

OLD AND NEW METHODS IN WRITING HISTORY,
BEING THE OPENING ADDRESS OF THE HISTORICAL SECTION AT THE DORCHESTER MEETING.¹

By SIR HENRY H. HOWORTH, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., M.P., F.R.S., F.S.A.

I find myself by your favour in a position of doubt and difficulty. I am expected to say something new and inspiring on a subject which has exercised human thought and ingenuity since Apollo and Athene presented their compositions before the Critics of Olympus, and in which every grain of ungleaned matter must consequently bear the character of a paradox; but a graver difficulty remains. I am asked to speak to you about a subject whose limits, scope, and purpose have never been defined, and are perhaps incapable of definition.

What is History? Is it a story or a sermon? Is the historian a prophet and a teacher as well as a retailer of old tales? Ought he, in writing the epitaph of the past, to tell us what it was, or rather, like other writers of epitaphs, to tell us what it should have been? Are all well-attested facts properly available as bricks with which he may build his walls, or should he throw the great mass of them into the pit of oblivion and select only those which are attractive to the poet or the artist? Is it Truth that he should rigidly follow, or that which is more entertaining and less soporific than Truth—the material with which the Romancer and the teller of Tales likes to fill his pages with—the picturesque and the sensational?

Is it his purpose to be read or only to be spoken of as a learned man? These are some only of the questions which rise up when we are bidden to say something on history in general.

Unfortunately, they are all capable of more than one answer. Fashion, taste, temper—each and all govern the position in different ways; and, apart from these controlling influences, there are as many kinds of history as there are motives for human inquiry and study.

¹ Read at Dorchester, August 4th, 1897.

One man wants knowledge in its most concrete form. For him the panorama of life has no moral. For him history is a scroll inscribed with a mere photograph of the past, just as the scenes followed each other on the stage, and all the picture is equally in focus. All knowledge is to him equally knowledge. The ploughboy tuning his voice as he swings to and fro on a gate at dinner-time is as important a figure in its way as Napoleon or Alexander. The doings and sayings of a County Council are to be recorded as carefully as those of the Mother of Parliaments, which has marked the world with everlasting furrows.

Facts are what he wants—facts and not inferences; sober narrative, and not imaginative poetry, sentiment, or moralising. The mediæval chronicle is his ideal, and a Chinese book of annals his highest level. We cannot question that this is history. It may not be very readable history, but that may be the fault of the reader who has no imagination of his own to clothe the scaffolding with, or the narrator who cannot represent in languages pictures or landscapes in which the facts shall tell their own story.

While this is what attracts some students, others wish for no pictures at all. To them facts are mere counters, from an examination of which laws can be deduced and inferences drawn. What they want is the Philosophy of history. Their object is not so much to trace out the former path of the ship as to secure lessons from which to learn how that path shall be steered in the future. To them history is essentially what it was once defined, viz. philosophy teaching by examples. To trace the inevitable course which certain streams are bound to run, to measure and gauge the various moods of what the ignorant call Fortune and the wise know to be the certain results of certain causes. This is his theory of history, and history assuredly it is, but history generically different from the last kind. In this kind of history the tale has no value at all: the whole value is in the moral.

A third kind of history, again, imports imagination very largely into the story. We all know that the facts which have been saved from the sphere of forgetfulness are necessarily only scraps of the whole story—a mere wreckage. shreds and threads of a once continuous pattern—detached

tesserae from a once complete mosaic. To detail these, in however graphic language, is to present but blurred and fragmentary pictures which the great majority of students who have no imagination cannot clothe with appropriate colour or outline. For them the fragmentary picture or the torso have no meaning. They see ruin and nothing but ruin in the Parthenon and the Colosseum. For them another kind of artist is needed who can imagine, fill in the wanting words, the gaps in the picture. Emendator, restorer, call him what you will, his *rôle* is to reconstruct the lion from one of its claws—the statue from a broken limb. His own personal equation is present everywhere: he introduces the Romancer into the province of the Annalist. In some cases there is a good deal of importation, and in others there is less. We cannot, in fact, definitely separate the picturesque historian from the writer of historical fiction—Macaulay and Froude from Walter Scott and Dumas. There is no difference in kind and in essence between them. It is merely a difference of degree. Freeman's Harold is as imaginative and fantastic a figure and as far removed from the Harold of the documents as is Kingsley's Hereward. It is a poetical inspiration of the writer in either case. Nor am I sure that the Romancer's story is not truer history than that of the polemical historian.

We know perfectly well that the speeches reported by Thucydides, or by any other ancient writer, are the composition of the scribe, and as like what the characters depicted really said as is the picture drawn by a practised advocate in a court of law like the true story of the career of the prisoner he is defending. There is point, therefore, in Professor Seeley's continual warning against picturesque history, but it is a Cassandra's song after all. If the individual did not exist in that shape the class did. It is not every babe which can digest the strong food which forms the narrative of a mediæval monk, or extract honey from the rugged contents of the book of Deuteronomy.

