

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT BRYCE, O.M.

Delivered at the Annual General Meeting, July 19, 1917

THE time has now arrived when I must quit the presidential chair, which indeed I would not, but for your friendly pressure, have continued to occupy so long. It has proved impossible to carry through some of the things which four years ago I had hoped to accomplish, but you are aware of the difficulties with which the Academy has to contend. One is the want of funds; another the want of a local habitation in which we can place our books and meet at times most convenient to ourselves. Grateful as we are to the Royal Society and the other learned Societies which allow the Council from time to time to assemble in their apartments, we often feel ourselves in the position of him who is called in the *Iliad* an ἀτίμητος μετανάστης, and sigh over our wandering homelessness, trusting that the State will before long lodge us as it has lodged those elder sisters. A still greater obstacle to the prosecution of our work, when we compare ourselves with the Academies that sit in Paris, Rome, Berlin, or Petrograd, is the distance from London at which a large majority of the Fellows dwell. This makes it hard to secure a good attendance at meetings, or an adequate discussion of papers read, or the formation of Sectional Committees representing the full strength of a section for some special topic with which, as it may happen, there are only five or six members of a section qualified to deal. Some of these difficulties have made themselves more severely felt in war time. We may hope that with the return of peace, which can hardly be long delayed, they will diminish.

Among the enjoyments which have accompanied the labours of the Chair, one has been the listening to many admirable papers, some by our Fellows, some by persons, eminent in their several walks, whom we have invited to address us. The standard maintained has, I venture to believe, been as high as that of any learned body in any other country. Nor must I forget to refer to the remarkable

excellence of the biographical notices of deceased Fellows for which we are indebted not only to members of our own body but to others also. They constitute a most valuable record of the lives of not a few ornaments of our time, and ought, I think, to be periodically collected, say at intervals of five years, published in separate volumes, as records, prepared by those who had intimate knowledge, of the personal character, as well as the services to learning, of men who will receive the gratitude of succeeding generations of scholars who consult their works.

It is also a pleasure to acknowledge, as it was a constant pleasure to receive, the advice and support of the Council in dealing with the sometimes perplexing questions of administration that from time to time arose. In tendering my hearty thanks to them, I must thank our Secretary also, whose unflinching zeal and energy have been given without stint, and sometimes, I fear, to the prejudice of his own learned researches, to everything that can promote the interests of the Academy.

It is with great satisfaction that I now hand over my duties to one whose distinction as a scholar is recognized in every civilized country, and who, while admirably qualified to represent British learning, is not less qualified to discharge, with sound judgement and with an efficiency tested and matured by long experience in important public work, the duty of guiding, in conjunction with the Council, the policy of the Academy and of maintaining the position it holds in our national life.

As an account of the most important parts of the work done by the Academy, and of its administration of the endowments whereof it is trustee, has already been laid before you in the Report submitted by the Council, I may now proceed to say a few words upon those whom death has taken from us during the past year.

Evelyn Baring, Earl of Cromer, was the first person whom the Academy elected, only a year ago, to be an Honorary Fellow, recognizing in him one who had the taste and temperament of a scholar and man of learning, although it was in public life, as a diplomatist and administrator, that he won that fame which few Englishmen of action in our time have equalled. Had he not been a distinguished statesman he might have been a distinguished writer, for his history of Egypt during the period of what was practically his rule there showed the qualities of a true historian; and as soon as leisure came to him in his latest years, he devoted it to literature, returning with a youthful freshness to the study of the ancient classics, and pouring forth in a succession of addresses and articles

the fruits of his vigorous thinking and long experience of affairs. The foundation of that prize for the encouragement of Greek studies of which he made the Academy his trustee gave evidence of his undiminished sense of the value which ancient literature has for us to-day. While we mourn his departure, we are proud to have had him as a member of our body, and shall remember him as a brilliant example of the union of great abilities with a high sense of public duty, and of an interest, sustained to the latest hours of his strenuous life, in the progress of letters and learning.

Dr. Edmund Moore, Canon of Canterbury and for many years Principal of St. Edmund Hall at Oxford, was one of the oldest and most respected of our Fellows. He showed us how much can be accomplished, in the midst of a busy life, by constant devotion to one great aim. Concentrating his efforts on the study of Dante, he has given to the world the most perfect text of the poet's works that has yet been published, and has enriched our knowledge of those works by elucidating many of the most important and difficult questions which they raise. In industry, in accuracy, in the weighing of evidence, he had no superior among the scholars of our time; and for many a year to come his writings on Dante will be indispensable to every student. In private life he carried modesty as far as it can go without passing into self-distrust, and was always kindly and genial, loyal to his duties and true to his friends.

The Rev. Dr. Swete, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was one of the most learned and judicious of our Biblical scholars, an acknowledged master of Hellenistic Greek, and an accomplished student of the early Christian Fathers. He filled, in the course of a long and honoured life, many important posts, in the University as well as in the Church of England, and was no less distinguished by his influence as a teacher than by the solid worth of his writings.

Dr. Courthope was best known to the present generation by his elaborate *History of English Poetry*, a book whose every page displays wide learning, sound judgement, and fine poetical taste, together with a clear appreciation of the relation of English poetry to the various phases of national life. He was for five years Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and in his later years devoted much labour to the completion of Elwin's monumental edition of Pope's works. He was, however, not only a critic of poetry, but himself a poet, and produced in his youthful prime two volumes of verse, *Ludibria Lunae* and *The Paradise of Birds*, marked not only by a fertile invention but also by singular grace and refinement of style.

Josiah Royce, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University,

Cambridge, Massachusetts, was, since the lamented death of his friend and colleague the late Professor William James, the most eminent representative in the United States of metaphysical studies. His work touched various philosophical problems, among which may be named symbolic logic, the theory of Human Community, and several questions in the sphere of empiric or observational psychology. But he was chiefly occupied with the study of the ideas upon which religion rests, a subject which he treated with originality of method and spiritual insight. The last of his more important books was devoted to the philosophical significance of theological doctrines. His personal character, earnest and winning in its modest simplicity, added to the influence which his intellectual powers had secured for him in the great University he adorned.

AN Annual Presidential Address is most naturally and appropriately devoted to a review of the work done during the year preceding in the various branches of learning for the promotion whereof the British Academy exists. At present, however, the continuance of the Great War has not only greatly reduced the amount of that work, but has also so reduced the accounts of it published in books or periodicals, that there is comparatively little to be recorded; and this applies to all the other nations which stand in the forefront of the intellectual movement of the world no less than to ourselves. During the last two years, accordingly, I took for the theme of my annual addresses the phenomena, political, social, and ethical, which the War has brought out in strong relief and which have seemed to throw light upon the history of mankind in previous conflicts, no one of them either so terrible or covering so vast an area as does that which we have been and are still witnessing. Having already said upon that subject as much as it seemed fitting to say in the midst of the strife, I will on this occasion turn from the present to the future, and attempt, on quitting the chair in which your favour placed me four summers ago, to present a rapid survey of some few of the fields in which the work of the Academy is likely to lie during the next thirty years—that being the period of activity to which the younger members of our body may look forward.

Those of you who try to observe the progress of the sciences of nature must have been struck by the view which the students of those sciences take of the prospect which opens before them. They tell us that this prospect is infinite. The more they learn about nature the more they can foresee to be learnt. Every discovery opens a path to fresh discoveries. The number of problems already solved, or at

least appearing to have been provisionally solved, in any given decade, is less than the number of new problems which are constantly emerging. I know nothing more suggestive than to read from week to week a list of the papers presented to our sister institution, the Royal Society. They contain a record of researches made and an outline of hypotheses advanced in every branch—every department and sub-department—of scientific inquiry, mathematical, physical, and biological. Some of these sub-departments are still in their infancy, but they are already developing a technical terminology, much of which is entirely new to most of us, and indeed scarcely intelligible, because it deals with facts and relations not merely abstruse, but only quite recently brought within the sphere of those exact methods which require the invention of new technical terms.

