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THE TEACHING OF INDIAN HISTORY

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

(JANUARY 20, 1914)

BY

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
EARL CURZON OF KEDLESTON,
G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

MY DEAR LORD,

IT was probably as great a surprise to you as it was to me that the electors should ask me to accept the post of Reader in Indian History. You had nothing whatever to do with that; but you have a great deal to do with its first result, for I have quoted many words of yours in this inaugural lecture, which I now offer for your acceptance. I had read Indian History for many years when I had the opportunity of seeing it in the making under your devoted and far-sighted rule. What I saw and heard then and what I have read since has made me understand something of what India owes to you, a debt which I am confident will be recognized more and more fully as the years go on. Oxford has given many of her sons to the service of India. I think that she will give many more. But she has never given, and I do not think she can give, any one with mind and heart more devoted to that service than yours have been. It is such as you who have given to Indian history the fascination which it exercises, as I believe, increasingly, upon Western students and Western workers.

I am,

Your lordship's faithful servant and kinsman,

W. H. HUTTON.

BRITISH INDIA

AN INAUGURAL LECTURE

WHEN I was invited to take up the work which I begin to-day, it was only the advice of those whose judgement I was bound to accept which made me feel that I must not regard myself as altogether unequal to the task. But there was one encouragement which I speedily received which has given me hope that I may be able to discharge my duties not wholly inadequately: it is the intimation that if the choice had rested with my honoured predecessor, the first holder of this office, who was my first teacher in history, and remained my constant friend, he would have chosen me to carry on the work which had been the delight of his life for so many years. I cannot begin the words I have to say this afternoon better than by a brief record of the distinguished teacher whom I. have been called upon to succeed.

Sidney James Owen, the fourth son of Henry Owen, a solicitor at Worksop, was born on December 30, 1827. His chief school was Repton, his Oxford College Worcester, his degree a third class in Literis Humanioribus. He was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. For two years he was a Fellow (as it was then called) at Radley. In 1856 he went out to India as Professor of History and Political Economy at Elphinstone College, Bombay, a foundation which has had many distinguished teachers on its staff. Ill health compelled him to return to England after two years, and he came to Christ Church in 1861 as Lee's Reader in Law and

History, combining with that post the teaching of history at Magdalen and at Radley. He began his long association with Indian studies in this University on his appointment as Reader in Indian Law in 1864. In 1868 Indian History was added to the subjects he was required to teach. In 1878 the subject of Law was withdrawn and Mr. Owen was appointed Reader in Indian History for life. He was elected a Student of Christ Church in 1883. He carried on his work, with unflinching zeal, almost to the last. He died on November 22, 1912.

I suppose that the three things by which he will best be remembered among us are his great knowledge, his great enthusiasm, his great kindness. No one who knew him could be ignorant of any of the three. He belonged to the period when men really had a liberal education; he had taken full advantage of it; and he continued to educate himself to the last. And all that he learnt was made vivid in his mind by his intense, almost fiery, enthusiasm. When he was imparting knowledge he seemed always to be at a white heat, and the reason of that most certainly was that to him education was not merely an intellectual but a moral process. Like Lord Acton, he abhorred the notion that because something had happened in the past we were to speak quite differently of it than we should have spoken if it had happened to-day, that we should not say whether an action, or a policy, was right or wrong, because it was long gone by. But his own eager moral feeling, if it carried him through history as a judge, made him in common life a most sympathetic friend. There was nothing in human character, any more than in human achievement, which did not interest him. He was anxious to understand, anxious to help, reluctant to

condemn. It was that which made him the friend of his pupils no less than the friend of the great historical scholars among whom he first began to teach in Oxford. He belonged to the Age of Oxford historians, but he survived them all—Stubbs and Freeman, whose letters are full of him and with whom his friendship was very close—Green and Creighton, whom also he knew well—York Powell, first his pupil, then his colleague. One of that great Age remains, and he has written to me some words which express with his own masterly precision and generous sympathy what the first Reader in Indian History was, forty years ago, in Oxford :

⁴ I had never the good fortune to attend Sidney Owen's lectures, but used often to hear a great deal from his pupils about their freshness and power. The same eagerness of mind and warmth of feeling which made him a conspicuous and attractive social figure among the younger teachers of Oxford in the sixties, endeared him to the members of his class and gave him a hold upon them. He had brought back from India a keen interest in its peoples and their history. They had touched his imagination. They were real and vivid to him; and, being a widely read man before he went there, he had been able to compare Eastern things with Western, and to discover illuminative analogies.

