

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Transactions and Reports, Nebraska State
Historical Society

Nebraska State Historical Society

1885

The Place of History in Modern Education

G. E. Howard

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebhisttrans>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Howard, G. E., "The Place of History in Modern Education" (1885). *Transactions and Reports, Nebraska State Historical Society*. 64.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebhisttrans/64>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska State Historical Society at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Transactions and Reports, Nebraska State Historical Society by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

and decayed ; the seven cities of Cibola have vanished ; the cross of Coronado has mouldered into dust, and these rusted relics are all that remain of that march through the desert and the discovery of Nebraska.

NOTE—The student of Spanish conquests in America will, of course, understand that the suggestion that this armor belonged to a soldier of Coronado's expedition is merely fanciful. It is, however, by no means, an impossible surmise; though it must be admitted that defensive armor was used in America against the rude missiles of the natives, long after the use of gunpowder had banished it from European warfare.

Since the delivery of this lecture, an antique stirrup, of the exact shape and character of those used for centuries by Moorish horsemen, has been found near the Republican, at a spot about seven miles north of Riverton, in Franklin county. It was buried so deep in the ground as to preclude the idea that it had been covered by natural causes, and its presence there may afford a curious subject for conjecture.

It is worthy of note also, that the engineers of the new branch of the Union Pacific Railway, now building northward along one of the forks of the Loup, report numerous ancient mounds along their route, and many evidences of once populous cities. Specimens of the ancient pottery, with the shards of which the ground is thickly strewn, are almost identical with those still to be found at Pecos and other cities in New Mexico. This fact is peculiarly interesting, in view of one of the statements of the Turk, just before his execution, to the exasperated Spaniards, that the cities to which he was conducting them, "were still beyond."

THE PLACE OF HISTORY IN MODERN EDUCATION.

BY PROF. GEO. E. HOWARD, NEBRASKA STATE UNIVERSITY.

The following is an abstract of an address delivered by Prof. Howard at the opening of the winter term of the Nebraska University, at the time the Nebraska State Historical Society was in session, and by agreement before a joint session of the two organizations, to serve also as the annual address of the Historical Society :

History is the youngest of the studies to claim a place in higher education, and as a disciplinary study it is still regarded by many as on trial—on probation.

It is thought that it has, at most, no higher claim than as a culture study or means of general information. This opinion finds frequent

and varied expression. One says: It is not necessary to study history in college, since it may be mastered subsequently as a means of recreation or relaxation between the hours of business. Another says: History may be sufficiently taught as an adjunct of some other branch, as Latin or Greek. A third: History is not a science, and therefore not entitled to a large space in the academic course.

Now these statements are made in all sincerity by men of culture. May they not rest on a misapprehension of the character of modern history? May they not possibly be based on the conception of history as it was and not as it is understood by scholars?

In short, what is its place in modern education?

It seems desirable as a starting point of this discussion to make two preliminary statements: First, as to the condition of historic study outside the schools. Second, as to its condition within the schools.

If the familiar aphorism of Mr. Freeman, that "history is past politics, and politics present history," be accepted, there will be little difficulty in perceiving that the thought of this generation is pretty liberally engaged in the actual making of history.

On the other hand, equally patent is its astonishing productiveness in historic writings.

There is scarcely a topic of general or special interest which is not treated by a formidable catalogue of authors. The bare enumeration of authorities which must be consulted on such a topic as the history of the German mark or Old English local government, requires many closely printed pages. It is no exaggeration to say that the past fifty years have produced a more splendid array of historic talent than all the preceding generations combined.

Our precocious scientific genius is the mark of the nineteenth century, and the most striking thing connected with modern science is its historic tendency. It is full of suggestion that the word historic is frequently used by writers in other departments of thought to characterize the trend or form of their investigations, notably in the natural sciences, philology, and jurisprudence. In fact there is little practical difference between the terms comparative, inductive, and historic. Each is opposed to *a priori* or assumption, and each implies that the present must be viewed in the light of the past.

To trace the persistence in type, note the transformation in variety in animal or vegetable forms, or mark the phonetic corruption of a

word, differs little from observing the continuity in growth of an institution.

