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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

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OF THE

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Your Excellency, Members of the Reception Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply grateful to you all for the honour you have done me by asking me to preside over this, the Fifth Session of the Indian History Congress, under the auspices of the Osmania University and of its noble Patron, His Exalted Highness, Sultan-i-Ulum, the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar.

I am conscious that I am unequal to the task assigned to me, and the small amount of work I have done in a limited field of Indian History cannot constitute in itself any valid claim to preside over a distinguished body of scholars and research workers of varied experience. I feel that my choice to this chair has proceeded from a conviction of the fundamental equality of all workers in the democracy of scholarship. I am sustained in the discharge of the onerous burden laid upon me by the consciousness that I shall most readily receive your indulgence and kind support in the performance of my duties.

The very first idea that strikes me and, indeed, should be uppermost in the mind of every student of the history of our land, is how best to harmonise the energies of all workers and their output of historical material of every kind so as to evolve some order from the prevailing disarray, on account of which the growing mass of scholarship finds it difficult to develop into definite and fruitful shape. The materials of study have become extensive and are growing in volume and variety with every passing decade-day, every year, with such giant strides that the best hope and prospect of securing a real advance in the study lies in its being left to be synthesised by a syndicate of scholars acting on the principle of a harmonious division of labour in exploring the original sources of information relating to every topic and every period.

Great indeed has been the progress of our knowledge of Indian History since the day when Sir William Jones lighted in 1793 upon the sheet-anchor of Indian Chronology, and since James Prinsep ushered in a new epoch of invigorated studies by his decipherment of the forgotten alphabets of ancient Indian inscriptions. Certainly, the vista of our History has been receding more and more into what may be regarded as pre-history which was widened on an unparalleled scale by the epoch-making discovery of the Indus Valley Civiliza-

tion. The most pressing need of to-day is a correct, impartial and just interpretation of the material which has thus accumulated and many parts of which still require re-interpretation or even new interpretation, a task that urgently calls upon the best minds of the land to save history "from being tied to the chariot-wheels of perverted sectionalism and to remove the miasma of suspicion, insinuation and downright untruth that have been growing up in the land." This disease of insidious growth has been apparent to observers for some time. Against it the teacher, the researcher, the general scholar and, above all, the writer of text-books, have to most carefully guard themselves. History is not propaganda, nor is it rude and vulgar publicity. That it runs the serious risk of being made to subserve propaganda purposes is plain, particularly to those who are conversant with the conscious, but highly condemnable, attitude of writers who deliberately try to hold up to ridicule great and honoured personages, whether Hindu or Muslim, Indian or European. The exploitation of historical resources should always be conducted with a critical mind and with judgement, and the building of conclusions should be made on the most thorough and unprejudiced bases possible. Pictures of the past occasionally lend themselves to the possibility of getting refined by the charm of guessing ancient motives from the records of ancient deeds. But to a much larger proportion they come out distorted from the true and proper perspective by a projection consciously, or even unconsciously, made of more modern and even contemporary ideas at work in the mind of the writer. This is a defect to which writers on the history of ancient epochs are prone.

Another equally potent and insidious danger is that which has been described by G. M. Trevelyan as a sort of reaction as much marking the method of historical as of political progress. Conclusions which have been accepted for a great length of time and have consequently become stereo-typed, may in some cases be found to be based upon insufficient data; and such conclusions to which faddists become, in their manner, indissolubly wedded, grow to be formidable obstacles in the way of even an initial examination of new theories that may go against them. This danger is particularly marked in those aspects of Indian historical studies that are associated with questions of race and culture-contacts and an examination of the social order and changes affecting them. They also bring into delicate and complex reflection the principles of nationality and patriotism. Again, the difficulty of interpretation of the lines of true historical development in these fields is rendered all the greater by an ideal that some historians have in view, namely, the reflection of the spirit of the period of study taken up in the light of a conception of truth, which concerns more the spirit than the letter of the recorded word. It may be pointed out that several Indian writers, particularly those working on the period of British rule, have expressed a disproportionately stressed admiration for English political and administrative ideals, while the European historian of the same epoch is in danger of falling into

a tilted national or racial bias that must necessarily warp the formation of balanced conclusions. This danger of impaired judgement and deficiency of a balanced vision operated in the minds of a large number of the Hindu historians of the age of Muslim domination, as well as in those of their Muslim counterparts. It is these that have made many otherwise able pieces of work sink in value in the developing web of historical scholarship of our country.

