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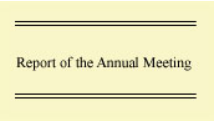

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WIDER HORIZONS

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A YEAR AGO in Kingston my predecessor gave his presidential address under the title of "Broad Horizons". The idea was an admirable one. He wished to warn us against the narrowness and distortion that can come from a too nationalistic approach to our history. To confine our attention to events that took place in Canada can give us an entirely false and inadequate understanding of what those events mean. Much of Canadian history took place outside of the country. For much of it we have to look to France or Great Britain or the United States. Even this is not enough. Where Professor Burt thought that we really failed was in the field of imperial history. This to a large extent has been ignored. As long as this was the case, Canadian history would suffer both in perspective and in depth of meaning. The rest of his address was largely a demonstration of the gains that awaited those who studied Canadian history in its setting as a part of the history of the British Empire during the last two centuries. The broader the historian's outlook, the greater and more valuable the harvest he reaped!

I hope that I shall not be accused of plagiarism if I come before you and say that the remarks that I am going to make are to be disguised (if they need a disguise) under the title of Wider Horizons. I think that I am justified in taking that title, although from some points of view the title may be misleading.

It may be misleading in this sense. My aim is not to elaborate on, or to extend the application of my predecessor's thesis. It is not even my intention to confine my remarks within the field of history. Rather it is my intention to consider the field of history itself. What part does history, or what part should history play in a liberal education? What part does history, or what part should history, play in making a full and complete man?

I must elaborate, and in elaborating I shall betray my own point of view. That will be apparent in everything that I say. For that I make no apologies. I am convinced that there is a very close relationship between truth and personal conviction. The closer a man comes to saying what he himself believes, the closer he comes to revealing such truth as there may be in him. He knows no other truth. For over thirty years I have been teaching history. What have I tried to do? Was I simply teaching historical facts or was I using historical facts to achieve ends, not so obvious but no less definite?

Before trying to answer the question what part history plays in a liberal education, it is necessary to make clear what I think is meant by a liberal education. That is really the crux of the whole matter. Probably I shall be giving utterance to a personal opinion and a very personal opinion at that. However there is so much that passes for education which is nothing of the sort, such a hodge-podge of planless

and miscellaneous subjects that are thrown together without any apparent aim or purpose; so much that masquerades under the guise of education that is nothing but vocational training, so much that is nothing but the acquiring of a trained technique that is covered by the same blessed word, that we do well to pause occasionally and ask ourselves what is the essence, the core, the distinguishing mark of a liberal education.

It is a difficult question to answer and none of us will give quite the same answer. I am quite conscious that a man can get an education without going to college. I have no particular quarrel with those who say that the aim of education is to make a man think, think correctly, and think for himself. I am quite ready to admit that there is much learned even by those who are pursuing technical and vocational courses. I am also quite conscious that the materials and methods, the subjects studied, and the relative weight put on those studies change from age to age and from country to country.

Nevertheless I still believe that there ought to be an ultimate goal; a final vision if you like, that comes as a result of a liberal education. Just as Dante, after all his wandering in Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, had a final glimpse of the Eternal on his throne, so ought we to have some final illumination in our darkness. The light may do no more than reveal the darkness, but it is light and not darkness. A transformation has taken place and we know, at least those who have experienced it know, that it has taken place.

The very essence of education is understanding. It is not training. That is an entirely different matter. The highest understanding would be for a man to know himself, and to know the universe in which he lived. That is an impossible achievement in this world. I admit that. What I do contend however is that a man must be perfectly aware of the ideal end of education, and never cease in his striving to approach it. Goethe was a great example of the idea I am trying to express. He would enter into life, play his part in it, survey with steady gaze all man's achievements, past and present, and ever strive to build up within himself a God-like understanding of the whole. It is not strange that in his later life his contemporaries talk of him as an Olympian figure. It was an Olympian ideal that he ever held up before him.

It was the ideal of all real education—to know and to understand, to be master of life and to seek ever to understand its meaning, to strive for light, and more light. Education means knowledge, and a thirst for knowledge that no amount of knowledge can ever satisfy, but it also means an endless attempt to bring some kind of order into a man's thinking, a final synthesis of a man's life, a crystallization of all that a man knows and thinks and has experienced around some interpretation of human existence. There is no escape. We are but specks of intelligence between two eternities. What do we see in the little span that is ours? I am not saying that a man must find the answer, I am not even saying that he must find an answer. I am certainly far from saying that we must all find the same answer. I am only saying that every man, certainly every educated man must face up to the greatest problems of human existence — call them religious or philosophical as you will. What is life and what is its meaning?

