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SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE TEACHING OF ROMAN HISTORY.¹

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There are moments when conscientious teachers, and those in particular who have the responsibility of instructing the picked young men and women who pursue higher studies at a University, feel some doubt as to the value of the work on which they are engaged. Could not our pupils, they ask themselves, be better employed in acquiring knowledge of another kind ? Is the subject-matter of their studies of sufficient importance to occupy so much precious time ? Is the training in method which they receive from us superior to what they would derive from pursuing some other line of work ? Such thoughts are particularly apt to occur to teachers of classical subjects, for the claim that a classical education provides the best general training for life has ceased to be regarded as a platitude, and is in many quarters considered to be almost paradoxical. If the classical teachers of our schools and universities are not to be content to live by taking in each others' washing, the schools providing the universities with undergraduates and receiving schoolmasters in return ; if they hope in the future, as in the past, to co-operate in educating men whose main activities will not be concerned with Graeco-Roman antiquity, it is absolutely necessary that they should not only be able to find arguments with which to defend the faith that is in them, but that they should justify their confidence by the excellence of their results.

It is for this reason that I wish to consider briefly the right of Roman history to occupy an important place in educational curricula, and to suggest some mistakes of method which teachers should avoid if they are to do full justice to their subject, and arouse a real interest in it in the minds of their pupils.

Before an audience of the converted it is unnecessary to spend much time in pointing out that the period covered by Roman history is one of perennial interest. At Oxford undergraduates reading *Literae Humaniores* take up the subject after a year spent on Greek history, and I feel confident in saying that the majority of them turn with pleasure from such problems as the wars between Athens and Aegina, or the constitutions of the minor states of Greece, to the great questions which confront them when they begin their year of Roman history. Of course the profundity of Thucydides and the piquancy of Herodotus make Greek history an attractive subject to the teacher and the taught ; but I have often felt a little uncomfortable in asking my pupils to devote time to points to which

¹ Read at the Annual General Meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies on June 19, 1923.

it is difficult to apply the word 'important' in any natural sense, and have been led to justify myself by pointing out that the training in method which can be derived from the comparison of sources and the careful weighing of evidence has a value independent of the importance of the subject. But this consideration makes little appeal to those who are interested mainly in ancient thought or in the broader aspects of ancient civilisation, who not unnaturally wish to learn method from a subject which interests them. I do not of course suggest that Roman history can be studied with profit by any one who is ignorant of the history of Greece, for there is no break between them. 'Rome is the successor of Alexander.' I merely wish to point out that the study of the so-called great days of Greece, when the city state was in its prime—and this is what most people mean by the study of Greek history—has limitations which are not entirely concealed by the great writers who have recorded the history of the period. It is at any rate arguable that the study of the city-state is of antiquarian interest, and that the student of institutions learns less from Athens and Sparta than from the Persian empire which they both despised, and from the Hellenistic kingdoms which succeeded them.

When the 'Greats' man turns to Roman history, he is face to face with the exciting century which witnessed the collapse of Rome as a city-state, and the incorporation in her empire of Asia Minor, Syria and Gaul; he has to consider how C. Gracchus, Marius, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar in various ways prepared the way for the principate; and with the help of Cicero he will get glimpses behind the scenes for which there is no parallel in any other period of antiquity. Or, if he prefers to start later, he can embark at once on the study of the organising work of Augustus, and of his achievements in the departments of administration, finance, army and frontier policy. Human interest will be provided by the sardonic pages of Tacitus, whose narrative he will be taught to supplement from the vast mass of inscriptional evidence which is now easily accessible even to a beginner. He will range from Britain to Egypt, from Spain to Armenia, and will contemplate the penetration by Mediterranean civilisation of countries which even Cicero thought wild and barbarous. If he is wise, he will follow, at any rate in outline, the history of the Western Empire until its fall, and will familiarise himself with the various reasons which have been given for the ultimate collapse of the political system which in the first two centuries presented so imposing an appearance.