The phenomenal historic activity of our age, then, is the first statement.

What is the condition of historic study within the schools?

In Germany, history has long occupied an honorable position in the university as the peer of philology and science. And the recent utterances of Prof. Paulsen, of the university of Berlin, seem to indicate that a movement has begun pointing to a reconstruction of the gymnasial course through a liberal substitution of history and other modern studies for Latin and Greek.

In England, until recently, the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge have contributed little to the encouragement of this study. Few of the throng of illustrious scholars whose names are the glory of English historical literature have been called to professorial chairs. The same is true of the leading scientists. Hallam, Kemble, and Palgrave, like Huxley, Darwin, and Spencer, owed nothing to the encouragement of these schools.

But in England a new era has already dawned for history, shown by the presence of such scholars as Bryce and Stubbs at Oxford, and Seeley and Freeman at Cambridge; and by the new appreciation of the educational value of the study of English institutions, inspired largely by the publication under the wise patronage of the government, of those wonderful national records contained in the "Rolls Series" and the "Calendars of State Papers."

In our own country the study of history in the schools is in a most peculiar condition: neglected by the many and exalted by the few. In the majority of the common schools either no provision is made, or else the subjects chosen and the methods adopted are so unfit that little results save dislike for studies which should be as intensely fascinating as they are essential to the duties of citizenship.

Year after year is spent in ciphering through the dreary round of the rules of arithmetic, including the dark mysteries of "circulating decimals" and "alligation alternate," and not an hour is devoted to the history and organization of the state, county, or city in which the pupil lives.

The only wonder is that the youth passes the ordeal with enough judgment left to solve any practical problem of life without recourse to his customary machine, the "rule."

The condition of things in the college is in happy unison with that of the common school. Few of the several hundred institutions of nominal college rank are conscious apparently of the movement of the times. History still stands at the threshold asking in vain for worthy recognition.

If the study is not entirely neglected, at most select morsels are doled out by the professor of Latin or Greek, without regard to previous diet or the power to digest such strange viands. Occasionally some poor tutor, in addition to his usual double portion of work, is allowed, for a term or so, in order to swell the list of facilities in the annual announcement, to hear a class call off a catalogue of hard names usually denominated "General History."

Happy is the student who can now and then enjoy a lecture or course of lectures by some non-resident plebeian, who is suffered, like the old tribune of the plebs, to shout out the demands of the millions through the doors of the sacred edifice, instead of being invited to enter, put on the badge of office, and take a seat with the elders at the council board.

But recently several of the leading and more liberal universities have set on foot a movement which is destined to effect an entire revolution in the college curriculum, and bids fair to place historic science in the front rank of studies for which academic honors are given.

The leader in the new movement is the Johns Hopkins University at Baltimore; not so much from the variety of instruction offered, as on account of originality of organization, scientific method, the emphasis of American local institutions as the most fruitful field for academic work, and on account of her admirable system of co-operation, which already embraces the most enterprising scholars throughout the country. This latter system is already stimulating production to a remarkable degree. The monographic serial published through this medium is the most important contribution to the study of our local institutions which has yet appeared; especially as suggesting the direction which independent academic investigation may most readily take. In this university are three professors in the department, offering an aggregate of twenty-three hours instruction a week, besides the work of the seminary. One of the seven undergraduate courses, is the course in history. For the completion of this course the degree of Bachelor of Arts is given, as it is also given for that in Latin and Greek and the other courses.

[The speaker then gave at some length a detailed account of the "School of Political Science" in the university of Michigan; of the "Wharton School of Finance and Economy" in the university of Pennsylvania; noticed the significant fact that Cornell University has established a separate chair for American history, a precedent recently followed by the university of Pennsylvania; stated that Harvard was now giving the degree of Bachelor of Arts for work, which, under the elective system, may consist almost wholly of history; showed that history had already taken a prominent place in Yale College, the universities of Kansas, California, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Syracuse, and in Columbia and Iowa Colleges; he then proceeded:]

What is the evident interpretation of these facts? It is this: A number of the foremost institutions of the United States affirm that historic studies are worthy to form the substance of a liberal education which should be recognized by an academic degree; and that degree, in the two leading instances, is the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

They say that the subjects which more than any others are stirring the thoughts of men in this generation, should find a corresponding place in modern education.