¹ Lecturing was in those days less of an art than it has since become; and there were few in Oxford, perhaps no one till the late Bishop of London began to lecture at Merton, who had made Modern History so interesting as W. L. Newman at Balliol had made Ancient History. Owen was one of the pioneers. He roused the minds of his pupils and communicated to them something of his own enthusiastic pleasure in Indian things and in history itself as a study. He had an jarglenj as well as a loveable nature/

If I venture to add to what Lord Bryce has written, it

is only that I may record the impression of a later date. When I first knew him, and to the end, Mr. Owen was a lecturer of extraordinary vigour and rapidity; his mass of knowledge, his facility of illustration from unconventional as well as the most recondite sources, seemed to struggle for precedence as he spoke, and the torrent of his eloquence (he really was eloquent and it really was a torrent) at times reduced his hearers almost to stupefaction. But he had the supreme virtues of a lecturer: he always knew his subject thoroughly, far beyond the knowledge of any who heard him, and he could never by any possibility be dull.

The precision which was sometimes wanting in his spoken teaching was never absent from his literary work. He had a style which was formed not, like much of our modern historical writing, on the examples of journalistic freedom, but on reverend and classic models. He was, if I am not mistaken* a great admirer of Hooker: he was certainly a constant reader of Macaulay and Carlyle. There was something in his own manner of writing which can be traced to these apparently inconsistent and incongruous origins. There was more which was characteristically his own, the reflection of his own way of thinking out problems and expressing conclusions: the manner of his speech, in fact, if he had time to revise it and write it down. It was clear, emphatic, somewhat *flamboyant* eminently sonorous. His published lectures have above all the mark of lucidity and vigour. His book, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, the work of his old age (the copy he gave me is dated March 13, 1912) has all the vigour of his earlier work, the appreciation of dramatic incident, the vivacity of narration, the interest in character and romance. I cannot but regret that several of his earlier lectures

and papers, privately issued, have never been reprinted. But probably his most enduring and valuable contribution to the history of India is to be found in the Introductions he prefixed to his two volumes of selections from the Despatches of the Marquess Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington, which those who are most familiar with the State papers of the great viceroy and the great soldier best know to be masterly analyses and expositions of documents and policies, in their origin, their meaning, and their results. In those two volumes, happily still studied in our University, the first Reader in Indian History rendered a signal service to students of British aims and achievements in the East. For that, as for very much else, his name deserves to be held in honour among us. *Requiescat in pace.*

I have few of the qualifications for my task which belonged to Mr. Owen. I have neither his wide knowledge nor his great memory. In one thing only can I profess to resemble him : a keen interest in the history of all ages, and races, and religions ; and in one thing only to be his equal: a passionate belief in the great qualities of the Indian peoples and in the justice and devotion of their British rulers and servants.

There is a great field to-day, a great opportunity, for those who will study the history of British rule in India. How is the study to be undertaken, and in what spirit is it to be pursued ? Many of our own historical scholars have given us here, and when they left Oxford to direct the historical teaching of other Universities, the answer. But may I take the reply from the great scholar whose inaugural lecture at Cambridge was so remarkable a picture of his method—that impressive figure among the leaders of historical learning, of whom it may be said that there was no one of all the men of the Victorian

age (of those who wrote at all) who wrote so little and knew so much? Ranke, said Lord Acton in that famous lecture, had taught historians 'to be critical, to be colourless and to be new'; and this is clearly what Acton regarded as the ideal for the historian. The statement, I cannot forbear to say in passing, is not wholly true of Ranke, for certainly he was not colourless. His work, for example, on the seventeenth century, in style as well as method, has just that colour which S. R. Gardiner's conspicuously lacks. Of Acton also it is not wholly true, if we are to judge by his published lectures. They are critical and colourless, but certainly they are not new. The great historical professor had little historical imagination, more insight perhaps, but a vast historical memory. So when it came to writing history he was overwhelmed by his accumulation of knowledge. The mass of his notes to his inaugural lecture is a depressing spectacle, not because of its size, but because of its absence of judgement in selection. He quoted a number of the most worthless books, of the most obscure pamphlets, simply because they happened to say something that he wanted to say, and he was too honest not to proclaim that it had been said before. Really, Professor Bury's inaugural lecture, in spite of what some (rather wilfully) consider its wrong-headedness, and Professor Oman's, in spite of what others (very foolishly) regard as its robust Philistinism, have done more to put a true view of history before us than all the elaborations of Lord Acton's famous pronouncement. But behind that comparative failure lies the truest success in expressing what is the ideal which every historical student should set before his eyes. The strength of that lecture lies in the emphatic assertion of moral principle. Right and