It is surely quite unnecessary to defend the study of a subject like this. It is equally suitable for schoolboys and for undergraduates, for those who hope to be scholars and for those who propose to enter one of the professions. The future lawyer will familiarise himself with the conditions under which the Roman legal system was

evolved; the future clergyman will learn to know the society in which Christianity appeared and the rival religions which she had to encounter; the future public man will study the methods of a great governing people, who faced problems very similar to those which trouble the modern statesman. The temperament and character of the builders of the Roman empire are not difficult for the young student to grasp. Roman common sense and the Roman genius for compromise are qualities which appeal to the Englishman, to whom Caesar, Augustus and Trajan are far more intelligible than medieval emperors and saints, or even perhaps than the men of the seventeenth century.

If again the teacher of history aims at training his pupils in the methods of historical research, it is not easy to find a better period. For this purpose the very scantiness of the sources may be regarded as a positive advantage. The student of a problem in Roman history is seldom overwhelmed by the mass of his material; but he must collect it often in the most unlikely quarters, and must base his hypotheses on a wide knowledge of ancient literature and of the general character of ancient civilisation. I may quote as an illustration the method in which Mr. Heitland in his recent work on agricultural labour extracts information not only from such obvious sources as Cato, Varro and Columella, but from chance references in Horace, Cicero and Juvenal. One should not indeed exaggerate the possibility of the production by young students of what can fairly be called original work in Roman history. Highly competent scholars have already dealt with most aspects of the subject, and special points cannot be profitably studied except by those who have had a thorough general training in the history of antiquity. It would, I think, be a disaster if our Universities abolished the existing examination system, and followed the example of Germany in setting young men fresh from school the task of undertaking research. It may be different in other subjects, but at present even the choicest products of the public schools are altogether unfitted for work of this kind in the department of ancient history until they have obtained a far wider knowledge of ancient life than they possess when they come to the university. Few of them, for one thing, can read German or Italian with ease, and their knowledge of ancient historians is extreme scrappy. It is far better for them to receive the kind of training which the existing system supplies than to specialise prematurely on work for which they will require constant guidance if they are to avoid serious blunders. Those who have had to read the dissertations of young Germans and Americans know that, though they sometimes show ability in the collection of material, they seldom show breadth of treatment, or provide any proof that the writer has a wide knowledge of antiquity as a whole.

But what has been said does not invalidate my assertion that the study of Roman history provides an excellent training for one who hopes to become a scholar and to qualify himself for historical research, not necessarily in the period which he has studied as an undergraduate. The value of the training which it gives is largely independent of the interesting nature of the subject. Without undertaking research himself the student of Roman history, if properly taught, is kept constantly in touch with the evidence on which constructive historians have based their assertions. He is encouraged to study the method no less than the conclusions of the great masters of the subject, and to accept nothing at second-hand. He learns to cultivate the critical spirit, and to weigh as well as measure his evidence, making allowance for the prejudices of contemporaries, and realising that to some Greek and Roman writers the events which they describe were almost as much ancient history as they are to us. He thus gets some insight into the attractive, if somewhat inconclusive, game of *Quellenforschung*, which occupies such a prominent place in the writings of modern students of antiquity. He is introduced to the study of inscriptions, and learns that far-reaching conclusions can be derived by a competent scholar from a document which at first sight appears trivial. Finally he is encouraged to avail himself of any opportunities which may arise for visiting the existing material remains of Roman civilisation, and is made to understand the help which the spade has rendered to the solution of historical problems.

In what has been said hitherto I have attempted to summarise the advantages possessed by Roman history as a subject of study. A teacher has only himself to blame if he fails to make it stimulating and attractive to his pupils. Naturally he should adapt the character of his teaching to their age, abilities, and tastes. If he is instructing young boys he will scarcely expect to interest them in problems of government and administration, and will be wise if he lays stress on military matters, using maps freely, and on the human side of the leading figures in Roman history. If he is a University teacher, he will be well advised to temper the wind to the shorn lamb, reserving certain questions for his abler pupils, even among whom there is room for discrimination.

