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Presidential Address

W. K. Ferguson

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS *

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As one of my predecessors in this distinguished office remarked on a similar occasion, presidential addresses generally fall into one of two categories. Most commonly they are discussions of some subject in the speaker's special field of interest. More rarely they are essays on the general subject of history and historical writing. Professor Creighton characterized the former as the safe way. The latter is obviously more hazardous. On this occasion I have decided to live dangerously and to deliver myself of a few random *obiter dicta* concerning some of the problems of historiography. I have been tempted to adopt this rash course by the tradition that the presidential address is not open to discussion. It is the one occasion on which a scholar may address his peers without fear of immediate and overt question or contradiction. Nevertheless, I embark upon this undertaking with a good deal of trepidation. I fear that much of what I will have to say will be merely laboring the obvious. With the permission of my contemporaries, then, I would like to direct my remarks principally to the younger members of the profession, who may not yet have had time to think as consciously about the problems of their craft as they will later do.

What do I mean by the problems of historiography? This is a question that my wife frequently asks and does not stay for an answer. There are, in fact, a great many, and I can touch on only a few to-day, principally those problems of a practical sort which the working historian will have to face sooner or later and to solve to the best of his ability.

I intend to say very little about the problems of research. No one will question its fundamental importance, but after a hundred and fifty years of increasing emphasis upon research I think we can take it for granted. The first point I want to make is that without communication research is sterile. Now it is true that there is no more fascinating game in the world than historical research; but it is not an end in itself. The historian cannot fulfil his function in society or justify the princely salary paid to him unless he communicates his knowledge. If he fails to do this, his research is, to use Bolingbroke's phrase, "at best but a specious and ingenious form of idleness". I use the term communication, despite its deplorable aura of jargon, because I do not wish to imply that the historian can fulfil his function only by publication. The academic historian is fortunate in having a captive audience which he

* *Some Problems of Historiography*, read before the Canadian Historical Association, University of Montreal, Montreal, Quebec, June 8, 1961.

can reach directly, and this is undoubtedly his most important audience — one that he can influence in its formative years. But there is a still larger audience, composed, we fondly hope, in part of those former students in whom we have awakened an interest in history, which can be reached only through the printed word. Historical research can, in fact, fulfil its social function to the fullest extent only when it is translated into literature.

The concept of history as literature is one that seems unfortunately to have faded somewhat in the last century or so. Until the arrival upon the scene of the professional academic historian the writers of history were primarily men of letters. Their books were directed toward the general reading public and they found their place, with the pages, it is true, sometimes uncut, on the shelves of gentlemen's libraries. Gibbon could write happily in his *Autobiography* "My book was on every table, and almost on every toilet". I am sure that few historians to-day could claim as much, nor can many compete with Gibbon's style. One reason for the decline in the literary quality of much historical writing may be that historians began to write for other historians, and scholars have a notoriously high boring point. Another reason may be that in many places history has been evicted from its time-honored place among the *studia humanitatis* and has been classified as a social science. As such it has acquired an esoteric terminology comprehensible only to the initiated members of the guild. In the strictly medieval sense of the word it has become a mystery. It might be well at this point to recall the humanist ideal of learning as expressed by Leonardo Bruni in his essay *De studiis et litteris.*

> To enable us to make effectual use of what we know [Bruni wrote in the opening years of the Quattrocento] we must add to our knowledge the power of expression. These two sides of learning, indeed, should not be separated: they afford mutual aid and distinction. Proficiency in literary form, not accompanied by broad acquaintance with facts and truths, is a barren attainment; whilst information, however vast, which lacks all grace of expression, would seem to be put under a bushel or partly thrown away. Indeed, one may fairly ask what advantage it is to possess profound and varied learning if one cannot convey it in language worthy of the subject.

May I repeat that if history is to fulfil its social function fully it must recover its status as literature. How then is this to be accomplished? I can suggest no easy formula. Writers, like teachers, are born, not made. Young scholars can, however, be encouraged to develop such native literary talent as they possess, and can be taught that prose rhythm is as necessary to historical writing as poetic rhythm is to poetry. They can be disabused of the idea that literary form is somehow suspect, that a readable history is probably unscholarly. It might even, God save the mark, be popular! Now, few people acquire a fine literary style without wide reading and much practice. I once heard a distinguished

professor of history say that he would advise any aspiring student of history to concentrate during his undergraduate days on literature and languages: the requisite training in history could safely be left to graduate school. This is perhaps an over-statement, but it suggests an emphasis which is, I think, increasingly necessary in these days when audio-visual aids are becoming accepted as substitutes for the written word. We are, I fear, in danger of breeding a race of illiterate and inarticulate historians. Our graduate schools commonly require a knowledge of two foreign languages as pre-requisites for the Ph.D. degree, and very properly so. There are times, however, when I feel that I would be willing to settle for a knowledge of English.

