

# FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*June 11, 1907*

## ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, LORD REAY

ON the occasion of this our Annual General Assembly, it is in the first place my sad duty to name those whom we have lost during the past year: it is a heavy list of those who cannot answer to our Muster Roll—Maitland, Goschen, Davey, Pelham: these are grievous losses for the Academy, and more so when we think of the others whom we miss from our ranks—Cowell, Lecky, Salmon, A. S. Murray, Leslie Stephen, Monro, and Jebb! Their various services to the British Academy, directly and indirectly, must never be forgotten by those appointed to carry on their work in advancing the causes for which our Academy has been founded. In place of the four Fellows whom death has taken from us, to-day, no doubt, four scholars will be elected to take their place, so that our number will not be lessened: may they prove zealous recruits!

Dealing first of all with the internal affairs of the Academy, I would note that important Papers have been read, and have for the most part been issued in Brochure form according to the excellent practice we have established, and judging by the Balance Sheet we may feel somewhat gratified at the interest taken in these Brochures by those outside the Academy. Volume II, containing the Papers for 1906, is ready, and will shortly be issued. A copy is placed on the table. Papers have been read by Mr. Hogarth on 'Artemis Ephesia'; by Professor Silvanus Thompson on 'Petrus Peregrinus di Maricourt'; by Professor Souter on 'The Commentary of Pelagius concerning the Epistle of St. Paul'; Professor Vinogradoff on 'Knight's Fees'; Professor Ridgeway on 'Who were the Romans'; the Dean of Westminster on 'An Unrecognized Westminster Chronicler'; and Signor Boni on 'Trajan's Column'. Considering the range of the subjects and the importance of the Papers, I venture to think we have done well in the matter of communications during the past Session, though I desire to express the hope that Fellows of the Academy will come forward more readily with contributions in the years to come than during the past year. I would especially remind the more

recently elected Fellows of their duty in this respect. But important as may be the reading of Papers, there is more ambitious work to be undertaken by the Academy, and it is with considerable gratification that a forward step will to-day be taken in respect of a great national undertaking to be launched by the British Academy by its own unaided efforts, efforts which I sincerely trust will later on be supplemented by such Treasury help as we may reasonably expect. I refer to the proposed Series of Records of Social and Economic History, submitted to the Academy by Professor Vinogradoff, a project very dear to our lamented colleague, Maitland, and a very fitting monument to his memory, if, as I hope, the British Academy will rightly raise some memorial to him as one of our original Members. I, for my part, would like to see some due memorial to each of those who have been our fellow-workers.

The details of the Series of the Social and Economic Records, more especially with reference to Volume I, will be placed before you this afternoon. Similarly, it is proposed to give a small grant to help the preparation of a report on Venetic and Ligurian Inscriptions to be submitted to the Academy by Professor R. S. Conway, whose important observations on the linguistic aspects of Professor Ridgeway's Paper on 'Who were the Romans' have attracted considerable attention among philologists, and whose work on the Italic Dialects is well known.

As regards our financial condition, I am glad to be able to feel more satisfied, though we have not succeeded yet in softening the hearts of the stern custodians of the Treasury. We have had the good fortune to receive from an anonymous donor, a friend of the Secretary's, the munificent sum of £10,000 to endow a Fund to be called 'The Leopold Schweich Fund', for the furtherance of research in the archaeology, art, history, languages, and literature of ancient civilization with reference to Biblical Study. The sum is now invested half in Bank of England Stock, and half in the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Inscribed Stock of the Government of New South Wales, and the Committee, which has been appointed in accordance with the conditions of the trust, will soon make proposals to the Council in respect of the Fund. I devoutly hope that efforts will be made by Fellows of the Academy to obtain similar aid for specific departments of the Academy's work. This first Benefaction is of good augury, for although we may well claim aid from public Funds, and maintain that the State should give encouragement to scientific studies promoted by the Academy, I would repeat what I said in my first address, namely, that 'the Academy may also stimulate private benefactors, on whose

munificence we depend to a large extent in this country for the advancement of scientific knowledge'. Indeed, perhaps one of the most important functions of the Academy may be to serve as trustees of the wishes of pious donors with reference to distinct departments of Learning or specific projects.

As regards the relation of the British Academy to the other Academies, in the first instance I would mention that the Academy of Japan, the last constituted of the Academies of the International Association, has been established at Tokio, our ally of the East having quickly followed this country in taking its place, in both the Sections of Natural Science and of Letters, among the active Academies of the World.