In illustration of my meaning I wish to mention a problem which is very familiar to the teacher of ancient history at Oxford. Like other people we suffer from an overcrowding of our curriculum, and have constantly to deal with able men who are primarily interested in the philosophical side of 'Greats,' and who, with the best will in the world, simply have not time to study Greek and Roman history in the way which I have attempted to describe. Such men unfortunately tend to regard this side of their work almost as a nuisance, and devote to it as little time as is consistent with

success in the schools. But it is by no means impossible to interest them in ancient history if they are introduced to it in the proper way. A bridge must be found to connect the two sides of their course, and one such bridge exists in political philosophy, which, as Aristotle realised, is only a fruitful subject if the speculations of philosophers are taken in close connexion with the concrete facts of history. The philosopher can approach Roman history from the standpoint of Greek political theory. He can be shown the interesting chapters of Polybius on the Roman constitution and encouraged to examine them critically. He cannot do this without acquiring a good deal of exact information on the history of the Roman constitution, and realising the reaction on it of the expansion of Rome's power through Italy and round the Mediterranean. The philosopher may not have the passion for detail which characterises the 'pure historian,' he may prefer the universal to the particular, but, if he is a man of real ability, he can easily be made to feel the necessity of basing generalisations on accurate knowledge, and can be persuaded to enter almost with enthusiasm into the study of evidence if he is convinced that the point at issue is one of real importance. He will realise, for instance, that the thorny problem of the powers of the Roman princeps is not suitable for *a priori* methods, but involves a study of the general character of the magistracy not only in Rome but in Greece, and an accurate knowledge of the powers, whether regular or irregular, of the Republican generals whose careers provided precedents to Augustus.

Another bridge between philosophy and history is the study of ancient religion. Here again Polybius is helpful, with his reflections on the moral value of the Roman fear of the gods. The philosopher is invariably interested in the worship of the Roman emperors. To understand the character and implications of this curious phenomenon he is led to study such fundamental features of ancient religion as hero-cults among the Greeks. Again, he must acquire some knowledge of the oriental states whence the idea of a god-king came to Rome. This will lead him to consider how the emperor-cult spread in the western provinces—a subject which involves quite a minute study of evidence. Or again, he may be attracted to the subject by an interest in the early Christians, who refused to revere 'the image of the Beast.' The study of Pliny's famous letter may arouse an interest in early Church history and even in the dating of the books of the New Testament. Finally, reflections can be suggested to him on the general question of Church and State in antiquity. He can be made to realise the closeness-of the connexion between them under the Republic, when the magistrates were almost sacerdotal figures, whose religious duties were supremely important, who represented the Roman people to the gods, and whose presence at elections, however inconvenient, was essential

if the procedure was to have validity. He will be taken back to his Greek history, and will note the efforts of Pericles to give a religious consecration to the Athenian empire, the influence of religious institutions in fostering union between cities, and the difficulties which the religious basis of the family and the tribe presented to constitutional reformers.

I have developed this point at some length, though in this particular form the problem is only a domestic one. But similar difficulties must confront teachers of Roman history in schools and in other Universities than Oxford. It will rarely be the case that this is the only, or even the most important, subject on which their pupils are engaged. The problem for them, as for us, is to make the best use of the time at their disposal by emphasising those aspects of the subject which are most likely to be appreciated, in the hope of arousing an interest which may lead to further study or even to the production of historical scholars.

Quite enough time has been expended in pointing out the possibilities of Roman history as a subject of study, and the more difficult task remains of suggesting ways in which teachers may produce better results from their labours than is commonly done at present. That some improvement in school teaching is desirable is obvious to any one who has examined papers done in the examinations conducted by the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board or by the Delegacies for Local Examinations. The papers in Roman history are done by boys and girls in the top forms, many of whom are on the point of proceeding to the University, so that they provide an excellent means of gauging the quality of the work of the ablest pupils in the schools. It would be absurd to deny that much excellent work is done in these examinations, but in general I feel justified in asserting that the results are disappointing. My own experience is that, though a considerable knowledge of detailed facts is displayed, this co-exists with a lamentable ignorance of the really significant aspects of the subject. The popular questions are always those which can be answered in a narrative form, and only a few bold spirits attempt those which require thinking. To give an example, such a question as 'Give some account of the Roman conquest of Spain' seems to make an immediate appeal, though I imagine that most examiners have to look up the facts before proceeding to mark the answers. On the other hand, if one asks, 'State and illustrate the principles which guided Rome in the administration of Italy,' the question is attempted by few, although any good text-book provides material for an answer.