Are these schools justified in this position? The remainder of this discussion will be an attempt to furnish the material for an answer by enquiring: First, What is history? Secondly, What are its advantages as a means of mental discipline?

WHAT IS HISTORY?

and, first, what is its theme, its subject?

Briefly stated the beginning and the end of history is man. Whatever bears the impress of his thought is its sphere. Whatever will enable the historian to get closer to the average common man of any age is precious to him.

Surely no more interesting nor useful study can be imagined than the intellectual history of our kind.

The naturalist does not scorn the pettiest detail in the structure of the most rudimentary forms of animal or vegetable life, even in remote geological ages, and his science justly finds an honored place in institutions of learning.

Shall not the habits, the customs, the institutions, the achievements

of man be equally respected? History is to the intellectual man what biology or physiology is to the physical.

It is the recognition of its proper subject, the right point of view, which has suddenly filled the study with human interest; has made it practical, and therefore immensely productive, even in material benefits; and which, by leading to the scrutiny of every part of the vast field of human activity, has greatly widened its boundaries.

Historians of the old or annalistic type were entirely too fond of fine society. They loved especially to frequent the palaces of princes and prelates, to prattle of pageants and progresses, of banquets and battles, of the virtues and vices of kings. Fortunate, indeed, if the arid waste of annals be occasionally enlivened by a glimpse of man in a Thucydides, a Gregory of Tours, a Philip de Comines, or a Pepys.

But the scholar is no longer nice in his tastes. He is more eager to visit a Saxon town moot than the Field of the Cloth of Gold. He is much more interested in the chances for justice in the old hundred court than in the corruption of Lord Chancellor Bacon. More partial to a peasant's daughter than to a countess. Would give more for an hour with a villein of Edward First's day than for a week in the saloons of the Grand Monarch. It is infinitely more valuable to him to know the wages of a ploughman or the prices of beef, barley, or pork, in a by-gone age, than to know that Elizabeth left three thousand dresses in her wardrobe, or that a gentleman of her day, to use the quaint words of Harris, "often put a thousand goats and a hundred oxen on his coat," or "carried a whole manor upon his back."

HISTORY A SCIENCE.

In the second place history is a science—a comparative science.

But I hasten to relieve you of the apprehension that I am about to inflict upon you a psychological thesis. For the present purpose it is perfectly indifferent whether Mr. Buckle's doctrines of general averages or of the determining influence of physical environment are true or not. I shall not attempt to prove that man is or is not a free moral agent, and hence, that he is independent or not of physical causes. Whether the career of intellectual man can be predetermined with the same certainty as can that of physical man, is an interesting question but need not be answered to establish the scientific character of history.

It is sufficient to say that human nature is steadfast, governed by persistent natural laws, to which, doubtless, the will as well as the other mental faculties renders due obedience. But even if this premise, which I think will not be disputed, were not true, yet, if the study of history, though not the relation of its facts, is subject to scientific method, still my use of the term science is justified, as in analogous cases it is justified, notably for linguistics and geology, each of which is still to some degree tentative, though the subject is capable of scientific method, and furnishes excellent mental discipline. And that the study of history is capable of scientific treatment and has an elaborate scientific apparatus, is well known, and their efficiency demonstrated by the experience of those leading schools already mentioned.

Indeed the methods and the apparatus of the historian are strikingly similar to those of the naturalist. The library is his laboratory; the institutions of his city or county are the analog of the geologist's local formations; the survival of a custom in a distorted and scarcely recognizable form, the analog of the fossil remains of a trilobite, each must be detached from its environment with care, properly classified, and labeled for the cabinet.

It was the clear recognition of history as a comparative science, which, a few years ago, gave such an impulse to investigation. It was a phase of the wonderful productivity produced by the advent of comparative philology—the perception of the fact, that the comparative or historic method is the vitalizing principle of all science. History is a very comprehensive science. It is important to note this in determining whether it furnishes material for a liberal education. History means more than it once did.