Again, another form of history is that which consists in drawing characters and tracing motives. This, again, is legitimate enough. It is not sufficient for some readers that we should figure the motley crowds that pass across

the canvas as we unroll the years that are gone. Many of us yearn to know why men acted as they did, whence they got their inspiration and their teaching, what influences moulded them, and why and whence the changes, the growth, the life of communities sprang. In such moods we do not care to linger much on the doings of the common herd—the human kine which graze the same meadows perpetually in the same fashion, with the same appetites and tastes, and roll on their great and weary loads monotonously. They have little to stir us. We want rather to study those who have the spark of movement in their marrow and their souls—who have thought and said and done new and great things; who have had the divine gift of driving or leading men, and who have shaken the golden fleece until it dropped its load of fertilizing drops. Drum and trumpet history it is sometimes called. Hero worshipping it is sometimes called. It, at all events, regards the drama of life in its more stirring periods, its tragedies and its comedies, as the main object of study rather than the dull and monotonous tapestry that covers the greater part of the walls of Time.

This is very elementary trifling you will say. So it is. It is only meant as a protest against those who look upon history as necessarily belonging to one or other of these categories only, instead of embracing them all. We cannot expect to have them all in the same covers. They presuppose different tastes, gifts, and sympathies. They ought to be the handiwork of different hands, and are meant for different readers. We must concede to each its own special sphere and dominance. What we can and must insist upon is, that whichever special branch of history is in question, it should be written according to the laws and rules of the combined science and art of history, as it is understood by its highest votaries, and must sweep away with the broom of destruction the crudities and the imbecilities that in the name of history crowd our shelves with ephemeral rubbish, and which waste our lives and tempers in a search after Truth where the conditions of Truth do not exist. This is to be the burden of my sermon. Let us come down from abstract phrases to more concrete teaching. The traveller differs

from the historian mainly in this : that the former can test his knowledge by his own senses, and can report what he sees and hears or experiences ; while the latter, who has to record the events of other days, has to extract his story from other witnesses than himself. The former has to take care to be vigilant, observing, and truthful ; the latter has to sift the vigilance, powers, and opportunities of observation and truthfulness of others, partly the testimony of living or once living witnesses, and partly the testimony of monument and relic.

It seems to me that the process of testing the witness before we turn to his narrative is a very modern one, and was first pressed home in its best and most rigid forms in Germany. It has been very much neglected in the historical writing of our own country. The older historians apparently treated all testimony as equally valuable and trustworthy. The man who actually saw the strife, and the man who wrote about it from hearsay or otherwise many a decade later, were deemed of equal value and of equal importance as witnesses. It is pitiful what masses of books exist in which the author never seems to have realised at all the prime necessity of testing his witnesses before quoting them, and this among historians often put in the first rank.

Yet we have at our elbows a perpetual living school of teachers from whom better things could have been learnt, namely, those who practice in our Law Courts. The historian is, in fact, in the position of a Judge, and the testimony he has to examine, like that produced in a court of law, ought to be first put into the crucible and the dross separated from the gold before the gold is used to gild the silver salver with. It seems to me that no better rules could be drawn up for the historian in this behalf than those which control the actions of courts of law and are known as the Laws of Evidence.

The first and cardinal rule of our courts of law is that secondary evidence is not admissible when primary evidence is available. That we ought not to quote the copyist and the compiler when we can get at the original source ; and that in every case we must quote the author who lived nearest to the events, and beware of the picturesque phrases of much later writers who were

constrained to gild the not too refined gold and to paint the not too well preserved lily.

When Henry of Huntingdon, or some poet like Gaimar, touches up the bald story of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle with a few rhetorical touches, we must beware of mistaking these touches for what is called local colour, or treat it as an independent tradition.

It is pitiable to turn over the pages of popular historians where this cardinal law of evidence has been entirely overlooked, and where authorities of very different dates, and who had very different opportunities, are quoted as if they were of the same value. The earlier and duller man being often brushed aside in favour of the later manufacturer of picturesque phrases. Mr. Freeman was a great offender in this respect. In the long-drawn-out and remarkable account he gives of the Battle of Hastings it is quite surprising to find how to him apparently William of Poitiers and the Peterborough Chronicle were of no greater authority than Wace, who not only wrote a hundred years after the event, but whose touches, which look so picturesque and have such apparently local and personal colouring, are in so many cases the necessary frailties of his narrative, which required a rhyme or a rhythmical phrase at all hazards. This criticism was not reserved for to-day. It was the subject-matter of a good-natured polemic in which he and I engaged many years ago. I hope I shall carry your general assent with me in saying that no statement in an historical work ought to be attested in any case by a second-hand authority when the first-hand authority is available and accessible. What is the use for instance of quoting the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for statements which have been immediately derived by the compiler of that work from Bede, and for which Bede is the prime authority; or to quote William of Malmesbury or Matthew Paris for statements which were directly derived by those writers from still extant lives of saints or diplomatic documents? Such quotations would not be permitted in a court of law. This method of writing history has become quite discredited in Germany, and it ought to have no place with us; and if it be a reasonable rule to adopt in writing European history, how much more so in