Statements about past events are in reality restatements made after the examination of the available evidence accumulated by the writer concerned; and in most cases, the restatement "is a selection dominated by ideas current now from the restricted contents of the original statements." Every restatement involves a subjective presentation, as the personal element will colour, in a greater or less measure, each restatement made, though care may be taken by the individual author to avoid the projection of any positive personal bias into his conclusions. This personal bias is most natural and inevitable in the treatment of recent events, but is possible even in the study of the past. The historian of ancient times has, indeed, a very cardinal duty to live through, in his own mind, into the past; and he generally runs the risk of, subordinating facts that might have had fundamentally different spiritual and contemporary significance. Mommsen has pleaded that history should be neither written nor made without love or hate. We know that in many cases the intensity of personal feeling inseparable from patriotism and politics, has given history its specific quality of intellectual, moral and emotional excellence and at the same time has been a formidable obstacle to the development of true, accurate and impartial historiography. The golden mean between these two extremes is difficult to arise at, particularly for those who are engaged in presenting the history of formative epochs and constructive forces; and it is still more difficult to portray historical personalities and their impelling energies, in all complete accuracy of their lives and ideals, without trespassing into either of these antithetic dangers. Such has been the experience even of our most scholarly historians of personalities like Akbar, Asoka and Sivaji and of national movements like that of the Marathas.

In the field of British Indian History the danger of such insidious forces is particularly marked. The question may be asked: 'Is it possible to combine the scholastic, frigid and unemotional spirit of sober scholarship with the enthusiasm that should mark the avid interpreter anxious to find out energising ideas and present them in forceful form?' Will it not be good that every historical composition should be marked by an intensity of personal feeling that should be inseparable from patriotism and politics? But we should be also aware of the obstacles to the development of true historiography that lie behind this assumption. To take only a single example :-It is a most delicate and difficult task to decide when and how Sivaji came to be animated by the goal of a Maratha

Padshahi, and when, if at all, the subsequent ideal of a Hindu *Pad-Padshahi* dawned on him. In the guise of dealing with the *Zeitgeist*, some writers have unconsciously put their own mental texture and environment into their pictures of the past.

Similar and related questions whether History can justifiably help the realisation of the highest aspirations of the national or the human spirit, and whether it should consciously aim at presenting a wide philosophic vision comprehending a clear synthesis of forces far wider than those of one's own country or age, are intriguing problems for historians to attempt to solve, but would appear to be impossible of final decisive solution. The danger of a representation of our ancient history by exaggerated pictures of the achievements of earlier generations with a view to infusing in us a feeling of pride, is that it will take the writer very near to the place where he will become fatally coloured by avowed partisanship and by passions of ideology. Nor have we unanimous advice from our venerable teachers on this subject. The learned Bishop Stubbs stresses the great value that should always be attached to the drawing of a moral by the teacher and student of History, and would hold that the marrow of civilised History is ethical and not metaphysical, and the underlying motives of progress as manifested in the march of the Historical Muse through the corridors of time, should pass along the maze of the shades of right and wrong. We are also bound to hold as the highest, truth that the object of all right research in History should be its freedom from every partiality of ideas and ideology and its entire dependence on its material for its conclusions.

According to Lord Acton, the historian should never debase the moral currency or lower the standard of rectitude. Lord Haldane, the embodiment of Liberalism in the field of historical and philosophical thought, thus says :-"The historian will fail hopelessly if he seeks to be a mere recorder. For the truth about the whole, the expression, of which is what matters, was not realised in its completeness until time and the working of the spirit of the period had enabled the process developed in a succession of particular events to be completed His business is to select in the light of a larger conception of the truth. He must look at his period as a whole and in the completeness of its development. And this is a task rather of the spirit than of the letter."

A further examination of the question of partiality, racial or cultural and even institutional, which has coloured the work of historians in the field of Indian History, leads one to an examination of the views expressed by different master-minds of History from the days of the Greek Polyhistor, Polybius, to Bishop Mandell Creighton and G. M. Trevelyan. Polybius put forward an impassioned plea for impartiality in historical judgments. He urged that directly a man assumed the moral attitude of a historian, he should forget totally all considerations of friendship and patriotism. Bishop Creighton, on the other side, warns the

historical worker against the cult of impartiality which would develop dullness and paralyse the judgment. Professor Trevelyan has opined that "History must be thought about from some stand-point, and the cant of pure impartiality in History is only equaled by the cant of pure historical facts having value except as food for thought and speculation."