It is not enough, however, to say that written history should possess a literary quality. There are all sorts of literary styles and not all of them are appropriate to history. Let us consider for a moment the qualities most necessary to historical writing, and, while doing so, let us maintain a firm grip on the obvious.

The subject matter of history calls primarily for two forms of prose: narrative and exposition. We may consider narrative first, for history began as story. Historical narrative requires of the writer something of the novelist's gifts: imagination, the ability to evoke an atmosphere and to recreate the actions of men vividly and concretely. This does not mean that the historian is free to mingle fact and fiction. He is bound by his professional honor and the exigencies of his craft to recount events, so far as possible, exactly as they occurred. But the story he tells is the story of living men, and he will approach no closer to the truth by draining his story of all semblance of life. Unfortunately our sources seldom tell us all that we would like to know. Imagination must fill in the *lacunae* before the story comes to life in the historian's own mind, which it must do before he can infuse life into his narrative. I have always thought the story of Henry IV standing bare-foot in the snow before the castle of Canossa one of the most dramatic in medieval history, but it took the question of a girl student to make me vividly aware that this was something happening to real people. She asked, not too naively, what the Countess Mathilda said to the emperor when they met at dinner that night. She could scarcely use the weather as an opening gambit of conversation, and she would have to decide whether, as a solicitous hostess, she should enquire concerning her guest's health and possible chilblains or whether it would be more tactful to ignore the whole incident. Not an important point, perhaps, and one on which the monastic chronicler is regrettably silent, but for me at least the unanswerable question lent a new immediacy to a more than twice-told tale. Finally, imagination is necessary if the historian is to become emotionally involved with his characters, as I think he should be. This, I know, is contrary to the prevalent notion that the scientific historian should maintain an attitude of strict objectivity, and, of course, he should never allow his

involvement to lead him into distorting the story. But, if he does not become in some degree involved, he cannot care what happens to his characters, and, if he does not care, it is certain that nobody else will.

Narrative, however, is but one form of historical writing and in recent years it has become a decreasingly important one, since we have added to political and military history the newer disciplines of economic, social, constitutional, cultural, intellectual and religious history and many others. Here the primary form of expression is expository. Imagination is necessary here, too, but for exposition the most necessary quality is that it should be clear. It has often occurred to me irreverently that the virtues an historian most needs are faith, hope and clarity. Without the first two he will never get anything written, and without the last he will not get anything read. Now, clarity is not something easy to attain. In my experience it can be approximated only as the result of much writing and rewriting. Carl Becker used to say that if the author didn't sweat, the reader had to. Such a division of labor may make mass production possible, but it is ruinous to craftmanship. We are all too familiar with the massive works which reviewers characterize as mines of information, not always noting that the reader will have to do his own mining. Verbal clarity, of course, is impossible without clarity of thought. When I get tangled in an inextricable web of involved syntax, I find it useful to stop and ask myself what *am* I trying to say? Sometimes it works. Neither clarity of thought nor of expression, however, will avail unless your work as a whole, whether it is a lecture series or a book, is clearly organized. Without a solidly constructed scheme of organization, the main outlines of which are clearly discernible, the best you can hope for is, as Faguet said of Voltaire's thought, "un chaos d'idées claires".

This brings me to the second, and closely related, category of historiographical problems: that of organization. Now, organization is not only essential, as I have suggested, to clarity of presentation and hence to effective communication; it is fundamental to the very nature of historical science. History is a science in so far, and I think only in so far, as it is an organized body of knowledge. Abstractly considered, history may be said to include everything that has happened to mankind, every thought, every action of every individual man since "in this world's unpleasing youth our Godlike race began". But, in this sense, history simply cannot be known, much less communicated. Of all the thoughts and actions of men only a fragmentary record survives. The basic problem of historical epistemology, however, is not that we have too little data, but that we have too much to grasp unless the available facts are selected and organized in some comprehensible pattern. Only when this has been done can history be qualified as a science, — something that can be known. This becomes apparent as soon as we move away from the strictest form of detailed narrative and begin to think about history. We cannot consider every individual fact or event as an isolated unit. We

are forced to generalize to a greater or lesser degree if any statement we make is to have meaning beyond the mere reporting of the individual fact or event. Generalization, then, is the first step in the organization of our historical knowledge, and an indispensable tool for the communication of that knowledge to others. Only when we have taken this step can we draw inferences from our data which will help us to explain the factors which have conditioned the course of historical development.