The same tendency to avoid questions which call for thought and not merely for memory is found in the weaker candidates in University examinations. I well remember an answer given by a candidate in an Oxford Pass examination for which a knowledge is

required of the earlier books of Aristotle's Ethics. In his *viva voce* his face brightened when he was asked to enumerate the various types of courage mentioned by Aristotle, but when the examiner asked him what Aristotle would have thought of Christianity, after a long pause he replied, 'I think that is a Greats question, sir.' I am sure that a similar answer would have been given had he been asked, for instance, whether the Roman Senate was at all like the House of Lords.

In his recent Romanes lecture on 'Ignorance,' Professor Burnet expressed the opinion that young people at the present time know much less than used to be the case, and was inclined to find an explanation in the employment in schools of 'inductive methods.' Boys and girls are encouraged, he said, to construct, for instance, the rules of grammar for themselves by the observation of concrete examples instead of learning them ready-made, with the result that they read less than they used to do, as the main object of the teaching of grammar is to make reading easier. Valuable time is lost by expecting them to do badly for themselves what has already been well done long ago by competent scholars.

I cannot help thinking that Professor Burnet had in mind mainly quite young children, and, if this is so, his criticism is very valuable and can be applied to historical as well as to linguistic teaching. A great opportunity is lost if the minds of children, at an age when their memory is extraordinarily retentive, are not filled with a store of accurate information. The present tendency to apply what may be called kindergarten methods to those who are above the kindergarten age is responsible for a great deal of ignorance. But it is rather different with boys and girls in the upper forms of schools and still more with undergraduates. At this stage I think that the Professor would agree that there is more to be said for 'inductive methods.' Of course the method of teaching a subject is largely determined by its subject-matter. The teacher of natural science has the great advantage of being able to apply experimental methods even to quite elementary teaching. His pupils are not required to accept dogmatic statements on the authority of their teacher, but are able to verify them for themselves. The teacher of history has a rather more difficult task. History is not a science like chemistry or physics ; it cannot be reconstructed *a priori*. But at the same time, it is not impossible to introduce into historical teaching, even at quite an early stage, something analogous to laboratory methods, and it seems to me that the neglect of this possibility by the majority of teachers is mainly responsible for the faults which have been indicated.

What I mean is this. Just as the teacher of arithmetic or algebra sets his pupils problems to illustrate the rules which they have learned, just as the teacher of a language makes his pupils construct sentences to illustrate the words and the grammatical principles which he

has taught them, so the teacher of Roman history ought to bring his teaching, so to speak, down from the abstract to the concrete, by-connecting it as closely as possible with the classical texts which his pupils are reading. I have no doubt that this is a platitude of educational theory, and I should apologise for uttering it, were it not for the fact that it is very rarely applied. Even men who are scholars of their colleges and have taken a high class, in Honour Moderations are inclined to regard the writings of Cicero, Caesar, and Tacitus simply as providing exercises in translation. It constantly happens that a man who has read, for instance, the whole of the Verrine orations has not the most elementary knowledge of Roman provincial government, or that one who can translate accurately such speeches as the Pro Marcello or the Pro Lege Manilia has never considered their significance as historical documents. Latin is certainly a hard language, and only the best products of the Universities can read a Latin book 'with their feet on the fender.' I do not at all agree with people who think that 'the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome' (to use their favourite quotation) can be appreciated by those who cannot construe Xenophon or Caesar. But there is no reason why the study of language and of history should not be combined to a much greater extent than seems to be usual.