Nature is always before us. The material she offers is never reduced, except to some slight extent by the disappearance of rare forms of animal and vegetable life, while new mechanical appliances such as the microscope, the telescope, and the spectroscope, or new modes of mathematical calculation, have increased the powers of investigation which the inquirer can employ. Even in subjects that have been systematically and minutely examined for centuries some new fact may suggest new relations between the facts previously ascertained, and open up a fresh path of discovery.

Struck by this, and seeing how inspirited the students of nature are by the sense of the boundless vista down which they gaze into the unknown, we turn to ask how matters stand with ourselves who have for our subject the thoughts and acts of man. Does a like vista of endless progress stretch before us? Or can we foresee a time when much of our material will have been exhausted, as some of the South African gold reefs have already been worked out, or their productivity so lowered that even the labour by which a little more metal might be extracted from the ore that lies round the mine-shafts could better be employed in some other way, because the possible results would not be worth that labour?

This may seem to be the case as regards some departments of learning in which, inasmuch as the data are limited in quantity, little more knowledge can be expected, so little have our predecessors left for us to do. The unexamined materials are moreover in some instances rapidly diminishing. Many languages vanish by the extinction or absorption of the tribes that speak them. The number of tongues spoken round the shores of the Mediterranean and the Euxine was probably ten times as great in the time of Herodotus as it is now. The number now spoken in South America and in

India may be in another century less than half what it is now ; and with the disappearance of the tribes, their worships, their superstitions, and their folk-lore generally will also be lost. Prehistoric antiquities and ancient buildings of many kinds crumble away or are despoiled for the sake of their stones, or perish under the shocks of war ; and the buildings we erect, though more numerous, will most of them be less interesting and less beautiful than those which the ancient world and the Middle Ages have bequeathed to us. Posterity will not greatly care to investigate or preserve the ruins of our railway stations and town halls. I need not multiply illustrations : these are enough to indicate a *prima facie* case for those who suggest that a time may come when, in some branches at least of the Academy's work, there will be no more work to be done, and the devotees of those branches will be passing into the sere and yellow leaf while their colleagues of the Royal Society will still rejoice in the world they have to conquer, and be flourishing like a green bay-tree.

Apart however from these speculative reflections, let us address ourselves to the inquiry which of the possibly exhaustible subjects within our domain are likely to be longest fertile in results. Some, I shall endeavour to show, are inexhaustible, because fresh matter for investigation will go on being created. But even in the case of gold reefs that must be eventually worked out, the date of probable exhaustion is a good way off. When I visited Johannesburg twenty-two years ago experts were predicting that in forty or fifty years a large proportion, perhaps two-thirds of the mines, would have ceased to be profitably workable. But now the shafts have been sunk so much deeper and the methods of reducing the ore have been so much improved that, although the output has increased, the time when declining returns may be looked for has been postponed for another thirty or forty years. So perhaps it may be with us. Taking all the branches of human learning together, not only the volume but the value of our output may prove to go on increasing.

The survey I am going to attempt must of course be a brief and sketchy one, for the field is vast, and my knowledge of most parts of it is imperfect and superficial. Still even a hasty and imperfect survey may serve to start reflections and help to elicit the views of those among you who, in each branch, are competent specialists. I begin with the department of History, and in it with that prehistoric history which finds in the data supplied by archaeology the basis for ethnological study.

Here we are faced by a question of great interest and difficulty which may long continue to occupy inquirers.

The story of primitive man goes back to a period in which archaeological data are very scanty, and less important than those afforded by the remains of the human skeleton and of the bones of creatures which were contemporaneous with early human forms. There is a region to which both the anthropologist and the archaeologist may lay claim. Broadly speaking, however, skulls belong to the former, implements and ornaments, hut circles and cave paintings, to the latter. It is when we try to classify races and ascertain how they have diverged or been intermingled that the difficulties of adjusting different sorts of data become manifest. Early in last century attempts were made at a provisional distribution of the races of mankind according to skin colour and some other obvious physical characteristics. Rather later, comparative philology found another basis for classification in the affinities or dissimilarities of language, some of the linguistic groups being believed to coincide, even if roughly, with the older groups which had been classified by colour and features. More recently a totally new classification, founded on the shape and dimensions of the skull, has been proposed. It cuts quite across the older linguistic division, and it seems to be out of relation with a third set of criteria on which another school has laid stress, those supplied by the customs and folk-lore of primitive races in the past and savage or semi-civilized races in the present. I express no opinion on the comparative value of these three sets of data, but there is evidently a need for determining their respective values, and for correlating them, so far as possible. Here is a problem of the utmost interest. For solving it far more facts are needed than we now possess, and when the facts have been collected, controversy will arise over their interpretation. We seem to need a new science, or at least a new scheme, of ethnology, and it must take a good while in the making.

In this connexion many subsidiary questions arise which can be studied in the light afforded by the phenomena of the present. One relates to the fusion of races by intermarriage. Does such fusion tend on the whole to improve the inferior race as much as it is commonly supposed to damage the superior? May there not be some gain, at least in the case of some intermixtures, even to the superior race? There is reason to believe that the effects are different in the case of different races. It is said, for instance, that the intermixture of Chinese with American aborigines produces a good stock, that of Chinese with negroes and of negroes with American aborigines a bad one, worse than either of the component elements. So far as I can ascertain no data that can be called scientific exist for the

determination of these questions, which have an evident importance for the practical statesman as well as for the historian.¹

Another topic which needs more investigation than it has yet received is the influence upon racial character and aptitude of environment, and especially of contact with other peoples, as compared with what may be called the inherited quality of the race. No one denies the importance of physical environment, yet we find so many instances in which races altogether dissimilar live, and seem to have long lived, under similar physical conditions that we are obliged to lay stress on heredity and also to place the points of divergence, not only of the chief stocks but even of races kindred, yet plainly distinct, a long way back in the process of evolution.

Such fragmentary observations as I have been able to make in travelling among the non-European peoples have led me to doubt whether we are not apt to exaggerate the importance of heredity on the one hand and of physical (such as climatic) environment on the other, to under-estimate the value of the contact of races for each of them, and to allow too little for the social and political conditions under which a race or people has lived, it may be for thousands of years.² Should such doubts be well founded, the differences in mental power and in a capacity for progress between such peoples and ourselves may be less permanent than we fancy, and the ultimate assimilation and equalization of the several human stocks, at least as respects some branches of activity, be nearer than is commonly supposed. The gulf, for instance, which is believed to sever us Europeans from what we call the East—though really there are four or five quite different ‘Easts’—may be by no means so deep as both Easterns and Westerns fancy.

Another question has less actual, but not less historical significance. What is the weight to be attached to cultural similarities as an evidence of the contact—direct or indirect—of peoples in the past? Does the recurrence in Mexico, for instance, of mouldings and other forms of design which we find also in Egypt or Asia Minor point to any transmission of those forms from the one country to the other?

¹ Some of the fusions that are now taking place deserve to be studied, as for instance that of the Chinese with the aboriginal islanders in the South-West Pacific. In Hawaii the Japanese are now the largest element, and they must eventually become commingled with the aborigines, and also with the Portuguese and Chinese inhabitants.

² Take for instance the differences between the semi-civilized Finnic tribes of Northern Europe and Asia and the far more advanced condition of other Finnic peoples, apparently akin, such as the Finns of Finland, the Magyars, and the Bulgarians, who have been long in contact with older civilizations.

