IN MEMORIAM

EDWARD GARLAND FLETCHER

Born 11 May 1903 in Portland, Maine, where he was buried 2 October 1979, Edward Garland Fletcher remained very much a New Englander in spite of his long residence in Texas. In 1925 he took his B. A., cum laude and as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, at Bowdoin, Longfellow's college, and Hawthorne's. From Bowdoin he went down to Harvard, earning his M. A. in 1927, his Ph.D. in 1931. By that time he had served his apprenticeship as a teacher at Carnegie Tech 1927-30. In the fall of 1931 he came to Austin as Adjunct Professor of English and remained at the University until his retirement as full professor in 1973.

During his first decade here Edward set a furious pace as a scholar, publishing some twenty articles, notes, and reviews, two short monographs, and a splendid edition of Boswell's Life of Johnson, published by The Limited Edition Club, with marginal comments by Mrs. Piozzi (Thrale). During much of this time he was serving as the first secretary-treasurer of the newly organized Conference of Texas College English Teachers.

The Life of Johnson was reprinted, in three volumes, in 1963 by The Heritage Press; the editor in listing the reissue in his annual report remarked, with commendable wryness, that the six and a half pounds of scholarship must surely win him the annual prize "for the weightiest scholarly production of any member of the English Department." The sober fact is that he was for several reasons unable to sustain his early pace. Most vexing and likely most debilitating were the recurrent bouts of ill health which beset him for the rest of his life. But there were less distressing causes as well. The increasing diversity of his interests (American Literature--his principal publications had been in eighteenth-century British literature--, foreign languages and literature, linguistics, critical theory, and a host of others) doubtless interfered with the concentration which had helped produce the earlier works. No one could possibly have read as widely or have attended as many lectures on a myriad of subjects as he did without some impairment of productive concentration. With all these Edward was an indefatigable collector and clipper, specializing to

some extent in contemporary drama and theatre. After his retirement he gave his quite extensive and valuable collection to the Humanities Research Center's Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Library. All these years, while publishing less, he continued his scholarship, concentrating more and more on American literature, especially on an earlier Portlander and Bowdoin alumnus, Longfellow; on Melville; on critical theory; on prosody.

Most of all we should not neglect his students, for he never did. In class, in conference, in season and out, he was always ready to give unstintingly of his time: to bright students who had caught some of his own infectious enthusiasms, to troubled students who needed the fatherly advice he was never weary of giving. Even after his retirement he remained available to a sizable group of admiring students.

He spent the first year of his retirement in Austin, giving his many friends cause to believe he would gradually settle into a quiet yet busy retirement here, but before the year was out he had found the pull of his native region too strong. Gathering up his considerable store of books and momentoes he returned in June 1974 to his birthplace to join his devoted sister Dorothy. After returning home he kept very busy, especially resuming the travels which in earlier years had taken him to England, Scotland, Ireland, France and Mexico. Even during the few years left him he took several European tours. Here at home he continued his life-long practice of attending meetings of learned societies like the Modern Language Association, the Texas Conference, and the English Institute.

Since we have discovered no verse commentary by him on his feelings for his old home we suggest as a fitting substitute the opening lines of a fine poem by his favorite, Longfellow:

Often I think of the beautiful town
    That is seated by the sea;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town.
And my youth comes back to me.
    And a verse of a Lapland song
    Is haunting my memory still:

"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Dr. Peter T. Flawn, President
The University of Texas at Austin

Bill D. Francis, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Leo Hughs (chairman), Clarence Cline, Martin Michael Crow