

to his reading public the series of colorful vignettes of historical figures which it contained. Its originality, unlike that of the later works, lies more in its critical use of facts than in new discoveries, and in its different interpretation of European history.

The Introduction set Ranke apart from most contemporary Romantic historians. History was to be scientific, impartial, liberated from dependence on contemporary politics or philosophical systems; he rejected the paths of Hegel and of Michelet. History could only show "what actually happened [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*]."

Secondly, the book was quite original in its conception of Europe as the result of the interaction of two groups of peoples, the Latin and the Teutonic. The Slavs were excluded from consideration as peripheral. The description of Europe as a dynamic entity is typically Rankean, and was refined further; a more mature version can be seen in his essay on "The Great Powers." Thirdly, the critical appendix set new standards for the use of the printed sources of the Renaissance, and is useful even today. Its virtue was chiefly negative; it showed the difficulty of using such printed material and pointed the way toward recourse to archival research—a development in which Ranke followed the mandates of his own early work, and led the profession along the lines which he proposed.

The Introduction has been translated from Ranke's SW 33:v-viii.

THE PRESENT BOOK, I must confess, appeared more perfect to me before its printing than after. Nevertheless, I rely upon kindly readers who will pay attention less to its deficiencies than to its possible values. So as not to entrust it solely to its own powers, let me begin with a short explanation of its purpose, its material, and its form.

The purpose of an historian depends upon his point of view. About my viewpoint in this volume, two things must be said. First, I regard the Latin and Germanic peoples as a unit. This notion differs from three analogous concepts: the concept of a universal Christendom (which would include even the Armenians); the concept of Europe (for the Turks there are Asiatics, and the Russian empire embraces the whole of northern Asia and cannot be understood without investigating and penetrating a complete range of Asiatic affairs); and, the most analogous concept, the concept of Latin Christianity (for Slavic, Lithuanian, and Magyar races belonging to the latter have their own special and peculiar nature which I shall not include here).

By touching upon what is foreign to this unity only where necessary and only as a passing and subordinate matter, the author will remain close to the racially kindred nations of either purely Germanic or Latin-Germanic origin whose history forms the heart of all modern history.

In the following Introduction I shall try to show—by tracing the threads of international affairs—how these peoples have developed in unison and along similar lines. This is one aspect of the present book. The other is manifest from the contents: that it includes only a small portion of the history of those same nations, which we could call the beginning of the modern age. It contains only histories, not History. It comprises, on the one hand, the founding of the Spanish monarchy and the collapse of Italian freedom; and, on the other, the formation of a double opposition: political opposition by the French and religious opposition by the Reformation—in short, that division of our nations into hostile camps upon which all modern history is based. It begins at the moment in which Italy was still enjoying at least external freedom, and, if the position of the papacy is taken into consideration, perhaps even a predominance. The narrative then describes the division of Italy, the invasion by the French and Spanish, the destruction of freedom in some states and of self-determination in others, and, finally, the victory of the Spanish and the beginning of their domination. Starting with the political insignificance of the Spanish kingdoms, it proceeds to their unification and to the crusade of the united kingdoms against the infidels and for the inner renewal of Christianity. The book seeks to make clear how this crusade led to the discovery of America and the conquest of its great empires, and how, above all, it led to the Spanish domination of Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands. Thirdly, the work proceeds from the moment when Charles VIII went forth as a defender of Christendom against the Turks, through all the fortunes and misfortunes of the French, to the time 41 years later when Francis I called upon those same Turks for aid against the emperor. Finally, by following the beginnings of a political opposition in Germany against the emperor and of a religious opposition in Europe against the pope, it attempts to open the way toward a complete view of the history of the great schism caused by the Reformation. The first phase of that

schism itself will be considered. The book seeks to comprehend all these and other related events in the history of the Latin and Germanic nations as a unity. History has had assigned to it the office of judging the past and of instructing the present for the benefit of the future ages. To such high offices the present work does not presume: it seeks only to show what actually happened [*wie es eigentlich gewesen*].

But from what sources can such a new investigation be made? The basis of the present work, the sources of its material, are memoirs, diaries, letters, ambassadors' reports, and original accounts of eyewitnesses. Other writings were used only if they were immediately derived from such as these, or seemed to be equal to them in some original information. These sources will be noted on every page; the method of investigation and the critical conclusions will be presented in a second volume, to be published concurrently.

Aim and subject shape the form of a book. We cannot expect from the writing of history the same free development as is, at least in theory, to be expected in works of literature; I am not certain that it was right to ascribe this quality to the work of the Greek and Roman masters. A strict presentation of the facts, contingent and unattractive though they may be, is the highest law. A second, for me, is the development of the unity and the progress of the events. Therefore, instead of starting, as might be expected, with a general account of the political situation of Europe, which would have confused if not distracted our attention, I have preferred to discuss in detail each people, each power, and each individual only at the time when each played an importantly active or leading role. I have not been disturbed by the fact that here and there they have had to be mentioned earlier where their existence could not be ignored. But thereby we are better able to grasp the general line of their development, the paths which they followed, and the ideas by which they were motivated.

Finally, what will be said of my treatment of particulars, the essential part of the writing of history? Will it not often seem harsh, disconnected, colorless, and tiring? There exist noble models for this work, ancient and—we should not forget—modern as well. I have not tried to emulate them; theirs was another world. There is an exalted ideal toward which we can reach: the event itself in its human

intelligibility, its unity, its diversity. I know how far from it I have remained. One tries, one strives, but in the end it is not attained. Let none be impatient with this! The important thing, as Jacobi says, is always how we deal with humanity as it is, explicable or inexplicable; the life of the individual, of generations, of nations; and, at times, with the hand of God above them.

TWO INTRODUCTIONS: THE *HISTORY OF THE POPES* AND THE *HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION*

Quite aside from the works which they precede, Ranke's introductions are interesting both for the light which they cast on his research methods and for his own personal ideas about history. In them we see unfolding the nineteenth-century revolution in history, the progress in transforming history from a story based on memoirs to a story based on archival research. We see Ranke earning Lord Acton's accolade as "the real originator of the heroic study of records." Ranke used these short pieces not only to introduce his own works but to lay down a standard for others to emulate; if he only partially achieved his goal in his earlier works, from the *History of the Popes* on he produced a series of masterworks of enduring value. There are some short excerpts from other introductions in the last section of the present volume.

The selection from the *History of the Popes* is based on the translation by Elizabeth Foster (London, 1847; pp. xi-xix); that from the *History of the Reformation in Germany*, on the translation by Sarah Austin in 1845 (repr. New York, 1905; pp. vii-xi).

Introduction to the *History of the Popes*

THE POWER OF ROME IN ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES is universally known: in modern times, she has exercised renewed influence over the world. After the decline of her importance, in the first half of the sixteenth century, she raised herself to be once more the center of faith and opinion for the Romantic nations of southern Europe, and made bold, and often successful, attempts to recover her dominion over those of the North.

It is my purpose to describe, at least in outline, this period of the

revived temporal power of the Church—its renovation and internal development, its progress and decline. This is an undertaking which, however imperfectly it may be performed, could never have been attempted, had I not had the opportunity to avail myself of certain materials hitherto unknown. My first duty is to give a general indication of these materials and their sources.

In an earlier work [the Preface to the *Ottoman and Spanish Monarchies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*], I indicated the contents of the manuscripts in Berlin; but Vienna is incomparably richer than Berlin in treasures of this kind.

Besides its essentially German character, Vienna possesses an element more extensively European: the most diversified manners and languages meet in all classes, from the highest to the lowest, and the Italian in particular is fully and vividly represented. Even the collections in this city present a comprehensiveness of character, attributable to the policy of the state and its geographical position; its ancient connection with Spain, Belgium, and Lombardy; and its proximity to and ecclesiastical relations with Rome. The Viennese have from the earliest times displayed a taste for collecting, possessing, and preserving; whence it arises that even the original and purely national collections of the imperial library are of great value: to these, various foreign collections have since been added. A number of volumes similar to the Berlin *Informazioni* were purchased at Modena, from the House of Rangone. From Venice were acquired the invaluable manuscripts of the Doge Marco Foscarini, including his materials for a continuation of his literary undertaking, the "Italian Chronicles," of which no trace is elsewhere to be found. And the bequest of Prince Eugene added a rich collection of historical and political manuscripts, which had been formed, with comprehensive judgment, by that distinguished statesman. The reader is animated by feelings of pleasure and hope, on examining the catalogues, and perceiving the many unexplored sources of knowledge which will enable him to supply the deficiencies manifest in almost all printed works of modern history. A whole futurity of study! And at the distance of only a few steps, Vienna presents literary subsidies still more important. The imperial archives contain, as might be expected, the most authentic and valuable records for the elucidation of German, and general, but particularly Italian, history. It is true that

the greater part of the Venetian archives has been restored, after many wanderings, to Venice; but there remains in Vienna a mass of Venetian manuscripts far from unimportant: despatches, original or copied, and abstracts thereof made for the use of the state, and called "Rubricaries"; reports which, in many instances, are the only copies extant; official registers of public functionaries; chronicles and diaries. The notices to be found in the present volumes relating to Gregory XIII and Sixtus V are for the most part derived from the archives of Vienna. I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the unconditional liberality with which I was permitted to have access to these treasures.