The ideal of impartiality is perhaps far more easily attainable by men writing on the histories of foreign countries and of distant periods of time widely removed from their own days, as such distance provides the mental and moral isolation, deemed to be necessary between the historian and the subject matter of his work, for enabling him to attain an ideally impartial temper. This positive distancing should be done by the historical worker with the conscious skill of the trained artist. I may well repeat here what I have urged on another platform. Cannot one justifiably ask that this distance of attitude arising from a rigid impartiality of mind and judgement should be kept up on a most rigorous scale and should never be allowed to be lost by any consideration of pride or by a natural desire to gild the past? How often have pictures of the past based on preconceived ideas been drawn by writers, largely Indian, but including foreigners also, on the genesis of Dravidian and Aryan civilisations, the effect of the Aryan invasion on the inhabitants of South India and the consequent intertwining of cults and beliefs, the bearings of the impact of the one civilisation on the other and even the less uncertain, but more elusive, interaction of the forces of the North upon the South and *vice-versa*? Similar dangers are to be avoided by interpreters of the vast extension of Indian culture into the central, western and south-eastern regions of Asia, our knowledge of which has been growing by leaps and bounds in the last two decades, and to which some of our eminent scholars both in Bengal and in Madras have been making valuable contributions. The culture contacts of India with the outside world are fields which are particularly susceptible to the manifestation of the symptoms of such an outlook.

In this connection one may with advantage remember the warning given by Dr. Finot, the distinguished Director of the Indo-French School of Oriental Research at Hanoi, that "it is impossible to trace clearly the evolution of Indian civilisation in Indo-China in all its definite stages without great precaution being taken and to show how the ideas and social institutions of India came to be transformed at the touch of foreign races of quite a different turn of mind."

A two-fold point of view is to be kept up by investigators in these fields, particularly the view that should be taken as an almost axiomatic assumption, namely, that a faithful representation of the spread of Indian culture abroad should be free from the leanings inherent in the historian and student prone to look at new facts from their accustomed point of view. Sir Denison Ross has thus drawn attention to this lurking danger. "The detachment that is really called

for in an effort at the understanding of an extraneous culture is not perhaps always possible in the fullest measure. Nobody therefore need be held to blame; but it is none the less necessary to remove the defect and perfect the knowledge that we possess of ancient Indian culture in its evolution down to modern times." He has shown that such defects are possible, particularly because of the operation of the author's affection for the subject of his study.

The principle of continuity has become complicated in the field of Indian History by the varying margins between historical and pre-historical times and peoples of our land, as well as by numerous breaks caused by lack of adequate sources and by the *lacunae* that occur from the operation of this and other factors in the early history of the different regions and dynasties.

Equally important is the question of what distinctively marks the evolution of life in historical times from that which marks the epochs of pre-history. Researches into pre-history can be regarded in one sense as the reading of the present into the past. Thus the immortal discoveries of R. D. Banerji, Sir John Marshall and Sir Aurel Stein have established much more authoritatively than Freeman's dictum could ever do, about the continuity of history of which earliest enunciation was made by the Stoic writer, Diodorus, in the memorable works, that 'all men living or who once lived belong to the common human family though divided from one another by time and space.'

True history should be comprehensive, and not merely be nation-wide, but also extend particularly in the portrayal of cultures, their origin and dispersion, to a continental and even inter-continental background. Many phases of Indian History, markedly those relating to filiations of Dravidian culture and origins, and the spread of Indian civilisation in Indonesia and Serindia, require that the historian should extend his understanding from the conventional, narrow; and possibly sub-national and project it on a truly international, background.

At the present day, international problems of various kinds are occupying a large place in men's minds, and their solution demands, among other factors, a degree of intimate and sympathetic knowledge of the complex of historical tendencies which have produced them. Many of us Indians have no other background than that of India and British Histories or at the widest, portions of European History. The difficulties which we have to grapple with are the complex results of current and past contacts between cultures far removed from one another and the reaction on our life produced by the intensified internationalism of the present time. If History is to be fruitful in this respect, it is essential that it should move away from its conventional background and get in a marked manner into the lines of a truly international

approach.