He cannot shift or quibble or evade. He may feel with Dante that in His will is our peace, or he may, with Bertrand Russell, feel how brief and powerless is man's life and how pitiless and dark is the slow sure doom that awaits him. He may think that existence has meaning and purpose, or he may think that man's life and all his aspirations are but such things as dreams are made of and that all our lives are rounded with a sleep.

Perhaps it is absurd — perhaps even in bad taste to raise such questions here and now. This is 1951 and not 1251. Seven hundred years ago men knew what were the answers to all these questions. That to us is the great charm of the thirteenth century. There was a unity, a harmony to western civilization that vanished long ago. Now we live in a moral anarchy. What one calls good another calls evil, one half ridicules what the other half venerates. The world has become a bedlam of conflicting claims and counter-claims. The depths are broken up and whirl is indeed king.

However, because the winds blow from every quarter and darkness is all around, is no reason that we should despair. We are compelled to become our own pilots and to navigate with some idea of the port for which we sail. Nearly eighteen centuries ago a Roman Emperor lived in times in some ways not unlike our own. He was not certain whether the universe was order or chaos. He could only strive to order his own life as a wise man should.

One subject tries to grapple with the problem I raise. Philosophy has always tried to live up to its name and to bring home to men's minds the necessity of a philosophical grasp of all experience and knowledge. Once the crown of all education, philosophy has sadly fallen from its high estate. Only too often it is willing to accept the rôle of only another subject in the college curriculum, instead of being the medium that gives meaning to the whole. Only too often it has given up the attempt to be the great awakener of men's minds and the great unifier of men's thoughts. In our university world the voice of philosophy is so meek, so etherial, so apologetic as to be scarcely heard at all.

It is my belief that it is the duty and the opportunity of history, or of those who teach history, to fill in — at least in part — the gap made vacant by the eclipse of philosophy. History is the memory of mankind. It must be as comprehensive, as exact, as scientific (if you wish to use that term) as it is possible to be in recording the events of the past. It must never falter in trying to record events exactly as they happened. Truth must ever be its aim.

At the same time, this is not, in my opinion, the greatest rôle that history is called on to play. A dry, meticulous, accurate, non-committal account of the past has become the ideal of a great many historians who have all too easily tried to ape the scientific methods of their scientific brethren in a scientific age. History may be more than a science, it may be less than a science, but it is not a science. No matter how carefully the historian may examine the fragmentary evidence that chance has saved from the wreckage of time, the final story is only a series of judgments about the past.

History is indeed the memory of mankind, but like any true memory it is more than just a record of times gone. It is mankind's

teacher and conscience and judge. A person who studies history ought to get a sense of the great sweep of human life and endeavour, a sense of what man has tried to do and failed to do, a sense of tragedy, of splendour and of wonder. The person who studies history ought to be like a man sitting on a mountain and seeing far below him the long pilgrimage of the human race. He sees man emerge from the mist, he sees glimpses of his early history, he follows him in his long struggle through the ages, down to the present day. Everything interests him, everything has to be fitted into the picture. History may not give a man a philosophy, it may not make him a philosopher, but if it does not make him ask very profound philosophical questions, it is strange indeed.

It ought not to fail, and that is why I contend that history can at the present day do more than any other subject to lead a man to the very core of a liberal education. It spreads before him the great panorama of human life, and forces him to grapple with the great questions of meaning and purpose and value. We expect that an old man will be wiser than a young man. He has the benefit of fifty years more experience. We ought, in the same way, to expect the student of history to be wiser than he who is ignorant of the subject. History is but the extension of human experience.

It is more. It is a never-ending reminder of the mystery of time and the brevity of human life. It takes man back along a long road, but a road that seems short when he thinks of the ages that went before the first written records of Egyptian or of Babylonian. Six thousand years seem little indeed when considered alongside the ages being revealed by the work of archaeologists and anthropologists. How did the human race fare then? This too is within the survey of history. Even the aeons of time with which the geologist and the astronomer deal are part of the picture and they frame the picture.

The historian can never long forget such an illustration as Sir James Jeans gives in his little book *The Universe Around Us*. Take, he says, a postage stamp and stick it on to a penny. Then put the penny and the postage stamp on top of Cleopatria's Needle. The height of the whole structure may be taken to represent the time that has elapsed since the earth was born. The thickness of the stamp represents the time that man has been civilized, while the thickness of the penny represents the time that man has been on the earth before he was civilized. This relative sense of time ought to be in the background of all historical thought.

