

TENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

July 1, 1912

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

DR. A. W. WARD

SINCE I had the honour of addressing the Fellows of the British Academy barely three-quarters of a year have passed, and what I have to add to the record I then attempted of the eventful experiences of the preceding twelvemonth need not detain you long. It is, however, my mournful duty to recall to you that in the interval two distinguished names have been added to the growing roll of our Fellows whose task is done, and who are no longer with us, except in the spirit of their labours. That spirit—the spirit of truth which knows of no faltering and of no yielding, but which nevertheless works in perfect harmony with the spirit of love and (I venture to add) the spirit of prayer, as they presented themselves to our great English eighteenth-century mystic—no scholar and divine of our own age has more signally attested than the late Dr. Fairbairn, who died in reverend old age on February 9 last, mourned by many generations of learners. To their successors he has bequeathed a rich store of *studies*—as he loved to call his works—in religious philosophy and history, and to us the memory of a nature singularly sympathetic and gentle in the midst of arduous research and subtle controversy.

Within the last few days, and since I had put on paper my brief notes for this annual address, there has been announced to us the death, at the advanced age of seventy-nine, of one of the most distinguished of the original Fellows of our Academy, and one of the most notable members of its philosophical section—Dr. Shadworth Hodgson. I trust that the pen of one of the members of that section, and perhaps of the Aristotelian Society over whose inception and earlier labours he presided, and in whose work he took a close interest till within a few years before his death, will before long do justice to his long-continued labours and their results, as well as to the sympathy and encouragement which he never failed to extend to workers, older

or younger, in the same field. The papers which he read before the Academy, and more especially that on 'The Interrelation of the Academical Sciences', are well remembered. Wherever the complete picture of the ideal philosopher is to be found, or however it may be most successfully presented, it will not fail to reproduce some of the most distinctive features of the broad-minded and highly cultured brother-Fellow whose loss we are suddenly called upon to deplore.

I have also to record the death, on May 19 last, of one of the Corresponding Fellows of this Academy, Señor Menendez y Palayo, President of the Spanish Academy of History, and Director of the National Library at Madrid. His career, the narrative of which forms one of the most striking pages in the history of modern scholarship, will, I confidently hope, be retraced with full knowledge as well as sympathy by one of our own Fellows. On the present occasion it must suffice to say that while our late Corresponding Fellow by his continuous labours indisputably raised the standard of historical research and literary workmanship throughout his native country, the work of his wonderful youth, the *History of Heterodox Spaniards* (*Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*) is an achievement of extraordinary learning, very wide in range and exact in detail, the merits of which have been freely acknowledged by European historians of widely different views.

The summer season is at hand, which, in accordance with the habit of our times, lends itself with increasing facility to celebrations recalling the past history and marking the present progress of learned bodies, with all of which we enjoy some measure of friendly intercourse. One foreign University, however, summoned us to send a representative to its jubilee while the apples were yet fresh upon the oaks, and while we were unable to respond to the hospitable call. On May 29 last the University of Lemberg celebrated the 250th anniversary of its foundation, which, in 1661, was decreed by John Casimir, the last of the Jagellon kings of Poland, a prince whose own mournful experiences seem like a premonition of the tremendous national tragedy which was to follow soon after. Established under the control of the Order of Jesus and reestablished under King Augustus III, the University, in consequence of the partition of Poland, became Austrian, and was once more refounded, under very different auspices, by the Emperor Joseph II; and its scheme has been completed by the addition of a medical faculty under the venerable reigning emperor. A University which has preserved and augmented its vitality through such a series of vicissitudes as that which I have indicated has a strong claim upon the friendly goodwill of all bodies interested in the

unswerving pursuit of high literary and scientific aims, and our own congratulations, though a little out of date, are not the less sincere.

In April last the twofold celebration—academic and patriotic—at Athens was attended on our behalf by Mr. Hogarth, who bore with him sympathies deeper than almost any other solemnity of the kind could have evoked, and associating themselves with cherished memories of the love of Hellas and of Greek scholarship that animated such leaders of our own as Jebb and Butcher. At the Congress of Orientalists held at the same time at Athens Professor Driver represented the British Academy. Mr. Arthur Balfour has been good enough to undertake to represent us at the first Eugenics Congress, to be held in London in July, and Sir Arthur Evans and Professor Percy Gardner at the Archaeological Congress which will meet at Rome in October.