And perhaps I ought here to particularize the many and various aids afforded me in furtherance of my attempt, both at home and abroad, but I feel restrained by a scruple (whether well founded or not, I am unable to decide) that I should have to mention so many names, some of them of great eminence, as would give my gratitude the appearance of vainglory; and a work, which has every reason to present itself modestly, might assume an air of ostentation ill suited to its pretensions.

Next to Vienna, my attention was principally directed to Venice and Rome.

It was formerly the almost invariable practice of the great houses in Venice to form a cabinet of manuscripts, as an adjunct to the library. It was in the nature of things that these would relate principally to the affairs of the republic. They served to show the part taken by the respective families in public affairs, and were preserved as records and memorials of the house, for the instruction of its younger members. Some of these private collections still exist, and I had access to several; but much the larger number were destroyed in the general ruin of 1797, or since. If more have been preserved than might have been expected, the gratitude of the world is due chiefly to the librarians of St. Mark, who labored to save, from the universal wreck, whatever the utmost resources of their institution would permit them to secure. Accordingly, this library possesses a considerable store of manuscripts, which are indispensable to the history of the city and state, and which are even valuable aids to that of Europe. But the inquirer must not expect too much from it: it is a somewhat recent acquisition; gathered, almost at hazard, from private collections; incomplete and without

unity of plan. It is not to be compared with the riches of the state archives, especially as these are now arranged. I have already given a sketch of the Venetian archives, in my inquiry into the conspiracy of 1618, and shall not repeat what I said there. For my Roman investigations, the reports of the ambassadors returning from Rome were above all desirable; but I had great reason to wish for assistance from other collections, because none is free of lacunae, and these archives must necessarily have sustained losses in their many wanderings. In different places, I gathered together 48 reports relating to Rome: the oldest date from the year 1500; 19 are of the sixteenth century, and 21 of the seventeenth. These formed an almost complete series, with only a few breaks here and there. Of the eighteenth century, there were only eight, it is true, but these, too, were very instructive and welcome. In the majority of cases I saw and used the originals. They contain a great number of interesting notices, the results of personal observation, which had passed out of memory with the generation. It was from these that I first derived the idea of a continuous narrative, and the courage to attempt it.

It will be obvious that only Rome herself could supply the means for verifying and extending these materials.

But was it to be expected that a foreigner, and one professing a different faith, would be permitted to have free access to the public collections, there for the purpose of revealing the secrets of the papacy? This would not have been perhaps so ill-advised as it might appear, since no search can bring to light anything worse than what is already assumed by unfounded conjecture, and received by the world as established truth. But I cannot boast of having had any such permission. I was enabled to take cognizance of the treasures contained in the Vatican, and to use a number of volumes suited to my purpose; but the freedom of access which I could have wished was by no means accorded. Fortunately, however, other collections were thrown open to me, from which I could acquire information, which, if not complete, was very extensive and authentic. In the flourishing times of aristocracy, more particularly in the seventeenth century, it was customary throughout Europe for the great families, who had administered the affairs of state, to retain possession of some of the public documents. This practice prevailed in Rome, to a greater extent, perhaps, than in any other

state. The reigning kinsmen of the pontiff, who in all ages exercised considerable power, usually bequeathed as an heirloom to the princely houses which they founded a large part of the state papers accumulated during their administration. These constituted a part of the family endowments. In the palaces which they erected, a few rooms, usually in the upper part of the building, were always reserved for books and manuscripts, which each succeeding generation contributed to enrich. Thus, to a certain extent the private collections of Rome may be regarded as the public ones, since the archives of state were dispersed among the descendants of reigning houses, without any objection's being made to the practice; much in the same manner as the superfluity of public wealth was suffered to flow into the coffers of the papal kindred, and certain private galleries, such as the Borghese or the Doria, became greatly superior to the Vatican, both in extent and historical importance (though the latter is distinguished by its selection of masterpieces). The manuscripts which are preserved in the Barberini, Chigi, Altieri, Albani, and Corsini palaces are, accordingly, of inestimable value, for the aid which they give toward a history of the popes, their state, and the Church. The Vatican public records office, which has recently been established, is particularly important for its collection of registers illustrative of the Middle Ages; for that period, it will still repay the inquirer, but, so far as my knowledge extends, I do not believe that much is to be gained from it for later centuries. Its value sinks into insignificance, unless I have been purposely deceived, when compared with the wealth and magnificence of private collections. Each of these comprises, as may readily be supposed, that epoch in which the pope of the family reigned. But since the kindred of each pontiff usually retained an eminent station, since men are in general desirous of extending and completing a collection once begun, and since opportunities were frequent in Rome because of the literary traffic in manuscripts established there, the whole of these private collections possesses many valuable documents illustrating other periods, both proximate and remote. The richest of all (in consequence of important bequests) is the Barberini; that of the Corsini Palace has been remarkable from its commencement for the care and judgment with which it has been formed. Fortunately, I was permitted to use all these collections, as well as others of less importance—and in some in-

stances with unrestricted freedom. An unhopd-for harvest of authentic and suitable materials thus lay before me: for example, correspondences of the nuncios [*nunciaturae*], with the instructions given them, and the reports which were brought back; circumstantial biographies of different popes, written with greater freedom, because they were not intended for the public; lives of distinguished cardinals; official and private journals; investigations of particular circumstances and transactions; special opinions and deliberations; reports on the administration of provinces, their trade, and manufactures; statistical tables; and accounts of receipts and disbursements. These documents, for the most part entirely unknown, were prepared by men practically acquainted with their subject, and of a credibility which, though it does not supersede the necessity for a searching and critical examination, is equal to that usually accorded the testimony of well-informed contemporaries. The oldest of these manuscripts of which I made use related to the conspiracy of the Porcari against Nicholas V. Of the fifteenth century I met with only a few; but at the beginning of the sixteenth, they became more numerous and more comprehensive at every step. Through the entire course of the seventeenth century, during which so little is known with certainty respecting Rome, they afford information, the more valuable because of its previous dearth. For the period after the beginning of the eighteenth century, they decrease in number and intrinsic value; but at that time the Roman court and state had already lost much of their influence and importance. I shall go through those Roman manuscripts, as well as the Venetian, in detail, at the end of the work, and shall note there whatever I may find which is deserving of attention and which I could not well introduce in the course of the narrative. The large mass of materials, both manuscript and printed, which is lying before me, renders a stringent condensation indispensable.

An Italian or Roman, a Catholic, would enter into the subject in a spirit very different from mine. By indulging in expressions of personal veneration, or perhaps, in the present state of opinion, of personal hatred, he would give to his work a peculiar, and, no doubt, more brilliant coloring; on many points he would be more elaborate, more ecclesiastical, more local. In these respects, a Protestant, a North German, cannot be expected to compete with him. He regards the papal

power with feelings of more indifference, and must, from the first, renounce that warmth of expression which arises from partiality or hostility and which might, perhaps, produce a certain impression in Europe. For mere matters of ecclesiastical or canonical detail, we can have no true sympathy; on the other hand, our position affords us different, and, if I am not mistaken, purer and less partial views of history. For what is there in the present day which can make the history of the papal power of importance to us? Not its particular relation to us; for it no longer exercises any essential influence, or creates in us solicitude of any kind; the times are past in which we have anything to fear; we now feel ourselves perfectly secure. Popery can now inspire us with no interest other than what results from the development of its history and its former influence.

The papal power was, however, not so unchangeable as is commonly supposed. If we consider the question apart from those principles upon which its existence depends, and which it cannot abandon without consigning itself to destruction, we shall find it affected, quite as deeply as any other government, and to the very essence of its being, by the various destinies to which the nations of Europe have been subjected. As the history of the world has varied, as one nation or another has gained the ascendancy, as the fabric of social life has been disturbed, so also has the papal power been affected: its maxims, its objects, and its pretensions have undergone essential changes, and its influence, above all, has been subjected to the greatest variations. If we cast a glance at the long catalogue of names so frequently repeated through successive ages, from Pius I in the second century, to our contemporaries, Pius VII and Pius VIII in the nineteenth, we receive an impression of uninterrupted stability; but we must not permit ourselves to be misled by the semblance of constancy. The popes of different periods are, in fact, distinguished by differences as strongly marked as those existing between the various dynasties of a kingdom. To us, who are lookers-on at a distance, it is precisely these mutations which present the most interesting subject of contemplation. We see in them a portion of the history of the world, and of the general progress of mankind; and this is true, not only of the periods when Rome held undisputed sovereignty, but also, and perhaps even more remarkably, of those shaken by the conflicting forces of action and counteraction, such

as the times which the present work is intended to comprise: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—times when the papacy was menaced and endangered, yet maintained and fortified itself; nay, even re-extended its influence; striding onward for a period, but at last receding again, and tottering to its fall; times when the mind of the Western nations was pre-eminently occupied by ecclesiastical questions; and when that power, which, abandoned and assailed by one party, was upheld and defended with fresh zeal by the other, necessarily assumed a station of high and universal importance. It is from this point of view that our natural position invites us to consider it, and this I shall now attempt.

