, and immediate, here he adhered closely to carefully prepared notes, replete with bibliographical references. When he expanded, as in matters of theory, he would shut his eyes and the effect of the quiet voice emerging from the immobile beard was trance-like. One could not choose but to believe. He met his graduate courses throughout the year, his own lectures in the first term and the presentation of reports in the second. The papers were given at evening meetings in his house on Hilliard Street. Although he rarely interrupted the speaker, and indeed usually gave an appearance of quiet and contented slumber, his criticism was full, incisive, helpful, and never harsh or niggling. The hour or two of general and smoky conversation which concluded the sessions gave the participants a feeling of friendly contact, knowing and being known, which they seldom enjoyed with other teachers. Kittredge, contrary to a somewhat general impression, was altogether approachable. He did not, to be sure, regard the library as a place for informal interviews nor did he stop on the street for a bit of chitchat. A student once reported, "I met Mr. Kittredge on Massachusetts Avenue today and he was most gracious." "What did he say to you?" "He didn't say anything, but the way he walked by me was very courteous." If anyone who had reason to consult Kittredge took the trouble to telephone him, he invariably was given a prompt appointment and, the appointment kept, he was never made to feel hurried or that he was infringing on the time of a great and busy man.

He took infinite pains with the theses prepared under his direction and his interest continued long after the degree was received. His letter files are full of requests for suggestions on revision and assistance toward publication, sometimes a quarter of a century after the thesis had been completed. He always did what he could, even when importunity must have tried his patience. For Kittredge to direct a dissertation was to accept a lifelong assignment.

Teaching for Kittredge was not a skill that could be induced by precept or training, and he rejected all opportunities to analyze his own

methods for the benefit of others. Indignation was his only response to a questionnaire which asked, among other things, how much time he spent in preparation for an hour in the classroom, and when asked for a brief statement as to how he taught, he replied briefly enough, "That's a question that I'm quite unable to answer." On another occasion he said that a teacher requires only three things, "A knowledge of his subject, adequate vocal cords, and students." He once told a class, "I can't teach you anything, but there is nothing under God's heaven you can't learn."

During almost fifty years, oral examinations in the Division of Modern Languages and Kittredge were identical. He rarely missed an oral, either for undergraduate honors or for the doctor's degree, his participation was continual and lively, and he never complained of a crushing burden. His obvious enjoyment of orals may have made him suspect among his more reluctant colleagues, but it was a comfort and joy to the insecure and apprehensive victim. He was a skilled and imaginative examiner, almost always in the candidate's corner or, to change the figure, his champion in the lists. His questions were short, pointed, and clear, and he aided other examiners to make theirs the same, not always perhaps to their gratification. "What Professor Blank wants to know, if I understand him, is . . ." He was especially adept at straightening out the dire clues in the hour on German linguistics which was the curtain-raiser under the old system. In the discussion which determined the candidate's fate Kittredge, either because he presided, which as Chairman of the Division he ordinarily did, or by seating himself strategically, had the last word. If the judgments were favorable, he said little, but if the tide seemed to be going against the candidate, he spoke at length and if necessary often, always in favor of a pass. Usually he and the candidate won, either by eloquence, by cajolery, or by prolonging the discussion half an hour or more past lunchtime. Some held that this was not so much sheer philanthropy as a distate for breaking unpleasant news. Once he did leave Warren House through a window rather than face a failed man. If there were those who felt that Kittredge's soft-heartedness defeated justice and lowered the degree, this opinion was not common among graduate students.

The story goes that Kittredge was asked why he never took a doctor's degree and that he replied, "Who would have examined me?" Here, unfriends said, is plain proof of arrogance, but the history of the

PH.D. in English at Harvard makes the proof lame, even if the anecdote be true. The first doctor's degree in English was given in 1876 and the next in 1888, the year in which Kittredge joined the miniscule Department. From the outset he was an examiner and a teacher of courses which graduate students took. The answer, if given at all, refers to the resources of the Department and not to the speaker's assumption of superiority. Kittredge in truth was a shy and modest man. He was decisive, which may have made him appear dogmatic, and he was rarely wrong in matters of fact, which could make people who had differed find him overbearing. Accuracy was a passion with him, yet one which could be expressed with humor, as a pair of examples may suggest. One aspect of his showmanship was his ability to talk himself out of the classroom and utter his last word with his hand on the doorknob and the bell above beginning to toll. To do this even Kittredge had to keep track of time, and one morning he borrowed a watch from a student in the front row. He evidently felt that some explanation was necessary and so said, "I am not requesting the loan because I do not own a watch. In fact, I own two watches. One is now at the jeweler's and the other was taken from my house twenty-three years ago." Again, when a female candidate had withdrawn from her oral, someone asked idly, "How old do you suppose she is?" and another gave the unchivalric and now dated reply, "She must be as old as King Tut." Kittredge looked at the record and settled the matter, "Eleven years older."