Two further points I want to make. The first is the necessity of never forgetting the unity of history. History is all history. The whole is not only greater than the part, but the whole is greater than all the parts added together separately. History is a seamless web. We tear it at our risk. Only necessity can excuse us, but every time we separate a part from the whole, we run the risk of distortion. We have thrown away much of man's experience. It is for that reason, that whether a man is writing history or studying history or teaching history, that he ought always to be like a fresco painter. He must first sketch out a broad outline, he must have his masses and his figures correctly placed. The whole picture must be ever before him even if he is concentrating on a single part.

The second point is that he must not restrict the scope of history. It is the story of all man's past endeavours. It is not just the story of his wars, or of his political arrangements or of his social achievements or of his economic schemes, his religious beliefs or his artistic life. It is all of these but it is essentially and above all an attempt to understand the thought and outlook of man in past time. History means little to us if we cannot enter into intellectual communion with the men about whom we are reading. They do not live for us if we cannot think with them, feel with them, see the world through their eyes, understand their hopes and fears. It is only when we have such sympathy and understanding that we extend our own experience by vicarously entering into the experience of others. So comes wisdom.

Up to this point I have been trying to do only one thing. I have been trying to explain what I think is the greatest rôle that history can play in making a truly educated man. It is, if you wish, to make him a philosopher. It is to present history as all past human experience. It is an experience that forces him to think what is its meaning and purpose. Has it any meaning or purpose? If it has, what is the conclusion that he draws from it? If it has not, or if he can find none, then what does he make of his own life in this apparently meaningless record.

However, history has other rôles to play and some that you will think much more certain than the one that I have been trying to express. It has one rôle that is very simple, much more obvious, and to many, much more interesting than forcing a man to think about his place in the scheme of things. It is such a simple rôle that it seems hardly worthy of being mentioned after the first. However I have heard professors who were prepared to defend the place of their subject in the college curriculum for this reason and none other.

It is the value of history as a story, as a great drama, as a great epic, more wonderful than any novel or play or poem. It is the poetic appeal of history. The more we know, the more we want to know. Its interest and its elusiveness and its wonder only increases with the years. If Aristotle thought that after seeing a tragedy a man rose up, purified and ennobled, surely the greatest tragedy of all is worthy of the greatest study and attention. All other stories wither and sink into insignificance compared with it.

Most wonderful of all it is true. There is the greatest need for imagination in history but it is not an imagination that invents but an imagination that tries to build up from every known fact a picture of what we think actually happened. For fiction there is no place. As soon as the historian detects the false he loses interest. His whole concern is to recover the truth. There may be gaps in the story, the colours may be thin and faded, but if they are authentic, the historian is satisfied. Truth has value, falsehood has none.

In his desire to recover and preserve the past there is much more than interest or curiosity. It is an act of piety to the dead and it is an extension of our own lives. It is a pushing back of the darkness that surrounds us all. We keep the past alive and so drive farther away the realm of night. We are not so conscious of our own loneliness.

We live only in the present, second by second. The future is unknown; the past lives only in men's minds, growing dimmer and dimmer. It fades, and as it fades it dies. It disappears into the limbo of forgotten things. It was, but is not. We are, but soon we shall not be. We too shall go to join the shadows.

History is a web that is forever being woven. A ray of light—the present—falls where the shuttle shoots back and forth across the loom. Quickly the present passes on to join the endless number of presents that have slipped into the past. All were once in the noonday light, now all have passed into the shade.

No man has expressed this sense of the poetry and the pensive sadness of history better than Carlyle. Over and over he expresses the same thought.

"History after all" (he writes) "is the true poetry; Reality, if rightly interpreted, is grander than Fiction; nay even, in the right interpretation of Reality and History, does genuine Poetry lie.

