

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

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To the losses of the British Academy which I had with deep regret to note when addressing the Fellows in October last, yet another has been added by the death, on March 2 of the present year, of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin, the historian of *Italy and her Invaders*. He passed away on the eve of the International Historical Congress, over one of the Sections of which he had consented to preside, but at whose opening meeting, instead of welcoming him among us, we had to commemorate as best we could his services to historical science and to the art of historical narrative, long one of the proudest possessions of our national literature. He was himself one of the most unassuming as he was one of the most open-minded of men; but he is to be accounted fortunate in having left behind him the book to which he devoted so much labour as a completed work. His last (eighth) volume brings up the story of the Empire of the West to the death and canonization of Charles the Great, while in its Venetian chapter it looks forward to the development of a unique growth excluded from the system of that Empire. Thus, like his great exemplar Gibbon, he succeeded in finishing what he had begun, although, again like Gibbon, he was unable to confine his intellectual curiosity, even as a historian, to a single theme, however great. We at our Academy have profited by the breadth and variety of his intellectual and moral sympathies—and not we alone, but all who through his writings or spoken words have been brought under the influence of his free and humane spirit.

A reference to our losses is naturally followed and relieved by a mention of our prospective gains. The names of those proposed to

you by the Council, after consideration by the respective Sections, for election as Fellows of the Academy, are seven in number, and their election would bring the total number of our body up to 98. I do not think that it behoves me to say more on this head than that, in my belief as well as in that of the Council, our several Sections would be greatly strengthened by your acceptance of its proposals. You will at the same time be asked to approve of the Council's further motion that five scholars of European reputation should be added to the number of Corresponding Fellows of the Academy—a distinguished group in whose intimate association with our own body we take especial pride.

The chief event in the history of our last Academical year has been the meeting in London of the International Historical Congress. As you are aware, the British Academy was charged with the initial responsibility of the measures necessary for the preparation and organization of this important gathering. After the Organizing Committee (to which the Academy had summoned representatives of a large number of learned bodies, including the national Universities, as well as of His Majesty's Government) had appointed an Executive Committee, and the Sections had been formed and their officers named, the conduct of the affairs of the Congress passed to these authorities. But I do not go too far in saying that from first to last no small share of the burden fell upon the shoulders of members of our own body, and that a particular debt is owing to the devoted and single-minded labours of our Honorary Secretary as Secretary of the Congress and to the energy and tact of one of our Fellows as Chairman of one of its most important and heavily-tasks committees. Inasmuch as, in the unavoidable absence of the distinguished Fellow of the Academy, who had been elected President of the Congress, I was as your President called upon to take his place, I can speak with knowledge in publicly thanking Professor Gollancz and Dr. Prothero on behalf of the Academy, and they will, I know, wish that I should associate with their names those of our friend Professor Whitney, the Secretary for Papers, and the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Secretaries of the several Sections and Subsections, whether or not they were members of our body, in acknowledging the indefatigable exertions without which so numerous and polyglot a gathering in a city so centrifugal could not have attained to the success which it actually achieved. What that success has been from the point of view of the advancement of historical science, time will show; meanwhile, this may not be an unfitting occasion, before passing from this subject, to place on record a few facts and figures connected with it.

In the first place, the designation of this gathering as an *International* Congress will be thought to find a sufficient warrant in the statement that of the 1100 members (including associates) whose names were enrolled in the offices of the Congress between 300 and 350 were subjects of other Governments than our own. It should be added that the official representatives who attended included those of not less than sixteen distinct Governments, of about seventy non-British Academies and learned Societies, and of about seventy non-British Universities. Without any wish to institute comparisons, it may be pointed out that no previous historical congress has presented an equally international aspect.

In the second place, I should like to be allowed to touch—I can do no more within the limits of this brief address—on the extraordinary activity displayed by the Congress in what I regard as its supreme function—the intercommunication of the results of individual historical research, study, and criticism. The number of papers read at the Congress exceeded 200—and they were distributed far less unevenly than might have been expected, through the nine sections and their subsections into which the work was divided. As a member of the Congress who listened to as many of these papers as the locomotive facilities of the metropolis made it possible for him to hear, I will venture to say that those who organized and those who attended this great meeting of historians had every reason for congratulating themselves on the readiness with which the firstfruits of so much learning and ability were laid before them for their acceptance. A very general desire was naturally felt and expressed for the preservation in printed form of as many as possible of these papers. Neither the Congress, nor I may add the Academy, had funds at their disposal which would have enabled them to contemplate from the first the publication of the whole body of papers.

The whole matter was considered as fully as possible by the authorities of the Congress, after report from the sections and subsections, and it was agreed that, while the liberty of individual publication was as a matter of course assured, those sections or subsections which desired to publish in a collective form all or most of the papers read before them should be left free to take this course. So far as our Academy was concerned, the Council resolved to include in our Proceedings any papers read at the Congress by any of our Fellows or by any Fellow of the Royal Society, so far as the writer had no other destination for his contribution. The Presidential Address had already been issued in the same form by the Academy.