As already said, the recognition of man as its proper object suddenly enlarged its boundaries by ennobling, so to speak, whole groups of facts previously neglected, but since regarded as auxiliary sciences or special departments.

In the first place, under history, in the usual or restricted sense, are embraced two great divisions: narrative history and institutional history. The former includes the religious and political story of man in all countries, at all times, in all crises. The latter, itself amply sufficient for a special if not a liberal education, comprehends history of political constitutions, ancient and modern; comparative politics, ancient law, including the history of Roman law, comparative manners

and customs, comparative mythology, ecclesiastical institutions. Secondly, there is a congeries of sciences, scarcely to be distinguished from history, and often classed with it under the common head of political science; these are: political economy, finance, social science, administration, international law, political ethics, local government, constitutional law, etc.

There is also a second congeries of correlated studies whose practical results are indispensable to the historian. Ethnology and ethnography, geography, epigraphy, comparative philology, archæology, anthropology, the history of philosophy, literature, and the fine arts.

So important are these complementary branches that the historian must often depend almost wholly upon one or the other of them for a right understanding of an epoch or a movement.

For example, the age of the Antonines is unintelligible without the history of philosophy; the Renaissance, without that of art; the age of Chaucer or of Elizabeth, without that of literature; the age of Anne, without that of Grub street and the coffee-house.

But no one of these subjects is more important and so little appreciated as ethnology and ethnography, the classification and characteristics of races. A concrete example will illustrate: Doubtless the most important crisis for civilization was that Titanic duel of a century and a quarter between Rome and Carthage. But who can accurately estimate the value of the stake, or sympathize with the great leaders without perceiving that it was the clash of opposing civilizations, the impact of diverse races? On the one hand, Fabius and Scipio, best Roman examples of our Aryan stock: On the other, the great-souled Hamilcar and the chivalrous Hannibal, sons of the Tyrian city of Dido, and descendants of those old Phœnician Canaanites whom the children of Israel were commanded to drive from the Promised Land; that those Semitic worshipers of Moloch were the blood relatives of their deadly enemies, the followers of Jehovah; and that those two Carthaginian heroes were racial first cousins of those doughty old warriors, Gideon, David, and Judas Maccabeus.

What I wish to enforce with special emphasis is the institutional character of history, the growing tendency to treat all history, even narrative, from an institutional point of view. It is this fact which enables us to see clearly that it is a science in matter as well as in method.

An institution is an organic being instinct with life. It is as much a living thing as is a plant or an animal—nay, it is of a higher order. Its vitalizing principle is the mind of man itself, in response to whose desires it develops organs and performs functions. It is as much a part of man as is his body. Without institutions man, a social being, cannot exist. He does not consciously create them. They grow with his growth and decay with his decay. The organic and vital nature of institutions is embodied in the great modern doctrine of survival and continuity. Just as in the animal or vegetable world, persistence in type, perpetuity in genus and species is the rule; so with an institution, continuity is the rule in all essential features. But just as an animal organ which no longer has a function to perform, or is employed for a different function becomes rudimentary or transformed, so an institution may survive as a meaningless custom or become differentiated into a number of new and co-existent forms or varieties.

Institutional history thus takes its place as a natural science.

Before leaving this part of my subject I must point out two practical advantages of institutional history of great importance in estimating its educational value. The first is as a preparation for law and practical politics. This quality is expressly recognized in the annual announcement of the school of political science of Michigan university, and is formally set forth as the object of the endowment of the Wharton school of finance in the university of Pennsylvania.

Since the days of Bentham English and American jurisprudence has shown a healthy tendency to simplification. This tendency may be described as a gradual substitution of equitable for technical rules in every part of legal procedure by pruning off archaic and barbarous forms. This is a direct result of the study of comparative institutions. It is well known that the Norman lawyers employed the selfish craft of their profession to conceal the primitive and healthy kernel of Germanic legal custom in the factitious and cumbrous environment of forms and technicalities; but during the past few decades, guided by a new sense for the rational and organic nature of institutions, scholars have been unwinding this artificial covering and disclosing once more the original and healthy germ.

No higher nor more necessary service can be rendered by education than to offer the best facilities for the formation of broad scholarly views of the organic character of institutions on the part of future lawyers, legislators, and statesmen.