writing Eastern history, where compilation is the rule and original composition the exception, and where late fourth and fifth-hand compilers are continually paraded as witnesses for facts, when the original sources are available and open? Here, therefore, the personal equation and the personal frailty of a succession of copiers has unnecessarily sophisticated the story at every point. What is the use of quoting Mirkhavend and Khuandemir for information which has come to them from Rashid ud din or Ibn al Athir through many polluted channels and conduits, when we can go direct to the original fountain?

This rule of historical testimony involves another, namely, a much more rigid editing of our sources. It is monstrous that we still should have editions of chronicles and texts in which those facts which are original and those which are borrowed are not sharply defined. No statement in a properly-edited historical source ought to appear without its being at once obvious, either from the nature of the print or from distinctly-marked marginalia, whether the statement is an original one or not; and if not an original one, whether it is the earliest source. All the mere *copy* should be put in smaller type with warning notes attached, and it ought to be made a criminal offence to quote passages thus printed in smaller type unless they either vary in some way from the original source or there is substantial value in the testimony as corroborative or otherwise.

Another rule which seems to me to be paramount is that only the best and most critical editions of texts should be used and quoted, and that the particular edition of the work used should always be named. Who would dream of quoting a classical text which was edited before the days of Bentley and of Heyne before collation had been made a paramount necessity of editing? and why should any other rule be applied to other than classical texts and authorities?

What is the use of quoting editions of old English chronicles or of old English literary works published from a single manuscript, or from corrupt examples, when critical editions dependent on all existing MSS. are available? To most writers of historical manuals in England all editions of a book seem to have the same

value and authority. Again, in the case of many authors who have preserved for us lost sources, how necessary it is that we, in England especially, should cultivate the German method of diligently tracking, when we can, the originals of these quotations that we may give them their due weight, and, having done so, refer to both the original writer and also the immediate source. Diodorus Siculus is a very entertaining, but a very late writer. His testimony, however, becomes far more valuable and interesting when we know that a large part of his composition is derived directly from much older and now lost authors, just as Josephus' history is. These earlier writers in such cases are the real witnesses, although their evidence is only available now in hearsay and secondary fashion, and they ought to be quoted accordingly. The discussion of the relative merit and value of the authorities and the *fontes* ought to be an indispensable part of every scientific history, and it ought to be impossible in these days to turn to an historical work of any character or repute which does not contain a careful *apparatus criticus* in which the witnesses are cross-examined as to character, ability, and truthfulness, just as witnesses are similarly arraigned in a court of law. Where is anything of the kind to be found, except of the most perfunctory and childish character in such well-known works as Freeman's *Norman Conquest* and Green's *History of England*? If these authors are turned to, it will be found that a work like the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for instance is treated as a divinely-inspired document instead of being a very late compilation from Bede, the lives of the saints, etc., none of it probably dating from before the reign of Edward the Elder. The earliest part of it is an artificial and utterly baseless story, while in later times it is vitiated by many mistakes and a sophisticated chronology. The statements in the *Chronicle*, before the conversion of Ethelbert of Kent to Christianity, are many of them as trustworthy as the story of Romulus and Remus; and yet we have the doings of Cerdic and his son, etc., etc., discussed with the same gravity as if they had filled a similar rôle in history, and one as well attested as that of Vasco de Gama or of Mr. Cecil Rhodes. And this is done by a

whole school or rather *clique* of writers, who will tolerate any fantastic reasoning from one of their own number if he will only accept the common shibboleths of the sect.

To quote an example. Can anything be more like *Alice in Wonderland* than many of Dr. Guest's lucubrations on the settlements of the Anglo-Saxon tribes in Britain, based upon the tales about Cerdic and Cynric and Cissa and Port and all the other *gentes fabulosi* of the chronicler?

I am well aware that we have some notable exceptions to this rule, and that Stubbs, Skene, Haddan, and Yorke Powell, Hodgskin, Bury, Round, and others I could name, have worked on different lines and have imported and followed up German methods. These lights, however, only make the general waste more desolate-looking, and it will remain so so long as our historical writing is so little directed and so little methodised. Every man who can write clear English thinks he can write history, forgetful that the craft of the historian is one calling for more special training than almost any other branch of inquiry, where Truth has to be sifted out of manifold testimonies and evidence has to be weighed and measured. When shall we have in England an institution like the *Ecole des Chartes* in France, teaching young men how documents should be edited, a school of diplomatic training in the wider sense of the term, instead of such editing of documents and of chronicles being left to the untrained instincts and the untaught methods of every literary privateer with a yearning to write a book.