Introduction to the *History of the Reformation in Germany*

FROM THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War, the constitution and political condition of Germany were determined by the periodical Diets and the measures there resolved on.

The time was long past in which the public affairs of the country were determined by one supreme will; but its political life had not yet (as at a later period) retreated within the several boundaries of the constituent members of the empire. The imperial assemblies exercised rights and powers which, though not accurately defined, were yet the comprehensive and absolute powers of sovereignty. They made war and peace, levied taxes, exercised a supreme supervision, and were even invested with executive power. Together with the deputies from the cities, and the representatives of the counts and lords, the emperor and the sovereign princes appeared in person. It is true that they discussed the most important affairs of their respective countries in their several colleges, or in committees chosen from the whole body, and the questions were decided by a majority of voices. The unity of the nation was represented by these assemblies. Within the wide borders of the empire nothing of importance could occur which did not come under deliberation here; nothing new arise, which must not await its final decision and execution here.

In spite of all these considerations, the history of the Diets of the empire has not yet received the attention which it deserves. The Recesses [documents summing up all the decisions of the emperor and Diet published at the conclusion of the session] of the Diets are sufficiently well known; but who would judge a deliberative assembly by the final results of its deliberations? Projects of a systematic collection of its transactions have occasionally been entertained, and the work

been taken in hand; but all that has hitherto been done has remained in a fragmentary and incomplete state.

Since it is the natural ambition of every man to leave behind him some useful record of his existence, I have long cherished the project of devoting my industry and my powers to this most important work. Not that I flattered myself that I was competent to supply so large a deficiency, to exhaust the mass of materials in its manifold juridical bearings; my idea was to trace with accuracy only the rise and development of the constitution of the empire, through a series (if possible unbroken) of the Acts of the Diets.

Fortune was so propitious to my wishes that, in the autumn of 1836, I found in the archives of the city of Frankfurt a collection of the very kind I wanted, and was allowed access to these precious documents with all the facility I could desire.

The collection consists of 96 folio volumes, which contain the Acts of the imperial Diets from 1414 to 1613. In the earlier part it is very imperfect, but step by step, in proportion as the constitution of the empire acquires form and development, the documents rise in interest. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, from which time the practice of reducing public proceedings to writing was introduced, it becomes so rich in new and important materials that it lays the strongest hold on the attention. There are not only the Acts, but the reports of the deputies from the cities—the *Rathsfreunde*—which generally charm by their frankness and simplicity, and often surprise by their sagacity. I profited by the opportunity to make myself master of the contents of the first 64 of these volumes, extending down to the year 1551. A collection of imperial Rescripts occasionally afforded me valuable contributions.

But I could not stop here. A single town was not in a position to know all that passed. It was evident that the labors of the Electoral and princely colleges were not to be sought for in the records of a city.

In the beginning of the year 1837, I received permission to explore the Royal Archives of the Kingdom of Prussia at Berlin, and, in the April of the same year, the State Archives of the Kingdom of Saxony at Dresden, for the affairs of the empire during the times of Maximilian I and Charles V. They were of great value to me: the former as containing the records of an electorate; the latter, down to the end of that

epoch, those of a sovereign principality. It is true that I came upon many documents which I had already seen at Frankfurt; but, at the same time, I found a great number of new ones, which gave me an insight into parts of the subject hitherto obscure. None of these collections is, indeed, complete, and many a question which suggests itself remains unanswered; yet they are in a high degree instructive. They throw a completely new light on the character and conduct of such influential princes as Joachim II of Brandenburg and, still more, Maurice of Saxony.

Let no one pity a man who devotes himself to studies apparently so dry, and neglects for them the delights of many a joyous day. It is true that the companions of his solitary hours are but lifeless paper, but they are the remnants of the life of past ages, which gradually assume form and substance to the eye occupied in the study of them. For me (in an introduction an author is bound to speak of himself—a subject he elsewhere gladly avoids) they had a peculiar interest.

When I wrote the first part of my *History of the Popes*, I designedly treated the origin and progress of the Reformation with as much brevity as the subject permitted. I cherished the hope of dedicating more extensive and profound research to this most important event of the history of my country.

This hope was now abundantly satisfied. Of the new matter which I found, the greater part related, directly or indirectly, to the epoch of the Reformation. At every step I acquired new information about the circumstances which prepared the politico-religious movement of that time, the phases of our national life by which it was accelerated, and the origin and working of the resistance which it encountered.

It is impossible to approach a matter originating in such intense mental energy, and exercising so vast an influence on the destinies of the world, without being profoundly interested and absorbed by it. I was fully aware that if I executed the work which I proposed to myself, the Reformation would be the center on which all other incidents and circumstances would turn.

But to accomplish this, more accurate information was necessary as to the progress of opinion in the evangelical party (especially in a political point of view), antecedent to the crisis of the Reformation, than any which could be gathered from printed sources. The archives

common to the entire Ernestine line of Saxony, deposited at Weimar, which I visited in August 1837, afforded me what I desired. Nor can any spot be more full of information on the marked epochs at which this house played so important a part than the vault in which its archives are preserved. The walls and all the interior space are covered with the rolls of documents relating to the deeds and events of that period. Every note, every draft of an answer, are preserved here. The correspondence between the Elector John Frederick and the Landgrave Philip of Hesse alone would fill a long series of printed volumes. I endeavored, above all, to make myself master of the two registers, which include the affairs of the empire and of the League of Schmalkald. As to the former, I found, as was to be expected from the nature of the subject, many valuable details; as to the latter, I hence first drew information which is, I hope, in some degree calculated to satisfy the curiosity of the public.

I feel bound here publicly to express my thanks to the authorities to whom the guardianship of these various archives is entrusted for the liberal aid—often not unattended with personal trouble—which I received from them all.

At length I conceived the project of undertaking a more extensive research into the archives of Germany. I repaired to the Communal Archives of the House of Anhalt at Dessau, which at the epoch in question shared the opinions and followed the example of that of Saxony; but I soon saw that here I should be in danger of encumbering myself with too much matter of a purely local character. I remembered how many other documents relating to this period had been explored and employed by the industry of German inquirers. The work of Bucholtz on Ferdinand I contains a most copious treasure of important matter from those of Austria, of which too little use is made in that state. The instructive writings of Stumpf and Winter are founded on those of Bavaria. The archives of Württemberg were formerly explored by Sattler; those of Hesse, recently, by Rommel and Neu-decker. For the more exclusively ecclesiastical view of the period, the public is in possession of a rich mass of authentic documents in the collection of Walch, and in the recent edition of Luther's letters by De Wette; and still more those of Melancthon by Bretschneider. The letters of the deputies from Strasburg and Nuremberg, which have

been published, throw light on the history of particular Diets. It is hardly necessary for me to mention how much has lately been brought together by Foerstemann respecting the Diet of Augsburg of 1530, so long the subject of earnest research and labor.

Recent publications, especially in Italy and England, lead us to hope for the possibility of a thorough and satisfactory explanation of the foreign relations of the empire.

I see the time approaching when we shall base modern history no longer on the reports even of contemporary historians, except insofar as they were in possession of personal and immediate knowledge of facts; and still less, on works yet more remote from the source; but rather on the narratives of eyewitnesses, and on genuine and original documents. For the epoch treated in the following work, the prospect is no distant one. I myself have made use of a number of records which I found when in the pursuit of another subject, in the archives of Vienna, Venice, Rome, and especially Florence. Had I gone into further detail, I should have run the risk of losing sight of the subject as a whole; or in the necessary lapse of time, of breaking the unity of the conception which had arisen before my mind in the course of my past researches.

And thus I proceeded boldly to the completion of the work, persuaded that when an inquirer has made researches of some extent in authentic records, with an earnest spirit and a genuine ardor for truth, though later discoveries may throw clearer and more certain light on details, they can only strengthen his fundamental conceptions of the subject—for truth can be but one.

CRITIQUE OF GUICCIARDINI

Ranke's programmatic statements on the need for critical research and a careful use of the sources are stated briefly in the Introductions to his major works, and are glimpsed occasionally in the narrative of his major histories. However, it is in a number of his smaller, more technical essays and fragments that we see the critical faculties of the historian actually at work. His most famous piece of extended criticism, indeed a book-length work, is to be found in the second part of his first published work, on the history of the Latin and Teutonic peoples. Following closely on the publication of the narrative came a long critical appendix, *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber*, in which Ranke systematically evaluated the major historians upon whose work study of the Renaissance era had previously depended, and upon whose work much of his own first book was based. More than the narrative, it was the critical appendix which won the young scholar a reputation among colleagues, and his appointment to the professorial position at Berlin. It represented the most detailed and sharply evaluated survey of the historiography of the early-sixteenth century which had yet appeared.

Ranke's most famous piece of criticism was directed against Francesco Guicciardini, whose *History of Italy* was regarded both as the best Renaissance historical work, and as a reliable source for much of the complicated politics of that era.

The following selection, slightly abridged for reasons of space, gives Ranke's account of Guicciardini. It is critical to the point of being hostile, and some Guicciardini scholars have protested that he distorted his subject.

Yet this essay represents more than a young historian's seeking to make his reputation at the expense of a predecessor. It shows us Ranke at the very outset of his career, when he first turned his attention to a careful use of printed sources and memoirs, before he developed his skills and opportunities in the unpublished archives of Europe. It is the judgment of one great historical mind upon another, and reveals something about both.