Does the existence of similar superstitions, similar marriage customs, similar games, argue either a common racial origin, or a borrowing by one race from another? Or are such resemblances due to certain tendencies and lines of action in the mind of mankind generally which express themselves in more or less similar ways in many countries? When we find people worshipping the sun in Peru, and in Persia, and in Egypt, and in Ireland, need we attribute this to any historical connexion? Need we take a certain likeness between the rude figures found on Easter Island and those at Tiahuanaco in Bolivia as evidence that there was a relationship between the makers of each, and infer therefrom an intercourse by sea between Polynesians and South American aborigines for which there is no other evidence.

Passing back to the general field of archaeological research, it is sufficient to indicate a few of the directions in which that research must be pushed further. Many ancient sites remain to be examined in Egypt, in Syria, in Asia Minor, in North Africa, even in Greece and the outlying Hellenic settlements. The brilliant discoveries of Sir Aurel Stein and others in Central Asia have not exhausted those regions, nor have the explorations of the Yale expedition directed by Professor Hiram Bingham, great as have been its results, exhausted Peru. Sir W. M. Ramsay has lately reminded us how many small tribes and vestiges of old peoples remain to be studied in Asia Minor. At least as many remain in the Caucasus. Recent excavations and explorations in Southern and Western Europe have shown how much more we may yet learn regarding the successive stages which are now being traced in the development of palaeolithic man. What needs to be most emphasized is the duty that lies on all learned bodies and societies to urge on the governments of civilized nations the need for collecting and recording those phenomena of a savage life which is rapidly vanishing under the contact of European nations. Every year some tribe dies out, and it becomes no longer possible to preserve a record of its physical characteristics, its language, its customs, its tales, its art, though all these not only help to interpret those of other tribes but cast much light on the parallel phenomena which we are trying to recover of the life of primitive or half-civilized man in the remote past. A special responsibility in this matter rests upon Britain, because we and our self-governing Dominions control a greater number and variety of primitive or backward races and tribes in Asia, Africa, and Australia than does any other civilized Power. We ought to set an example in this matter, similar to that which on the whole (if with some lapses) we have done in our considerate treatment of primitive subject peoples.

Coming to history in the stricter sense of the term, let us first consider the sources of history in order to see how much remains to be done in exploring them, and then bethink ourselves of some of the topics which need and will best repay further investigation,

Historical sources fall into four classes, which do not quite correspond with chronological periods. First come prehistoric records, including the materials already touched upon as belonging to archaeology, viz. buildings, fragments of primitive art, implements, and also traditions, which among some peoples contain at least a germ of truth, as may be said of the New Zealanders (among whom they go back for some three or four centuries), of the Peruvian Quichuas, and of the Celts of early Ireland. Of such sources more may well remain to be discovered, even after the wonderful results obtained in the last half-century, especially in certain parts of Central Asia and Central America. Certainly much can still be done in the way of correlation and interpretation. The second class covers the time between the invention of writing (hieroglyphic or alphabetic) and the introduction of printing. The earlier records are inscriptions on stone or clay or metal (in the case of Egypt on papyrus also), but the great bulk, for the middle and later periods, are coins and manuscripts. Despite the labours of Mommsen and his coadjutors on the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and the similar work done on Greek monuments, there is doubtless much more to be still found and interpreted, especially in China and Turkistan, and in the Turkish dominions, so soon as the impediments interposed by an abominable government, which asked backshish from the rich and gave kurbash to the poor, have been removed. As respects the ancient world, some few manuscripts may lurk in Eastern monasteries or possibly in the corners of old-fashioned European libraries. Otherwise there seems to be little to expect, apart from Egyptian or Herculanean papyri. Nor is the prospect much more cheering when we come to the Middle Ages, so assiduously have the archives of all the European States and of their principal cities been ransacked. There must still however be a good deal of matter which, though known to exist, has not been yet printed.¹ Not long ago the records, judicial and administrative, of the city of Siena, full records going back to

¹ As an instance of the possibilities that lie close at hand I may mention that many years ago, having gone to Rome to look for a manuscript mentioned by a writer of the early seventeenth century which had never been seen since his time and had been sought for in vain in the Vatican, I found it in the private library of one of the great Roman families, entered in the catalogue, where anybody could have recognized it by the most cursory examination. It was like finding a very rare plant among the birches in Hyde Park.

the thirteenth century, were published. It is when we approach modern times that the volume of manuscript matter begins to swell. The Vatican and Simancas, not to speak of local libraries and ancient family collections in many European countries, must contain plenty of records still imperfectly explored, even if much has been calendared. The researches of our Historical Manuscripts Commission have shown how large a mass of private letters bearing on the politics or illustrating the social or economic life of our country remains to be turned to historical account. And here let a British delinquency be noted which ought to be cured. It is the omission to provide for the due preservation of our public local records, most of them ecclesiastical, and many going to ruin through neglect, or hidden away in country houses unknown to their possessors. A Departmental Committee reported upon this subject more than ten years ago, but no Act has yet been passed for ensuring the safety of these documents. A regrettable fault (which has lately been removed) was the reluctance of successive British governments to allow students, however well accredited, to inspect State papers of a date any later than 1780. When ten years ago I looked through the archives preserved in Dublin Castle I found that there also everything before that date was still kept secret, though Mr. Lecky, and possibly some one else, had been allowed to see certain papers. Such caution, which amazed foreign, and especially American students, was surely overstrained. Documents of the fifteenth century preserved in the Papal Chancery are far more likely to be turned to controversial uses to-day than documents of the beginning of last century preserved in our Record Office, yet Pope Leo XIII showed a liberality from which British authorities appeared to shrink. Now however the Record Office in London allows documents anterior to 1837 to be inspected. The mass of private letters that are written in our time and may constitute precious materials for the historian of the future goes on growing. Diaries may from time to time be expected like the Greville memoirs and like that of Gideon Welles which has thrown so much light on the inner history of the American Civil War. But as regards letters it is to be remembered that they are now shorter than a century ago, that being frequently dictated to a typewriter they tend to be less familiar and confidential than when no eyes save those of the recipient saw them, and that being committed to inferior paper most of them may have perished before they are likely to be used for the purposes of history.

The third class of sources, printed matter, begins from the end of the fifteenth century and has latterly prodigiously increased.

When he gets well down into the sixteenth century, the investigator, beginning to be delivered from the difficulties of palaeography, finds a greater difficulty in the abundance of his material. He cannot, like the mediaevalist, buy nearly all the books he needs, but must spend most of his time in a public library. I need not tell you how much there is to be done for the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries in the re-examination of books and records of all kinds and in testing their trustworthiness, nor what room for systematic treatises, pervaded by a philosophical spirit, in which all the literature relating to some particular period, or subject, or person, is worked up into a form available for those who are not experts in that particular topic. Tocqueville's *Ancien Régime* and Taine's *Origines de la France contemporaine* are brilliant examples of what men whose minds are both exact and comprehensive may do to bring the essence of the original sources, and the broad results they point to, within the grasp of the general public.