No arrogant dogmatist could have had as many friends as Kittredge did or been a cherished member of so many clubs. He loved to fold, or rather stretch out, his legs and have his talk. Taste or convention tended to limit his social hours to masculine society, and his friends were academics and business or professional men with informed tastes in books and history. Because he was an orthodox Congregationalist and a conservative in politics he might not have been at ease with voluble atheists and levellers, but there were Unitarians, perhaps some who were even freer thinkers, and liberals verging discreetly upon radicalism, among his friends. In a series of essays of 1874 he had listed the three great American statesmen of the nineteenth century as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Charles Sumner, had given some thought to extending the death penalty as an extreme measure to reduce petty crime, and could see that on rare occasions, such as the

Chicago Fire, Vigilance Committee Law and even Lynch Law "seem almost absolutely necessary." The Whig-Republican tradition is clear enough, but in the same papers he wrote in favor of Woman's Suffrage, took a philosophical view of the election of a Democratic governor of Massachusetts, and maintained with spirit that "Aristocracy is nonsense." An essay entitled "How Shall I Earn a Living," contained no reference to teaching, and another, "Qualities of a Good Business Man," suggests that a business or professional man must watch his step to keep out of jail. Whatever tenets the tree held over from the twig, Kittredge was not a political professor and never let personal convictions about current events color his teaching.

Kittredge had no patience with scholarly fads and whimsies and attacked them with ridicule as often as with reason. When petrified verse was being found in Shakespeare's prose, he could find it in Milton's prose, not too unlikely a source, and also in modern detective stories. He aided the etymological mythologizers by showing that their own names, properly handled, gave evidence of divine origin. Anagrams and cryptograms were one of his favorite sports, as when he proved that the menu for a certain dinner was composed by Keats with an assist from Marlowe. In the field of topical allusions he demonstrated at length and with a wealth of historical details that *Romeo and Juliet* is based on the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. The only difficulty lay in the date of the play (1595-96) and that of the murder (1613), but Kittredge was convinced that this trifle would be cleared up as readily as many of the discrepancies found in similar interpretations. He antedated the full flowering of sexual symbolism, which is rather a pity, though his sense of taste might well have kept him from expounding "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones and" sex "in every thing," or any of a hundred thousand other vulnerable lines. Here it may be noted that although Kittredge shared the reticences of his breed and generation, he was no prude. He told and enjoyed anecdotes of the kind once called off-color, but, and this again was of his generation, his stories had a scatological rather than a sexual point. In teaching Chaucer he read more of the fabliaux than was common at the time, and he defended Chaucer against those, such as the American critic and statesman Theodore Roosevelt, who accused the poet of immorality. For Kittredge what Chaucer wrote was anything but pornography, which he once defined in an appar-

ently offhand classroom comment as "Literature written specifically for the excessive, improper, immoral, and inopportune arousal of passion."

Three things determined Kittredge's eminence in his world: his personality, his learning, and the fact that he came into academic life at a time when American graduate study in the modern languages and literatures was just entering its first great cycle. Before he died he saw perceptible changes in emphasis and methods, but there is no evidence that he lamented the passing of a brave old world. His interests were wide and he encouraged others to widen their own, a fact made clear by the variety of doctoral dissertations which he directed. He believed that students of modern literature should know the classics and that students of English literature should be familiar with the development of the English language, and one suspects that he found it difficult to think that there could be general disagreement on those points. What endeared him to his students was not so much his erudition as his willingness to share it, his infinite patience with their first attempts at scholarship, and his aid in furthering their careers. If he was aware of personal conflict between research and teaching, it was resolved in favor of teaching. His writings are a noble monument, and yet he could have varied Child's remark, "I should have been more of a producer, if I had not spent about half my life in helping people."

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