Thus for *Boswell's Life of Johnson* has Time done, is Time doing still, what no ornament of Art or Artifice could have done for it. Rough Samuel and sleek wheedling James were, and are not. Their Life and whole personal Environment has melted into air. The Mitre Tavern still stands in Fleet Street; but where now is its scot-and-lot paying, beef-and-ale loving, cocked-hatted, pot-bellied Landlord; its rosy-faced assiduous Landlady, with all her shining brass-pans, waxed tables, well-filled larder-shelves; her cooks and bootjacks, and errand boys and watery-mouthed hangers-on? Gone! Gone! The becking Waiter, who, with wreathed smiles, was wont to spread for Samuel and Bozzy their supper of the gods, has long since pocketed his last sixpence; and vanished, sixpences and all, like a ghost at cock-crowing. The Bottles they drank out of are all broken, the Chairs they sat on all rotted and burnt; the very Knives and Forks they ate with have rusted to the heart, and become brown oxide of iron, and mingled with the indiscriminate clay. All, all has vanished; in very deed and truth, like that baseless fabric of Prospero's air-vision. Of the Mitre Tavern nothing but the bare walls remain there; of London, of England, of the World, nothing but the bare walls remain; and these also decaying (were they of adamant) only slower. The mysterious River of Existence rushes on; a new Billow thereof has arrived, and lashes wildly as ever round the old embankments; but the former Billow with its loud, mad eddyings, where is it? — Where?

Now this *Book* of Boswell's, this is precisely a revocation of the edict of Destiny; so that Time shall not utterly, not so soon by several centuries, have dominion over us. A little row of Naphtha-lamps, with its line of Naphtha-light, burns clear and holy through the dead Night of the Past: they who are gone are still here; though hidden they are revealed, though dead they speak. There it shines, that little miraculously lamplit Pathway; shedding its feebler and feebler twilight into the boundless dark Oblivion, for all that our Johnson *touched* has become illuminated for us: on which miraculous little Pathway we can still travel and see wonders."

This is history as art and poetry. This is history holding back the billows of time ever ready to wash away every evidence that we ever came this way.

If the pleasures of the imagination are amongst the greatest pleasures of life it would be hard to surpass the pleasure that history can give. Travel means little without it, but with it what magic windows are opened? Who can sit on the steps of the Parthenon and watch the sun sinking behind the hills towards Thebes without being carried away by a sense of all the days that have passed since Pericles walked the streets of Athens? To sit amongst the ruins of Olympia and listen to the wind sighing through the pine trees; to watch the lizards darting amidst fallen columns in the Roman Forum; to listen to the chanting of the mass amidst the forest of pillars in the great mosque at Cordova; to sit and dream amidst the glories of Chartres! This is poetry made visible. This is a magic world of charm and wonder and beauty that only the lovers of history can enter. It is an education of heart and mind and imagination that only the past can give.

I have tried to express two of the things that history can do for us. It can awaken within us — so far as we are capable of being awakened — the philosopher and the poet. It can make us conscious of the brevity and the mystery of man's life and it can clothe that brevity and that mystery with beauty and wonder.

I now come to what I might call the utility values of history. I hesitate to use this term because I do not wish to imply that there is no utility in making a man wiser or in awakening the artist and poet that is in him.

However I do think that there are certain very practical uses that can be advanced for the study of history—reasons that in themselves make history an indispensable part of a liberal education. History is the background — and a very necessary background — for practically every other field of study. It can bring order and form where otherwise there would be disorder and confusion. No matter whether the study is archaeology or architecture, language or religion, chemistry or mathematics, it has a history and it can be merged into the general history of the world.

Take what might be considered one of the least historical of subjects — mathematics. One could argue that the subject has no history. It is like Plato's ideas, changeless and eternal, ever perfect and only waiting to be discovered and understood. All that has ever happened is that the human mind has gradually and slowly discovered the truths of mathematics. Egyptian and Arab, Greek and Roman have all made their contribution to the sum of knowledge that we have today. Still unless a mathematician were satisfied to be a calculating machine, enjoying the knowledge and the skill that countless mathematicians have built up for him, he must become an historian. Only then can he fully appreciate his subject. Euclid and Archimedes, Descartes and Gauss are but shining lights in a long story. They are high priests in an historical revelation.

Every field of knowledge has its history. It is the most universal way that man has of approaching any subject. Almost as if by instinct our first wish is to discover the process by which a thing became what it is now. There may be much illusion in this. It may belong to the same class of intellectual soporific as by knowing the names of things we think we know when we do not. History as well as words may be used to conceal our ignorance from us.

However that may be, history serves the very useful purpose of enabling a man to bind his knowledge into a neat chronological strand. No matter how many strands there are and no matter how the strands increase in length and strength they can lie together in perfect order. The closer they are brought together, and the more one can be made to depend upon another, the greater the order and the continuity in the scholar's mind.

There are some subjects however where historical knowledge is indispensable. It is not a question of convenience but of necessity. Without history the whole field would be a closed book. There would not be the slightest hope of bringing meaning or understanding into the apparent confusion. Pure reason would be a hopeless guide.