The following excerpt from the second part of his first book, unlike the narrative, has never before been translated. It was included in Ranke's *Sämtliche Werke* under the title "Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber." SW 33/34 includes the 1874 revision of Ranke's original text of 1824; the later version is used in this selection.

Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* was first published in Florence, in

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

In 1877 the aging Ranke attended a lecture at the University of Berlin in which Wilhelm Scherer maintained that Ranke's work was an outgrowth of Romantic philosophy and that Ranke himself was essentially close to the position of Hegel. The old historian rebuked the speaker: "I am indeed much more original than you think!" and stalked away.

Yet we know that behind the careful student of the sources lurked a mind of deep philosophical and religious interests; Ranke expected to derive some insight into the plan of the universe, a philosophy of history, but one derived only from careful historical research. The fine distinctions of method and position between Ranke and his contemporaries have been explored by modern scholars such as Wilhelm Mommsen, *Stein, Ranke, Bismarck* (1954); Helmut Diwald, *Das historische Erkennen* (1955); and Carl Hinrichs, *Ranke und die Geschichtstheologie der Goethezeit* (1954). Another good survey of the problem can be found in Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (1968).

Since Ranke rarely discussed philosophy in his histories, most such research has been based on his notes and private papers. A clear statement of his views early in his career can be found in the following fragment, which was written in the 1830s and offers a good counterpart to the lecture on history and politics. In reviewing his career, Ranke declared that "It is laughable to hear that I am lacking in philosophical and religious interests; it was just these, and these alone, which drove me to history." Yet he maintained that he was far from an Hegelian in method. "From the particular we can indeed thoughtfully and boldly ascend to the universal; but from the universal, there is no way to the particular." What Ranke rejected was, not philosophy as such, but the notion that philosophical systems could be used to explain history; yet there certainly was room for contact between the two.

The selection was chosen from Ranke's papers, and posthumously published by Alfred Dove in *Weltgeschichte* IX, Part II, pp. vii-xi.

IT HAS OFTEN BEEN NOTED that there is a certain contradiction between immature philosophy and history. Some thinkers have decided on *a priori* grounds what must be. Without observing that others,

more doubting, will disagree with their ideas, they set forth to rediscover them in the history of the world. Out of the infinite array of facts, they select those which they wish to believe. This has been called the philosophy of history! One of the ideas which is continually repeated in the philosophies of history is the irrefutable proposition that mankind is involved in an uninterrupted progress, a steady development of its own perfection. Fichte, one of the first philosophers of this type, assumed that there are five epochs of what he called a world plan: the rule of reason through instinct, the rule of reason through law, the liberation from the authority of reason, the science of reason, and the art of reason. Or, put otherwise: innocence, original sinfulness, complete sinfulness, initial justification, and completed justification. These stages can also appear in the life of an individual. If this or similar schemes were somehow true, then universal history would have to follow a progression, and the human race would travel in its appointed course from one age to another. History would be completely concerned with the development of such concepts, with their manifestations and representations in the world. But this is largely not so. For one thing, philosophers themselves are extraordinarily at odds about the type and selection of these dominating ideas. Moreover, they consider only a few of the peoples in the world's history, regarding the activity of the rest as nothing, merely superfluous. Nor can they disguise the fact that from the beginning of the world to the present day the peoples of the world have experienced the most varied circumstances.

There are two ways to become acquainted with human affairs: through the knowledge of the particular, and through the knowledge of the abstract. There is no other method. Even revelation consists of the two: abstract principles and history. But these two sources of knowledge must be distinguished. Those historians who disregard this err, as do those who see history as only a vast aggregation of facts which must be arranged according to a utilitarian principle to make them comprehensible. Thus they append one particular fact to another, connected only by a general moral. I believe, instead, that the science of history is called upon to find its perfection within itself, and that it is capable of doing so. By proceeding from the research and consideration of the individual facts in themselves to a general view of

events, history is able to raise itself to a knowledge of the objectively present relationships.

To make a true historian, I think that two qualities are needed, the first of which is a participation and joy in the particular in and for itself. If a person has a real fondness for this race of so many, so varied, creatures to which we ourselves belong, and for its essential nature, always ancient and somehow always new, so good and so evil, so noble and so brutish, so refined and so crude, directed toward eternity and living for the moment, satisfied with little yet desirous of everything; if he has a love of the vital manifestation of humanity at all, then he must rejoice in it without any reference to the progress of things. To his observation of humanity's virtues he will add an attention to its accompanying vices, to its happiness and misfortunes, to the development of human nature under so many varied conditions, to its institutions and customs. In summary, he must seek to follow the kings who have ruled over the races, the succession of events, and the development of the chief undertakings. All this he should do for no purpose other than his joy in the life of the particular individual, just as we enjoy flowers without considering to which genus of Linnaeus and Oken they belong. Enough: he must do this without thinking how the whole appears in the individuals.

But this is not enough. It is essential that the historian also have an eye for the universal. He ought not to conceive of it *a priori* as the philosopher does. Rather, his consideration of particular individuals will show him the course which the development of the world as a whole has taken. This development is related, not to the universal ideas which have ruled in one or another period, but to something completely different. No people in the world has remained out of contact with the others. This relationship, inherent in a people's own nature, is the one by which it enters into universal history, and must be emphasized in universal history.

There are some peoples who have armed themselves more powerfully than their neighbors on the planet, and these above all have exercised an influence upon the rest. They were the chief cause of the changes, for good or ill, which the world has experienced. Our attention ought to be directed, not to the ideas which some see as the directing force, but to the peoples themselves who appear as actors in history,

to their struggles with one another, to their own development which took place in the midst of these peaceful or warlike relationships. It would be infinitely wrong to see only the effects of brute force in the struggles of historical powers or to conceive of the past in that way. There appears a spiritual essence in power itself, an original genius which has its own proper life, fulfills more or less its own requirements, and forms its own sphere of action. The business of history is to perceive the existence of this life, which cannot be described by a thought or a word. The spirit which appears in the world is not of such a conceivable nature. It fills all the boundaries of its being with its presence; nothing about it is accidental; its manifestation is founded in everything.

ON THE RELATION OF AND DISTINCTION BETWEEN HISTORY AND POLITICS

Ranke's address "On the Relation of and Distinction Between History and Politics" ("De historiae et politicae cognatione atque discrimine") was delivered in 1836 as his formal inaugural lecture as professor at the University of Berlin. Actually, the promotion had been awarded earlier, in 1834, in reward for his services as editor of the *Historisch-Politische Zeitschrift*. As the foreign minister, Ancillon, remarked to the minister of education, Altenstein, Ranke's promotion was desirable "more in the general interest of the state than in that of the university," and initially he was paid out of the general treasury rather than from the university budget. The philosophical faculty was never asked to vote on the appointment, and was informed only afterward that it had taken place. Ranke's great series of works, beginning with the *History of the Popes*, which earned him an international reputation, were published after he had gained his professorial rank. Though his editorship of the journal ceased in 1836, Ranke remained a conservative supporter of the Prussian government in university controversies relating to academic freedom.

In 1841, after his appointment as Prussian Royal Historiographer, he began to research and publish his first version of the *History of Prussia* in nine books. During the Revolution of 1848 he addressed several memoranda to King Friedrich Wilhelm IV urging him to resist liberal demands, and joined some 60 professorial colleagues in petitioning for a dismissal of the Frankfurt assembly. Ranke's conservatism was sincere (when Bismarck ruthlessly overrode principles in order to make Prussia supreme in Germany, Ranke thoroughly disapproved); but it was also opportune, though closely related to his whole way of viewing politics as part of the historical process.

This lecture should be considered, in conjunction with his 1836 "Political Dialogue" and 1833 essay on "The Great Powers," as one of the basic statements of his thoughts on history.

In it Ranke describes some of the common misapprehensions about the usefulness of history in politics, decisively rejects the Enlightenment approach of seeking universal laws of society and politics, and argues that each state can be governed correctly only by those who, through the

study of history, can understand the past experience and development of their state, and govern in accordance with the principles which underlie its particular and unique nature. He differed from many conservatives in allowing for gradual change and historical development of these underlying principles, but was repelled by what he regarded as the doctrinaire approach of liberals. Here he has attained a much more mature view of the relation between history and politics than was manifest in his earlier disclaimer of their connection, in order to study only "what actually happened." But he warns that the value of history to politics is indirect, not a matter of simple imitation.

The style is rather formal, with a certain stiffness of expression, which betrays in part its Latin origin, in part a personal aversion to the ceremonial occasion. In April 1834 he had written to his friend Heinrich Ritter, "Unfortunately, a Latin dissertation and similar lecture are still required, which I have little desire to do, so that I am not yet famous among the faculty." In 1836, which saw the close of his political-journalistic activities, as well as this inaugural lecture, Ranke took leave of politics to retire to his study and lecture room, to fulfill the program of national histories which enlarged the insights laid down in "The Great Powers." The political experience, even this summation of it, was not without value for that larger task. In 1872, when revising his Prussian History for his Collected Works, Ranke pointed to the significance of this lecture for his career: "It included a few sentences which almost serve as a motto for the enlarged Prussian history which will follow."