In this form of education rests our hope finally to surmount three of the greatest dangers which threaten our republic: crude legislation, bad economy, and the defeat of justice in the courts of law.

The second advantage is the opportunity for independent and original investigation. It is an advantage possessed over botany and other natural sciences, because comparatively little has yet been done in the local field of American history. Especially important is the fact that independent work may begin in the public school. The history and organization of the school district, town, or county in which the pupil lives is unwritten. The boy or girl can collect facts in regard to the city council or school board as easily as he can classify butterflies or flowers. Nay, he may begin still nearer home—with his father's family. Its history and organization are also unwritten. And let me say that this institution is too much slighted by educators.

How few are prepared to give an intelligent analysis of its organization? The system and mode of reckoning relationship, the simpler mutual property rights of parents and children, the nature of a will, why and when it should be made, what is an administrator, mutual moral obligations of the various members of the family, and the grounds on which they rest, is the family a political body? etc.

A few lessons devoted to this institution might prove a remedy for some very serious social evils arising in ignorance or heedlessness touching many of the fundamental duties of men and women.

HISTORY AS A MEANS OF MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

Passing now from the consideration of the aim and character of historic science, I invite your attention to the second inquiry: History as a means of mental discipline, and first in its relation to the study of language.

The first way in which history furnishes a discipline in language is in the study of historic etymology, or the history embodied in proper names. The terminology of institutional history is unique. Its class names are not artificial labels, manufactured from the stock of the dead languages, but natural products co-existent with the thing itself, and almost always containing an epitome of its history. The use made by writers of this source of history is very extensive. The first work published on the subject was Jacob Grimm's history of the German

language, but since its appearance a formidable literature has arisen devoted to the study of proper and local names. I will only mention William Arnold's great work on the "Settlements and Wanderings of the German Races," and Isaac Taylor's "Words and Places," the last of which every English student should read. As you are aware nearly all that is known of our Aryan ancestors is derived from the results of comparative philology. Witness the use made by Mommsen in the first chapters of his history of Rome of the etymology and meaning of words. Many of the gravest discussions of constitutional history turn on the derivation of a word. For example the word "king." If the views of one party be accepted, it is derived either from the cognate of a sanskrit root meaning father of a family, or from a cognate of the German *koennen*, to be able, to have power; hence the man of power, the able man, as Carlyle styles him.

If the views of another party be accepted, it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *cyn*, meaning gens, race, or clan, and the patronymic *ing* meaning son of, born of, hence child of the race. In other words, in the first explanation, we behold either a patriarch with power of life and death over his family, or an absolute monarch in embryo, divine prerogative, the justification of Charles I., and James II., and George III. In the second, we see a rudimentary constitutional king, the servant of his people, the justification of Cromwell and William of Orange and Washington.

Thus the intelligent teacher of history constantly calls attention to a feature of language almost entirely neglected in education save by the professional philologist—the organic living nature of words; the fact that each is a little world with an eventful history all its own.

But perhaps the most important discipline in respect to language, constantly required by the study of history, consists in the use of class names and general propositions.

No department of logic is more important than that which treats of genus and species in the use of terms. The child thinks in concrete details, the man in general forms; and no subject insists on this principle as an essential to comprehensive thought, more constantly than history. No task is more difficult than to lead the student to analyze his subject, to devise class-names for the genus, species, and variety of his argument. Institutional history is nothing if not analytic.

So important is this practical application of logic, that I would like to insist on the student's depositing a mental brace synopsis of each subject in the *tablinum* of his memory.

I am aware that this is trespassing on the benefits supposed to be peculiar to the study of language; but I am convinced that a science which is essentially analytic calls the attention more sharply to the importance of observing the connotation of words than an abstract subject with which no immediate practical use is necessarily connected.

DISCIPLINE OF THE REASON AND THE JUDGMENT.

In the second place what discipline has our science for the reason and the judgment?

I have termed history a science, but it is by no means an exact science. I am profoundly glad that it is not an exact science.