There are, of course, certain hazards which accompany the process of generalization. We will probably find that the accuracy of our statement varies in inverse ratio to its significance and general usefulness. This is something that young scholars find disturbing, but it is a risk that I think we must take. We may discover, for example, that in a given English manor in the year 1200 seventy-five per cent of the tenants were serfs. In this case we have the evidence of the manor roll and can be fairly sure of the accuracy of our statement, but the inferences we can draw from it are limited. After further research we may conclude that in that year the majority of the tenants on English manors were serfs. This is a more significant statement, but due to inadequate data it cannot be as precise. Nevertheless, in our thinking about English society in 1200 this generalization serves its purpose by organizing our knowledge and enabling us to communicate it. The significance of such a generalization, however, depends not only upon its lateral or geographical extension, but also upon its vertical or chronological scope. For what area of time is it valid? There was a previous time when it was not yet true and a later time when it had ceased to be true. Thus, if our generalization is to be useful it must be limited by both place and time, to, let us say, England in the High Middle Ages. In short, if we are to discuss medieval serfdom, we must have some periodic concept that will indicate briefly the time for which our generalization is valid.

But, if we grant the need for a term denoting a period of time for discussion of the kind of fact I have just mentioned, do we have the same need when dealing with a unique event like, for example, the Battle of Waterloo? I think we do, once we try to assess its historical significance. Ideally, of course, what happened to every single individual in that battle was an historical event. When I was young, someone told me that on the field of Waterloo there is a tombstone on which is to be found the following inscription:

> Here lie the bones of Alexander McPherson
> Who was a most extraordinary person
> He stood two yards high in his stocking feet
> And kept his accoutrements clean and neat
> He was slew
> At Waterloo.

I have not verified this, and with the years my faith in it has faded. If, however, the event thus recorded did indeed take place, it was a personal

tragedy, but it can hardly be regarded as historically significant. Even the battle itself, dramatic though it was and vitally important to those who fought and died in it, has for us little historical significance if shorn of its context of cause and effect. And when we begin to think about, or to describe, the varied factors which culminated in that day of battle and its far reaching results for France, for England or for all Western Europe, we cannot deal with these day by day or even year by year. We need some periodic devices like, perhaps, the Napoleonic Era and the Age of Metternich.

I may have seemed to labor this point unduly, but the problem presented by periodization as an instrument for the organization and communication of historical knowledge seems to me sufficiently important to merit some further consideration. It is a problem beset by many difficulties, for the point at which our generalizations become doubtful is nearly always the point of time. In most areas of historical activity conditions change gradually, and it is one of our most difficult problems to decide for what period of time any given generalization is sufficiently valid to serve the purpose of our science. Nevertheless, we cannot do without periodic devices of some sort. Analogies drawn from the natural sciences are generally misleading when applied to history, but it seems to me that chronological periods serve the historian in much the same fashion as genus and species serve the biologist. They enable him to organize his knowledge and hence to think about it, to interpret it and to communicate it.

There are historians who have objected to any form of periodization on the ground that it imposes arbitrary divisions upon the unbroken stream of history, and, in fact, no form of periodization should ever be taken as marking a break in the continuity of historical development. Yet the stream of history *does* at times reach a turning point at which it seems to veer off in a new direction, and here and there it *is* broken by rapids which accelerate its tempo, and it will help our understanding to mark these places. Or, to use another analogy dear to historians, history is a seamless web woven on the loom of time; but I submit that it must be cut into manageable lengths if it is to be handled conveniently and conveyed to the consumer.