When, again, will our professors of History at the Universities learn from Germany that there are two kinds of students of history: those who wish to pass examinations and those who wish to prosecute original research? Where have we here the young men who have gathered round Mommsen and Sybel and Curtius and others in Germany, and have learnt their profession by working in the workshops of real masters—doing the hodman's work for the practical builder and brick-setter. What a charming thing it would be to find my distinguished and very learned friend, Lord Acton, teaching the young people under his charge how the bricks and mortar of real history are made; how historical walls

and buttresses should be built if they are to stand up against the ravages of time, and presently, when they have progressed further, how lordly façades and buildings are to be designed if they are meant to live as the works of Thucydides or Gibbon or Mommsen live! We may, and we do, rebel very often against German style and German opacity in narrative, but we must all do homage to the scientific spirit in studying history which they have cultivated so well and which they have recently inoculated the French with. Why should we be so far behind?

Is it not a stupendous leap when we turn from Grote and Merivale, to quote two fine examples of the old methods, to Busolt and Mommsen among the moderns? What a gap there is between history as we were taught it as boys and history as we may learn it now! but in learning it we must go elsewhere than to our own teachers. It would be impossible for a German student to publish the ridiculous and uncritical crudities which sometimes pass for history among us. He would be killed with ridicule and contempt; and why is this? Have we no men equal to the task—no materials, no taste, and no learning? Of course we have, as good as there are anywhere; and, in addition, a finer judgment and a truer historic instinct. Publications like the *Historical and the Classical Reviews* and the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, and the periodical publications of our Universities, are a measure of the advances we have made, but it is sporadic and individual. I am pleading for a truly scientific training in modern methods of writing history. I would begin by imposing upon every man who takes Honours in the History Schools at the Universities the obligation of producing some original "Programme," or Dissertation, or Memoir, as a proof that he has learnt his trade. To give a man Honours in history because his memory can retain a great load of undigested materials, or because he can answer a number of absurd conundrums which the fatuous ingenuity of an examiner has devised, is a ridiculous test of the capacity of an historian, however much it may be a test of the industry and retentiveness of the human mind in pursuit of a Fellowship or of the monstrously base uses we put our clever men to; but let us pass on. As we have seen, to go back to the earliest witnesses and

to get those witnesses' testimony in its purest form are the two cardinal factors of historical composition. A third one equally important requires the acumen and skill of the Judge. Contemporary witnesses do not, of course, stand on the same level, and to discriminate between different witnesses in regard to the weight of their testimony is the most trying of the historian's duties. This, again, is a duty which has only recently been insisted upon.

Those among us who are in the thick of living politics, who know how entirely different the very same circumstances (of which we have been witness ourselves) appear to, and are reported by, any two men who happen to differ in temper, acuteness, or opinion, know full well how great is the human factor and the personal equation of the reporter in every narrative, even when it is supposed to be the bald and meagre and neutral report of simple facts. For example, who would accept Mr. Labouchere's dissection of Mr. Rhodes' recent actions in South Africa much less his dissection of Mr. Rhodes' motives, or of his own, as history?

I am not sure that the safest witnesses, after all, are not the strong partisans on either side. We are on our guard with them when they abuse their opponents. It is more difficult with such a reporter as Tacitus, for instance, whose plausible phrases are so full of innuendo and of scarcely tangible sophistication of the truth which have imposed on generations of students. Who with any judgment would now accept the Tiberius of Tacitus any more than the Richard the Third of Shakespeare as pictures of the men? Tacitus wrote for the Roman nobles who hated the Empire, and Shakespeare for the granddaughter of Richard's rival. We forget that in former days, as now, the reporter had very frequently to meet the taste of his audience. He was not expected to tell what was quite true, but what was interesting and tickled the ear. Without dishonest motives he invented not the speeches that were made, but those he thought dramatically appropriate, and moulded the characters of his heroes in corresponding fashion.

Another kind of witness whose testimony is most important has been quite unappreciated by historians of

severely logical minds. I mean the reporter of old wives' tales, of the miracles of saints, the prodigies of nature, the supposed pranks of the devil—all the machinery, in fact, of mythology, or superstition, or credulity, or what you will, which fills the lives of saints and the records of sinners at certain dates. Fables no doubt they are, but fables genuinely believed to be true, and for that reason marking the mental outlook of the story-teller, and in no sense to be ignored, and yet they are as rigidly ignored by some modern historians as they were implicitly followed by those of another day; but how are we to write the history of Europe from the seventh to the eleventh century without them? These, and such as these, are the frailties of nearly all human witnesses—are the frailties, in fact, of those not gifted with omniscience, and it is unfortunately from such as these we must try and get the truth.