wrong are real distinctions ; or, as Burke says, ' the principles of true politics are those of morality enlarged/ Lord Acton concluded his fine declaration of belief with the statement that we could be more impersonal, disinterested, and just than the historians of former ages; and so it is in our power ^l to learn from undisguised and genuine records to look with remorse upon the past, and to the future with assured hope of better things; bearing this in mind, that if we lower our standard in history we cannot uphold it in Church or State/ To have said this, and, still more, to have borne it always in mind when he wrote, was the true glory of Lord Acton as a historian ; and it is that lesson of a life of stupendous knowledge which he has left to the world of students of a later day. That is the great warning, never more needed than in the study of British India. If we lower our standard in history we cannot uphold it in the work which lies before us as a nation still to do.

When it was announced that I had been appointed to the Readership in Indian History, not a few of those who congratulated me said, in almost the same words, ' What a dull subject!' Dull! I cannot conceive any epithet more inappropriate or unjust. The History of British conquest and government of India (for to that the subject of this Readership is now restricted) is full—fuller almost than any history we know—of excitement and romance. Nowhere have greater deeds been done, nowhere greater sacrifices made, nowhere have more noble and strenuous lives been lived, nowhere more devotion shown by rulers to those submitted to their sway. Nowhere have the characteristic glories of great soldiers, great administrators, economists, legists, saints, been more fully displayed. And that splendid

story (for such, with all its stains, it is) is still continuing to-day. The same qualities which won India for England are still being shown, and the story which has been so full of danger, and devotion, and glory, is still being acted, in unbroken sequence, before our eyes. I say, with no shadow of hesitation, that there never has been a finer tale, never a greater record of man's prowess and sagacity, than that of the peoples of West and East whose interaction in the great Indian peninsula during the last three hundred years I am called upon to elucidate and expound.

What English historians have done in the last half-century to advance our knowledge of this history has not been unworthy of the progress that they have made in other spheres. I do not speak of the histories of the Mutiny, or of times more recent still, of the series which our own Press has produced, in which some of the ablest and most distinguished of Victorian administrators have described and judged, from a full knowledge, and frequently after a laborious research which has not been adequately recognized, the careers of the British and native rulers of India—though I need not fear to say that one of the best services which our University has rendered to India was given when men like Sir Lepel Criffin, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Auckland Colvin, and Sir Charles Aitchison, not to mention that modest and gallant soldier, Sir Owen Burne, were induced to tell the stories of those whose careers they had studied with special opportunity and had often a unique capacity to record. Nor do I speak of the fine effort made by Sir William Hunter, whose contagious enthusiasm stirred many in Oxford to work for the increase of our knowledge of things and persons Indian. I do not speak of Sir William's own excellent History of India, for he

wrote hardly more than enough to show how ably he had planned and how thoroughly he had provided for the execution of his design. It is now in the highly competent hands of Mr. P. E. Roberts, another of our Oxford students of Indian history, from whom we are justified in expecting great things. I would rather select one conspicuous instance of a distinct service to historical truth, an important historical rectification, which has been rendered during the last few years.

Within twenty miles of where I stand to-day there rests all that was mortal of one of the very greatest men England ever gave to the service of India. It is not yet a hundred years ago since Warren Hastings died. Much that belonged to him is still as he left it. You may walk in the large conservatories that he built at Daylesford to remind him of the climate of Bengal, or sleep under the lofty dome with its oriental decoration which marks one of the bedrooms in his house as his own design. You may handle, in a house still nearer to Oxford, the very letters which he wrote to his 'adored Marian', during the rising at Benares, when he was in imminent danger of a violent death, as calmly as if he sat in his Council Chamber at Fort William, little rolls of thinnest paper, carried, at the risk of their lives, by natives who, like almost every one who knew him, were devoted to his service. And at Oxford, as well as at Worton, are portraits by which the greatest painters of his time have enabled us to see what manner of man the heroic statesman was. Thirty years ago the obloquy which had rested on him for the last thirty years of his life still clung to his memory. 'He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man.' We all remember the words, at the critical point in Macaulay's famous description of Warren Hastings on his trial.