A second and somewhat more serious objection to periodization is that the terms commonly applied to historical periods are so frequently loaded, and that they indicate a fundamental bias. Such terms as the Dark Ages, the Age of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Romantic Era, the Age of Nationalism, not to mention the Renaissance, suggest a point of view which limits their applicability and may, indeed, distort the interpretation of the age. They are, however, hallowed by custom and rich in accumulated connotations. They have, themselves, a history, and there seems little reason to substitute for them less familiar guide-

posts. We may delude ourselves by the hope that we can find less prejudiced and more chronologically exact periods in the reigns of outstanding monarchs or in such purely chronological terms as decades or centuries. If, however, these terms correspond in fact to a phase of historical development sufficiently distinctive to make them useful as periodic devices, they will acquire overtones and connotations which rob them of their apparently innocuous character. Such terms, for example, as the Elizabethan Age, the Age of Louis Quatorze or the Victorian Age, the Thirteenth Century, the Eighteenth Century or the Quattrocento have become concepts as loaded as the more apparently biased terms I have already mentioned. Certain decades have also acquired this conceptual character. For those of us who lived through those hectic years, the term "the Twenties" carries as distinct a connotation as though we called it the Aspirin Age. Even certain years have acquired the character of concepts or symbols. For Americans, if not for Canadians, 1776 is as potent a symbol as 1066 and all that, something that awakens in almost every mind the memory of a great moment in history. When I first went to New York the memory of the late Mayor Hylan was still green, and people still recalled the occasion on which he delivered a Fourth of July address. Hizzonor was doing very nicely, all things considered, with close attention to his manuscript, until he reached his peroration: "What this country needs is more of the spirit of — One Seven Seven Six."

Now, I am not arguing that there is anything deplorable about the fact that these various periodic terms have acquired through use an aura of qualifying connotation. On the contrary, it is only when they have acquired this aura that they become useful as a kind of shorthand symbol, compressing into a word or a phrase what it would take us pages to explain. I can only suggest that when we use these terms we think about them instead of merely taking them for granted, that we use them carefully and with due consideration for their applicability to the historical facts, and that, when necessary, we warn the reader to be on his guard against accepting them at their face value. This is particularly necessary in works of synthesis, where we are dealing with the whole civilization of an age. For a periodic term that may be irreproachable in the history of art or religion or economics may warp the picture of the whole. Moreover, the broader our canvas the more danger there is that our periods will overlap or become fuzzy at the edges. This is unfortunate, but it is unavoidable.

The foregoing observations suggest another historiographical problem, that of interpretation and synthesis. Like other problems it is not an easy one to solve, and I think it has been somewhat neglected by professional historians in the past two or three generations. Let me repeat that I do not depreciate original research or its immediate products in the form of editions of sources, monographs or articles in learned journals. These are the essential materials with which the historian works, but

they are not the end product of his craft. In any case, the audience for works of detailed research, or monographs dealing with a restricted field, is almost inevitably limited to the membership of the historical profession. If historians are to fulfil their social function, they must put together the materials made available by research into some larger synthesis, and interpret the facts so as to give them meaning for the interested but untrained reader, as well as for that perhaps only potentially interested audience composed of our helpless students. Not that we should think of synthesis and interpretation as a kind of popularization fit only for consumption by the uninitiated. Even professional historians may find an interpretive synthesis of inestimable value, and that not only because as specialists they cannot be equally conversant with all fields. Such a work may contain no single fact that is unknown to them, but they may see the facts in a new light as the result of some scholar's thoughtful consideration of the known data. We are too accustomed to thinking that a learned article or monograph to be respectable must present original research. It might be more valuable if it presented original thought. It is a hopeful sign that the editor of the *American Historical Review* has recently issued appeals for more interpretive articles, and I understand that other editors would welcome articles of that kind, but find them in short supply.

I fear that our system of graduate study must bear some of the blame for this state of affairs. Certainly it does little to encourage either interpretation or synthesis. Perhaps this is unavoidable, since it is essential that the apprentice scholar should be given basic training in the techniques of research, and there is time for little else. It may be assumed that independent thought will come later, when the maturing scholar no longer feels an examining committee breathing down the back of his neck. Unfortunately, the doctoral dissertation frequently sets a pattern which the scholar will follow for the rest of his life, devoting such energies as he can spare from his academic duties to learning more and more about less and less. For many graduate students, too, in this age when students marry young and acquire the title of *pater* before that of doctor, the effort to complete a dissertation may be a traumatic experience from which they will never recover, and which will end their careers as productive scholars then and there. The attitude which this uphill struggle may breed in a young scholar's family was brought home to me by a friend whose six year old son was overheard in spirited altercation with the small daughter of a neighboring instructor. As the young lady stalked off in high dudgeon she fired one last Parthian shot: "You — you Ph.D., you!". I have no suggestion to make for the amelioration of this regrettable situation. I am merely taking this opportunity to express a growing alarm at the length of time it seems to take the average student to-day to overcome the hurdle of the doctorate, at the strain it seems to impose

on both the candidate and his long-suffering family, and at the irreparable damage it may do to his future career as a productive scholar.