This selection has been translated from the German version written by Ranke's brother Ferdinand, in SW 24:280-93, and compared with the original pamphlet from Ranke's library, now in The George Arents Research Library for Special Collections at Syracuse University.

AS YOU ARE WELL AWARE, my honored audience and dear colleagues, nothing occupies people in our times more than the desire and inclination to improve government or to cast it into new forms. I believe that this urge originates from two causes: partly from boredom with the institutions of our ancestors, which they say have changed and deviated from the original intentions of their creators; and partly from a certain preconceived notion about the best forms of government, which has, somehow, been absorbed into every soul like a physical necessity and to whose standard the state must conform itself for its own good, either at once or gradually. Nor can we say that only ignorant or evil persons, seized with an inordinate desire for novelty,

have chosen this path. We know rather that there are honorable men, patriots, who have adopted the same viewpoint, or at least have not condemned it.

But it is marvelous that this general tendency of thought and spirit has not brought forth its expected fruit! How many states are there which have not been troubled and shaken by this pressure? And have we not seen men driven to complete blindness and criminal acts in the carrying out of such plans, which they dreamed would lead them to wisdom and virtue? Indeed, we have observed that the praiseworthy zeal to improve a bad and perverted form of government has been transformed into a rejection of good laws, into public disorders, and, finally, into a frenzy of madness. Thus great storms break out, preventing the pilot from controlling the rudder of government or steering the ship by a fixed course. The people are deprived of their ability to consider or to recognize what would be useful or harmful; one would be fortunate indeed to rescue oneself safe and sound from the dark clouds and stormy winds which sweep the sea.

The freedom for which men have aspired has often been turned into a slavery detested by honorable men through the domination of a foolish and terrible mob. And when we inquire about the form of government which has resulted from this change, we can discover nothing based on solid foundations which could promise or ensure that security which is necessary for the real development and cultivation of the human spirit. Indeed, the more a state is shaken and torn by these storms of opinion and party, the more it seems to drive itself into still more violent disturbances. In the words of Vergil, it flows with burning sorrow here and there. The most extreme tendencies are always preferred to whatever is good and healthy. Thus whenever a division of minds occurs today, it suddenly seizes upon and poisons an otherwise peaceful people. At times we fear that the entire series of previously overcome misfortunes is about to occur once again.

I have no doubt, dear listeners, that most of you have thoroughly studied the reasons why such justified hopes and expectations have so seldom met with success. The causes, we all understand, are of many kinds and differ in different countries. They can be explained only with great thoroughness and completeness, as our own age has certainly learned. But there is one reason, and a very universal one, which

is often advanced, and it is a discussion of this reason which I should like to bring to your attention.

History, they say, not only is no longer listened to by the younger generation, but is even intentionally set aside. If youth paid more attention to its precepts and to its continuing series of events, and considered their necessity, then matters might have gone more according to our liking. Though this argument has the appearance of complete truth, it is actually somewhat dubious. For many deny decisively that history can or must be drawn upon to bring order to government. What does history, which gives us a supply of knowledge of previous ages, have to do with the improvement of contemporary states? The establishment or improvement of their political constitutions requires a completely different science. History sometimes excuses deep-rooted evils by explaining their origins, but their remedy can be obtained only by the new science of politics, first developed in our time. There is a steady progress of the human race, and we can raise no longer those questions which occurred in other ages, only those which concern us today. When one is afraid to trust one's own strength and looks to untrodden paths to find newer or better things, the human situation appears to resemble more the sorry picture of a stagnant pond or dirty swamp than the joyful and happy image of a running stream.

And, in fact, to concede the undeniable: drawing history into the governing of a state involves the greatest difficulties, and not only for the reason cited above. History itself does not offer such certain prescriptions that no one could doubt their worth. Writers appear daily who neither seek nor find anything in history which does not agree with their political doctrines. Do not the same differences in opinion which divide states into parties also appear no less passionately in the researching and retelling of the events? There are disputes over the nature and character of the Middle Ages, over the original customs and mores of the German peoples, over the virtue of men honored in antiquity, and, finally, over the origin and beginnings of the human race. So far is history from improving politics that it itself is more usually corrupted by it.

But how are we to judge all this, my dear listeners? Is it really true, as a few maintain, that there is nothing at all which is really certain and true in the study of the humanities? Do we, or do we not, know the

events of ancient periods, and their history? Is it possible to understand their inner nature, or shall we remain ignorant of it for all eternity? Can we not draw up ways in which a well-governed state can be distinguished from a corrupt one, the constitution of Tarento distinguished from that of Rome, of the ways in which virtue differs from vice? God forbid! Humanity would then descend to the level of beasts; everything would then be given over to a game of blind chance. No, no one can deny that nature and Divine Providence have afforded us a deep insight into the causes of misfortune and happiness, and the ability to determine how good laws differ from evil customs. No one will maintain that we suffer such great blindness or lack of understanding that we are unable to distinguish anything about the nature and ways of previous ages.

What is your verdict, my esteemed audience? Do you believe that some knowledge of past events contains nothing useful which is applicable to the present or future? Will you agree that there is no close connection and kinship between history and politics? I cannot think that you would agree to such a view. But there is a question as to what relationship exists between the two. This question can hardly be raised in our days without the danger of error. Nonetheless, its utility and necessity are so great that I do not shrink from raising it, especially amid a gathering whose good intentions are beyond doubt. I shall thus discuss the relationship between history and politics, attempting to show what the borders of these disciplines are, where one touches upon the other, where they part ways, and what distinctions exist between them.

Starting with history, as the better known of the pair, let us mention that its aim is not so much to gather facts and to arrange them as to understand them. History rests not solely on memory, as some believe, but above all on critical understanding. Nor can we deny that it is difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to select from many accounts the one which is factually the best. Those who know only by hearsay the role of criticism are aware of its use in historical circles. And yet this is only part of the task of historical studies.

Another still more glorious and difficult part consists in observing the causes and premisses of events, as well as their results and effects, and in distinguishing exactly the intentions of men, the mistakes which

cause some to fail while others succeed. We recognize why one arises and another declines, and how states are strengthened or dissolved: in short, we comprehend equally the hidden causes of events as well as their visible appearance. Whoever wishes to accomplish this turns profitably to history. Just as natural science not only attempts to draw a careful picture of nature, but also strives to investigate the higher goal of the eternal laws governing the world itself in its parts and members; just as science endeavors to press on to the inner sources of nature from which all things spring, so it is with history. Although it pursues the succession of events as sharply and accurately as possible, and attempts to give each of them its proper color and form, and ascribes to these efforts the highest value, still history goes beyond this labor and moves on to an investigation of origins, seeking to break through to the deepest and most secret motives of historical life.

Some presume to fly to such heights but deceive themselves, embracing a cloud instead of Juno. Their efforts secure them only formulas and empty wind in place of truth. A few of them are aware of an obscure sense of dissatisfaction with their ideas, take refuge in philosophical or theological doctrines, and transform their historical studies. But we should not conclude from these errors that the goal which they have set for themselves does not exist. Though they cannot attain their object, the goal is there. The victor's palm which they fail to win will one day be awarded; and like the victor's prize at Elis, in Horace's phrase, be accompanied homeward in the awareness of divine happiness.

But we must proceed, if I am not mistaken, in a completely different way to make progress.

History by its nature must reject poesy and empty shadows, and can accept only the completely certain and sure. It requires prudence as well as boldness of spirit. On the one hand, it must research individual events with the greatest care, and avoid errors; on the other, it must not allow itself to be dissipated in the multiplicity of events, but must press on with steady gaze toward its final goal, despite the fact that this procedure denies the human yearning to comprehend everything on the first attempt. History leads us to unspeakable sweetness and refreshment at every place. For what could be more pleasant and more welcome to human understanding than to become aware of the

inner core of events, of their deepest mysteries; or to observe in one nation or another how men's enterprises begin, increase in power, rise, and decline? Or gradually to attain a knowledge, either directly through a justified intuition or indirectly through a sharp-eyed, thorough recognition, of those things in which each human age excelled, or sought or strove to attain and achieved? For this is likewise a part of divine knowledge. This is what we seek with the help of history to attain; history is motivated wholly by this effort. Who will ask whether this be useful or not? It suffices to recognize that such knowledge is as useful as any other, that it belongs to the perfection of the human spirit.