It is remarkable how seldom in real life we can avail ourselves of the forms of mathematical reasoning. In trying to forecast the future in actual business, do our utmost, we can seldom arrive at more than a moral certainty—a probability. In planting a crop, choosing a course of study, training a child, deciding on the right or wrong, the justice or injustice of an action, estimating the probable demand or supply of a commodity, we cannot use square and compass, nor avail ourselves of the propositions of Euclid.

We cannot be certain of our major premise. There are a thousand starting points, each of which may be the major premise. Would it not be fortunate for the student, if the college course should fortify his mind for the long and arduous struggle before it, which he can in no honorable way evade?

History has for its subject these very problems. The historian regards the experience of all generations as so many experiments performed for his instruction. No other science has such a number and such a variety of recorded experiments, performed under such absolutely perfect conditions.

History is pre-eminently the study which produces breadth of view and comprehensiveness of judgment. It seeks ever for cause and effect. It requires the intellect to gather up in one firm grasp a multitude of interlacing threads, tangled and twisted, and stretching over vast spaces to the event or phenomenon to be explained. It stimulates the desire

to grasp the utmost number of facts, in order to deepen and strengthen the resulting generalization.

In this process the exercise of what has been called the "historic sense," costs a supreme effort on the part of the reason. This may be defined as the recognition in respect to any act or thing of the principle of historic relativity. An act is great or ignoble, good or bad, according to the ethical standard of the age in question, and not according to our own notions of right or wrong. Indeed, an act which, if done by one of our own number, we should unhesitatingly condemn, may be worthy of praise, if committed by a man of the middle ages. In history, one has little use for the terms good or great, except relatively. The student of man must ever obey the maxim, "Put yourself in his place." He must try to strip off his present environment, his personal bias, his social, religious, or political prejudice, and by a sort of mental self-translation, rehabilitate himself in the new environment.

In studying the men of other ages and conditions of life, as Sir Henry Maine has so often enjoined, we must never commit the blunder of ascribing our emotions and sentiments to them.

DISCIPLINE IN MORALS.

Rightly studied, the history of man is a first-rate teacher of ethics—a thousand fold better than the ordinary treatise on moral philosophy.

What better training in principles of conduct can be imagined than familiarity with the lives and characters of great men? To follow a soul through all its vicissitudes of pain and pleasure, failure and triumph, always viewing it as a factor in the movement of the age, cannot fail to teach the nature of moral conduct.

What a supreme privilege to sympathize in the magnanimity, the unparalleled self-restraint, the sublime patience of Hamilcar; to scrutinize the insatiable ambition, the fatal self-conceit, the inchoate, noble instincts of Pompey; to weigh the vanity and modesty, the learning and superficiality, the strength and weakness of Cicero; to trace the devious windings and sinister motives of Sulla's precocious intellect; to compare the mingled licentiousness, frank magnanimity, and profound wisdom of Julius with the cunning and artificial virtue of Augustus; to admire the constancy of Washington; and to witness that

sublimest soul struggle of all—the mighty spirit of Cromwell, as with pain and prayer he bears the burden which human liberty had imposed upon him.

Thus the student acquires a sense, an instinct for comparative ethics. Dogmatic ethics may be well enough, but the study of relative or historic ethics is indispensable to the highest moral development.

HUMANISM AND TOLERATION.

There is a most interesting result of the constant habit of viewing all things in the light of historic relativity: the development of a sentiment of generous toleration for all opinions and institutions—what the men of the Renaissance called humanism.

Surely no one will say that this sentiment is not much needed in our seething modern life; and surely a science which makes this sentiment an essential to its successful study affords a vital element of liberal education in the best sense of the word.

A whole college course does not always accomplish so much!

The spirit of that true son of the Renaissance, Pico of Mirandola, is worthy of admiration. Filled with a passionate love of men, he strove to reconcile all their great thoughts. The creation of the world as recorded in Genesis, seemed to him consistent with that of the Timæus of Plato; and he would fain defend 900 paradoxes against all comers.

The student should emulate the example of Coleridge, who, it is said, always approached reverently anything which he proposed to investigate, charitably presuming that it had served some useful purpose, satisfied some human need, however useless it had now become.