It is when we reach the fourth period, that in which newspapers and other ephemeral products of the press have so vastly increased in number and volume, that the student finds himself confronted by an appalling profusion of material. To use it for historical purposes would seem hopeless had not the thing been done, as for instance by Mr. James Ford Rhodes, in his history of the United States, by Aulard and de la Gorce, and, in a lesser degree, by Häusser and Treitschke and Lamprecht, as well as by Spencer Walpole and other recent English writers. The difficulties are unspeakably increased by the untrustworthiness of the sources and the lack of means for testing them critically. When once, many years ago, I had to present an account of a political movement in California, and found it hard to get a connected narrative from those who had watched that movement very shortly before, I was told that its phases could be followed only by reading through the files of the leading San Francisco newspapers for about ten months, but the warning was added that my labour would be thrown away because the statements in the papers were mostly lies. Lord Acton observed that by declining this task I had put myself out of the class of scientific historians, but after all everything in this world is an equation between labour expended and results expected. It may be added that vast as is the amount of news which the newspaper press pours forth, and great as are the activity and enterprise it displays, the historian finds it deficient in two respects. He cannot learn from it, nor do its readers generally learn, the real qualities, perhaps not even the real aims, of the leading political figures. Such persons are frequently credited with virtues

and condemned for sins for which they deserve neither the praise nor the blame. The public seldom knows the truth about those whose names are oftenest on its lips. Even those keen eyes and ears that haunt the halls or fill the galleries of a Parliament or a Congress do not grasp the full significance of what they are watching. Neither is it easy to gather from the daily or weekly press what is the general judgement and feeling of thoughtful and fair-minded men at any particular moment. Every political organ, even when it does not mean to be partisan, seems nearly always to reflect the views of a party, nor can a just view of the best public opinion be obtained by discounting the extreme statements on both sides. Each journal is, by the law of its being, apt to omit or minimize facts which tell against the cause it supports, while the organs of the other party maximize them.

Is it too much to say, comparing the abundance we see to-day with the scantiness of our sources for the history of ancient and mediaeval times, that Volume and Value are in an inverse ratio to one another? The Assyrian king doubtless exaggerated his exploits. Herodotus was often misinformed. The monkish chronicler sometimes put down statements which in passing from mouth to mouth had departed pretty far from the facts. But Herodotus did his best to get at the truth, and the thirteenth-century annalist, living in his quiet cell, took seriously his duty of recording events, and had seldom (except where the interests of the monastery were involved) any motive for perversion. Now, however, the purveyor of news is in the midst of the 'happenings' which he publishes for others to read. He has, besides his personal bias, the interests of his party to consider, and in some countries (though less in England than in most others) he has an unslakable thirst for 'copy', the more sensational the better, which makes him give ready currency to reports which the slightest inquiry would have shown to be false.

Evidently therefore whoever wants to write with fullness and in a scientific spirit the history of this or of last century will have his work cut out for him. He cannot ignore the newspapers. They are, with all their defects, a priceless record. He cannot be content with a curt summary, such as some weekly or monthly periodicals give, useful as these are, for often it is in the details of an event that its true significance is to be found.

The quantity of investigation which the historian in the future must be prepared to undertake is roughly proportioned to his distance in time from the events and to the volume of his sources. The further back events lie, and the scantier are the materials, and the more

fully have they been heretofore dealt with, so much the more completely has their pith been already extracted. There is accordingly least left to be done in ancient history, and not much more in early mediaeval history. Every fresh and powerful mind makes a new departure and opens a new point of view which leaves less to be accomplished by his successors. Much of what Niebuhr and afterwards Mommsen did for Roman history, much of what Grote did for the central part of Greek history, does not need to be done altogether *de novo*. However there is still room. Books on Roman history well worth studying (such as those of Greenidge, Pelham, Otto Seeck, Ferrero) have continued to appear. There are still unsolved problems in Athenian and Roman constitutional history. New views are from time to time propounded regarding Socrates and the place he held in Athens, and the causes of his condemnation. There are controversies regarding the trustworthiness of well-known historical portraits, such as that presented of Tiberius by Tacitus. Travellers of the calibre of Leake and Tozer and Sir Arthur Evans, of Sir W. M. Ramsay and Mr. W. Leaf and Mr. Hogarth, may continue to carry on geographical explorations throwing fresh light upon events and social conditions in the homes of ancient civilizations.

In an account given to us by Professor Haverfield of excavations along the line of the Roman Wall he told how the foundations of an ancient building had been recently discovered because a keen-eyed observer happened to see strong sunlight fall at a particular hour of the day upon the grass in such wise as to suggest that something hitherto unsuspected lay underneath the smooth surface. So a stray hint from an unexpected quarter, a stray fact which has struck nobody before in its relation to an old problem, may lead any one of us into a new and fertile path of thought and inquiry.

One would think that more remains to be done for the history of the Roman Empire, especially on the side of provincial administration and provincial life generally, and also in its relations with the great Eastern and rival empire of the Sassanids. The last time I saw Mommsen I asked him whether he could hold out any hope that he would carry down his history from Julius Caesar at least to the days of Constantine. Instead of replying that he was too advanced in years, the old lion shook his mane and raised his eyebrows with a gesture of despair, and said, 'What materials are there except court gossip?' Nevertheless materials continue to be discovered, and slowly as they come in, they may after a while be sufficient to enable a penetrating and constructive mind to enrich us by a fuller narrative and a completer picture than we yet possess. Still more

evidently do the annals of the East Roman Empire ask for a more thorough treatment, especially in its later phases, than they have yet received, much as we owe to Finlay, to Krumbacher, and to Professor Bury. Among other subjects, the careful study of which is needed, may be mentioned the Greek kingdom of Bactria and its relations—indeed the relations of Greek culture generally—with India, North-western India, and the Far East, the kingdom of the Nabathaeans, and that of the Ephthalites or White Huns, the early history of Arabia and above all of Mohammed and his surroundings. Every few years there appears some new treatment of the Prophet's character and his aims, and of the causes which led to the swift growth of the empire of his first successors. These views are so far discrepant as to show that many questions are not yet settled. We need to know more about the rule of the Arabs, or rather of the Arabized Moors, in Spain. So also we need a history of Iceland, a subject on which little has been written, except in Danish, since the days of Konrad Maurer. Some historian versed in architecture ought to give us a full account of the work of the Crusaders in Palestine and Syria. In Northern Europe two remarkable processes, extending over long periods, will repay further treatment. One is the process by which from the days when Henry the Fowler took the Wendish fort of Brannibor down to the days of the Hohenzollern kings of Prussia, the Baltic regions from the Elbe to the Niemen have become almost completely Teutonized. The other is the parallel process, beginning later and not yet ended, by which the Finnic and Turkic tribes of North Central and Eastern Russia have been and are being Slavonized. How few there are in Western Europe, even among historical students, who know the facts needed for a comprehension of the intricate problems of nationality which now confront the branches of the Lithuanian and Slavonic stocks between the Gulf of Finland and the Adriatic!

On the ecclesiastical side of history we note that the controversies which were so acute from the days of the Reformation down to our own regarding the organization of the early Church are now approaching a settlement. Not a few facts are admitted by Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists alike which would have been contested seventy years ago. Much has been done on the history of the Popes during the darker centuries, the thorough critical treatment which the *Liber Pontificalis* has recently received having greatly helped us. But much still remains obscure. So also some of the mediaeval heresies and sects (in particular those Bogomils whose origin and westward extension raises interesting questions) need to be further investigated and the relations between them cleared up. It may



interest you to have news regarding another topic on which a comprehensive treatise has been much needed. A book on Witchcraft was occupying the most learned of all American historians, Mr. Henry C. Lea, at the time of his lamented death, and what he had done towards it will shortly be published, with the additions of a highly competent scholar.