We now approach politics. The question as to whether it is an art or a science requires us to begin with a few remarks about government. If I am not mistaken, there ought to appear in the life of states the same continuity of life we ascribe to the human race. Men die; one age follows another or supplants it. But states, which far outlast the longevity of the individual, enjoy a very long and always regular life. We can take Venice as an example. From the time when the city was founded in a lagoon of the Adriatic Sea, we see how it proceeded in the same manner for a thousand years: its marriage with the sea; its conquest of neighboring lands: often by craft and often by force; its creation of a secret state power; its favoring of the populace and suppression of the aristocracy; its growth, development and flowering, and its eventual decline and fall. These can be perceived by anyone who follows the history of Venice. The same theme appears in all its marvelous persistence and succession through different centuries like the life of a single person. Similarly [the Roman historian] Florus artfully distinguished certain ages in the character of the Roman state. In the course of time, collapse comes even to states themselves, and not only to those which must endure a conqueror's law and authority, but also, astonishingly, to those who have been victors and have imposed their yoke on others. The Roman state was unable to preserve or even to retain its old city laws when it began to dominate and rule the world. For it is in the nature of human affairs that the stronger part, whether it leave the battleground as victor or as vanquished, gradually gains the upper hand and destroys the individuality of the weaker part. But, as it happens, the latter's life is not wholly destroyed; nothing is ever completely abolished. Though something appears to

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE LATIN AND TEUTONIC NATIONS

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One of the most quoted of Ranke's pieces is the first he ever published. In 1824 the unknown *Gymnasium* teacher from Frankfurt on Oder appeared before the German public as the author of the *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations, 1494-1535*. It was a small work, offering a survey of Europe at the turning point between medieval and Renaissance times. Though not a best seller, the book attracted scholarly notice and some criticism. Above all, it won the attention of officials in the Prussian ministry of education, and led to Ranke's appointment as extraordinary professor of history at the University of Berlin in the spring semester of 1825. His career was launched.

The *History* covers the chief European nations from 1494 only to 1514; a planned second volume intended to carry the story to 1535 was never completed. The narrative is colorful, but the research was not profound; Ranke depended chiefly on printed sources and contemporary histories by Machiavelli, Guicciardini, and others. In a critical appendix he compared these earlier writers and their sources. Painstakingly he uncovered a host of errors: misinformation, distortion of the facts, and plagiarisms. Ranke may have exaggerated in some respects—Guicciardini's reputation has been somewhat restored by later historians—but the result of his work was to demonstrate clearly the impossibility of writing accurate history from contemporary historians and memoirists.

The same critical talent which gained him appointment to the university faculty at Berlin was too dissatisfied with completing the work based on the same printed sources, and the second volume was dropped after Ranke's attention had been brought to an extensive manuscript collection of relations by ambassadors of the former Republic of Venice, housed in the Berlin library. These opened his eyes to the possibility of an historical reconstruction done from eyewitness accounts and official documents. This led to his more ambitious expedition in 1827 to explore the archives of Austria and Italy, and his whole future work.

Fifty years later, in 1874, the aging Ranke debated whether to include his imperfect youthful book in his edition of his Collected Works. After some consideration, he concluded that he should, at least to present

collapse, it is only merged into a more perfect society. Thus a new life is born, and another course of events established, which are closely related to the former existence, and connected with it in retrospect.

And if we now ask, "What is it which enables a state to live?" then it is the same as with the individual, whose life incorporates both body and spirit. So too with the state. Everything depends on spirit, which is the pre-eminent of the two. Although we are not granted the privilege of bringing the hidden to view, revealing the soul and its activity, the very source and current of life, by indicating it precisely with definite proper names, still we are able to observe what lies before our eyes, and to reach conclusions about the remote causes of events by reflecting on its mysteries. For the spirit cannot be touched with the hand or the eye; it is known by its successes and its effects. Who would be foolish enough to think that he could see God with his eyes? And yet no one would hesitate to maintain that He exists and that everything has its origin in Him.

I come now to the point which I have undertaken to prove. We perceive states and peoples, whether contained in larger or smaller boundaries, living and flourishing according to their own customs, which they share with no other people, and according to their own laws and particular institutions. It is obvious that each state has a completely definite character and a life of its own, which distinguishes it from all others, and that everything which it has and does derives from this character. Since this is so, it is not hard to indicate the task and duty of those who govern the state. Esteemed listeners, how would you judge those who, caught up in some attractive prejudice, seek to achieve their own ends, regarding everything older as outmoded and useless; men who set aside everything without considering whether its forms and laws have been blessed by usage, and who undertake to transform abruptly a state which they do not really know? It seems to me that they hardly fulfill their duty, but instead tear down rather than build. Let us listen to a man who has some experience in governing. "Every people," Cicero tells us, "every social institution, which is a creation of the people, every state, which belongs to the people, must be ruled according to a certain plan if it is to endure." It is self-evident how much this viewpoint agrees with our own. For by nature every living thing flees death and seeks its self-preservation. It is ap-

parent that the chief point of civic wisdom is that those who are entrusted with the honor and authority of ruling the state should take care to maintain and preserve it, leading it daily toward ever greater perfection. Cicero describes for us in the same passage how this should take place: "this plan is always to be derived from the foundations on which the state was established." In those foundations are contained the source and origin of the inner life of which we speak. Thus the helmsman of a ship must know the difference between a warship and a merchantman. No one should control the rudder of a ship of state who does not completely know not only the nature of the sea in which he sails, but also the nature of his vessel. He who lacks this thorough knowledge would do better to take his hands off the wheel. For he would necessarily destroy the very institutions which he is supposed to preserve, scattering and extinguishing their life. I believe that only those who have achieved the closest relationship and identity with the nature of the state which they represent can distinguish themselves in politics.

Up to now, dear listeners, we have considered separately the offices and limits of history and politics. It should not be hard to derive from this the connection which exists between the two, and to determine in what their relationship and distinction consist.

First, it is clear that the basis of both is one and the same. Just as there can be no politics which does not rest on a complete and exact knowledge of the state which is to be ruled—and that knowledge is inconceivable without knowing the events of past ages—and just as history incorporates this very knowledge, or attempts to comprehend it, so it is clear that in this matter both are most closely connected. I do not say that politics is impossible without a perfect historical understanding. For there is a critical use of human reason which likewise with divine inspiration can penetrate into the nature of things. Nor do I recommend a special type of education for those who would be suited for government. Rather, I shall try to probe the nature of the problem, unconcerned whether a carefully achieved education or a kind of prophetic intuition is better suited to reach those heights of which we spoke. It is, after all, the task of history to extract from past events the nature of the state and to bring us to an understanding of it; the task of politics, to carry on and develop it after recognition and understand-

ing are successfully achieved. The knowledge of the past is incomplete without an acquaintance with the present; an understanding of the present is impossible without a knowledge of the past. They clasp one another's hands. One cannot exist, or be complete, without the other.

Nevertheless, I am not one of those who believe that nothing new should be allowed to take place. We know from experience how human nature is prone to error, how human affairs can easily take a turn for the worse. We see in order for life itself to continue to flow and progress that new enterprises are daily necessary, and that even storms can be essential. Political wisdom consists, I think, not so much in preservation as in progress and in growth. The human race lacks much of what it needs to grow toward its highest perfection. History itself would already have reached its limits, and achieved its eternal goals, if we did not wish to continue striving to reach these heights and summits.

This is, honored listeners, the relationship between history and politics as I conceive them. Both comprise at once a science and an art. As sciences they are most closely connected, though one is more concerned with the past, the other with the present and the future. As art they are much farther apart. History is based wholly on literature. Its task consists in renewing our vision of the way in which events have occurred, and human nature behaved, and in preserving the memory of them for all time. But politics belongs to practical affairs. It strives to hold men together through the bond of the state, to preserve their peace through the wisdom of law, to bind them in free consent to join together, so that they will behave properly in their private and public lives. History and politics differ from one another, just as do theoretical and practical philosophy. One is proper to the school and to retiring persons; the other is concerned with the market place, to disputes and public strife; one is practiced more in shadow and the other in the light of day; one suffices simply to preserve, the other passes beyond preservation to the creation of something new.

I believe, esteemed listeners, that I have taken account of those who will object that there are aspects of politics which have nothing in common with history, yet are of the greatest importance. These consist in the natural laws affecting the state, not only the proper administration of field and forest, but also the way in which income is to

be obtained and spent, how cities should be governed, courts held, laws given and enforced. In fact, I would not want to disparage a science which is also so rich in discernment, truth, and utility. Rather, I would see it as no less necessary for the state than medicine is for the human body. Human society forms its own body; political economy shows how the members of a state are closely bound to one another, and displays for us their arteries and veins, the location of their breathing and blood, and teaches in what the healthy functioning of the body politic consists, so that sickness can be healed or avoided. It is of such great importance that ignoring its prescriptions leads, not to the damage of one part, but to the destruction of all parts. Nonetheless, this statement does not weaken in the least our earlier argument. First of all, the historian no less than the politician requires an exact and ready familiarity with these things; the events which he studies are often the result of the health of the state. Secondly, the science of politics does not have such sufficient weight and regard that every political transaction must depend upon it. Just as a strong and healthy person will pay some heed to medical advice, but will hardly be so obedient to it that he will allow it to direct his whole life to the same extent as a sick person would, so it is with the healthy and wisely ordered state. It bases itself on the maxims of political economy and quietly observes them, but hardly remains so timidly tied to them that it does exactly only what their rules allow. It never renders them a slave-like obedience. The state keeps in sight other laws of higher significance, more comprehensive viewpoints which proceed from the drives of its own inner life, drawn from its spirit and heart, which allow mankind to play a part in divine freedom.