Among the home gatherings during the present summer are two to which we are looking forward with particular interest, and to which you will perhaps allow me very briefly to advert. The earlier of these, indeed—the Congress of the Universities of the Empire—is to be opened to-morrow morning by the Chancellor of the University of London, and we have made bold to invite the attendance of the Delegates at our own gathering at Burlington House this evening, when our friends and ourselves are to have the pleasure of listening to Professor Andrew Cecil Bradley's oration on Shakespeare—the second of a series for which the munificence of one of our benefactors has enabled us to arrange as a most appropriate annual function of the Academy. The Congress will have its hands full in dealing with problems pressing for solution, and of which in many cases I feel assured that cooperation between the Universities, old and new, will prove a most effective solvent. Fortunately, these problems are under no special necessity of including the relations of Universities at the present day to bodies of the nature of our own—relations which rest on assured conditions of mutual goodwill, and the pursuit, though to some extent in different ways, of the same intellectual ends. In France the foundation of the Academy had been from the first almost the direct emanation of the authority of the monarchy, and thus formed an organic part of a system of regulated progress affecting the whole intellectual life of the nation. But, in at least two other leading European countries, the learned societies founded in the latter half of the seventeenth century were directly designed to resuscitate the waning intellectual aspirations and renovate the zeal of study for the sake of study—in other words, the love of Truth for the sake of Truth—which had owed so much to the Renaissance, but which, in

different ways and in different degrees no doubt, had been deeply depressed, in Germany by the Thirty Years' War, and in England by the hardly much briefer period of civil troubles. The fact that the Universities of Europe have long since recovered from this depression, and, in no age more eagerly than in our own, are proving themselves conscious of their duties as homes of research and learning, has not (how could it have done so?) lessened either the cordiality of the relations between them and the chief learned Societies of Europe, or the value of their cooperation. The actual interfusion of the work of Universities and that of Academies at the present day would, in any case, make it difficult to estimate their indebtedness to one another; without the Universities our Academies might be in occasional danger of finding their foundations built in clouds and air; on the other hand, it is not going too far to say had it not been for the labours of Leibniz—I might almost say, for his dreams—it would be difficult to imagine a development of German university life and an advance in the highest conceptions of its purposes such as has been achieved since Wilhelm von Humboldt relit the flickering torch; while, were a curtain drawn over the 250 years of strenuous endeavour, crowned by achievement in every field of scientific research, which are registered in the Royal Society's record, the tale of achievement on which the Universities of the British Empire can base their plans of a progress such as the Empire expects from them in the expanding vista of the future, would be very different from what it actually is.

We of the British Academy, mindful of the glorious history of the Royal Society, mindful, too, of the many distinguished literary names to be found on the roll of that Society in the past, and, above all, mindful of the origin of our own body and of the unfailing courtesy and goodwill shown towards us by an illustrious institution of which we may take pride in regarding ourselves as a latter-day offshoot, shall not be among the last to tender our cordial congratulations to the Royal Society on the approaching 250th anniversary of its foundation. An address to this end has been drawn up by the Council.

To one other contemplated meeting of scholars united by their common studies I directed your attention already in my last address, because upon the British Academy has devolved the organization of a gathering of considerable significance for the world of historical studies. The preparations for the third meeting of the International Historical Congress, which is to be held in London from the 3rd to the 9th of April, 1913—in succession to previous Congresses at Rome in 1903 and at Berlin in 1908—on which a representative Committee assembled on the invitation of the Academy and executive bodies

appointed by that Committee has been diligently engaged, are already in an advanced state; and, as you are doubtless aware, His Majesty the King has signified his gracious intention of becoming the Patron of the Congress. Mr. Bryce, whose name is a tower of strength wherever, on either side of the ocean, historical studies are cherished, will be its President; Vice-Presidents and officers of the Sections into which the work of the Congress will be divided have been appointed; and I need not say that due publicity will be given to the arrangements made as we proceed. I may add that among the Committees of the Congress the Financial Committee will have a responsibility thrown upon it which it is hoped the generous support of Fellows of the Academy and others will enable it to meet.