To take a concrete example, I can imagine no more pleasant task than to read the *Agricola* of Tacitus with an intelligent sixth form. It is a short book written in fairly difficult Latin which it takes some scholarship to reproduce in literary English. At the same time there is hardly a sentence in it which does not contain matter of historical importance, capable of suggesting to a competent teacher points which it would be well worth while for him to develop. The fact that Agricola's family was not Italian would suggest a discussion of the extension of the Roman citizenship to the provinces, which might be enlivened by reading Tacitus' version of the speech of Claudius on the admission of Gallic chiefs to the Senate. Again, Agricola's life provides an admirable example of the career of the typical public servant under the Roman principate. The teacher will note such points as the unimportant character of Agricola's duties as a magistrate compared with the importance of his provincial governorships; he will draw attention to the conservatism which preserved these relics of the past as qualifying for responsible posts. To explain Agricola's rule in Britain it will be necessary to discuss the Roman army-system, and even to touch on such a controversial point as the methods in which the legions and the auxiliaries were recruited. If the boys have read some Livy, their attention might be drawn to the evolution of the Roman army in the three centuries which separate Hannibal from Galgacus. All the problems of Roman government are suggested by phrases in this little book.

If a class of intelligent boys had read it in the way I have described they ought to be able to face most of the questions which might be set on the early principate in a Higher Certificate paper without much aid from a textbook.

The unfortunate distinction which exists at the Universities between Pass and Honours teaching has far-reaching effects. The main feature of Pass teaching in classical subjects is that a small amount of work is prepared in a minute way; every detail is committed to memory irrespective of its importance, and, one may add, rapidly forgotten when the examination has been passed. In this examination no questions are considered legitimate which cannot be answered directly from the set books, or which involve any wider knowledge. This kind of thing, I think, accounts for the unpopularity of classics with the less able boys at school, and the less able undergraduates at the Universities, and encourages the view that classical studies can only be profitably pursued by the few who have a distinct gift for them.

The fact is that the distinction between the Pass man and the Honours man is a very arbitrary one. There is of course a difference of ability between individuals, but to draw a sharp line between the two classes is very unfair to the weaker men. What I am advocating is that what are called Honours methods should be applied as far as possible to all higher teaching, and especially in the upper forms of schools, where at present Pass methods seem to hold the field in the teaching of Greek and Roman history. What is to blame for this it is difficult to say. It is the custom to attribute all sorts of evil effects to the examination system. How often are we told that the teacher has no chance of employing intelligent methods as he has to cram his pupils with facts, the assumption being that the only means of success in an examination is hastily to acquire a mass of ill-digested knowledge. Anything farther from the truth it is difficult to imagine. In the examinations with which I am acquainted far more credit is given for style and intelligence than for mere knowledge. Of course the 'windbag,' who tries to hide his ignorance behind a cloud of words, is even less appreciated than the dull candidate who conscientiously produces a string of facts. What is really welcomed is an answer in which the knowledge is intelligently marshalled and the facts quoted in such a way as to illustrate the broader aspects of the question which has been attempted. I feel quite confident that no Oxford examiner would fail to give credit to the boy who has been trained to think, and that no Oxford College would elect to a scholarship the well-crammed plodder in preference to the boy who produces work of the kind which has been described.

It is not only in the work of schoolboys that there is often a lamentable absence of what may be called 'the Honours spirit.'

The problem of the 'pure archaeologist' is one which frequently encounters examiners in the School of Literae Humaniores. Such a man often possesses admirable qualities; his power of observation is acute, and he has a passion for detail which is lacking in many abler men. But he is not only devoid of interest in ancient philosophic thought; his knowledge of ancient history as a whole is often defective, with the result that the examiners with regret commonly put him in a low class, and their action in doing so can be easily defended. From nothing have archaeological studies suffered so much as from being undertaken by men who have not sufficient width of knowledge to appreciate the full significance of the facts which they discover. Those who knew the late Professor Haverfield will remember the pungent terms in which he used often to refer to local antiquarians. In spite of his efforts and those of others there is still a real danger that archaeology may suffer from getting into the hands of men whose general training is inadequate. It is perhaps fortunate that some are content to act as hewers of wood and drawers of water in the work of excavation, but first-class archaeological work can only be done by men of wide reading, whose historical interests are by no means limited to the particular problem which they are investigating. To produce such men is the obvious duty of the Universities.