Again, as to written testimony: The chronicler and professed historian have been until lately the main props of the historian. We now feel that a much better kind of evidence in every way than even contemporary annals or chronicles are contemporary State or private documents and contemporary archæological remains. These, for the most part, tell no lies; they remain, too, as they left their maker's hands. I am not, of course, speaking of Napoleon's bulletins, of Pope's letters, of the famous decretals, or the obituary notices of great and little men, but of legal and judicial documents—of deeds not meant for publication: the hard and bald business-like documents in which the personal equation of the narrator is largely absent. What a revolution took place in England in the theory and methods of writing history when the Keeper of the Records stopped the publication of the Mediæval chronicles and began to publish indices to the large masses of diplomata in the Record Office! To some of us the former series was too abruptly concluded. We still want critical editions of Florence of Worcester, of the Lives of the Early English Saints, of Orderic, and of others we could name, but this is a mere fly in our pot of ointment. The tremendous gain is that involved in teaching the English historian that if he wants to really let us know what was done, say, in the reign of Henry the Third, we must not turn to the professed chroniclers, but

to the almost endless records in which the doings of the King, of Bishops, of Lords and peasants, are actually inventoried and entered by contemporary and official scribes, by clerks and routine officials who had no care for reputations and no motives and no opportunities for deliberate misleading. It was Mr. Freeman who first taught us what an inexhaustible mine of materials is contained in Domesday Book, not for purposes of local topography and local genealogy only, but for picturing the full story of our realms at a critical time. If he had lived twenty years earlier he would have given quite as great an importance to the *Codex Diplomaticus*, to the Chartularies of the great Abbeys, and to the vast stores of our judicial and State records, instead of labouring the minute and rhetorical variations of the various professed chroniclers. It is thus that the *Corpus Inscriptionum*, &c., &c., has so largely displaced the ancient professed writers of Greek and Roman history in the pages of Mommsen and Duruy and others.

But this is not all. It is not only that greater weight is now given to contemporary documents stamped with the mint-mark of authenticity; but we now feel that the story cannot properly be told if we limit ourselves to a few picked authorities and if we do not take note of all the evidence, fragile as well as strong.

Who would now attempt to write a history of Wales or of Ireland or of Anglo-Saxon England compiled from diplomata, however genuine, or from the statements of arid and prosaic chroniclers, ignoring the literature of the period, its poetry, its science, its fables, its Saints' lives—ignoring, in fact, the fresh food upon which the minds of its people were fed? Turn, for instance, from Mr. Green's account of Henry the Fourth to that of Mr. Wylie. How every page of the latter is lighted up with real life by the passages from friars' sermons and rhymers' ballads, by glimpses into the necromancer's study, and witty phrases from divines like Wiclif and wits like Chaucer, and by the queer, odd tags and tatters, fringes and ornaments from all kinds of dusty corners. Thus the bones are wrapped, if not in human flesh, at least in a living form. The very things which the Chronicle never mentions, because they are so familiar to

him, are the things we want to know most about. We who live so far off their times and their modes of thought long for the casual testimony of a casual vagabond, such an one as he who has visited a new country for the first time and stayed only a fortnight there, and has noted all the things which were new to him but which are stale and stupid and unprofitable to the man who has lived there for six months. What would not some of us have given for a history of the Norman Conquest such as Freeman's picturesque men could have written if he had spared us the hundreds of pages of polemic about the supposed heroic prowess of a decaying and, to speak plainly, of a swinish race and its pinchbeck heroes: about the calculating, cruel, selfish Danish family of Earl Godwin if he had given us a truer picture of the people and their mode of living: if he had told us more about things which neither William of Poitiers nor the *Peterborough Chronicle* would deign to notice, and thus given us an insight into the mental life of the people and the literature they read and the things they used: searched through the songs, the travellers' tales, the bestiaries, the crude scientific manuals, and let us peep into kitchen and hall and parlour, into cottage and castle; and not merely escorted us from one battlefield to another?

Again, we hold that, as far as may be, both sides should be heard, and sometimes more than two sides. How can we understand the inner history of England at certain periods without an intimate knowledge of that of Scotland and Ireland and Wales as well; and not merely the history of these other lands as it appeared to Englishmen, but as it appeared to their own folk? Freeman, while at every turn he glorified the Saxons and Anglians, utterly mistook the perspective of history in speaking of and treating them as English.

We English are a mixed breed of Teutons and Frenchmen. May not we thank heaven for that? But we are more: we also have a large Celtic strain in our blood. Freeman had no patience with the Celts, who had taught the rude Anglian very nearly all the civilisation he had, who had taught Western Europe the art of making romances, who kept alive poetry and art and most of those ideals which were not merely animal in mediæval

life. He consequently converges nearly all his story upon battles and pageants, and ignores the yeast and leaven which was working its way into the sturdy bones of Anglian and Dane and Roman at the time he writes about. What kind of history is that? It is merely history as presented by a man with a brief for one side, and that side the soldier's side only. We must confront independent witnesses with independent stories to tell, with each other if we are to get at the truth, and especially put in the foreground the witnesses who have told unpalatable truths. It is in the mocking and sarcastic ballads of the peasants' rhymers and the friars that we get the best antidote to the optimistic sycophancy of the Courtly annalist of the Plantagenets or the distorted narratives of the monks, whose looking-glass did not reflect what would discredit his cloth or his Church or his party. In searching for historic truth it is the writings of heretics, of political outcasts, of pariahs, which are most profitable to consult.