The Triennial Meeting of the International Association has just taken place at Vienna, where the Academy was represented by Professor Bywater and the Secretary of the Academy. From our Delegates we shall no doubt this afternoon have some report of what took place at the Meeting: I hear with special gratification that the first part of the great Encyclopaedia of Islam was submitted in the three languages of English, French, and German. The aid which the Academy, through the generosity of the Secretary of State for India, has been able to give towards this undertaking, namely, £200 per annum for ten years, has been a source of great strength to the work, and has been genuinely appreciated by the Committee and by the International Association of Academies. Through the International Association and also through our foreign Corresponding Fellows, the number of whom we are to-day increasing, we are linked by very strong ties to the other Academies of the world. In the list of Corresponding Fellows to be added to-day the United States will for the first time be represented and linked to us. Our kinsfolk across the ocean will, I am sure, be gratified to learn of the election of some of their most distinguished and leading scholars. It will gratify them as much as it will give satisfaction to our absent colleague who is now discharging at Washington the high duties of British Ambassador. It was with great regret that Mr. Bryce, temporarily at all events, had to be absent from us, but duty's call had to be obeyed.

I think that we have had abundant evidence that a useful sphere of activity is lying waste as regards the organization and co-ordination of those branches of scientific study which fall within our scope, and that the existence of a body like ours is fully justified.

Our great need is undoubtedly more ample means. In that respect our position is identical with that of the Universities and



of all learned Societies. We are all dependent on 'the pious founder'. The multitude of claimants must bewilder him, and I am afraid is an excuse for a negative attitude on his part.

We have established our representative character by the careful selection of our Fellows and of our Corresponding Fellows.

If our progress has not been as rapid as some of us may have desired, on the other hand we have not committed the errors which a less cautious procedure might have entailed.

The nature of our work does not appeal to the general public, although that same public reaps the benefit of our efforts.

The Papers in our Proceedings contain the materials for a history of the Academy, and it is to them we refer when we are asked, 'What is your object?' The Proceedings show that we have taken a broad view of our duties.

Our method is *ex hypothesi* purely scientific; our only aim is to obtain scientific results. But the application of that method does not prevent us from considering questions which interest a wider circle than the purely academic circle to which most of us belong.

In some directions we can throw light on problems which give rise to controversy, and which require a more scientific treatment than they are likely to receive in other quarters.

I believe I am justified in saying that in the Academy all opinions are represented and that we have avoided all one-sidedness.

Our discussions have always been conducted with candour, and outspokenness has been reconciled with perfect harmony.

I believe that we have laid a solid foundation on which future generations can build. Our operations will gradually expand.

We depend on the individual exertions of our Fellows, on their loyalty.

I have a firm belief in the future which is in store for this Academy, if it does not lose sight of the high and dignified purposes for which it was founded.

The Academy must not expose itself to the taunt of running in too narrow a groove, and of closing its doors to those who touch exact and technical knowledge with the graces of style and culture.

In this respect the Royal Society has set a good precedent, and it is also the practice of the French Institute. I wish to see the foundation of an Academy in the United States, because the co-operation with such a body would ensure excellent work on both sides of the Atlantic.

I have to thank my Colleagues for the support which I have always received from them. I do not deny that the years during which

I have had the honour of being called by you to preside over this Academy have been years of great anxiety.

We have had to overcome many difficulties, and to proceed with great caution. We have established very friendly relations with the Royal Society, and with other learned Societies and foreign Academies.

My best thanks are due to Professor Gollancz, who since the foundation of the Academy has given to it, with constant devotion, unremitting services which no one is able to appreciate more than myself.

To the Members of the Council I wish to express my gratitude for their valuable co-operation in settling many perplexing questions with which we have had to deal.

I trust that Sir Edward Maunde Thompson may have as pleasant an experience as has been mine, and I am sure that we shall all endeavour to make the responsible office, which we are glad he has accepted, as little of a burden to him as possible.

Five or six years is but a small period in the history of any institution. Ours is probably the only Academy which is not State-endowed and has not even a domicile. But I am confident that ere long we shall be recognized at home as we have been recognized by our sister Academies, who have at once assigned to us a place of distinction.

In taking leave of the office which it has been my privilege to hold since the foundation of the Academy, I can only express the fervent hope that the British Academy may for long years to come grow from strength to strength. *Floreat Academia Britannica.*