And now we know, as Macaulay might have known if he had taken the trouble to learn, and as James Mill before him might have learned if he had not been blinded by prejudice and party passion, that Hastings was *not* a bad man, but that he was not only among the greatest, but among the best of the distinguished public servants whose roll is an honour to the British name. The vindication was begun years ago, and Sir John Strachey, in *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, Sir James Stephen, in *Nimcomar and Impey*, Sir G. W. Forrest, in his publication of the Bengal documents of Hastings's administration, had their part in making it. Sir George Forrest, in publishing his *Selections from the State Papers of the Governors General of India—Warren Hastings*—prefixed to it the excellent study of Hastings's administration which he had already twice issued in India. This is in many respects the most complete and most convincing vindication which that great statesman has received. What these writers had garnered was utilized in biographical studies by Sir Alfred Lyall, Captain Trotter, and Colonel Malleon. But the career of Hastings needed to be studied not only on its political, but on its personal side. This was done by Sir Charles Lawson in the paper, expanded from one in the *Madras Mail*, which he published in the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* in July, 1892, which after three years became in book form a substantial and excellent biography. Ten years later the able writer who calls herself 'Sydney Grier' came to complete the work by the publication of the deeply interesting personal letters which had so long lain neglected in the British Museum.¹ These were not in the hands of Gleig at

¹ *The Letters of Warren Hastings to his Wife*. Transcribed in full

the time when he was writing the 'big bad book' which Macaulay so unfairly condemned. They are of very high political and of still greater personal value. In the first place, they elucidate many difficult points in the political work of Hastings between 1780 and 1785, especially after the return of Mrs. Hastings to England. Secondly, they enable us to form a more complete estimate of the worth of Hastings as a man. They are full of intimate details as to his personal interests, his love of books and gardens, his abounding generosity, his charitable judgement even of bitter opponents, his deep religious feeling. The work of editing was done with very remarkable care, and with very wide knowledge. The result is the best biography of Hastings, at least as to some fifteen years of his life, that we possess. It is a book which throws abundant light on the beginnings of British rule in India, the aims of the rulers, the social life of the British exiles, the religion and manners of the conquering race. The new light on English politics in general, and on the career of a very large number of public servants, undistinguished as well as famous, is hardly less welcome.

We are now within measurable distance of being able to write an authentic history of the first years of our rule in India under Lord North's Regulating Act. That history would be concerned with almost the whole of the vast peninsula, for Hastings's political and military schemes extended from Delhi to Lhasa, from Goa to the frontiers of the South-East, and there was nothing too minute for his investigation and interest. A whole volume might be written on the friendships of

from the Originals in the British Museum. Introduced and Annotated by Sydney C. Grier. (Blackwoods, 1905).

Hastings, and it would be full of most interesting sidelights on the lives of almost all the great lawyers and men of letters of his time. A study almost equally interesting might be made of his residences in India, one of which was acquired by Lord Curzon on behalf of the Government of India, while another, in its present state, was described not long ago by the Rev. W. K. Firminger in the *Indian Church Quarterly Review*.

It is much to be hoped that the details of the life of Hastings may be still further studied. There is much to be found in the letters and diaries now at Nether Worton House. There is still good work to be done in tracing more minutely the relations of Hastings with Cornwallis and Wellesley—his letter to the latter, printed in the *Rulers of India* Life of the great Marquess, is of great interest—his opinions of Sir George Barlow and later governors ; and in illustrating his intimate knowledge of Indian life and conditions. One cannot help observing how far more just was his appreciation of Indian literatures, about which he corresponded with Dr. Johnson, than the insolent vandalism of Macaulay. A monograph of real value might also be written on the various portraits of Hastings.