As regards our own islands, most of the old controversies have been set at rest. The Picts, about whose racial affinities our grandfathers strove, no longer trouble either the Scots or the Angles. About the kingdom of Strathclyde and the Teutonization of Lothian and Fife there is perhaps no more to be ascertained, about the pre-Christian days of Erin very little. Immense additions have been made to our knowledge of the earlier phases of the Common Law and of early land customs. Nevertheless there are still fields which will repay intensive culture: and this applies to the economic and social conditions of post-mediaeval times also. There is no satisfactory history of the Gaelic clans either in Scotland or in Ireland, nor of the process by which a large Scandinavian element established itself in Cumberland and Westmoreland. A more minute and careful study of place-names all over our islands, and especially along the coasts, might help to supply in some of these obscure topics the lack of either written evidence or tradition and the scantiness of archaeological data, although these last have been much increased by the reports of the Historical Monuments Commission as well as by the constant additions made to our knowledge of early Britain by the labours of Professor Haverfield and many other indefatigable investigators.

When we come down to modern times, the number of paths of historical inquiry which lie open to the student, and for which he can draw upon sources not yet exhausted, becomes so large that it would be useless to enumerate even those of most permanent interest. The best way of realizing how much remains to be done is to note how even on subjects which have drawn the largest measure of attention new springs of knowledge are being tapped and new theories presented. Down till 1914 a constant stream of books on the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon was issuing from the French press: and almost the same might have been said of the Protestant Reformation, of the period of the English Commonwealth, of the American revolutionary war, of the events of 1848-9, of the War of Secession in America, and of the foundation of the new German Empire. In spite of this, and notwithstanding the publicity in the midst of which popular governments live, how many great events of our own time present problems yet unsolved! The truth

about the circumstances attending the outbreak of the war of 1870 might have remained long unknown had not Bismarck in a moment of cynical frankness told the tale of the Ems telegram. The full story of the incidents which led to the Jameson Raid in 1895, and of what followed it up to the South African War of 1899, is now known only to a very few persons and may possibly be never disclosed. Since July 1914 there has been an immense outburst of literature in many countries and languages as to the causes of and responsibility for the present conflict, and however clear we may hold certain conclusions to be, controversies will rage round these issues for many a year to come. Long is the life of a controversy which engages religious or political or national passion. People quarrel to-day over Mary of Scotland and the Casket letters: Cromwell still has his enemies and Danton his friends: Renan could not conceal his personal dislike of St. Paul.

In the United States, where the events of the past have little relation to the politics of the present, there is now wonderful activity shown in printing and publishing manuscript materials for history, especially local history, and also in working up the materials already in print and compiling narratives from them. State Historical Societies vie with Universities in this work, and the volume of the output shows no signs of diminution. An incidental result has been to increase the interest of the educated classes in local history, and the local patriotism of the citizens generally.

Besides the by-ways to be explored, there is much to be done for clearing and levelling the broad highways of history. How often has it occurred to each of us on venturing into a new field and finding that the particular questions which one sought to master had never received thorough treatment to exclaim 'The right book has not yet been written'. In English we have not yet any quite satisfactory history, critical, impartial, and philosophical, of France, or of Germany, or of Spain, or of Switzerland, much less of India or of Russia. There is plenty of work still, not only for the patient researcher, but for the man who, like Ranke, or Mommsen, or Taine, can add to the gift for patient research the wide view and the power of constructing on grand lines.

Here let a word be said as to another way in which historical studies may be aided. It has often been suggested that every fair-minded man with good opportunities for observation ought to keep a diary which should record the impressions made on himself and his friends by events as they occur, and the feelings or judgements these events evoke from the public. As already observed, such impressions are not quite adequately recorded by the daily or weekly press: and they are worth

recording, for the thoughts and feelings of the first moments are those things which it is most necessary for the historian to know, the hasty judgements, even the false judgements and false beliefs, of the people, or sections of the people, being quite as important as those which, afterwards prevailing, blot out the recollection of the former. The observer will often himself be in error, but if he has the true historical spirit he will never try to explain away what he wrote at the moment. What I wish now to put before you is, however, something different. It is that we should try to make provision for the systematic observation by trained students of such phenomena of special interest as may be visible at a given time in some other country.

Several French publicists, following the great example of Tocqueville, have visited Australia and New Zealand to study the forms which democratic government has taken there and to describe the experiments it was making. One of these observers in particular, M. André Siegfried, produced some thirteen years ago a quite admirable little book upon New Zealand. It is to be wished that among such of our younger scholars as have attained some knowledge of public affairs at home, there should be those who would visit not only the British self-governing Dominions but the republics of Spanish America, at present hardly known except to the British directors of their railways and the British financiers who have advanced money to them. Still more might it be desired that an historian familiar with the course of the first French revolution were now in Russia, studying at first hand, with the detachment of a foreigner and a scholar, the extraordinary drama, without precedent in the annals of the world, which is there unrolling itself. Nor is China, whose conditions made it even less prepared for republican government, to be forgotten, for in it also things heretofore undreamt of are being attempted. The Academy has not the means of sending out such observers: perhaps some learned body with larger funds at its command may think of doing so. The study of current history needs above all things the cool impartiality of science and that knowledge of the past which enables the observer to note and record at the moment the points which are most likely to have permanent significance.

It need hardly be said that however complete the work of research, however drained and exhausted all the sources of information may have become, there will still be occasion for new books on the larger themes. History will have to go on being rewritten from age to age, even though there be no new materials, because every age sees the past with somewhat different eyes, the events of each succeeding age

having set old events in a new light. Even if Stubbs and Maitland, Freeman and Green and Gardiner had not known the facts of the periods they dealt with incomparably better than did Rapin or Carte or Hume, they would have seen far more in those facts and drawn far more from them. The future can hardly bring any similar enlargement of knowledge or improvement in critical methods. But the point of view will always continue to change.

We may now pass to the topics included in another section, that of Philology and Literary History. Here we are at once met by the fact, already adverted to, that the languages of the small peoples or tribes are fast disappearing, and thus the material for philologists to work upon is being reduced in quantity, while no new tongues (as distinguished from mere dialects) are likely to appear.¹ This is all the more reason why students of language should do their utmost to obtain and record the words, and also (phonographically if possible) the pronunciation of words, in these vanishing tongues. We owe a great deal to the labours of the missionaries in these directions, but the help of governments should also be invoked for a purpose of such high permanent value. The same remark applies to the search for inscriptions in very ancient languages, such as Cypriote, Cretan, Hittite, and Etruscan. These have also to be deciphered, and though some, like Etruscan, have hitherto resisted all efforts at interpretation, it is too soon to despair. Some clue, possibly a bilingual or trilingual inscription like that of the Rosetta stone or that which Rawlinson copied from the rock at Behistun, may yet be found. There is, we are told, much to be done in determining the relations to one another and to Semitic tongues of the languages called Accadian or Sumerian and of both to the languages of Central Asia, and of all these to the East Asiatic languages spoken in China and the Indo-Chinese regions. Whether the time is ripe for a general classification of the languages of the Old World, and an examination of their relations to those of the American aborigines, which seem to form a separate group (with wide internal differences), appears to be thought doubtful. While on the subject of language I may mention three practical problems which claim the attention of our philologists.

¹ There is, however, a sort of new language being made under our eyes to-day in Norway. The literary language of that country, written and spoken in the chief towns, had under Danish influences become almost identical with Danish. It is now being archaized into a distinct tongue by bringing the so-called *Rigsmaal* (the literary language) much nearer to the so-called *Landsmaal*, the speech of the peasantry of Western Norway, which had preserved many features of that ancient Norse which survives in Iceland. One may compare the process by which Modern Greek was archaized out of *Romaic*.

One is the reform of the spelling of English. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the advantages, educational, commercial, and (to some extent) political, which would follow from bringing the spelling of our language into accord with its pronunciation. We all recognize the enormous obstacles to the change. But the thing will have to be done some time or other, and it grows no easier by postponement.¹

The second, connected with the first, is the possibility of adding to our alphabet a very few new letters which would be appropriated to sounds now ill-covered by the existing letters. As reforms in spelling would have to be carried through in conjunction with the United States and other great English-speaking communities, so additions to the Roman alphabet would properly be considered in conjunction with the other chief nations that use it. Were it possible to induce those Slavonic nations which use the so-called Cyrillic alphabet to modify theirs so as to bring it nearer to ours, a further step would have been gained.