University teachers of archaeology often regret that their subject does not seem to make much appeal to the abler undergraduates. The various reasons for this cannot be adequately discussed in such a paper as this. Certain branches of archaeology, for instance, can only be profitably studied by those who possess distinct artistic gifts. But the main cause is, I think, that archaeological studies are too often dissociated from the study of ancient history and literature. It is extremely easy to interest undergraduates in inscriptions as a means of supplementing or correcting the information they have derived from books. They find pleasure in noting abnormal features in a *cursus honorum* or in a military *diploma* which perhaps helps to determine a date. There is no reason why a similar interest should not be awakened in, for instance, pottery and coins, if the study of these subjects is not introduced to them in a narrow and technical spirit.

When Professor Lanciani gave a course of Gifford lectures on Natural Religion he was humorously described as 'proving the existence of God with the help of a magic lantern.' At present the magic lantern is often regarded as a panacea for the evils from which the study of ancient history is suffering. An interest in Roman history may certainly be aroused by familiarity with the appearance of imposing Roman buildings, and it is a good thing to line the walls of the classroom with photographs of the Porta Nigra or the aqueducts which stride across the Campagna. But this is

only the first step. It is from books and not from photographs and slides that our pupils must learn the things that matter most in Roman history—the qualities which enabled the citizens of Rome to make their little city the capital of the civilised world, the stages of Rome's expansion, and the methods which she employed in ruling her subjects. We learn far more of the *arcana imperii* which secured the Romanisation of the south of France from such writers as Strabo and Pliny and from inscriptions than from photographs of the Maison Carree or the Pont du Gard.

I am not foolish enough to depreciate the study of archaeology, for there is no doubt that it is the archaeologists who are at present doing most to increase our knowledge of ancient history. **But** this is no reason for teaching archaeology in a technical way to boys and girls in the upper forms of schools and to undergraduates at the universities, very few of whom are capable of undertaking original work. Few of them will ever be researchers, and even these few must first learn what is already known. The feud between the historian and the archaeologist is an unreasonable one, as is recognised by the best historians and the best archaeologists. But there is room for legitimate difference of opinion as to the stage at which archaeology should be introduced into education. After all there is no distinction in kind between a statement of an historian and an inscription or coin recording some historical event. If a teacher of Roman history is laying any stress on sources, as I have suggested that he should do sooner than is at present customary, there is no reason why he should not introduce his pupils, even if they are only school children, to inscriptions or coins, if it is practicable to do so. This could well be done to illustrate the *Agricola*, which has been already mentioned as a book which provides great opportunities to the teacher. To quote the Goodwood inscription or a *cursus honorum* parallel to that of *Agricola* is the same sort of thing as to produce a passage from Statius or Juvenal referring to the reign of Domitian. Even if some reference is made to the light which has been thrown by excavation on *Agricola*'s British campaigns, no new principle has been introduced. But if ancient texts cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of *Realien*, the converse is equally true. The archaeologist who has not a thorough knowledge of ancient historians is very badly equipped for his task. If archaeology is introduced into the teaching of Roman history in the way which has been suggested the result is pure gain. But if it is implied that a familiarity with the externals of Roman civilisation is to supersede the careful reading of ancient authors, the doctrine is a very dangerous one which should be resisted by all who have at heart the interests of classical education.