But I have said enough to illustrate, by what is indeed a familiar instance, what has been done in recent years to make the history of British India better known. Let me add that there is no period of Anglo-Indian history which does not need much further elucidation. And certainly there is none which will not repay the labour. Mr. Fortescue has shown how much new light can be thrown by an expert on the military history of our conquest and occupation. Admiral Mahan has shown the way towards further investigation of our naval affairs. Books like Dr. Busteed's *Old Calcutta* show

how fascinating are the bypaths of social history. Those who take special interest in the romance of biography and character may like to follow up the interest suggested by such stories as those of Madame Grand, whose association with Philip Francis caused so much scandal in Calcutta, and who lived to be the wife of Talleyrand and Princess of Benevento, or of Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte¹ who, when he was a serjeant serving in India with Bussy, was taken prisoner by Hanoverian troops in the English service at the siege

¹ 'Among the wounded prisoners was a young French Serjeant, who so particularly attracted the notice of Colonel Wangenheim, commandant of the Hanoverian troops in the English service, by his interesting appearance and manners, that he ordered the young man to be conveyed to his own tents, where he was treated with attention and kindness until his recovery and release. Many years afterwards, when the French army under Bernadotte entered Hanover, General Wangenheim, among others, attended the levee of the conqueror. "You have served a great deal," said Bernadotte, on his being presented, "and as I understand in India." "I have served there." "At Cuddalore?" "I was there." "Have you any recollection of a wounded serjeant whom you took under your protection in the course of that service?" The circumstance was not immediately present to the General's mind, but on recollection, he resumed, "I do indeed remember the circumstance, and a very fine young man he was; I have entirely lost sight of him ever since, but it would give me pleasure to hear of his welfare." "That young serjeant," said Bernadotte, "was the person who has now the honour to address you, who is happy in this public opportunity of acknowledging the obligation, and will omit no means within his power of testifying his gratitude to General Wangenheim."

'It can scarcely be deemed digressive to have presented the sequel of an incident appertaining to our narrative, in illustration of a character since distinguished by a still more extraordinary elevation, and as an evidence of moral worth affording to the Crown Prince of Sweden an honourable claim on other nations for the respect which he is said to possess in his adoptive country.'—Wilks, *Historical Sketches of the South of India (History of Mysore)*, vol. ii, p. 442.

of Cuddalore, and survived to be Prince of Ponte Corvo and die as Charles XIV of Sweden.

There are many incidents as curious in the story of British adventurers in India which Mr. Keene sketched in his *Hindustan Under Free Lances*. Indian military history is in itself a special study, and it is one that is full of romance. But in India it is also true indeed that civil life has as deep an interest, and that

Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war.

Those who have read the story of English achievement in the past do not wonder that there have been many lads like young Tom Newcome. 'The boy had a great fancy for India; and Orme's *History* containing the exploits of Clive and Lawrence, was his favourite book of all in his father's library/ Since Thackeray wrote there is a score of books to take precedence of old Orme; and there may be, there ought to be, many more to come. Our Regius Professor complained in his Inaugural Lecture nine years ago that the Modern History School 'does not train men capable of adding to knowledge. It produces very few historians/ That is specially true of workers at Indian History; but there is no reason at all why it should remain true. Nowhere is there a more fruitful field waiting for tillage; and I for one believe that the good training of the History School, if it does not become too specialist and minute, should admirably fit men to enter upon it. There is a great mass of documents at the India Office illustrating every period of the British connexion with India. Among the guides to these of especial interest I may mention the List of Factory Records of the East India Company, with Mr. F. C. Danvers's excellent introduction (1897), the

List of Marine Records, similarly introduced (1896) and the List of General Records from 1599 to 1879 (1902). On the India Office MSS. we eagerly await the Report of the Royal Commission on the Public Records. Besides the mass at the India Office there are almost as many at the British Museum and in private hands. There are abundant records at Calcutta and Bombay, of which Sir George Forrest and his followers have opened the door to us, and at Madras, among which (as I know from the provisional issue of a portion of the Calendar which was sent to me a year ago) Mr. Dodwell, himself one of our 'History men', and a pupil of my own, is doing most admirable work. There are the almost untapped materials for the history of the native States, which Indian scholars have already begun to use. There are many English scholars who have done important service among public and private manuscripts : Dr. C. R. Wilson, whose good work among the records of eighteenth-century India I first saw when it was my good fortune to examine him here for his degrees in Letters, whose death was a severe loss to historical investigation ; Mr. S. C. Hill in his *Bengal in 1756* 7 (*Indian Records Series*) Miss Sainsbury and Mr. W. Foster, C. I. E., whose Calendars of the Minutes of the East India Company and work on the Factories are full of most valuable information as to the early history of the English in India; and not a few others. But the field has still space for very many more labourers; and my experience of work among the MSS. at the India Office certainly shows me that research is well rewarded. Nor need it be narrowed as my work is narrowed. I have said that the Reader is now restricted, in the scope of his duties, to the British occupation. He is instructed by statute to lecture on 'The Rise, Growth, and Organization of the British Power in India'. This