The question of a universal language for the purposes of commerce and of travel, for of course no one dreams that an artificial *lingua franca* could be a fit vehicle for literature of the higher kinds, is now sometimes discussed, but is far too large to be entered on here and now.² However, the experiments made indicate a growing interest in the idea. A generation that has discovered how to traverse the wide-wayed air need not despair of any enterprise, though it is easier to overcome difficulties in the natural than in the human sphere. Man is the most unpredictable and intractable of all animals. One cannot even, following the Baconian maxim, rule him by obeying, so obscure and so varying are the impulses that move his action.

In the history of literature our province touches that of what is called 'pure literature' (not in the Victorian sense), though we treat the material from a point of view different from that of the literary critic. The more any question tends to become a question of taste and of the interpretation of an author's genius, and the less it is a matter for elucidation by history, so much the more does it seem to fall outside the domain of this Academy. Most of the older controversies have now been solved or seem to be approaching a solution.

¹ The spelling of Gaelic also diverges widely from the pronunciation, and it is to be hoped that those who, in Ireland, have been reviving popular interest in that ancient tongue will give their attention to reforms in its spelling.

² Such examples of *lingua franca* as Hindustani and Swaheli, or as the far ruder pidgin (business) English of China, and the Chinook jargon of North-western America, which contains only about three hundred words, are interesting subjects of study as illustrating the way in which languages grow, but can hardly furnish guidance for the problems which Volapük and Esperanto have tried to deal with.

Of these the two most famous are that of the origin of the Homeric poems and that of the dates and authorship of the books of the New Testament. The process by which agreement comes out of protracted and often embittered controversy is noteworthy. In both the instances just mentioned, though a good deal of light has been obtained from external evidence, added to by degrees during many years, the arguments employed have been chiefly based on a more and more careful and minute study of the writings themselves. Every new hypothesis broached surveys the facts already ascertained from a slightly different angle, and finds an explanation of some among them more tenable than the explanations theretofore propounded. Thus by degrees some hypotheses have to be abandoned, while others are accepted as sound and become theories in the proper scientific sense. This continued scrutiny of the data, resembling the constant application of an X-ray process, goes on till at last the field of controversy is so much narrowed by analysis that the time for a synthesis arrives, the majority of competent scholars having reached agreement. Thereafter it is only the so-called 'cranks' who start fresh hares, and only the hopelessly prejudiced who cling to superseded doctrines. Thus there is now a far more general consensus as to the genesis of the Homeric poems, and as to those parts of them which are obviously later than the others, than existed in the days from Wolf down to Lachmann. One may almost regret the possible disappearance of the whole controversy, because it had caused an incessant microscopic examination of the poems which was incidentally fruitful in many ways. Something of the same kind has happened regarding the books of the Bible: and here the approach to a consensus is more remarkable, because views of the older type being, or seeming to be, involved with theological doctrines, were naturally more tenacious of life, while views of the so-called 'Tübingen' type that arose in Germany early in last century were similarly tinged by a sort of bias against beliefs previously current.

One branch of work which long occupied many acute and learned scholars shows signs of coming to an end. It is the emendation of the texts of the Greek and Roman classics. Those of all the greater authors have been now brought to a state in which little more remains to be done, there being practically no new light to be expected from the recension of the old MSS. or the discovery of any others. It is interesting to be assured that in the case of the Greek writers of the best ages, the readings in the texts as settled in Alexandrian days have been but little shaken. The only quarter from which new MSS. can now be expected is Egypt, where papyri of importance may still

be unearthed. Of all possible discoveries those which we should probably most value would be copies of those Greek lyric poets whom we know only by fragments, or additional plays by the Attic dramatists.

The dispute about Macpherson and his alleged Poems of Ossian has long been set at rest, though many points regarding the date of the more ancient fragments of Celtic writings remain uncertain. The old questions as to the authenticity of various writings attributed to Plato and Aristotle and Cicero and Virgil and Tacitus (to take the most familiar examples) seem to have been mostly disposed of. That Procopius was the author of the *Anecdota* appeared to most of us no longer doubtful after the arguments of Felix Dahn; but two or three books have been recently published which attempt to sustain the opposite view. The controversy regarding the *De Tribus Impostoribus*, a phrase which his enemies enumerated among the sins of the Emperor Frederick the Second, and which was afterwards taken as the title of a book, seems to have dropped out of sight. M. Jusserand has conclusively vindicated the ascription of the *King's Quhair* to James the First of Scotland, but the authorship of the book *De Aqua et Terra* attributed to Dante is still in dispute. Every publisher's catalogue reminds us how many questions remain unsettled regarding the authorship of plays which go or have gone under the name of Shakespeare, and as to the collaboration of other dramatists with him in their composition. I need not multiply instances to show how wide a field there is in which the historian of post-Renaissance literature may disport himself, nor go on to indicate those other cases in which famous works need elucidation and interpretation by an examination of the lives, studies, and characters of their authors. One can fancy that thirty years hence books may still be written to explain passages in which Robert Browning assumes the reader's knowledge of out-of-the-way persons and incidents, or to discuss the question, recently presented to us in Mr. Gosse's skilful biography of Swinburne, whether that singular genius had any real interest either in Italy or in republican freedom.

When we turn to the mental sciences such as Psychology, Ontology, and Ethics we enter a field only one part of which can be said to deal with concrete facts capable of being studied by the ordinary methods of science. This part is the study, by observation and (to some extent) by experiment, of the phenomena of human intelligence and emotion. Here again we are on the boundary line between the 'natural' and the 'human sciences'. How and precisely where that

line is to be drawn is one of the great unsolved and perhaps insoluble problems. Observational psychology, working on lines which are in a sense parallel with those of physiology, has become a progressive branch of study, accumulating and classifying its data, and using those accumulated as a basis for further advances. Its vitality is shown by its power of throwing out shoots, two of which deserve passing mention. One is the application of psychological laws to the practical art of education. The other is the scientific investigation, by the various societies for psychical research, of certain obscure phenomena relating to what passes in the so-called subliminal consciousness, and to other phenomena which are disclosed in studying the action of minds upon one another otherwise than by means of speech or signs, an inquiry which some bold spirits are trying to extend into regions wrapped in even deeper darkness. All these lines of study have a future in which much may be done to extend our knowledge and to make it definite. Three other departments of what is called metaphysical science are Ethics, Epistemology, and Ontology. Ethics has indeed a practical side in so far as it lays down maxims for the conduct of life, and we have been reminded of the difficulties that still arise in applying these by the case of those who claim that conscience requires them to refuse obedience to certain laws of the State. Epistemology has a practical side in Logic which examines the processes of reasoning. But on their theoretic side these two subjects, as well as Ontology (including Natural Theology), deal with abstractions, and can hardly be said to be, except as respects their historical developments, within the realm of learning any more than within that of physical science. Are they to be deemed progressive studies, and can we estimate what results their further study may produce? Some represent them as sterile because they have no positive basis in concrete facts. Some complain of them as unprogressive, alleging that whoever listens to a metaphysical discussion finds that no two men use philosophical terms in exactly the same sense, because the inadequacy of language prevents each from conveying his full thought to another, even though both may employ the same technical terms. Some critics discredit the attempts made to create systems on lines parallel to those of the physical sciences as being nothing more than strings of barren formulae, adding no real knowledge to what was known before. Nevertheless, these metaphysical inquiries make a real appeal to the desire of man to understand himself and his relations to the universe. They will doubtless continue to be prosecuted. The minds that have a real gift for high constructive thinking are

extremely rare—has any appeared during the last eighty years?—rarer perhaps than even great poets; and second or third rate metaphysic attracts most men less than does second or third rate poetry, which may be true poetry for all that. But when hereafter great constructive or highly illuminative minds, such as Plato or Thomas of Aquino or Des Cartes or Kant, arise, they may be expected to go on building up new systems of philosophy each of which will set man and the world in new relations to one another, and leave a permanent mark upon human thought, and therethrough, upon human history also. Lesser men will explain and comment and criticize and try eclectic reconciliations: others will controvert them, and thus there will be always something going on. The great philosopher is never superseded, but there is always room for another. A man may call himself to-day a Platonist just as well as he may call himself a Hegelian, though he will recognize how much has been done since Plato. Thus it may be said that there is no reason to fear exhaustion in the sphere of philosophy any more than in that of history.