Aristophanes and Wycherley are often better witnesses than Plato and Bishop Burnet. They represent a mass of opinion which it was dangerous to utter except through the medium of caustic comedy.

What a gain it has been to us of late to rediscover the actual homilies of the Valentinians and the service books of the Gnostics, and to judge those persecuted sects not by the fiery and hasty judgments of their opponents and by passages torn from their context by some orthodox critic, but by their own statements. What a gain it has been, on the other hand, to recover Aristotle's Athenian polity and to put before our youth, who for generations have been misled by a spurious political philosophy, a sounder creed! What an advantage it is to be able to put as an antidote beside the futile hopes and fantastic experiments of the glorious century before the Peloponnesian war the masculine comments of a strong man like Aristotle, who had seen the rainbow dissipated and the old idols burnt to ashes! Or, to come to our own day, what a gain it is to have the real grim facts presented to us about the French Revolution instead of the Utopias and ideals which grew like wallflowers on the ruined walls of the Bastille, and this by some master of his craft.

like Aristotle was in old days, and Taine, or my friend Mr. Lecky, in our own. In dealing with times when sentiment and passion were rife we need the frigid analysis of some man of the world who had seen many rainbows come and go, and leave no path across the sky along which hapless men in a difficulty could pass over or through the hurricane!

If it be wise to confront opposing teachers and schools with each other, it is equally necessary, if some historian of the future is ever to give us judicial decisions on historical problems, that the fanatical champion on one side should be answered by the fanatic on the other. It is well to confront each man with a brief for his own side and his own opinion, making the best fight he can for that view and that opinion, dissecting, analysing, and answering his rival, and then permitting the judge, or perhaps the jury of Public Opinion, to decide between the two.

But let us pass on to another analogy from our courts of law. It is only in a certain number of cases that we can fall back upon spoken or written testimony, and the world is learning rapidly that in history, as in law, circumstantial evidence fills a great place and probably produces the most complete convictions. It is not the old-fashioned evidence with which modern historians have revolutionised both our methods and results; but by going far afield—Archæology, Philology, Comparative Mythology, Folk Lore, the survival of old creeds and of old institutions. These, and such as these, furnish the best of the modern historians with their most effective bricks and mortar.

The written records go back only a short way. Thus the Greeks only began to write down their then scanty literature in the seventh century B.C., and their genealogical lists and similar *disjecta membra* of early records do not go back beyond the eighth, shewing that in all probability the beginning of epigraphic writing was limited to that date. Beyond that those who wish to travel (and who does not yearn to know the causes and the beginnings of so much that is precious and unmatched?) must go into other fields. Formerly men turned to the Epic poems, and the first volume of Mitford and of Grote shews the method employed and the result obtained. Now, as any-

one may judge by turning to the last edition of Busolt's great work, they turn elsewhere also, and from archæology and the history of language and religion squeeze out a generous vintage of manifold inspiration which illuminates the Epic poems in a way undreamt before. This enables us in some measure to test their relative date, importance, and value, and at the same time floods the canvas with a wealth of details on the manners and customs, the thought and opinions, of the primitive world as inductive, as true, and as lasting in value as the record engraved on brass or scrawled across the more perishing papyrus. What a revolution this implies to those fed upon the kind of history which satisfied Robertson or Hume in the last century!

As I came westward last week to see my old friend General Pitt-Rivers I stayed at Salisbury, where another cherished friend the Dean, from that most delightful of carpets the green sward in the Close, pointed out what I was ashamed not to have known—namely, that in Salisbury as it stands we have a living specimen to illustrate what a brand-new town was like in the twelfth century. Do you quite realise that the whole thing was entirely begun *de novo* at that date? The Cathedral was transplanted from old Sarum. That we all know; but the new town was laid out around the Cathedral with its streets arranged in chequers as we see it still; and this evidently on a distinct plan. Is not that an eye-lesson as good as a chapter of William of Malmesbury?