leads me to say what I think very much needs saying to-day. It is a grievous weakness in the University's provision for learning that there is nothing done for the study of Indian history in ancient and medieval times. I should like to direct the attention of those who have the control of the Chancellor's Fund to this strange omission. A period of the world's history of extraordinary interest and of really enormous importance is entirely neglected in our provision for learning, education, and research. It is true that we have distinguished scholars who have from time to time dealt with a part of this subject, such as Professor Macdonell and Mr. Vincent Smith; but the former has already a subject so wide that only his knowledge and energy could adequately deal with it, while the latter has, I deeply regret to say, no official position in our midst.

Purely Indian history, with its literature and philosophy, Indian geography, historical and descriptive (except so far as I am told to deal with it)—a subject of extraordinary fascination in itself—Indian archaeology, are unprovided for in this University. In spite of the generosity which created, and has from time to time enriched, the Indian Institute, it still fails to play the important part it might play, and was intended to play, in the education of Oxford. What the Chancellor of the University said in 1909 is, I am afraid, still true.¹

¹ The Institute has not in any appreciable degree provided a meeting-ground for the East and West, or a place of social intercourse between English and Indian students. Its Museum has failed "to bring together a typical collection of objects suited to educational purposes and sufficiently complete to give a fair idea of the industrial occupations, domestic and religious customs

¹ *Principles and Methods of University Reform*, pp. 208-9.

of the people subject to our rule " ; or " to present a fair epitome of India, eminently attractive not only to Indologists, but to ethnologists and anthropologists of all nationalities." * The scheme of constant lectures by distinguished Anglo-Indian administrators and Orientalists, which started under happy auspices, has fallen into desuetude. The Institute possesses no permanent endowment, and is ill provided in respect of staff and attendance, besides being quite unable to extend its sphere of influence.'

I believe that this is largely due to the fact that we have still left unheeded the declaration of the greatest of Oxford historians, made so long ago as 1876, when Mr. Sidney Owen had been teaching Indian history in Oxford for eight years. 'At the present moment we want/ then said the Regius Professor of Modern History (after proclaiming another need which is still, as I think most disastrously, unsatisfied),

¹ We want a permanent chair of Indian History. The labours of our friend the present Indian Reader have shown us how thoroughly that study, the importance of which can scarcely be over-rated by Englishmen, falls in with the current of our University work. I say a permanent chair, because that is a subject of permanent necessity, not a subject like palaeography or numismatology, in which the labours of one good professor may serve for two or three generations, and the endowment of the man is of equal importance with the endowment of the chair or study.'

That demand of Dr. Stubbs, made nearly forty years ago, is not yet met. I appeal to those whose interest in India is real, who desire that her history should be fully

¹ Speeches of Sir M. Monier-Williams.

² *Lectures on the Study of Medieval and Modern History, 1867-84.* By William Stubbs, D.D. [1886].

known and rightly understood, who desire that she should be recognized in her greatness among the nations, to Indian princes, and to Europeans who have made fortunes in India, to provide for the creation of a Professorship of Indian History in the University which is already so closely linked, and could be linked more closely, to the Indian Empire.

The importance of the subject indeed 'can hardly be over-rated by Englishmen,' and our duty has not been done till permanent provision has been made in Oxford not only for a Reader in the History of British India but for a Professor who shall be worthy to teach the history of that great Empire, of those noble races and nations of which we have been called, so late in the world's long life, to be the heirs and successors. Some of those great names, charged with immemorial history, still survive. When we recall this fact, it is well to remind the critics of British rule of what is too often forgotten, that the English did not destroy national governments or organized political institutions. Where these remain it is the English who have preserved them. This is the case in the Rajput States, and many in Central India. 'In some, such as Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Jaipur, the families', says Mr. Os well, in his excellent *Sketches of Rulers of India*,¹ to which the present chiefs belong have ruled in the same territories for more than one thousand years; In other and larger, including the Mohammedan and Mahratta, States, the rulers are in all cases foreigners, and the rule came into existence in the eighteenth century. But in each and all there is history which needs to be written from the native as well as the foreign point of view, by native as well as by English scholars—or, better still, in collaboration between the two. Is it fanciful to suggest that