The wise student will learn to discriminate between men and movements. Even for Torquemada, the Scourge of the Inquisition, he will have sympathy; for, in the self-abasement and agony of spirit which preceded even his severest judgments, he will recognize a conscience, performing faithfully, according to its light, the painful duty demanded of it.

In Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Order of Jesus, he will recognize an honest man, striving to use the great instrument of the Renaissance itself—education, to stem the current of new ideas, and sustain the tottering structure of the Mediæval church.

Before despising an institution, he will seek the “reason of its

being," as the French say. For example, the doctrine of divine right of kings: At first blush, the pretensions of a Charles II. or a James II. to divine attributes, seem preposterous, ludicrous. The idea of the arch libertine, Charles II.'s curing the scrofula by the laying on of hands, through the emission of virtue divine, is essentially absurd. One is apt to sympathize with William of Orange, when he petulantly dismissed the only unfortunate whom he ever "touched," with the wish that God might give him "better health and more sense."

Yet this superstition was once revered by the learned scholars and divines of Christendom, and oceans of blood were shed to sanctify it. Even Sam Johnson, in his childhood, drew upon the divine virtue of good Queen Anne to cure his distemper.

But the philosophic student will not despise even this dogma, but will seek for the causes of its origin. Among the many far-reaching generalizations of Mr. Bryce, in his admirable book on the Holy Roman Empire, is that of the psychological immaturity or helplessness of the Christians of the early middle ages. They were unable to grasp the conception of a spiritual God, to be approached only in spirit. Hence they resorted to concrete intermediate forms as a material support for faith. On the one hand arose the adoration of images and saints and the whole system of Mariolotry. On the other, the Pope, who was invested with the divine attributes formerly possessed by the Roman emperor, and before him, by the Aryan hero-kings. The Pope became a world-priest, and vicegerent of God on earth. You know how this attribute was abused—how the Pope grasped at worldly wealth and temporal power; how, at length, when men's patience was exhausted, the little monk of Wittenberg, as the good elector of Saxony saw in his dream, reached his pen out and out, and touched the triple crown of the Pope—and it fell.

But though the Protestant world had thus destroyed the divine prerogative of popes, they were scarcely less psychologically helpless than the men of the middle ages. Luther's doctrine of "justification by faith alone," was only half comprehended. They needed a new crutch for faith; they found it in the king, who as earthly head of the church was again clothed in divinity; and Sir John Filmer in his "Patriarchia" formulated the doctrine for Christendom. Again you remember how the new divine man abused his opportunity, to oppress

and rob his subjects; and how finally Cromwell arose, and like Luther, reached out his sword and touched the head of Charles Stuart—and it was the crack of doom for the divinity of kings. Thus even the dogma of divine prerogative is seen to have satisfied the need of aryan, mediæval, and modern man, even though that need originated in human infirmity.

I might expand further on the discipline furnished by history for the imagination, or point out its advantages as a means of general culture, but I will not protract the discussion.

Allow me simply to gather into one view the substance of this argument:

History deals with intellectual man. It is a comparative science and possesses a scientific method and apparatus. It is comprehensive, largely institutional, treats of organic life, and thus takes rank as a natural science.

Institutional history has two practical advantages: As a preparation for law and politics, and as affording the readiest opportunity for independent investigation, and this investigation may begin in the common school.

As a means of mental discipline, it affords a training in language in two ways: in the history of words, thus emphasizing their living character, and in the use of generalization and class-terms, logic.

It disciplines the reason in those questions which will occupy it during life. It gives breadth of view, teaches practical and comparative ethics, and, best of all, inculcates principles of humanism and generous toleration.

Whether this is sufficient to justify the exalted rank which history is taking in the order of studies, time will render a verdict.

Fellow Students: In days of old Clio, the muse of history dwelt upon Olympus and communed only with gods and heroes. We are more favored than the Greeks. The muse has come down from the mountain and now dwells among men. Let us greet her, and she will reveal those living fountains of knowledge, which will give us power as useful citizens of this great commonwealth.

ERRATUM.

Page 204, lines 21 and 22 should read: "as Bryce, Stubbs, or Freeman at Oxford, and Seeley at Cambridge," etc.