Returning from this high and difficult air to the solid ground of fact we meet the sciences which deal with human relations in society, of which the most important are Economics, Law, and Politics.

Of all the departments of inquiry that have sought to describe themselves as sciences none is to-day in such disorder as Economics. Many of the propositions which forty years ago were thought most firmly established are now confidently assailed. Some seem shaken to their foundations. Doctrines that were heresies have grown so confident that the old orthodoxies seem ready to take flight. Everything is in a state of flux. Obviously therefore there is plenty for the economists of all nations to do, seeing that the present controversies rage in nearly every nation, covering matters so vital to national welfare as the following:

Land and the best means of its disposal and tenure for the national well-being.

The scientific conception of capital and its relation to labour.

Emigration and immigration.

Taxation, whether on property or on income, and the extent to which it may be made progressive.

Tariffs, and in particular the use of import duties in favour of home industries.

Wages: whether or no they should be fixed by the State, and if so, whether by direct legislation or by courts of law, or by Statutory Boards.

Questions relating to currency, metallic and paper.

Strikes and the means of averting or dealing with them.

Co-operation and profit-sharing between employer and employed.

These, and many other economic questions, fall also within the domain of politics; and that is why their discussion is apt to generate more heat than light. Different classes or political parties have a direct interest in their determination. It is therefore especially to be desired that trained students, blessed with impartial minds and applying scientific methods, should examine them in a cooler atmosphere. Behind them all lie still larger issues. Is it expedient to extinguish private property, and substitute some kind of common ownership and enjoyment such as is vaguely described by the names of Socialism, Collectivism, or Communism? Proposals of this nature raise issues that are quite as much ethical as economic, for the supersession of private acquisition and ownership would imply that the motive of private gain which has hitherto stimulated men to effort might possibly be dispensed with, its place being taken by a sense of common duty and of an interest in the well-being of the community as a whole, which would make men as eager to serve it as to benefit themselves. Other possible results on individual and national character, for good or for evil, may readily be imagined.

Questions like these (and many others belonging to the class of what are called 'problems of Reconstruction') being keenly debated everywhere, and the old landmarks having been so thrown down that there must either be a re-vindication of the old doctrines or a systematic creation of new doctrines, there is much waiting to be done, and we may regret that there are not more workmen of eminent capacity already engaged upon it. Many experiments are being and will be tried. They will need to be carefully watched and their results recorded. Many legislative proposals will be launched. They will deserve minute criticism. Many fallacies will be, innocently or trickily, disseminated. They ought to be refuted. So far from being exhausted, economic science may be expected to make a fresh start, though it need not neglect either past facts or the wisdom of Adam Smith and his earlier successors.

Law is so technical a subject that I must eschew details, and be content to indicate some subjects which are most interesting to, or comprehensible by, educated men in general.

Among these the following may be named as requiring to be dealt with on general principles, based on a sound theory, and adjusted in detail to the actual conditions of commercial and industrial life:

The principles to be applied to the creation and regulation of incorporated companies.

The steps to be taken to prevent the creation of monopolies by large industrial or financial combinations.

The liability of employers for acts done by their employees, and their own liability to those employees for injuries received by the latter (in the course of employment) for which the employer is not to blame.

The extent to which State control may, without disregard of vested pecuniary rights, be exercised over what are called 'public utilities', *i.e.* undertakings such as railways and canals.

The principles on which the law of Marriage and Divorce ought to be founded.

These five questions have been largely debated and dealt with by legislation in the United States, and ought to be studied with constant reference to the experiments tried there and elsewhere.

The limits to be assigned to the power of testamentary disposition.

Methods of legislation, as respects the form of statutes and the procedure to be adopted in passing them, and the extent to which legislative power may fitly be delegated to administrative or judicial authorities.

Codification, whether by consolidating existing Statute Law, or by condensing and simplifying customary law, especially as contained in the decisions of Courts.

The assimilation of the Mercantile Law of the chief civilized countries, so that the same rules may be adopted by as many of such countries as can be induced to agree upon a generally just and convenient system. This is a matter which has become more pressing with the continuing development of international commerce.

Comparative legal history. The history of the laws of the great nations has been, in each of those nations, pretty thoroughly investigated, although much remains to be done in detail. Germany and France led the way. We have repaired our former deficiencies by the great work of Sir Frederick Pollock and our ever to be lamented friend the late Professor Maitland. But the study of different legal systems not only in their relation to one another but in the light which the independent development of each throws upon the development of the others, has not, even after the examples set by Sir Henry Maine and Fustel de Coulanges as regards the early periods, received sufficient attention. The field of research is extending. Not to speak of Musulman and Hindu law, a comparison of Japanese feudalism with that of the European Middle Ages would yield valuable results. Nor must I forget to add what interesting

questions are raised by the fact that an ancient people of such high intelligence as the Chinese have somehow got along without any body of civil laws in the true sense, and without anything resembling European Courts. How did they manage it? Musulmans had at least the Koran and the Traditions and the Commentators, as well as their Kadi and their Mufti and their Sheikh ul Islam. China had nothing like these, only a collection of old customs made by an Emperor some two centuries ago, and scarcely at all applied in practice.

Into the topic which continental students and those of Spanish and Portuguese America call the Philosophy of Law, and which a few British writers have recently treated in a more practically helpful way, I do not enter, doubting whether much can be expected, at any rate for the purposes of legal science, from such abstract speculations as those in which Hegel led the way, followed by Trendelenburg, Röder, and others. Little work seems to have been done latterly upon those lines either in Germany or elsewhere.

There remains the vast topic of International Law. The events of the last few years have shown that much of its content needs to be built up again *de novo*, and that, if a new system is to command respect and obedience, some means must be provided for enforcing such rules as the nations of the world may agree to adopt. Any practical action falls within the sphere of politics, and must be taken by governments, but men of learning may prepare the way by their discussions. Some other nations have thought and written more upon these subjects than we have done. The United States in particular has gone ahead of us. It is time for Britain to show a more active interest. Most of all are both we and our Allies in the present War, all of whom join in the desire to provide against the recurrence of such calamities as are now disgracing and destroying civilization, bound to address ourselves to the problem of the means to be adopted for securing a permanent peace to be guaranteed by the action of free peace-loving peoples. Thinkers must lead the march, examine the difficulties, suggest to governments methods for overcoming them.

Last of all we arrive at what is called Political Science, a slightly misleading name, for no scientific precision can be claimed for the subject. Here also many new questions are emerging, while those as old as Plato and Aristotle have by no means been exhausted. Passing by these, as familiar to you all, I turn to some which are new, at least in the form they have recently assumed. They are all practical, and belong to politics in the current popular sense. It is not, however, as politicians that men of learning have to regard

them, but as students of history, of contemporary as well as past history.