Synthesis in the broadest sense has also been discouraged by the specialization which is the unavoidable corollary of our greatly expanded conception of what is included in history, as well as of the vast accumulation of material that has resulted from a century and a half of research. The problem was simpler when history was simply past politics. To-day the historian is more or less forced to limit the range of his research and writing, not only to a given period, but also very largely to one branch of history — political, economic, cultural or what not. Even within these relatively restricted areas, however, works of interpretation and synthesis are not only possible but indispensable. We are all aware of how much we owe to the men who have attempted this task in our own fields, and the large sale of works of this kind in paper-back editions suggests that they are capable of reaching a wide reading public. Interpretation and synthesis, as I have suggested, are not as a rule for graduate students, who are forced by circumstance to limit their dissertations to clearly defined and manageable subjects. I think, however, that we should encourage them more than we commonly do to look forward to the time when they will be qualified to write more thoughtful and interpretive history on a larger scale, and to feel that to do so is the rewarding climax of a scholar's career, the last of life for which the first was made. We should, I think, persuade them that there is nothing essentially unscholarly about works of synthesis, dependent though they must be on secondary sources. Above all, we should disabuse them of the stultifying conviction that it is the scholar's ultimate goal to leave behind him footnotes on the sands of time.

At this point may I repeat that the academic historian communicates his knowledge and understanding of history not only in writing, but more constantly in lectures to students, and it is in the class-room that he has a golden opportunity to develop a well-organized, interpretive synthesis of a considerable area of history. The exigencies of the curriculum will, indeed, force him to extend his study far beyond the area of his specialized research and his most intensive scholarly interest. This is fortunate, for it furnishes him with an incentive not only to expand his knowledge, but to organize and interpret it; and I venture to suggest that the amount of history the students carry away with them as a permanent acquisition will be measured by the degree to which he has achieved the objective of presenting an interpretive synthesis and not merely a series of lectures. Meanwhile, his own understanding and interpretation of his special field will be immeasurably enriched by being placed in the context of a larger synthesis. Without such a context, indeed, he may lose perspective and his picture of his own special field may slip dangerously out of focus. At the same time, a lecture course may serve the purpose of building up

a thoughtful synthesis which, when fully matured, may be presented to a wider audience in published form.

Interpretation and synthesis are always, of course, hazardous, and to present them to a more critical audience than that of your students requires some courage. Those of you who attempt synthesis will always be stumbling around in someone else's china shop. You will be forced to deal in a paragraph with a subject on which some other scholar has spent a lifetime of study. It is almost inevitable that the learned reviewer, who will assess your work, will be more intimately acquainted with some aspect of the subject than you are and he may, after praising it with faint damns, conclude his review with some such statement as: "It is unfortunate that the author was apparently unaware of the illuminating article by Professor Slawkenbergius in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*". Finally, if your synthesis is more than a colorless compilation, if you have ventured to interpret the facts, you may be certain that your interpretation will not be universally accepted. If your work is of sufficient importance it will call forth articles and monographs criticizing it and attacking its thesis in whole or in part. It may even inspire scholars to develop a contrary thesis that might not otherwise have occurred to them. But it is by this dialectic of assertion and rebuttal, of interpretation and reinterpretation, that our understanding of history is broadened and deepened. For a hundred years Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, to take a famous example, has occupied a central place in the historical writing devoted to that period, not only because it was itself a masterly synthesis, but equally because it has stimulated innumerable scholars to explore areas that he had neglected or to interpret the civilization of the age from different points of view, thereby adding immeasurably to our knowledge and understanding. More recently Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* has served the dialectical process of historical thought in a similar way, as have also such seminal works as, for example, Henri Pirenne's *Medieval Cities* or Turner's essay on the influence of the American frontier. The significance of such works may be measured not only by the number of scholars who have accepted their interpretation and have used it as the basis for further work, but also by the number of those who have found it in some way lacking and have been inspired to work along other lines. If this is the fate of the masters, you should not be discouraged if your interpretation is not greeted with universal acclaim. It should be enough if it presents a mark that other scholars will feel it worth while to shoot at.