At this point in our discussion, we come to another distinction between the two closely related disciplines. History is by its nature universal. True, some do concentrate their efforts completely on their fatherland, narrowly conceived, on their own state, on one small dark corner of the earth. But this is more out of a certain prejudice or piety or a praiseworthy tendency toward careful work than from any intellectual forces deriving from the nature proper to the discipline. The latter consists in the conviction that nothing human can be alien to history, which aims to comprehend all centuries and all monarchies. It is quite different with the nature of politics, which always exists

in relation to a given state, is exercised for the state's benefit, and, as such, is always restricted within certain limits. For who would attempt to govern by himself universally over every country? He would be fortunate indeed to understand how to administer one. Many are called to steer the ship of state; not a few are forced to abandon the rudder. This art of politics requires, if any does, keen understanding and the force of genius accompanying it to uncover and establish things. It requires courage and, if I am right, is the most difficult art of all.

And now let us return to our starting point.

The error of the philosophers of the last century was that they formulated a universal doctrine according to which every state must be ruled. They avoided the painstaking work of scholarship by which particulars could be discovered. They were so seized with disgust at the undeniable corruption which had established itself in public affairs that they convinced themselves that everything must be reformed according to the design for the best form of government. The different peoples were to receive one and the same law, and a common form of government was suggested. And so they attempted to do everything possible. They saw their role first as the weakening, dismantling, and destruction of their ancient institutions. From this, they proposed, were to follow general happiness and the return of a golden age. But soon they themselves came to realize that one cannot without penalty dislodge and bring into dispute the basic elements and origins on which human society is founded. They were taught that states possess a character of their own, which can be suppressed by force and violence, but which is not easily completely destroyed, and which can be resurrected. To their own personal regret, they opened the way for the greed and ambition of the worst men, who cleared the air at immeasurable expense to the human race, and even today, as in Spain, continue to bring calamity upon the government.

And now I turn to you, dear colleagues. History, whose professorship I have occupied for the last few years, and which I assume formally by today's celebration, has immeasurable good to offer to a healthy politics. It clears away errors and misunderstandings, which in our age affect the eyes of even the best men. A few remind us constantly that our own age can learn no lessons from history, still less derive our laws from it. They perceive things as too different, not only because

of the extraordinary skills of craftsmen and factory owners and the spread of education to the lowest classes, but also because the general awareness and humanity of all classes surpass those of all previous ages. They appear great to themselves, so that they might ignore their fathers and forefathers. Others, in contrast, assure us that our age is the worst which has ever existed. They maintain that it lacks piety, religion, courage, and justice. They complain that it is so full of errors that it can hardly be improved. The one will accept only what is new and unheard of, since this alone will be suited to the changed character of the contemporary period. The other favors only what has been approved by the usage of antiquity and treads as closely as possible in the footsteps of his ancestors.

But history teaches us that every age has its own weakness for error and its own potential for virtue. We ought to proceed neither from doubt nor from pride and arrogance. We also learn that each age has its own given tasks, as does our own, and that we must attempt to perform them with effort and concern. Finally, we recognize not only that human affairs are neither guided by a blind, inevitable fate, nor steered by false visions, but that their successful conduct depends on virtue, understanding, and wisdom. I invite you, dear colleagues, to take this science to your hearts. May we follow the paths which it suggests, guided too by the fatherland, the examples of ancient and modern times, and, finally, the nature and necessity of things themselves.

THE STATE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

In our times historical studies have turned more than ever toward the original remains of the past from all the centuries. The deciphering of the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, the collection of Greek and Roman inscriptions, the editing of documents and literature from the Middle Ages, the scholarly search through modern archives—all, despite differences in object, methods of study, and intellectual abilities, have the same end: to go beyond inherited tradition, to establish mastery over the lives of former times through direct participants or those related to them, and to see the past like the present before one's own eyes.

The modern centuries have also produced in more than one nation historians of real talent who are perhaps equal to the masters of antiquity. But they stand in a far different—and indeed disadvantageous—relation to present studies than do the earlier writers. Archaeological discoveries scarcely touch the area of political events with which the historical accounts are concerned. The archival research of modern times is directed primarily to this topic. The ancients stand alone and great over a dead world, and are hardly vulnerable to criticism based on other information. The moderns, in contrast, can receive such criticism in its fullest extent. The materials still exist from which they composed their works. And beyond these are countless other witnesses to the forces, drawn from the course and interaction of affairs, which affect every historical event. I would surprise you if I asserted that archival study of periods slightly removed from our times has an advantage over a view of the present. But it allows us to recognize more completely and clearly the relationship of events than we can surrounded by contemporary passions and interests. How much in every period remains necessarily secret, and even intentionally falsified! The inner circumstances of events first come to light with their results. While still engaged in struggle, the conflicting intentions cannot possibly be

given justice. It is precisely this conflict of contemporaries which gives rise to most historical works of a period, and which determines the historical tradition. These have in themselves an invaluable worth; but in order not to be directly dependent upon them or their errors, and to avoid continuing unintended or intentional distortions and bias, it is necessary to seek a broader basis for our portrayal. This can be gained only through a study of the original documents of the period and through the light which subsequent time has cast upon it. This is, I think, particularly suited to the progress of German historical scholarship, which expresses the genius of the nation in attempting to comprehend the history of all other peoples with the same trouble and effort as its own. One should not allow oneself to be bound and determined by the one-sided conceptions which necessarily form in every nation, in every age, as a reaction to political tendencies. Otherwise, a universal history of objective value would be unthinkable.

Everything hangs together: critical study of authentic sources, impartial understanding, objective narration—the goal is to bring to life the whole truth.

I advance an ideal which people will say is unrealizable. The facts are thus: the idea is infinite; the achievement by its very nature, limited. Fortunate enough, when one sets forth on the correct path and attains a result which can withstand further research and criticism.

from the *History of England* (SW 21/22:113).

The rich variety of history consists in its assimilation of the biographic impulses. But biography can also, at certain times, broaden into history.

from the Introduction to his biography of Wallenstein (SW 23:v-vi).

ON UNIVERSAL HISTORY

I

Great peoples and states have a double character—one national, and the other belonging to the destinies of the world. Their history, in a similar manner, presents a twofold aspect. Insofar as it forms an essential feature in the development of humanity in general, or records a prevailing influence exercised upon that development, it awakens a curiosity which extends far beyond the limits of nationality; it attracts the attention of and becomes an object of study for even those who are not natives of the lands whose story is narrated.

Perhaps the difference between the Greek authors who treated the history of ancient Rome in its flourishing period, and the Romans themselves, consists in the fact that the Greeks regarded the subject as it affected the entire world, while the Romans looked at it nationally. The object is the same: the writers differ in the positions from which they view it, but together they inform posterity.

Introduction to the *History of France* (SW 8:v).

II

When we contemplate the framework of the earth, those heights which testify to the inherent energy of the original and active elements attract our special notice; we admire the massive mountains which overhang and dominate the lowlands covered with the settlements of man. So also in the domain of history we are attracted by epochs in which the elemental forces, whose joint action or tempered antagonism has produced states and kingdoms, rise in sudden war against each other, and amidst the surging sea of troubles upheave into the light new formations, which give to subsequent ages their special character. Such an historic region, dominating the world, is formed by that epoch of [seventeenth-century] English history to which the studies, whose results I venture to publish in the present work, have been devoted: its

importance is as great where it directly touches on the universal interests of humanity as where, on its own special ground, it develops itself apart in obedience to its inner impulses. To comprehend this period we must approach it as closely as possible: it is everywhere instinct with collective as well as individual life. We discern how great antagonistic principles sprang almost unavoidably out of earlier times, how they came into conflict, where the strength of each side lay, what caused the alternations of success, and how the final decisions were brought about; but at the same time we perceived how much, for themselves, for the great interests which they represented, and for the enemies which they subdued, depended on the character, the energy, and the conduct of individuals. Were the men equal to the emergency, or were circumstances not stronger than they?

From the conflict of the universal with the particular the great catastrophes of history arise, yet it sometimes happens that the efforts which seem to perish with their authors exercise a more lasting influence on the progress of events than does the power of the conqueror. In the agonizing struggles of men's minds ideas and designs appear which pass beyond what is feasible in that land and at that time, perhaps even beyond what is desirable; these find a place and a future in the colonies, the settlement of which is closely connected with the struggle at home. We are far from intending to involve ourselves in juridical and constitutional controversies, or from regulating the distribution of praise and blame by the opinions which have gained the day at a later time, or which prevail at the moment; still less shall be guided by our own sympathies: our only concern is to become acquainted with the great motive powers and their results. And yet how can we help recognizing manifold coincidences with that conflict of opinions and tendencies in which we are involved at the present day? But it is no part of our plan to follow these out. Momentary resemblances often mislead the politician who seeks a sure foothold in the past, as well as the historian who seeks it in the present. The Muse of History has the widest intellectual horizon and the full courage of her convictions; but in forming them she is thoroughly conscientious, and, we might say, jealously bent on her duty.

Introduction to the *History of England* (SW 14:ix-x).

III

. . . In the sense in which I use it, universal history encompasses the events of all nations and periods, with this limitation: that they be possible subjects for scholarly work. For a long time, the view of universal history drawn from the prophetic Biblical books, of the four universal monarchies, was accepted as satisfactory. This view persisted even into the seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth it was replaced by that of the progress of the modern world. Under the influence of the revolution in ideas, universal history was secularized. The previous concept became untenable after the publication of the voluminous history of nations published in England under the title *History of the World*. This found a corresponding response from German historians, and stimulated them to similar efforts.