I may add, for the information of the present audience, that at

the Congress a very general desire was expressed for some permanent record of its meeting and proceedings; and it was accordingly agreed that such an account should be prepared and published under the editorship of Professor Whitney, the late Secretary for Papers, the expenses incurred being defrayed from a surplus fund, sufficient for the purpose, in the hands of the Secretary of the Congress. This volume, which will include brief summaries of all the papers read at the general and sectional meetings, furnished in the large majority of cases by the authors of the papers, will shortly be issued on behalf of the Congress.

Before passing from the subject of the Congress, I should add that among the papers read at its meetings was one by Mr. R. J. Whitwell, of Oxford, containing a proposal for the preparation of a Mediaeval Latin Dictionary, which, while paying due attention to previous labours on the subject, should correspond to the demands of more recent philological, legal, and historical learning. This proposal was committed by the Congress to the consideration of the British Academy with a view to its communication, with such observations as might be thought fit, to other Academies.

The papers contributed by individual Fellows and friends of our Academy to the general and sectional meetings of the International Historical Congress were so numerous that those read at meetings of the Academy itself during the year now ending were fewer in number than has been customary in previous years. We had, however, the pleasure of listening to two special papers of much interest—one by our fellow Academician, Sir John Rhys, *On Celtic Inscriptions in Cisalpine Gaul*, and another by Mr. Sidney Low, *On the Organization of Imperial Studies in England*. Professor Haverfield gave his annual Report on recent excavations in Roman Britain.

The Master of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, Dr. Johns, delivered to large audiences a series of three lectures on the Schweich foundation, his subject being *The Laws of Babylon and Israel*; and the annual Warton lecture, *On the Historical Character of English Lyric*, was given by a member of our own body, Professor Saintsbury.

I subjoin two announcements, which it gives me the same pleasure to make as that which I felt last year in stating the arrangements to which I have just referred, and which were so successfully carried out during the past Academical year. Professor Burkitt, a Fellow of our Academy, will deliver the next series of lectures under the Schweich Fund, and has chosen *Apocalyptic Literature* as his theme. Professor C. E. Vaughan (late of the University of Leeds) has undertaken to give our annual Warton lecture at our next meeting, when he will

treat of *The Influence of English Poetry on the Romantic Revival of the Continent*.

The Benefactions to which we owe the satisfaction, past or to come, of listening to these addresses, and of being able to invite our friends to participate in our pleasure, have secured to the British Academy what may be called its special opportunities. We are to enjoy another of them to-night in listening to an oration from one of the foremost of living German Shakespeare scholars. I wish with all my heart that these opportunities had been more frequent in the days which no regret can recall; and I may be allowed to say how sincere had been the wish of us that we might welcome among us on such an occasion—or on any occasion—the presence of one of the most learned, as he was one of the most sympathetic, of British literary scholars, the late Professor Dowden. The kindly thoughts which went to him from many of us across St. George's Channel must now seek to reach beyond a broader sea.

It is my duty to report to you that, in consequence of unforeseen difficulties, it was impossible to name a representative of the British Academy at the International Association of Academies which has recently been held at St. Petersburg. A detailed statement of the views entertained by our Academy concerning divers proposals which were expected to be brought forward at this meeting was, however, transmitted to the proper quarter.

As in all well-administered communities, the expenditure of the British Academy is strictly proportioned to its means. The grants which in the course of the year we have been able to make have accordingly been restricted to two provided by the Schweich Fund, which I have already mentioned, and of which the value to the Academy cannot be estimated too highly. A grant of £600 has been made from this Fund to the Egypt Exploration Fund for the Excavation during the season of 1913-14 of Abydos and the Temple of Osiris; while another, smaller, grant of £25 has been made from the same Fund to Professor Souter for researches on Pelagius.

I have also the great satisfaction of informing you that, through Sir Frederic Kenyon, one of our Fellows, an anonymous donor has offered the sum of £1,000 towards the expenses of reprinting in facsimile the Old Testament portion of *Codex Sinaiticus*, the Oxford Clarendon Press undertaking the additional pecuniary risk. The facsimile will be issued as a publication of the British Academy. You are asked to accept this gift, and return the thanks of the Academy to the generous donor. The Academy is not without expectation of further financial aid in the coming Academical year; but as to this

and as to future activities it will be the duty of my successor to report to you.

It remains for me to make one further statement which I ought perhaps to have reserved for a later stage of to-day's proceedings, but with which I hope you will allow me to conclude this brief and, I trust, not wholly unbusinesslike address. You will be asked to elect a President of the Academy, and I feel certain that no happier choice could be made than that on which you are likely to determine. My own period of office, which has already closed, could in no circumstances have lasted longer than for the period to which your indulgence, and in particular that of my colleagues on the Council, has already allowed it to extend. I have felt that indulgence on many occasions, and for many reasons, more keenly than it perhaps becomes a chairman, in whom impassiveness is almost a virtue, to feel anything. And I shall never think except with pride of the honour of having held this office in a body which, in time to come and under more competent guidance than mine, is, as I have never doubted and shall never doubt, destined to exercise a wholly beneficent influence upon the continuous and ever expanding growth of British learning and letters.