here is a link which might be forged by men of goodwill, Indians and Englishmen, to bind us more closely together? English and Indian students have already worked together with zeal on Indian History. The Calcutta Historical Society, of which I was a member from its beginning in 1907 to its conclusion (almost immediately after I had compounded as a life member) in 1911, printed some highly valuable papers, the result of considerable research, in the seven volumes which it issued of *Bengal Past and Present*. The enthusiasm and industry of its editor, Mr. Firminger, now archdeacon of Calcutta, deserve the highest praise. It is much to be hoped that he may be able before long to revive a society which was doing such good historical work. And, I repeat, the field for such work is vast indeed. One who knows India and Indian history as few men know them has reminded us of 'the amazing synthesis of anthropology, of history, of human experience, which is gathered within the boundaries of that great area'; and he gave a remarkable illustration of his meaning, when he told how an English sportsman once examined the quiver of a native hunter. 'He found the first arrow tipped with stone—a relic of the neolithic age: the next arrow was tipped with electric telegraph wire—a theft from the twentieth century.'¹

I cannot conclude what I have to say on this part of my subject better than by quoting some words in which Professor Maitland once expressed the needs of historical study, needs which are nowhere more explicit and evident than in regard to India.

'More co-operation, more organization, more and better criticism, more advice for beginners, are needed. And the need, if not met, will increase. History is

¹ *Lord Curzon in India*, p. 57.

lengthening, and widening, and deepening. It is lengthening at both ends, for while modern States in many parts of the world are making history at a bewilderingly rapid rate, what used to be called ancient history is no longer, by any means, the ancientest; Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and even primeval man, are upon our hands. And history is widening. Could we neglect India, China, and Japan, there would still be America, Australia, Africa, as well as Europe, demanding that their stories should be told, and finding men to tell them well or to tell them badly. And history is deepening. We could not, if we would, be satisfied with the battles and the protocols, the alliances and the intrigues. Literature and art, religion and law, rents and prices, creeds and superstitions have burst the political barrier and are no longer to be expelled. The study of interactions and interdependences is but just beginning, and no one can foresee the end. There is much to be done by schools of history : there will be more to be done every year.¹

There is indeed a subject of interest, as vast as it is absorbing, set before those who enter upon the study of Indian History. Shall I be charged with the basest utilitarianism if I ask whether there is any special object, beyond the love of knowledge, the desire to add something to the achievements of human learning, which may attract the student to-day? The question at least is one which we can hardly avoid. We have in this University a number of young men to whom one of the greatest tasks an Englishman can attempt will soon be entrusted. There is no nobler career (for the layman at least), none which calls for greater powers of wisdom and endurance and courage and unselfishness, than that of an Indian civil servant of the Crown, a career open to British subjects of all races, all religions, all differences of social position or upbringing. Little

¹ From *Essays on the Teaching of History*.

though I may be qualified, from the short time I have spent in India, to speak of many subjects connected with British rule in that country, I can say this with full confidence of its truth, that there has never been a finer body of men, more unselfish, more devoted to duty, more sympathetic towards those with whom they are brought into contact, than those civilians who were serving in India at the end of the reign of Victoria, Queen and Empress. It is no exaggerated example that I give when I say that of my own pupils and intimate friends who were working in India at that time, three gave up their lives as young men through sheer devotion to the duties they were called upon to perform.¹

May their successors be worthy to follow such men.

The work to which they are called is not merely to teach, to judge, or to rule; it is, at the basis of all, to understand. The poets are always beforehand with the statesmen and the historians; and it was George Meredith who wrote thus to an Indian man of letters: ¹Of Indian literature and thought we know much, and it is with reverence; of Indian character we know little."² It is the business of those whom we send out to learn to understand Indian character. And that we can help them to begin to do while they are here.

I would plead for a closer *rapprochement* between British and Indian members of this University. I know the difficulties are not all on one side, but I am sure that it is for us to go out to meet our fellow subjects with sympathy and welcome. We want to make them proud of the Empire which they share with us. Let us

¹ Colin Browning; David Ritchie; W. Le B. Tahourdin : men of whom my college may indeed be proud.

² *Letters of George Meredith*, ii, p. 621.

make them feel that its history is ours as well as their own.