The most obvious place where this is so, is when we try to understand the whole social structure in which we live. Everything around us has been woven in the loom of time. The language that we speak, the religion that we profess, the customs that we follow, the economic machine that feeds us, the forms of government that we obey, the international situation that so disturbs us — none of these can be understood without a knowledge of history. To quote St. Augustine with a variation, "history hath reasons that reason doth not know".

Take the most obvious and the most conspicuous subject of those that I have just mentioned. How can one hope to understand the present confusion in which the world finds itself in the field of international relations? When we speak of United Nations or Atlantic Pact or War or Peace, we are compelled to become historians. We can only understand by understanding the past. The whole recent history of the world has to be brought into the survey. We perhaps start with World War II and try to explain the events that have happened since its close. We soon discover that this gives a ridicuously incomplete and foreshortened account. We raise more difficulties than we solve. New questions arise at every turn. Instead of explaining anything we only reveal how complicated and far-reaching are the problems that we set out to solve. We find ourselves reviewing the twenty years of uneasy peace that intervened between two world wars, discussing the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the uncertainties of the 'twenties, the great depression, the rise of dictators, the civil war in Spain, the Japanese in Manchuria and all the tensions that brought about the final explosion in 1939. Even then we feel that we are only explaining the last act in a play. We are forced to go farther and farther back. We have to understand the causes that led to the first World War. We find ourselves talking about Bismarck, the League of the Three Emperors, the Triple Alliance, the Franco-Russian Alliance, the end of England's isolation, problems of Egypt and Morocco, of the Near East and the Far East.

By going back to 1870 we can give a fairly comprehensive and logical picture of how the present international situation has evolved, but even then we find ourselves continually harking back to events long before the battle of Sedan. Over and over again we have occasion to speak of Napoleon and the French Revolution, of Louis XIV, and the Thirty Years War. If we are not careful, we find ourselves talking about Charlemagne and his grandsons, of the Treaty of Verdun, and of events that happened over a thousand years ago.

It is always the same story. We cannot understand the present without understanding what went before it. More illustrations are unnecessary but if we needed them we have only to think of the field of religion. Two thousand years are not enough if we wish to understand the history of Christianity. Greek philosophers and Hebrew prophets carry us still further into the past.

I need say no more about the utility of history. Indispensability would be a better word. It is the great Open Sesame to what men have thought and planned and done. History is not just a necessary part of an education. Without it we would be lost.

The last reason that I am going to advance for the study of history as a part of a liberal education is that it ought to make a man humble. This is surely one of the great attributes of wisdom. I cannot deny that there have been arrogant and dogmatic historians but I do deny that arrogance and dogmatism are signs of wisdom, and I do contend that a study of history ought not to contribute to the development of these vices. Very much to the contrary, a study of history ought to take a man far from the region of omniscience. At every turn he ought to have it brought home to him, how uncertain is our knowledge, how fallible are our judgments, how changeable are our points of view. Except in things of minor importance finality is scarcely ever possible.

One of the most striking facts of history, and one that ought to check all pride and arrogance in the historian, is how few histories stand the test of time. Saluted in their own day as monuments of scholarship and "the last word on the subject", they drop out of sight with the years. Dust accumulates on the one-time classic, and when we open volumes that were great and famous in their day, they seem to us to have lost all interest and vitality. They are dated, and apart from the light that they throw on the age in which they were written they have passed out of the scheme of things. They seem to be interested in questions that no longer concern us, and, correct as their facts may be, the whole picture seems strangely out of focus. We need historical imagination to enter into the mind of the writer. No wonder that we drop the book with a slight touch of boredom. We feel that it is quite difficult enough to see around one corner without trying to see around two.

A history's continued existence may, in a few cases, be saved because it is itself an original source. All other sources of information have disappeared. Apart from this fortunate circumstance, the thing that best preserves an historian's work is art — literary skill. It is as a work of art that it keeps its place on our shelves. Without the stately flow of his prose, where would even Edward Gibbon be? Would Bury have spent so much time in re-editing him?

It is not just the inadequacy of our knowledge about the past. With that even the simplest man is acquainted. We know that accident and time and chance have all conspired to leave but the scantiest of records about the most important events. The muse of history has never shown the slightest concern for the historian. We see the past in the most uncertain of lights. Sometimes the landscape seems bathed in sunshine but more often it is hid in darkness and shadow, and the light flickers fitfully over the scene.