In the same connexion, I should like to mention that, hampered though it is by the slenderness of its resources, the Academy has contributed a small grant (of £60) to an international fund for the completion of an important statistical work, first undertaken by the Carlsberg Institution at Copenhagen, on the Sound Dues registers during the period from 1497 to 1657. These registers furnish the completest possible record of navigation and mercantile activity in the Baltic during nearly three centuries, in the course of which the leading part in the control of the traffic passed from the German Hansa to the United Provinces, and from the United Provinces to England. It is mortifying that for the completion of this great undertaking, which will furnish full tables of the numbers, approximate tonnage, destination, and freight of the mercantile navies of Europe during a momentous period of modern political and commercial history, so small a measure of support even relatively speaking—(Germany, for instance, has promised an annual contribution of between three and four times, and the Netherlands of between two and three times the amount)—should have proved obtainable in the country whose trade is more largely concerned in the story than that of any other; and if what I have said should lead to an addition to a few private subscriptions by which the Academy has been augmented, I shall not be ashamed of having once more taken up your time on the subject. It is difficult to persuade our foreign friends and fellow-workers that our Academy's funds are wholly inadequate for the prosecution of its own undertakings, and that the dues which many of us and which this representative body would be glad enough to pay as a contribution to work done at foreign centres of historical research cannot correspond to our wishes or to the interest which we take in that work.

I have much pleasure in stating that the Master of St. Catharine's

College, Cambridge, Dr. Johns, has accepted the invitation of the Council to deliver in December next the annual course of lectures in connexion with the study of Biblical Archaeology, for which the Schweich Fund enables the Academy to arrange. His subject will be taken from a field of which he is master and will probably be 'The Laws of Babylon and Israel'.

I have already reminded you that this evening Professor Andrew Cecil Bradley will deliver to his brother Fellows and our friends the annual Shakespeare Oration, taking for his special subject the tragedy of *Coriolanus*. More than ever, as we draw near the celebration of the most interesting commemoration which our age is likely to witness, the worldwide spread of Shakespeare's fame is brought home to us; and we are in hopes that in 1913 a distinguished man of letters, whose scholarship fitly represents that of the nation by which, apart from Shakespeare's own, the study of the poet has been most enduringly cherished, will take the place occupied this year and last by Professor Bradley and M. Jusserand.

Another Fellow of the Academy and another literary critic of proved power and acknowledged eminence, Professor Saintsbury, will in the course of October deliver the second of the Warton Lectures on English Poetry, provided by the munificence of the benefactor who has endowed the Shakespeare Oration. Professor Saintsbury has chosen as his subject 'The Historical Character of English Lyric'.

I close this brief account of work that has been done or undertaken, on the note which hitherto has as it were imposed itself, rather than been freely chosen, by Presidents of the British Academy. Not to lighten the personal labours, much less to gratify the personal ambition, of those scholars who might be reckoned among its Fellows, was this Academy founded, but to establish a body to which in matters of historical, philosophical, philological, and other branches of literary learning, both the educated community of this country and the authorities of the State might look for advice and guidance in whatever might advance the interests and promote the progress of letters in this land and Empire. It was thought best to establish this Academy of Humane Learning side by side with, rather than as an integral part of, that famous Academy of Natural Knowledge—the Royal Society of London. The decision once made was made, as they say, 'for good.' On us of the early years of the Academy devolves the duty of proving that it was a decision which admits of being worked out into fruitful achievement; and this duty we must perform, with the aid of private munificence and of such contributions from public resources as may accrue to us. The tasks awaiting those who

have at heart the progress of which I have spoken, are many and arduous—and most of them, from the nature of the case, can only be carried through by cooperative effort. On our part I think I may confidently say the effort will not be wanting ; but the measure in which it can be applied, and in which its results can be gathered in, will be determined by the goodwill of those with whom it lies to decide whether among the highest public interests of this country and Empire are those which this Academy is by its Charter of foundation called upon to regard as its province.