It is idle to shut our eyes to the dangers which surround the governments of India to-day. These will not have been encountered in vain if they shall have brought the two peoples closer together. A distinguished son of Oxford who has spent nearly forty years of service in the East has recently used words which are a real encouragement to hope. 'While much that concerns India is moving fast/ said Bishop Reginald Stephen Copleston a few months ago, 'I doubt if anything is growing faster than the intelligent interest of Englishmen in all that belongs to India.*¹ The time indeed which a Viceroy, as he entered on his task fifteen years ago, prophesied is coming to pass. 'I am one of those who think that the Eastward trend of empire will increase and not diminish. In my belief the strain upon us will become greater and not less. Parliament will learn to know Asia almost as well as it now knows Europe; and the time will come when Asiatic sympathies and knowledge will not be the hobby of a few individuals but the interest of the entire nation.'² The contribution that we can make to that interest, in this place, is to see that it is, so far as we can make it, intelligent and continuous. Here is the function of the student of Indian history. Whatever history is, it is certainly not present politics; but it is our business to supply to those who shall be concerned with present politics the sound knowledge which comes from a study of the past. We must set ourselves to train Indian historians as well as Indian lawyers, and soldiers, and

¹ Speech on June 23, 1913 (*Indian Church Magazine*, July, 1913).

² Speech of Lord Curzon at the Royal Societies Club, November 7, 1898 (*Lord Curzon in India*, p. 9).

civilians, and missionaries: to give them, with a wide culture, a groundwork at least of knowledge and sympathy in the things of the past. Some striking articles in *The Times* within the last few weeks were summed up in a warning of emphatic truth: 'You cannot safely think of India in terms of Western conditions/ Matthew Arnold may have been quoted far too often, and the East may be awaking, never to 'plunge in thought again'; but racial characteristics, if they are not indelible, show no signs at present of being obliterated. India is still to be compared not to England but to Europe; and 'even Europe is less divided than India'.¹

But if unity is coming, as indeed it may be, as the result of education and of industrial and commercial expansion, it is the English rule which both has made the beginnings of it, and will make the achievement, possible. The long process perhaps would have been shortened if the course of history had been different. Great men, when the process was at its opening, have done great things, and left names to be remembered with honour. But from the pure historian's point of view it is obvious that the English settlement would have been more rapid, more beneficent, some will say (if they are bold enough to prophesy) more enduring, if it had had for its motive power less of the spirit of Clive and more of the spirit of Christ. It is not a civilization, still less is it an army, which creates an Empire: it is a religion. But I am not now speaking as a missionary, and I am not one of those who prophesy, in that sense at least. I do not think that I pass beyond the bounds of my duty or transgress the limits of the historian. I am content to say, and to call upon our history in

¹ Edwyn Bevan, *Indian Nationalism*, p. 44.

India to prove it, that it was a truth which was uttered in 1898, justified by centuries of advancing altruism, that * the spectacle presented by our dominion in India is that of British power sustained by a Christian ideal \ It is in reliance on that conviction alone that we can contemplate with calmness the dangers which surround our service to the Indian peoples to-day. ' Inflexible justice, mercy, pity, labour for no thanks, toil for the helpless, never placation of the implacable or weakness before crime/ That^v was the ideal which has given India peace in times of hazard equal to those we are passing through. And India under it was content. 'We are here'—said one whom in this place we have a special call to honour, whom this University has regarded in a special sense as a representative of herself—' we are here to give justice, and a single act of injustice is, in my opinion, a greater stain upon our rule than much larger errors of policy or judgement/ There is a parallel to those words in others said twenty years before, which at the time exposed the speaker to shameful misrepresentation and obloquy— words which now I believe that every one of us, and every one of our administrators in India, would proudly take upon his lips. They were said by our great historian whose memory many of us here will never cease to cherish and regard. ' Let duty come first and interest second, and perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India, rather than that we should strike one blow or speak one word on behalf of the wrong against the right/^l

But I believe that our history proves that no such alternative is before us. I believe rather that, as we study the history of British India here, the history of

^l At a meeting at St. James's Hall, December 9, 1878 (*Life of Freeman*, ii. 113).

those who have laboured in India these three hundred years, as we see it in its results among those who now enter into the fruit of those labours, we shall echo the words of one of the greatest of the men who have served that great Empire: * To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom, that our work is righteous and that it shall endure.'