This has always been recognized as one of the difficulties of the historian. Thucydides was probably as conscious of it as Mr. Gooch or Mr. Trevelyan. The historian has always had to investigate and compare, to sift and to judge, to do his best to construct a plausible account out of imperfect details. There is nothing new in this.

What is new is the growing suspicion that perhaps we never actually see the past. What we see is not the past in its truth and in its entirety and in its complexity, but only a certain version of the past that at the present moment commends itself to us. Each age asks the past different questions and that is why each age wants to write its own histories. The questions asked and the answers given may have satisfied our ancestors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They do not satisfy us in the twentieth. Our chief interest is not to discover how men lived and thought in a previous age but how previous ages produced men who live and think as we do now. That is putting the problem a bit crudely. It is more subtle than that. We go to the past looking for light but in a very real sense the past is in darkness. We have to take our light with us. Our own shadows play strange tricks with us in the realm of the dead. We see things that the dead never saw and we pay scant heed to things that they thought of utmost importance.

There is justification in this. We are wise after the event. We know what movements were successful and were therefore significant; the movements that were still-born or that failed to develop, scarcely interest us at all. All this is introducing a certain bias into the story. It seems to give history significance and value but it is a significance and value in relation to the present rather than to the past. Times change and historians change with them.

If an historian is to do more than write a chronicle he is compelled to pick and choose. In telling his story he has to select and arrange and emphasize. No two men are likely to do it in quite the same way. With the best intentions in the world the historian is bound to take some bias with him. Do we think for one moment that it makes no difference whether the historian is a liberal or a conservative or a socialist or a communist — whether he is a Christian or a sceptic? Whether it is Michelet or Mommsen, Gibbon or Macaulay, their own present-world influences their picture of the past. None can escape it.

Examples there are without number. Can anything be more enlightening than the way French historians during the last century and a half have handled the events of the Great Revolution? The political winds of the present were forever changing the picture of the past. Restoration and Orleans Monarchy, Second Empire and Third Republic, all had their own ways of interpreting the actions of the men who ended the Old Regime.

With the rise of dictators in our own day we have seen new interest and new interpretations being put on the career of Napoleon III. Instead of seeing him as a belated arrival from an older time, we have come to look on him as a forerunner of an age that was yet to be. The light in which we view the career of Bismarck changes and changes again. The facts remain the same but the picture is different in 1900 and in 1951. Two world wars and the crash of empires alter the portrait of the Iron Chancellor.

We do not need new facts in order to get a new picture. Old facts can be seen in an entirely new light. What often takes place in history we can see illustrated on the stage. Nothing need be changed. All remains exactly as it was before. Not a chair or a table need be moved. All that needs to be done is to manipulate the lights. In a white light the scene appears quite different from what it does under a cold green or a warm pink.

From the same facts, different conclusions can be drawn. History, as Jarno says in Wilhelm Meister, is a sorry jade who will provide arguments for any cause. Lord Bryce tells a story that illustrates the point. In the Eastern crisis of the late seventies he met two of the most distinguished historians of the day. Each of them began by complaining that the lessons of history were so plain that there was not the slightest excuse for disregarding them. Unfortunately it turned out that one of them was a whole hearted supporter of Disraeli's policy, while the other was equally certain that Mr. Gladstone's policy was wise and right.

Probably I have said enough, possibly I have said too much. about the uncertainty of history. Some of you may think that I am discrediting the subject that it ought to be my object to honour. Such is not my intention. My purpose is entirely different. Divinity is not lessened because the worshippers see but through a glass darkly. The historian is not a humbler and a wiser man because he sees only in part and understands only in part. He is a humbler and a wiser man when he realizes that this is the only way that he can see or can understand. He watches the vast tide of human existence as it flows by, but in his ignorance and in his uncertainty he recognizes wisdom and knowledge. His subject is greater than himself but yet it is part of himself. He sees meaning but he does not see the whole meaning; he sees light but it is light surrounded by darkness. He is conscious of how much eludes him, but he is also conscious of how great is the vision that he is forever contemplating.

Here I close. For me there is no greater subject than history. How a man can study it and not be forced to become a philosopher, I cannot tell. Questions the most profound and the most searching are forever being asked. History is poetry and art. It deals with the greatest story known to man — the whole story of his existence from the beginning of time down to the present. History is knowledge. Only by history and through history can we know the world in which we live. It does all this and yet leaves a man profoundly conscious of his own littleness, of his own ignorance, of the play of forces that he cannot grasp, a sense of mystery and of tragedy that touches his heart but does not satisfy his understanding.