Our function is to gather and analyse, and summarize, and set forth in a clear form, the data which history and the observation of present phenomena provide, stating facts, tracing out causes, describing actual results, estimating the good and the evil which have followed from various methods adopted and experiments tried. To explain the Past by the Present, to illuminate the Present by the Past, is the business of the student of politics as well as of the historian. Let me enumerate a few of the current questions which deserve and will repay his labours.

What is the State? What limits are to be fixed to its control of individual freedom? Is it a law unto itself, bound by no moral rules? and if it owes duties to its subjects does it owe any to other States? or is the preservation of its own existence a duty overriding honour, justice, and good faith?

Can any and what general principles be laid down regarding the limits of State interference in forbidding practices it may deem pernicious, *e.g.* the use of intoxicating liquors?

What, generally speaking, should be the division of powers and functions between the central and local governments?

What are the causes which have, in many countries, discredited representative legislatures?

What has been the practical working of universal suffrage, especially in those countries where the franchise has been extended to women?

What are the best means of securing efficiency in the civil service, and of preventing favouritism in promotion?

What have been the results of the practice of direct popular legislation, Initiative, Referendum, and (in many States of the American Union) of the Recall of officials and representatives?

What, in governments having a republican form, is the best method of choosing the executive head, or heads, of the State?

Are Second Chambers generally desirable, and how should they be formed, *e.g.* by nomination, or by some and what species of election?

What has been the working of the absolute control of parties in a legislature by the majority of its members (*e.g.* the Australian caucus system)?

This list, from which I omit issues peculiar to one nation, State, or group of States, such as the problem of the means for amending the constitutional relations of the component parts of the British Dominions, is sufficient to show how many subjects there are which a student of politics may treat in a large and philosophic spirit, and

in which the practical politician may profit by his studies. Those studies will be valuable in proportion not only to their thoroughness but to their impartiality. As valour is the special virtue which we admire in the soldier, and honesty in the merchant, and public spirit in the politician, so is devotion to truth and truth only the characteristic note and guiding principle of the man of science and the man of learning. One of the uses of an organized body of learned men is that it holds up this ideal to each of its members, and makes them guardians in this respect of one another's honour.

Considering that England was the first of modern countries to create and work a free constitution, and that nowhere had thinkers so much opportunity to observe and such liberty to debate matters relating to government and all public affairs, as well ecclesiastical as civil, it may seem surprising that we have not latterly made so many contributions to the literature of these subjects as France and Germany, and above all as the United States, have done. Bentham, Burke, and Bagehot are perhaps the only three English writers who during the last two centuries have deeply stirred political thought. The first was not primarily concerned with politics, the second gave us splendid thoughts but no system, the third died before he had accomplished what might have been expected from his admirable gifts. We owe the best description of our own constitution and government to an American, Mr. Lawrence Lowell. We have had no Montesquieu, no Tocqueville, and (perhaps happily) no Treitschke.

The present time is well fitted to stimulate to greater activity those who cultivate these subjects. It sees the whole earth made one in a sense never seen before, every people and State brought into direct political relations with every other. The form in which this unity has become first manifest is a war whose flames have enwrapt the whole earth and which seems likely to leave it poorer by more than ten millions of lives. But the unity made visible in war will remain in peace. Industry and commerce, no less than alliances and enmities, prescribe that. It will become in time an even more intimate unity. Whatever happens anywhere in the economic and political sphere will have an interest for every other country.

Moreover the most extraordinary contrasts rise before us. We see a great nation in which the individual is expected to sacrifice himself, body and soul, to the State, a nation which has raised the State not only to amazing military efficiency but also to a position of irresponsible power and unlimited range of action greater than even the ancient republics dreamed of. In it is Wisdom, or the claim to wisdom : with it is Force. It becomes a sort of deity, invested with a mystic

sanctity. Its will is the standard of morality and the highest law, to obey which is the highest duty. To it, incense is burned on many an altar and prayer continually made.

Further to the East we see a still vaster nation, a great and gifted people, in which that wave of democratic change which is sweeping over the world is now tossing its spray highest. Not only equal rights but an equal share in all public powers and functions is to be granted to every man and woman, the ignorant and the instructed alike. Property is, for the moment, gone. The old institutions have been overthrown and no others set up to take their place. No person or body has any authority except what he can make good by arms. Every one appeals to the people, but the people have not yet found their spokesmen and most of them do not know what they want nor how to get it. This is a transient phase, for order always reasserts itself; and we may hope that when it comes, it will be a better order than was that which preceded the revolution. But was there ever before so much to try to observe and record and comprehend as what we see now passing before us?

The conclusion of the whole matter, the answer to the question which we set out to examine, is that there is abundance of work to be done in the departments of learning wherewith this Academy is concerned, more work indeed than there are workers to do it. We have been considering chiefly the past, and such materials as history and philology and literature provide. But think also of the Future. History is being made faster than it can be written. We have to deal not with a lake that can be drained but with a river whose current swells daily. We can see new problems beginning to emerge in philosophy, and in law; and materials for study are being accumulated on an even larger scale in economics and politics. The crop grows more quickly than it can be cut or harvested. Our task is not to find work but to decide what kinds of work have the first claim upon us. Though the men of science tell us that the more they discover the more they find to be discovered, still we can imagine a time when the powers of the telescope and microscope cannot be further increased, and when new methods of research like spectroscopy can hardly be looked for. The world moreover is limited in space, and in its natural objects retain, so far as we know, always the same properties. But the mind and will of man are constantly creating fresh materials with which we have to deal as they are created.

You will not expect me to compare the results to which we may look forward in the sphere of the human studies with those that are being attained in the domain of external nature, although nowadays

advocates of revolutionary changes in education seek to relegate the former set of studies to a subordinate place. History and philosophy, economics and politics, need no defence. They are the foundation of statesmanship, and a well-instructed far-seeing statesmanship is specially needed in times of sudden change. It must, however, be admitted that the results obtained in these branches of learning can seldom be summed up in forms which every one will comprehend. History supplies forecasts which are probable but scarcely ever certain. Even when the conclusions obtained by politics and economics are practically such as no trained student will dispute, we can never be sure that either political leaders or their followers will take such conclusions as guides to action. Among leaders, passion, selfishness, shortsightedness, want of moral courage; in masses of men as well as in leaders, selfishness, shortsightedness, and passion, drive nations astray. But history shows that in the long run those principles which the study of man in history has established as permanently true can no more be violated with impunity than can the laws of external nature be defied.

In days of stress and revolution passion rules and the reign of reason is suspended. Ideas, sound in themselves and safe at ordinary temperatures, are raised to a heat at which they cause explosions. When men, weary of the past, fancy that they are creating for themselves new heavens and a new earth, they reckon little of the lessons of experience, for such lessons seem to them to be part of that past of which they are weary and from which they are seeking to escape. Yet experience must be still our guide. What other guide have we?

There has never been a time in which the future was more obscure than it is to-day, because never have so many new phenomena been crowding so swiftly upon us and bewildering those with whom direction ought to lie. Man may, as we are told, be master of his fate, but bodies of men are not. They feel themselves swept along, as in a Greek tragedy, by some unknown power which it is vain to resist. The world seems to go plunging forward through the darkness like a great ship through an ocean fog, with icebergs all around. Yet experience gives cheer as well as warning. *Securus provehitur orbis terrarum.* The ship that carries the fortunes of the world may be sorely battered, but she will get through, and refit herself in calmer weather. When the tempest is spent the stars will reappear; as Dante, when he had passed through the sorrows and terrors of the Inferno, emerged under the vault of heaven, and saw above him the Four Holy Lights of the Southern sky,

E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.