Apart from the increasingly appreciated importance of the pre-historic evolution of human cultures, the year 500 B.C. as the lower limit, or perhaps, 1000 B.C. as the starting point, may be held to have witnessed the emergence of full-fledged religious creeds like the Prophetic School in Israel, Mazdaism in Persia, Brahmanism and Buddhism in India and Confucianism in China; these major philosophies and creeds may well form the starting point of later currents of interaction that have formulated ideas which have exercised a definite influence on the history of subsequent ages. By that date, the Semitic, Aryan, Mongolian and Dravidian races might well claim to have made their basic and stable contributions to culture; and India may be deemed to have become by that time not only the basis of a growing synthetic culture of its own, but also the meeting and focusing point of similar trends from different directions. This idea can be well put before the constructive historians of Ancient Indian epochs, prehistoric and historic; and it will help in the analysis and synthesis of all the results of their investigations. The task of stressing this view is all the more imperative, because Hindu and later Indian cultures have been marked by a broad, comprehensive and absorbing character that has enabled them to cover a steadily widening area in the chess-board of human evolution, and to display a capacity for adapting and absorbing foreign elements into themselves. In the region of Further India and Indonesia, the process of absorption of Indian culture by the indigenous races stopped so soon as their contact with India ceased in all active measure; but its effect is seen even now, after several centuries of Islamization, in the fact that the cultural background of some parts of Indonesia has remained essentially Hindu. If Hindu culture has thus demonstrated its firm hold in foreign lands, it should be easy to perceive how much more its inherent strength should have operated in India and how much more important its influence should have been on the peoples and cultures that have been absorbed in the course of ages into the web of Indian life. In the interaction between the essentially Hindu and the essentially foreign elements in the evolution of Indian culture, may be seen by those features that have been at once the glory and the weakness of our land. One line of research and approach that may be suggested to scholars is the inquiry into the widening stream of Hindu life flowing into the ocean of the interaction of peoples.

One difficulty that is of fascinating, but baffling, interest to the student, is the contentious question of the division of the peoples of our land into race groups and their cultures. We have not arrived at any definite conclusion and are not even agreed as to where the distinctions of the one type, ethnic or cultural or otherwise, should properly begin and where the corresponding features of the others should end. More likely to be profitable than this search after the mirage of race-origins and culture-contacts, Aryan, and Dravidian, is the quest of data

concerning the development of social institutions like the village community, tillage, irrigation and social economy. We are on relatively safe ground in assuming that in India the work of regular tillage, though it has been often interrupted to some extent by successive invasions, has not only maintained its hold upon the people, but developed in some remarkable directions through the ages. The series of external invasions and internal eruptions, so far from breaking down either the complication of the caste system or the involutions of land tenure and village rights, has, on the other hand, added to the complexity of the situation; the divisions of caste organisation have consequently tended "to dip, clash, combine and interpenetrate into one another" and not merely stand superimposed, one upon another, like the skins of an onion.

A kindred topic that may well occupy the attention of the historian is the proper explanation of the stratification that has marked Indian society, and the possible elements that may have operated to limit and modify the rigidity and turgidity of social activity in all its phases. Equally attractive is the less pressing but perhaps more interesting problem of the existence of fundamental differences between social evolution in India and similar processes in neighbouring lands like Burma, Tibet and Central Asia. The great challenges that have come down like avalanches on the slope of time, like Buddhism, the Huna and Scythian invasions and settlement, and the advent of Islam, have tended to modify the lines of social progress and alter even their bases. In this field the duty of the historian is to show that progress has not always been absent as has sometimes been imagined, but has positively been made possible by these great operating forces.

On the history of Islam in India and the mutual influence of Islamic culture and Hinduism in their widest aspect, the student is faced with a number of questions clamouring for solution, or at least an attempt at correct interpretation. The military and political achievements of the Muhammadan conquerors and rulers, the genius of Muslim writers, artists and builders, these and other related topics have been adequately dealt with; but the problem that still awaits definite interpretation is how far Islam has really entered into the web of Indian life in some of its remote phases and what historians have done to depict the Muslim peoples themselves in their religious and social life, apart from conquests and court connections and superficial contacts.

We can easily refute the charge generally made that all our indigenous historians have not lived into the life of the common people and have not given pen-pictures of their everyday activities and difficulties or of the changing features of society. To take but two shining examples, Kalhana's famous *Rajatarangini* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Shaikh Abul Fazl: Kalhana's work is something far more than a record of kings' doings, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, describing the scope of his work, in his "Forward" to R. S. Pandit's Translation

of *Rajatarangini*, (the Raga of the Kings of Kashmir (1935) (p. xii), points out how the historian has revealed the old order changing in Kashmir and the economic structure collapsing and thus shaking up the old Indo-Aryan polity and rendering it an easy prey to internal commotion and foreign conquest.