I am not suggesting, of course, that all historians who avoid interpretive synthesis do so from lack of courage. Many are fully occupied with more limited but necessary tasks, laying the groundwork of basic research from which a synthesis may be constructed. Some, too, I think tend to shy away from interpretation, because it seems to involve a

dangerously subjective element. Enamoured of the scientific ideal, they would like to think of themselves as high fidelity transmitters of historical truth, free from all subjective distortion. This must be a comforting illusion. I have always envied Fustel de Coulanges, who could say when his students applauded him, "Do not applaud me, gentlemen. It is not I who speak, but history that speaks through me". Nevertheless, I do not see how some subjective colouring of the facts can be avoided when once we begin to think about history. If there is one thing that is certain, it is that the truth will not put itself together, and the putting together is a creative act, which, like all creative acts, is conditioned by the mind of the creator. Scientific objectivity is a laudable ideal, but let us not use it as a pretext for the avoidance of thought.

In any case, even the most conscientiously objective historian cannot in fact avoid some element of interpretation when he attempts to do more than report the findings of detailed research. The mere process of selecting certain facts or events out of the mass of material available involves interpretation, since it implies the existence in the author's mind of some standard of values, some conception of what is significant, and the criteria by which significance is judged varies from generation to generation, from group to group. It is for this reason, among others, that history must be continually rewritten. Even the best histories become obsolete in time, not merely because later research has brought new facts to light, but because they no longer tell us what we want to know about the past, or do not tell it with the emphasis and proportion, the attribution of cause and effect, which to us seems reasonable. Since, then, we cannot avoid interpreting the facts, it behoves us to be perpetually conscious that we are doing so, and thus to avoid the perils that accompany a complaisant assurance that the picture of the past that we have created is the only possible one. We should not, in short, be afraid to interpret, but we should not take our interpretation for granted.

Students, I find, are frequently disturbed by the suggestion that in the science of history absolute and demonstrable truth is unobtainable, except in relatively small and unimportant instances. This thought also bothered the tidy and dogmatic mind of Dr. Johnson. "We must consider", he said, "how very little history there is; I mean real authentic history. That certain kings reigned, and certain battles were fought, we can depend upon as true; but all the colouring, all the philosophy of history is conjecture". Dr. Johnson obviously thought that he had thus disposed of history. I cannot agree. The good doctor would have been closer to the truth if for "conjecture" he had substituted "inference"; and inference is a valid form of scientific thought. It is the peculiarity of the science of history, however, that the validity of our inferences is dependent upon our knowledge of many things apparently irrelevant to our discipline, and upon the depth and breadth of our experience, whether personal or vicarious, of human emotions and all the infinite variability

of human nature; for the materials with which the historian works are not merely the acts of men, but the thoughts, emotions and subconscious drives which motivate these acts. Such are the limitations of the human mind and personality that we can never hope to bring to the solution of our historical problems the perfect knowledge and experience that would give our inferences the eternal validity of a Euclidian theorem. What we can hope for is at best proximate truth, but it is not mere "conjecture".

We may freely admit, then, that history is not an exact science, and that it can never hope to achieve the kind of knowledge claimed by the natural sciences. But I submit that it is for that reason in no way inferior to what are popularly regarded as more scientific disciplines. The sciences dealing with man need not apologize because the materials with which they work are frequently of a sort that cannot be measured exactly or verified by experiment. The preeminent importance of their subject matter guarantees them pride of place. I have tried to think of some other way of saying that the proper study of mankind is man, and have given up the struggle. Let it stand. It is trite, but still true. Nor is history in any way a less arduous discipline than the exact sciences, nor one demanding less of its practitioners. On the contrary, it demands not only those intellectual qualities which are required by the natural sciences — rigorous method, conscientious attention to detail, a wide range of factual knowledge, a capacity for logical thought and a spark of creative imagination — but in addition to these, certain qualities that the natural scientist may conceivably lack without the lack vitiating the results of his work. An ichtyologist may fulfil the demands of his science without knowing what it feels like to be a fish. An historian cannot be a good historian without knowing how men feel under a great variety of circumstances. He must bring to his task a capacity for empathy, for entering into the minds and emotions of men, and he must also have the experience that will lend validity to his imaginative reconstruction of other men's thoughts and feelings. He must never weary in his search for knowledge, but what he seeks is not merely knowledge. It is something no less important because less exact, which Dilthey has called understanding, *Verstehen,* and which the humanists called wisdom, *sapientia.* Above all, like any man whose profession requires him to deal with men and to assess human motives, the historian must be a man of sound judgement. Finally, may I repeat in conclusion that to fulfil his function the historian must be able to organize and communicate his knowledge, his understanding of the past and such wisdom as his thoughtful consideration of history has brought him. History, as I have said, is a science by virtue of being an organized body of knowledge, but it is a science that can achieve its purpose only with the aid of literary art.