

FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 28, 1906

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, LORD REAY

It is my duty on this occasion of our Annual General Meeting to survey, however briefly, the affairs of the Academy during the past twelve months ; and I may be permitted to refer in the first instance to what is perhaps uppermost in the minds of many of us, namely, that we cannot, alas ! to-day number in our midst two members of our body who twelve months ago were our honoured colleagues. By the death of the late Provost of Oriel, Dr. Monro, and of Sir Richard Jebb, a void is left in our midst which for long years to come will be keenly felt. When last year it was my privilege to offer our congratulations to Jebb on his well-merited inclusion in the Order of Merit, I expressed the hope, which has proved all too vain, that he might enjoy the honour for long years to come. It is a source of comfort to us that he appreciated our devotion towards him, and I know he felt gratified by the words I then uttered, and which now with pathetic interest I may well repeat :—‘ It can never be forgotten how great has been his service in the early days of the foundation of the British Academy.’ Let us again to-day pay gracious and due tribute to the memory of those of our Founders who have passed from us, leaving behind on those who survive the high duty of shaping the destiny, watching the fortunes, and advancing the cause, of the Society which is still in its infancy ; four years is but a short time in the history of a National Academy of Learning.

Indeed, bearing this fact in mind, I venture to think that we have no cause for dissatisfaction as we consider the present position of the Academy, and its activity during the past year. Important Papers have been read, and for the most part have already been issued to the Fellows, and to those of the general Public who desire to have them. It is gratifying to note that the sale of the Papers as Brochures is considerable, as may be seen from the Balance Sheet before you. Volume II of the ‘ Proceedings ’ is in an advanced state of progress, and will be issued at the beginning of next year. The Papers of the year were read by the following Fellows :—Mr Haverfield, on the

'Romanization of Roman Britain;' Dr. Fairbairn on 'The Language of the New Testament;' Dr. Wright on 'The Philological Value of English Dialects;' Dr. Hodgson on 'The Inter-relation of the Academical Sciences;' Professor Skeat on 'The Problem of English Spelling Reform;' Professor Rhys on 'Celtic Inscriptions;' Sir Edward Fry on 'The Rights of Neutrals;' and Professor Bosanquet on 'The Meaning of Teleology,'—a varied field of speculation indicative of the labours of the Fellows of the Academy, but only in a very small degree representative of the researches carried on by them, and of their published works during the past year. I desire especially to offer the Academy's congratulations to Dr. Joseph Wright on the completion of his monumental work on the English Dialects.

Still dealing with the internal work of the Academy, I should refer to the important General Meeting held in December last for the purpose of interchange of views, and discussion on any matters bearing on the business of the Academy. The Council has very carefully considered and given the utmost attention to the views expressed on that occasion, and some of the proposals have already been carried into effect. We desire to thank the Dean of Westminster for arranging an evening at his house in order that Fellows might have an opportunity of meeting together informally: great good must needs accrue from such social intercourse among the Fellows.

I shall later on explain the views of the Council on certain points raised at the Meeting.

The Academy has, of course, important schemes under consideration, the successful carrying out of which must depend on the question of finance; one project of truly national importance is being considered by a special sub-committee, viz., Professor Vinogradoff's proposal for editing a Series of Records of British Economic and Social History, valuable material extant in the Old English Manor Rolls. Such a scheme cannot be allowed to lapse.

As regards the Academy's work as a constituent of the International Association of Academies, I am able to report that we have received from the India Office the first grant of £200 towards the Cyclopaedia of Islam, and Professor de Goeje writes that this grant—to be continued conditionally for nine years more—is proving of the utmost value for the carrying out of the enterprise. At the recent meeting of the Council of the International Association held at Vienna, the Academy was ably represented by Professor Bywater, who has kindly accepted the invitation of the International Committee on the proposed Greek Thesaurus to serve on that Committee in the place of Sir Richard Jebb. Next year the Academies will assemble

at Vienna. Let us hope that by that time we shall be able to meet the representatives of other and older Academies unabashed by the consciousness of poverty. Meanwhile, practising economy in our home affairs, we are not altogether without means—but much more important than finance is our whole-hearted devotion to the cause of the Academy. With that feeling linking all together nothing can possibly deter us, though we may have to proceed more slowly and more patiently than would be necessary were we even moderately blessed with public endowment. Again, as last year, I echo our fervid sentiment towards our society, in the simple old-fashioned form, *floreat Academia Britannica*.