The learned Blochmann, in his estimate of the value of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, gives us a true picture of what a full-told history, at the hands of a polyhistor ought to be in scope. Apart from the trustworthiness, the love of truth and the marvellous powers of expression that marked the great minister, we see in his writings "the governed classes brought to the foreground: men live and move before us, and the great questions of the time, axioms then believed in and principles then followed, phantoms then chased after, ideas then prevailing, and successes then obtained, are placed before our eyes in truthful and therefore vivid colours." Abul Fazl's "wishes for the stability of the throne and the welfare of the people, his principles of toleration, his noble sentiments on the rights of man and the total absence of personal grievances and of expressions of ill-will towards encompassing enemies, show that the expanse of his large heart stretched to the clear offing of sterling wisdom."

Professor Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan has pointed out many a time the significance of the history of the British period for the understanding of present-day problems. The material at the disposal of the student for what may be called the British epoch is staggering in quantity and bewildering in its range and the difficulty of co-ordination that it presents is likewise formidable in many places. The dross of romanticism and common place sentimentalisms, which occasionally permeates research in more antique epochs can affect this period only in a smaller measure; but there is also operating the more serious and, in reality, the more insidious, danger of researchers trying to read, either by reason of an unconscious bias or by force of subconscious analogy, a great deal more than is justifiable in a rigidly objective process that should mark the study of the causes of the decay of the Muslim and Maratha powers and the rise and establishment of the British, in preference to other European, domination.

The facilities provided by the rich treasure-houses of archives in the capitals of those European States which have indulged in Eastern enterprise, have been made increasingly available not only to those scholars who have the ability and the facilities to study *in situ*, but also to others unable to study on the spot, "by means of printed lists of calendared documents, photoprints of manuscripts and other facilities of recent invention which reproduce, cheaply and in *facsimile*, manuscripts and records treasured in the different museums and record offices both in India and abroad. The enormous quantities of records, despatches and

other kinds of manuscript material pertaining to the activities of the European Companies in our land are largely the result of the almost Venetian supervision exercised by the home authorities over their servants and settlements in India. These have been supplemented by an astonishing amount of pamphlet literature embodying the passions and prejudices of persons who played a part in the great drama of eastern enterprise. Besides these, we have a very large collection of correspondence received and despatched, which it was usual "for men in high office in those days to keep themselves. Above all, there is the difficulty of co-ordinating these official sources with the indigenous output of material, like *bakhars*, chronicles, diaries, genealogies, local tracts, news-letters, letter-books and *shakavalis*, most of which have been utilised by the enterprising scholars of Maharashtra who dug them literally out of the earth in which they remained buried so long.

The correct method of using such material, a great quantity of which still lies buried far away from the ken of even the keenest researcher, was most difficult for our pioneers, particularly when they lacked knowledge of some or the intricate phases of Indian life for the right understanding of their subjects of study. That this defect characterised the work of even such an acute student of Maratha history like Elphinstone, has been made clear to us by Sir J. Jadunath Sarkar who urges that, even for the most intensive student of any particular period or topic, a search is essential for the further acquisition of the papers and correspondence of the actors themselves and of those who were in immediate contact with the events they describe. The idea of a corpus or consolidated body of every kind of first class original records in all the different languages in which they were written, collected and arranged in volumes according to subjects and periods, has come to be accepted as the desideratum for any really constructive historical work in Maratha History. One can very earnestly advocate the accumulation and careful edition of such a collection for each period or topic, in which every concerned paper of primary importance in whatever tongue it may be, should be assembled along with others equally important. The *Peshwa Daftar* at Poona has been analysed and made to serve as a sort of corpus for the Peshwa period by Rao Bahadur G. S. Sardesai.

Thus the dangers that confront the worker in arriving at a correct and impartial evaluation of the achievements of the builders of the British dominion are many. To illustrate one such danger against which the student should guard himself, and can quote the ever accumulating literature about some fateful heroes like Clive and Warren Hastings. From the days of Carraccioli down to the recent biography of Mervyn Davis, the whole chain of writers on Clive can be cited as illustrating the frequent changes of sympathy and opinion that beset the Muse of History in her never-ceasing advance. Similarly, with regard to the discreditable period of British rule in Bengal and Madras which lasted, in the former

province, down to the administration of Warren Hastings, and persisted in the latter for some more years, the student should guard himself against the dangers of a ready acceptance, at its face value, of the pamphlet literature of various types that thrusts itself forcefully, at every turn, upon his attention. The enigmatic figure of Warren Hastings serves even at the present day to cast a spell upon biographer and reader alike. Compared with the charm that has always attached itself to the ever widening literature on Warren Hastings and despite its varying value, the books published on later personages like Cornwallis, Wellesley and Lord Hastings fade into relative dullness or prolix rigidity.