The demand for greater stress on archaeology rests, however, on a sound principle, which it is one of the objects of this paper to

emphasise. This principle is that the teaching of Roman history should be as *concrete* as possible. Ancient historians have been criticised, notably in recent times by Croce, for being 'pragmatic' in their method, that is for writing the history of individuals rather than the history of institutions, tendencies, and ideas. This criticism is undoubtedly true, as any one knows well who has interested himself, for instance, in ancient economic history or in the history of ancient warfare, and has had to hunt for his material through the whole of ancient literature. It is quite legitimate for the advanced student to regret that no writer under the Roman principate, to take one example, has left an accurate study of the army-system, stating clearly the principles on which the legions and the auxiliaries were recruited; we should then know definitely the date at which Italians ceased to serve as legionaries, and what changes in the organisation of the army were the direct results of the troubles of the years 69 and 70. Such knowledge as we have of this important subject has been built up inductively by writers like Mommsen and Domaszewski from casual references in historians and from the study of tombstones and other epigraphical documents illustrating the nationality of the Roman soldier. It would have been easy for even such a non-military but contemporary writer as Tacitus to give a final answer to questions which are still the centre of controversy, and the orthodox answers to which are liable to be disproved by the discovery of a single inscription. The teacher of Roman history is constantly asked by enquiring pupils questions on matters of great importance which it is almost impossible to answer dogmatically; the foundations on which the statements of textbooks rest often prove to be ludicrously inadequate.

But to the teacher this may almost be regarded as a positive advantage. If he is dealing with a book of Livy or Tacitus or a speech of Cicero he is almost certain to come across casual statements of very considerable historical importance, which may even rank as *loci classici*. He can teach his class to note not only what is stated but what is implied, and can train them to reconstruct the background of the incidents narrated. This point has been already illustrated from the *Agricola* of Tacitus, but there is scarcely any work of antiquity, in prose or in verse, which cannot be treated in the same way, if only the teacher has the necessary knowledge and imagination.

A very misleading distinction is often drawn between the teaching of facts and the teaching of ideas; those who depreciate the value of pure memory-work are accused of wishing to substitute for exact knowledge the power of talking vaguely about tendencies and movements. There is indeed a real danger lest the desire to be interesting should lead the teacher of history to reduce the demands which he makes on the intelligence of his pupils, and to content himself with what is

merely picturesque, with sweeping general statements, or misleading modern analogies. This is of course the last thing which I should wish to advocate. My complaint against much present-day teaching of Roman history is not that too much detail is learned, but that this detail is learned simply as detail, and that insufficient stress is laid on its significance. It is a common experience that, as men grow older, their memory becomes in one way worse and in another way better. They lose the power of remembering facts unconnected with their main interests, but on the other hand they more easily retain what they fully understand, and what can be brought into rational connection with the body of knowledge which they have already assimilated. In short, their experience is rationalised, each new impression is digested and interpreted, and is retained simply because it is understood, while facts which have no special significance slip from the memory. The desire to correlate one's experience which is characteristic of a rational being can surely be said to exist even in the young. It is indeed extraordinary how well some children can remember what has little meaning for them, but I am confident that from quite an early age understanding is the best aid to memory. Every one recognises that to learn the propositions of Euclid by heart is of no educational value, and similarly in history the acquisition of detailed knowledge is only valuable as a preliminary ; it will only be retained if it is rationalised ; farther detailed knowledge can best be acquired and most easily remembered if it is sought for under the guidance of general ideas, corresponding to the hypotheses which direct the investigations and experiments of the man of science.

To return from this rather abstract discussion to the particular problem of the teaching of Roman history, I venture to think that a rather broader treatment of the subject than is customary would be favourable rather than otherwise to the acquisition of exact knowledge. Much harm has been done by studying the subject chronologically rather than systematically. At Oxford candidates offer one or other of three periods, but teachers find it quite impossible to restrict themselves narrowly to the particular years which their pupils are studying. The causes of the downfall of the Republic cannot be understood unless the student has followed the development of the Roman constitution from at any rate the end of the regal period. Similarly men whose period nominally begins with Augustus must go back to the Republic in order to understand the powers of the Princeps and the numerous republican institutions which survived in some form under the Principate. Some knowledge of the whole course of Roman history is required for the profitable study of any period of it ; indeed, it is desirable that the student should have at least an elementary acquaintance with the history of the whole Mediterranean world during some centuries before Rome comes into prominence.