Again, as I stood at the Deanery door a brave and deserving soldier was waiting there to ask the Dean if he might have his banns published in the Cathedral instead of in his parish church, where the young ladies would all look round at him and make him feel shy; and the kind Dean said that, although he could not promise this, he could give him a special licence; for when Henry the Second was having his mortal struggle with Becket, the then Dean of Salisbury was given a local and plenary jurisdiction in certain matters, including this one of special licences. What a romantic thing it is to think that this power has survived through all the centuries since, and survived also the tramping of the heavy boots of the Tudor sovereigns, male and female! Is not this, again, a

lesson as good as can be gathered from any life of Becket, or from that philosophical and delightful chronicler Mathew Paris? And when the Dean went on further to explain that among his functions and privileges was that of inducting not an Incumbent, but a real Prior, which he had twice performed—a right which had belonged to the Deans of Salisbury since Plantagenet times—and that both Prior and solemn induction had survived the desperate pertinacity of Thomas Cromwell and all the other iconoclastic foes of Priors and Abbots, Monks and Friars, it seemed to me that one's historic blood began to flow more quickly than it would have done if the same fact had been read out of Dugdale's very plain but very English Latin.

This is all true you will say, and all very trivial. I know it is, for I am trivial too. If I were not I should not be so impertinent; but what I wish to moralise about is that if it be true it is clear that the historian should see that his archæology is a really scientific archæology, and not slipshod and fantastic. Is there no need of the warning? Mine is assuredly no wolf's cry: there is no question more pressing.

When, some years ago, Dr. Guest wrote his lucubrations on the so-called Belgic ditches, the hill-forts, the dykes and ramparts of beautiful Dorsetshire, he took captive many people and some impulsive historians, and yet there are few works which are so absolutely wanting in inductive authority. What is the use of describing at great length the purpose and the date of certain green mounds which startle everyone by their obvious romance if we do not know anything more about them than their outlines and green covering? We may as well try to ascertain the solid beds which underlie a country by examining the potatoes and turnips which grow on its surface soil. The true inductive method was discovered and was carried out at great cost and with infinite patience and care by my old and very accomplished friends, Canon Greenwell and General Pitt-Rivers (a Durham Canon and a Dorsetshire soldier), the latter of whom, with his rival Mr. Mansell Pleydell, this county ought to be proud of, for they have done more for its actual culture and elevation in manifold ways, and done

more to illustrate its real history, it seems to me, than most people. I of course exclude Cerdic, who was a mythical personage; that glorified pirate Raleigh, and that sententious and most queer of learned people Sir Kenelm Digby, who poisoned his wife in his experimental efforts to make her beautiful for ever.

General Pitt-Rivers has always insisted that the spade is the true key with which to unlock the secrets of these mounds and dykes and ramparts. He has urged that by cutting through them we may ascertain their date; and that we can generally find in their various layers witnesses to their chronology. He has diligently applied this test, and now we are beginning to be in a position to really say when these several monuments were made, and consequently to read their story aright; but he has done more than this: he has taught us what a sacred trust a man has in his hands when he is permitted to dig into and explore a primitive monument, and thus to interfere with its integrity. He has taught us that we are, in fact, trustees for future generations.

We have no right to destroy historical evidence and to put our spade into these old monuments unless we most carefully and religiously record every fact, however apparently trivial, in regard to them, and thus prevent our children from suffering from our laxity. Not only ought we, however, to exercise the most conservative solicitude in digging over the ground, but we must also take care that we publish the results in fullest detail also; and this as soon as may be. "*Bis dat qui cito dat*" is an exemplary motto when we are dealing with evidence so easily lost.

Have we no lessons in Dorsetshire, and have we none in Wiltshire to hasten our pen when writing this homily? In this county you have, as you must know, some of the most important remains existing anywhere of the so-called Neolithic, or, as I prefer to call it, the Belgic, age, answering to the First Iron age of the Scandinavian antiquaries. Hill forts, which were apparently the strongholds of these early men, and which teem with remains especially interesting because they overlap with the earliest Roman remains, certifying to the fact that it was the Belgic culture which was put aside by the Roman, and

interesting further, since almost every object dating from this period has its own peculiar features. One of the most interesting of these hill-forts—Hod Hill—has been dug over by the ploughboy and his master, and the remains found were preserved in a fashion and are now in the British Museum; but almost the whole value of the discovery has been lost to science. We know virtually nothing of when and how the things were found; and they were apparently dug up with as little concern as if they had been potatoes in a field, and then piled together in the same heedless fashion. The Wiltshire Downs, again, with their manifold tumuli were dug over by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, and his harvest is now at Devizes, but they were dug over in a most perfunctory manner. He seems to have hated bones and the less showy articles, which are, in fact, the most important keys of the whole story. No doubt he was a pioneer and did his best, and did much better than many others; but how much better it would have been if the mounds on Salisbury Plains had in many cases been left alone until some “*Canonicus furibundus cognomine Greenwell,*” or some “*Centurio etiam furibundus cognomine Lane-Fox, Pitt Rivers aut Rivers Pitt, fratres incomparabiles*” had arisen who insist that we must measure and weigh and test every little circumstance, and publish it all in the minutest detail! We feel very angry when we contemplate the cruel work that was done by the old restorers of churches, and the old destroyers of cathedrals, of whom the greatest offender of all had the ill-luck to be successively Bishop of your own diocese and Bishop of Durham, and who left his ruthless handiwork in both dioceses; but we palliate and excuse the smaller criminals who have destroyed or mutilated our older and more fragile and less recorded monuments. May I again express the hope from this chair that those who have the custody of what remain will refuse to allow amateurs and people without the requisite training, knowledge, or resources to tamper with these invaluable documents—the very title deeds of our earliest history—just as they would forbid a quack or empiric to practise upon their children? While we are talking of archæology may I be permitted on this not unfitting occasion to do my humblest homage to the memory of my dear old friend and master