If personalities have claimed, in a disproportionate manner, the attention of historians and researchers in the modern period, a fundamental factor explaining this feature lies in the lack of a proper co-ordination between different aspects of national life, military and political on the one hand, and social and industrial on the other. As for the eighteenth century which has had no adequate treatment, monographs and pictures of its society and economy are exceedingly rare, except perhaps in the field of Maratha history in which a larger and more intensive quantity of work has been done and a higher level of research and presentation has been attained than in others. Even in respect of the military and political history of the British period, partisanship of varying character has been abundantly in evidence. The main existing accounts of the First Afghan War are largely tainted by controversy. "The amount of controversial literature is fairly extensive, but an intelligible and impartial history has not yet been written." is the verdict of one acute writer on the history of many of the wars and conquests of the British power. Another feature of British Indian History is that a large section of the Indian *intelligentsia* and of our historical writers have been unconsciously developing a quasi-English mentality and a disproportionately stressed admiration for current English political and administrative ideals. This lack of proper vision has resulted in a lack of really accurate subjective treatment of the topics as ascertained at first hand; and this feature is accompanied by their presentation "with a facility that seemed quite natural in the nineteenth century but now appears somewhat obsolete in these resurgent days of nationalistic feeling."

In this connection one may ask :- Are we better than the warped Hindu historians of the age of Muslim domination of whom Sir H. M. Elliot wrote in regret that the average Hindu historian of Muslim rule totally displayed "a lack of the feelings, hopes, faiths, fears and yearnings of his subject race and showed nothing to betray his religion or nation except perhaps a certain stiffness and affectation of style which show how ill the foreign garb befitted him." Such a total condemnation of our historians will not at all be justifiable at the present day. Most of us are impressed and influenced by British political practice and

European ideology and literature; and the growth of Indian nationalism has accentuated this bias which has, however, strangely enough, worked both ways. One class of our writers are apprehensive of the possible political repercussions of their views and consequently deny themselves that full freedom of expression which is their right. Another class go the other way and display a bias consciously strained so as to please the administration. It is only very rarely we get the historian that will naturally become indifferent to the effect that his views and judgements may produce upon the administration or the world outside. As has been well remarked by E. Thompson and G. T. Garratt :- "The writer of to-day inevitably has a world outside his own people, listening intently and as touchy as his own people, as swift to take offence This knowledge of an overhearing, even eaves-dropping public, of being in *partibus~ infidelium*, exercises a constant silent censorship, which has made British-Indian History the worst patch in current scholarship. Orme, Elphinstone, Montgomery Martin, Marshman, Thornton, Keene, Beveridge, Mill and Wilson, and most of the earlier historians of separate episodes are vivacious reading and kept the subject alive."

The ideal historian should not also display any tendency to weave destiny round his heroes, instead of allowing the story of their destiny to unfold itself in a natural manner. Every piece of his work should be primarily based on an impartial interpretation of data, which should be subjected to strictly scientific tests in their qualitative selection, as these alone would ensure their indicative value. Every epoch has got to be studied not only in its physical and material aspect, but also in its cultural and moral life; and the main task of the historian is to make history as much of a reality as possible, concrete and alive-" combining in it both the actuality of the field of treatment and a justifiable and well-founded morality of analysed conclusions; and he should avoid making his narrative degenerate into one kind of romance or another.

Such model and normative work has been effected by several tall historians of our land, of whom, to indicate only a few, among those fortunately still with us and active may be mentioned Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Father Heras, Dr. H. K. Mookerji, Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, Dr. Sir S. A. Khan, Dr. S. N. Sen and Dr. R. C. Majumdar, who may be deemed to be the highest representatives of the different fields in which they have been working and all of whom enjoy a goodly heritage of both work and following.