If this preliminary training could be given at school, University teachers would be freed from a good deal of elementary instruction which at present falls upon them. At present it is desirable to make undergraduates read such books as Breasted's *Ancient Times*, Warde Fowler's *Rome* in the Home University Library, or Mr. Matheson's *Growth of Rome*. Books like these ought, however, to be mastered before they come to the University, and supplemented by rather larger works such as Pelham's *Outlines*, and Strachan-Davidson's *Cicero*—a book which bears on every page traces of a broad conception of Roman history. If there is a risk that too little detail should be learned from such a course of reading, concreteness should be introduced by the study of carefully selected ancient texts in the way which has been indicated. The teaching of language and of history should not be in different hands ; the distinction between the 'Mods, man' and the 'Greats man,' between translation and subject-matter, is an unfortunate one. No one is qualified to be a classical teacher who does not attach importance both to the accurate rendering of a text and to the intelligent appreciation of its meaning. A book of Livy or Caesar or Tacitus ought not to be regarded merely as the narrative of events occurring at a definite period, but as a document illustrating the character of Roman life and Roman government, enabling the student to visualise, so to speak, what he has learned in general terms from his text-book of Roman history.

It may be objected that the method of teaching which has been suggested will not be conducive to success in examinations, as it will leave gaps in the candidates' knowledge which will not escape the notice of examiners. Care must, indeed, be taken by the teacher that important subjects are not entirely neglected, but, as has been already said, quality rather than quantity of knowledge is what is most highly appreciated in a well conducted examination, and a certain amount of ignorance is tolerated if questions are thoughtfully answered, and the candidate obviously understands the significance of the facts quoted in illustration of an assertion.

Much of what has been said applies primarily to the teaching of Roman history in schools, but even the Universities are not entirely free from what may be called unphilosophical methods. Undergraduates are too often unable to see the wood for the trees. Enough care is not always taken to prevent them from becoming involved in controversies about details before they have sufficient general knowledge to understand the real importance of the point at issue. Teachers should practise self-denial. It is very tempting to regale their pupils on discussions of small points in which they happen to be interested, and to introduce them to all the latest theories. But this should not be done prematurely even with the ablest men. Nothing ought to be assumed, and it must be certain that the foundations are well laid before the upper storeys are

constructed. At the Universities, even more than in the Schools, Roman history should be taught from the ancient authorities. More can, so to speak, be squeezed out of an ancient text than is sometimes supposed. At present almost too many shortcuts to knowledge exist, and many University teachers look back with regret to the days when their pupils really learned their Greek history from Herodotus and Thucydides, and their Roman history from Livy, Caesar, Cicero and Tacitus. There are certain excellent books which it is as well to conceal from the undergraduate, however valuable they may be in stimulating interest in the beginner, or in providing the ' general reader ' with the information likely to interest him. It is better that he should propound crude theories based on his own reading than reproduce at second-hand the conclusions of mature scholars.

The main point which I have attempted to emphasise in these somewhat discursive remarks is that justice can only be done to the great possibilities inherent in Roman history as a subject of study if those who teach it appeal throughout to the intelligence and the imagination as well as to the memory. No detailed study of a particular period should be entered upon until the pupil has obtained an elementary knowledge of the subject as a whole, and, I may add, of the geography of the countries with which Rome was concerned. Only if this foundation has been well laid will it be possible to study with profit, say, the Hannibalic Wars or the age of Caesar. When this latter stage has been reached, information should as far as possible be derived from ancient sources and the English textbook treated as a work of reference. Stress should be laid on the significance of all facts which are learned as contributing to the solution of important problems. Details will best be retained in the memory if they are rationalised and brought into connexion with each other. This is what the superior knowledge of the teacher should enable him to do ; his function should be to suggest points of view rather than to fill the heads of his pupils with unrelated facts. Though I have deprecated premature attempts to undertake ' research,' the spirit of research ought to dominate the teaching of Roman history from quite an early stage, and the employment of ' inductive methods,' as far as circumstances allow, will increase rather than weaken the appreciation of the importance and significance of detailed knowledge.