Augustus Franks, whom we have so recently lost? I have not known in my pilgrimage a man who combined so completely the unassuming modesty of a kind English gentleman with the never-failing stream of learning and of accurate knowledge of a great antiquary. I would we were more like him—we whom he taught so much of what we know!

Archæology is not the only handmaid of history which has revised its methods and which it is important we should use in a more critical way. Philology in its double capacity is another—first, as the direct index of relationship among peoples; and, secondly, as a guide to local topography. We now know that language, like art, changes continually, and changes, too, according to definite rules and principles; and if we are to compare words which have adopted different forms, we must see that the changes involved have been consistent with precise laws, and that it will not do to scramble to some hapless conclusion by seizing on casual resemblances or differences. We must do this especially in our inductions from local topography.

We know now that we must not attempt to jump at an etymology from the names we find on our maps, but we must trace them back to their earliest forms. Toad Lone, in my old borough of Rochdale, has nothing to do with either toads or sycophants, but is merely a corruption of Towd Lane—the old lane; as the Billy Ruffian of the sailor is a corruption of Bellerophon. Cateaton Street in London is not the street where sausages were once made, nor is Maiden Castle connected with the Lady of Shalot. Scientific etymology in the field of local nomenclature is a serious science, requiring long training and skill and patience; and the man who ventures into this field without due preparation ought to be treated as a kite or a jay is treated by a gamekeeper, and nailed to the historical lamp-post, if not with an iron staple, with a sufficiently crushing criticism. Isaac Taylor first held up the true lamp in these realms on this subject, and I know few worthier followers of him than my good friend Sir Herbert Maxwell, whose ancestor, King Maccus, would have been proud if he had thought that one of his descendants would combine the critical acumen of a

scholar with the reputation of a Leader of Fashion in the House of Commons.

We thus see that wherever we turn the processes of writing history have become more difficult, more precise, and more methodical, and that there is less and less room for the untrained, untaught, and unscholarly amateur. I feel that it required very considerable presumption and impertinence to put these harmless, abstract propositions into a concrete shape, and to point its moral by personal and particular references. No one but an unconventional and impertinent person with experiences of Mongolia, and by taste therefore, if not by descent, a Tartar, would have selected this quiet, respectable, dreamy, and very conservative county for airing such revolutionary theories, and stating these unpalatable truths; and no one but a man who had himself often offended against every canon which he now maintains would have dared to shoot his arrows about him heedless of the people—in this very room, may be—whom he is hitting. At all events, you will forgive me. The fact is, you must forgive me, for you will need me again. My kind friends, we have come from the four winds of heaven to encamp awhile in a very old corner of England. We are all delighted with its beautiful scenery, its lordly houses, its kind people, and the monuments that cover its many hills. We feel that it is a good epitome of the England which we love best; which Shakespeare and Tennyson loved best, and which attracts the American pilgrim to our shores—the England which contains some romance, some legend or interesting old relic, some tragedy or comedy in every cubic yard of its soil. We can almost fancy ourselves seated in the fierce sunshine on the grassy slopes of the amphitheatre close by while a British bear and a British bull were having a tussle in its arena in the days when Vespasian and Titus were destroying Jerusalem. We can almost fancy ourselves present when the West Saxons made Dorchester their first capital and their first see, and follow the long and diapered course of English history as reflected in the daily drama in its streets. It is our anxiety to know the best and the most accurate records available of all this romantic story, and much more, which makes us adopt

our Mongolian attitude towards the slipshod history and the archæological charlatanry which some folk have mistaken for history in many a shameless volume. May we hope that when the Institute again visits Dorchester another long step will have been taken in the direction of our Ideal; and in the meantime may we be allowed to say our *Nunc Dimittis* with the hope in our hearts that Ceres and Abundantia will pour out and empty their sacks of all that is best and most lasting over the green fields and pleasant homes of this fair county of Dorset!

Let me finish in the words of your own kindly old bard Barnes:

“Come along an’ you shall vind
 That Do’set men don’ sheame their kind.
 Use ’em well, they’ll use you better;
 In good turns they won’t be debtor.
 They be zound, and they will stand
 By whed is right wi’ head an’ hand—
 Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers.
 Happy, happy be their life!
 Vor Do’set dear
 Then gi’e oone cheer;
 D’ye hear?—oone cheer.”