The genius and activity of Indian historical scholarship at the present day are many-sided. The different Universities of the land are developing individual historical schools devoted to research in particular fields. Of these, the Calcutta school nurtured into vitality by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the Madras school initiated by Dr. S. K. Aiyangar and sustained by Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastriar, the

Allahabad school developed into full stature by Dr. Sir S. A. Khan, the Punjab school devoting itself, among other work, particularly to the field of Sikh History, the Osmania school intensively engaged in the elucidation of Deccan history and the Aligarh school dedicating its talents to the bringing out of a comprehensive history of India under Muslim rule, should be noticed. In South India much valuable work is being done towards the rescitation of Ancient Dravidian and Tamil culture by scholars like Mr. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, who has, by his recent translation of the great Tamil Classic, *Silappadikaram* (the Lay of the Anklet) revealed one of the treasure-houses of Ancient Tamil civilisation. Similarly, in Bombay, the Indian Historical Research Institute of Father Heras has been turning out solid, valuable and continuous work. We, the historians of India, owe a tribute of homage to the learned bodies which have been assisting us in one way or another, like the venerable Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, the fountain-head of all Indological research; its sister institution, the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; the Bharat Itihas Shamshodak Mandali of Poona, which has shown what enlightened nationalism could achieve in the resuscitation of the past; the Indian Historical Records Commission that has so much of solid and unpretentious, but very valuable, work to its credit; the Bihar and Orissa Research Society that was enabled to burst into efflorescence by the genius and labours of the late, Dr. K. P. Jayaswal; the youthful Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam, which has in a few years put forth an abundance of published work; the Historical Societies of the Punjab, Assam, Gujarat the U. P. and Bombay, the Mythic Society of Bangalore, one of whose foster parents is the venerable Dr. S. K. Aiyangar, the Andhra and Karnataka Historical Research Societies and the Rama Varma and the Tirupati Oriental Research Institutes, as well as periodicals like the *Journal of Indian History*, the *India Historical Quarterly* and *Indian Culture*. Let us also acknowledge with kindly feelings of appreciation the good help that we have received from the monumental publications of the Archaeological Survey of India in all its branches, for a period of nearly three quarters of a century, as well as from the Archreological Departments of great states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore and Baroda. Foreign institutes of Indology are bringing out journals dealing with subjects of Indian historical interest in centres extending from New Haven in America to Leyden and Oslo and to Hanoi and Batavia in the Far East; these have assisted us in a considerable measure with material, new points of view and fresh fields for exploration and invigorated us with most sustaining food. To all these various agencies of help, it is the duty of the historians of India assembled in their Congress to pay a meed of praise and appreciative gratitude.

Surveying the progress made by our Congress in furthering the scheme of a comprehensive History of India, we are happy that syllabuses of the various periods have been framed for discussion. The Secretaries will now submit the complete skeleton syllabus of the proposed History, spread out over twelve volumes, for

its consideration by the Committee appointed at the last session and also for eliciting the views of the members of the Congress. At this stage it will be useful if this session can give its countenance and approval to the scheme, and to provide for the appointment of committees and editorial boards for pushing through the work. A considerable headway still remains to be made before the scheme can be actually put into execution. Finance is a most important factor for the effective fruition of our aim, and it is high time that an appeal be definitely made to Governments, both British and Indian, and to generous patrons, in the name of this Congress, which is fully representative of historical scholarship hailing from every part of the country, in order that we may get a satisfactory response.

Our scheme of a Comprehensive History to be written on scientific lines was first mooted in the Allahabad Session in 1938. Preparations were made for implementing these proposals both at the Calcutta Session in 1939 and at the subsequent meeting at Lahore in 1940. The Congress has approved of these basic proposals at these two Sessions.

The plan has for its object the stimulation of research and the bringing to light of the results of such research made by scholars in the various branches and periods of our country's history. The treatment is intended to be on an ample and comprehensive scale and not merely to be popular and to satisfy the need of the lay reader. The appeal for support to our effort goes forth in the name of our Congress which is a most representative organisation and whose roll of membership includes scholars coming from all parts of the country, and from the different universities, Historical Associations, the Central and Provincial Governments, Indian States and the Imperial Government in their Archaeological and Record Departments. Membership of our Congress is open to everyone interested in the scientific study of Indian History and its attention has been concentrated on the cultivation of research, and its encouragement as can be seen from the published volumes of our Proceedings. Our aim in this great effort is not at all to invite or encourage any competition and rivalry among scholars and writers, but solely to bring about a co-ordination of effort among all interested in the furtherance of a truly scientific historical work. The Congress has made it perfectly clear again and again through Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan and other spokesmen that it has not identified itself with, nor in any way would affiliate itself to, any political, social or sectarian organisation and that it would not feel itself to be under any special obligation on the ground of any expectation or actual receipt of financial support from individuals, associations or Governments, both of the Indian States and of British India. I cannot help in this connection quoting Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan who has untiringly been stressing the non-sectarian and non-partisan character of our Congress and its vital individuality:-" It has maintained its individuality and integrity intact, and this has ensured the complete independence of its members, etc. Consequently, the history it has projected will be written by scholars who

are imbued with a single-minded devotion to scientific pursuit of knowledge and are not influenced by any other consideration in the pursuit of this aim."

Emphasis should be laid on the wholly scholarly and specialised nature of our enterprise which should be an irreproachable embodiment of ripe research work and intensive specialisation. Our aim is not the mere popularisation of a knowledge of Indian History, but the production of an authoritative series of volumes, which should be both creative and original in the best sense. For this aim the co-operation of all scholars, Indian, English, American or European and of other nationalities is required. "Scholarship should not be bound by ethnic or political frontiers and all scholars interested in any field of Indian History should be linked together throughout the world by masonic fraternal bonds which should serve as the strongest, spiritual and intellectual links." We should invite in the name of the Congress the co-operation of all scholars, both Oriental and Western, though, naturally enough, the contributions of foreign scholars will be very small relatively to the output of Indian writers. The best talents available should be utilised, and help and co-operation from every scholar, who has established his position "by the integrity, impartiality, independence and judicial spirit of his researches " should be sought.

We are indeed bold enough to claim that the present day Indian historical scholarship has attained a growth when we could dispense with the services of European scholars for most periods of Indian History. The Congress aims, in its scheme, at having the maximum number of Indian contributors, but does not exclude English and foreign scholars and historians who have made a special period or a particular subject, their lifestudy, and we will most emphatically avoid requesting contributions from those who have shown any manner of racial, political or imperialistic bias.

While the Congress should necessarily allow the utmost latitude and freedom of expression to writers on the various aspects of our history from the earliest epoch, we should faithfully portray all filiations of Indian culture with culture movements outside and draw the attention of students and scholars to the fact that so far as the last three centuries of our history are concerned, it behoves us to treat this period much more from the point of view of the Indian people than before and less from the point of view of the rulers of the land, as has been hitherto the practice. It is our duty, as Dr. Tara Chand has pertinently observed, to eliminate from historical scholarship the reproach that "the culture and life of India and its independent existence and growth should have been merely treated as an incident of British rule, nay, merely as an effect of the activities of the British government, British political parties and British ideologies." This corrective to the general trend of our historiography should be particularly applied in the treatment of our latest period of reconstruction and renaissance extending from 1765 to the present day. We ought to keep this ideal before our vision and, in the process, contrive to give

unequivocal expression to the individuality of our life and culture. Again, our treatment of mediaeval history should be completely scientific in its accuracy and objectivity. Besides, it should be infused with its appropriate spirit and present history as that of the people of the land and not as the chronicle of the doings of foreign dynasties. The truth has sometimes been indicated that the rulers of the middle ages never regarded themselves as foreigners and should not be treated by us as such, as they had but few interests outside the land. The middle age should be interpreted as but continuation of the ancient period and should not be hedged in by any terminal or dividing line on either side. Such lines of separation would be purely artificial and not in accordance with the continuity of historical evolution.

The learned Professor Freeman was greatly perplexed as to the particular point at which he should fix the end of the classical world and whether it should be in 476 or 800 A.D. or at any intermediate date between these two. Our difficulties in this respect seem to be whether the Runa settlement in Northern India can be regarded as the first symptom of the fundamental alteration of the polity and society of the land that marked the end of the classical epoch. Various dates have been suggested as closing of the ancient and mediaeval epochs like 712, 997, 1192, or even 1526--all these start, it is true, new currents; but they do not at all alter the fundamental course of evolution. That they lack what may be deemed a fundamentality of issue can very well be appreciated if we should take in what Dr. Tara Chand would hold as marking the life of the people and not the happenings at royal courts, nor the movements of armies and battles. Our middle age is thus a continuity from our ancient period and our modern age beginning with the initiation of European enterprise is certainly a continuity of and projection from the so-called middle age. Our social, cultural and political developments run really on continuous lines and cannot in ultimate analysis be regarded as revolutionary and catastrophic new beginnings. We should neither slur over, nor apologise, for the middle age, but do full justice to this period and give a full account of its variegated life through the cooperation of scholars of different languages and communities joining together in this coordinate enterprise.

A history of India written with this aim and on the basic idea of the continuity of our national life will be "not merely the expression of our learning and scholarship but also of our faith in the destinies of our people." I would finally urge that it is of supreme importance that our minds should be guided by large ideas and generous principles and not moved by narrow and particularistic impulses; and the members of our Congress owe a duty to the country and they should not only make available fresh material hitherto unutilized but also try to subject the data at their disposal to the canons of true historical criticism.