But a history of the several nations is not sufficient. A collection of the history of different peoples in narrower or broader framework is still not a universal history. The interrelationships of things is lost from sight. This is precisely the task of the study of universal history: to recognize these interrelationships, to indicate the course of large-scale events, which bind all the peoples together and dominate their history. Even a glance teaches us that such a relationship exists.

The origins of culture belong to an epoch whose secrets we cannot decipher. But its further development forms the most powerful manifestation in the centuries for which we have a reliable tradition. No single word can completely describe its nature. It includes both the religious and the political, the foundations of law and of human society. Sometimes the ancient, inherited condition of one or another Asiatic people is regarded as the basis of all history. But it is impossible to proceed from a people of perpetual unchangingness to grasp the inner dynamics of universal history. The nations can come under consideration only insofar as they react upon one another and with each other form a living unity.

What we call culture, or civilization, contains one of the most powerful motives for its own inner evolution. Were we to ascribe to this process a specific goal, then we would only obscure the future and miss the boundless breadth of the historical process. Within the

limitations of historical research, we encounter only the most varied forms in which this civilization appears, while at the same time it is resisted by the indigenous forms and customs of the different peoples and races. These too have their own original justification, and cannot be coerced. But history does not consist solely in cultural development. It arises still more from impulses of a completely different sort, the antagonism between nations, which fight over territory and predominance with one another. In these battles, which always also include the domain of cultural life, the great powers of history are formed, which continue without respite contending for leadership; thereby the particular is transformed by the universal, at the same time defending itself against the latter and reacting toward it.

World history would become fantasy and philosophic dream if it were to cut itself off from the sound foundation of national history; but neither can it remain upon that plane. In the nations themselves the history of humanity appears. There is an historical life which passes progressively from one nation to another, from one group of peoples to another. In the battles of individual groups of peoples universal history arises, and the nationalities themselves are brought to self-awareness. The nations themselves are not entirely natural creations. Nationalities of such great power and unique cultural form as the English or the Italian are not so much the products of their own land and race as results of great changes in events.

How then are we to investigate and understand the general life of humanity and at least that of the foremost nations? We dare not ignore the laws of historical criticism, as they apply to every research into particular events. For only critically researched history can be regarded as history. Our eyes must always be directed toward the universal. But false premisses can lead only to false conclusions. Critical research, on the one hand, and comprehensive understanding, on the other, will reinforce one another.

In discussions with trusted friends, I have often raised the question, whether it would be at all possible to compose a universal history in this sense. The conclusion was that it is not possible to satisfy these most stringent standards, but it is necessary to try.

Weltgeschichte I, pp. vi-ix.

SPIRIT AND THE STATE IN HISTORY

KARL: But you will not deny that these distinctions [in the abstract types of the monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy] are important. You will not disagree that the different states have something in common?

FRIEDRICH: It seems to me, however, that we must distinguish between the real and the formal elements. The formal is the universal; the real, the particular, the living, element. Certain forms of constitution—namely, those which are intended to limit personal power or the relationship of the classes—may be necessary for all states. But these are not the original source of life, which alone can give content to the forms. There is something which makes every state not merely a compartment of general reality, but a living individual, a unique self.

KARL: If I understand you correctly, your opinion differs from others in that one usually begins with the different political forms, and proceeds from them to present the particular examples of the types described. You, on the other hand, regard these forms only as a secondary, subordinate element. For you the original fact is the unique spiritual existence of the individual state, its principle.

FRIEDRICH: Let me explain with an example from the study of language. The forms by which grammar operates are generally applicable. They repeat themselves universally in a certain way. But the spirit of each particular language creates an infinite variety of modifications. By the principle of the state we should understand, not an abstraction, but its inner life. This principle gives to these forms of human society what is undeniably essential: their own specific modification, their own reality.

KARL: You maintain that there are different spiritual essences, then, which alone bring to life all the various constitutions and societies. . . .

FRIEDRICH: All the states which count in the world and are significant are motivated by a particular tendency of their own. It would be ridiculous to describe them as so many police departments for the benefit of individuals who have compacted together to protect their property. These tendencies are, rather, of a spiritual nature, which determines the character of their citizens, and indissolubly marks them. Out of the differences which arise from these tendencies come the modifications in constitutional forms everywhere, although these modifications also derive from common necessity. Everything depends upon the higher idea. This remains so even if we say that the states also derive their origin from God. For the idea is of divine origin. Every independent state has its own independent life, which, like any living thing, can, of course, perish. But while it lives it fills its whole environment and dominates it; it is identical with no other state.

KARL: In this sense, you take the states to be individuals?

FRIEDRICH: Individualities, each analogous to one another but essentially independent. Instead of these temporary conglomerations which the contract theory of the state presents, like cloud formations, I see them as spiritual substances, original creations of the human mind—one could say, thoughts of God. . . .

KARL: In this regard it would be possible for the state always to become more perfect. This would admit of progress.

FRIEDRICH: Only admit? The state is a living being whose every nature requires that it develop unceasingly, and progress irresistibly.

KARL: After what model, what ideal?

FRIEDRICH: All life bears its ideal within itself. The innermost drive of spiritual life is movement toward its idea, toward greater perfection. This drive is inborn, implanted in its origins.

KARL: You will not deny that there are often obstacles, failures, or even, let us say, relapses?

FRIEDRICH: When are they ever lacking in human affairs? But we should not lose courage for this reason. When we are otherwise healthy, these are only passing illnesses.

KARL: I still cannot see how these can be made harmless, for your government has no formal counterweight.

FRIEDRICH: Nonetheless, there is a spirit of the community which is not so easy to overcome. It can be obscured, but as long as some vital energy remains, it will reappear, gain the upper hand, and, in the end, dominate affairs and move them in its direction. It is, moreover, a great thing how the common interest becomes personified in the prince and necessarily appears as his own interest in his self-awareness.

KARL: But then why don't you allow the spirit of the community to come to its full awareness and expression? Why do you avoid representative bodies?

FRIEDRICH: Heraclitus tells us that the hidden harmony is often better than the obvious one. You must not misunderstand me. I do not condemn these forms of government. I wish that, wherever they do exist, they would develop in as salutary and brilliant a manner as possible. But I do not regard them at all as being indispensable. I am of the opinion that the public spirit has still other organs which often serve it even better.

KARL: Do you mean that this inner relationship is better than all forms of social contract?

FRIEDRICH: What naturally belongs together does not need it. No treaty is required between parents and children, between brothers and other members of the family.

KARL: I have one more thing on my mind. You give to the state so many attributes of spiritual unity, and the submission you demand to it is so complete, that I am afraid that you encroach upon the territory of the church.

FRIEDRICH: I should think not. Church and state are perpetually separate. The church links mankind in the highest, most supreme, society. She establishes an unchangeable rule of conduct, the rule of this mysterious society, that of religion. She tries to ward off everything which might damage it. But here is also the limit of her effectiveness. In a positive way, she does not have any influence upon human affairs. Whatever she claims in secular power she loses in spiritual force. She has, as I have said, nothing direct to do with the institutions of the state.

KARL: But both of these possess a spiritual nature. Where would you draw the boundaries between them?

FRIEDRICH: The spirit of the church is applicable to all humanity, is universal. By nature, each church asserts its universality. The idea of the state, on the other hand, would be destroyed if it were to include the entire world, for there are many states. The spirit of the state is truly touched with the divine, but rests upon human efforts. The state is a society of limited nature; above it there soars a higher society more freed from practical affairs.

KARL: Now I believe I grasp your thought as a whole: the states are spiritual entities, distinguished from one another by necessity and by their idea. Forms of constitution and the particular institutions necessitated by the general requirements of human existence are modified by this idea, which first fills them with reality and necessarily makes them into something different. Private and public life are up to a certain point identical. Private life is also dependent upon the idea which animates the state. These manifold creations of spiritual life are subordinated to the highest society, that of the church.

FRIEDRICH: But only come to see these entities in their full significance! So many separate, earthly-spiritual communities, called forth by genius and by moral energy, caught up in never-ending development, each in its own way progressing toward the ideal with its own inner drive, through the disturbances of the world! Behold them, these heavenly bodies in their orbits, their mutual attraction, their systems!

from the "Political Dialogue" (SW 49/50:323-24, 328-29, 337-39).

FREEDOM AND NECESSITY

In history, too, freedom and necessity contend with and infuse each other. Freedom appears more in personalities; necessity, in the life of common humanity. But is the first really ever complete, or the second ever absolute?

(SW 40/41:v).

THE GREAT COMBINATIONS

Out of the distance of the centuries we come to know the great combinations which lie within things. But the real activity of any contemporary present cannot be dependent upon these combinations. It arises from a proper conduct of the matters immediately at hand, on the good cause which one supports, on the moral energy which one applies. The forces which determine the progress of world history are, I might say, a divine mystery; the worth of a man consists in his own self-determination and activity.

from the *History of the Reformation in Germany* (SW 4:46).

History is no criminal court.

from his biography of Wallenstein (SW 23/24:513).

THE HISTORIAN'S TASK

The task of the historian: Everyone is satisfied when a poetic work combines spiritual content and pure form. When a scholarly book thoroughly works over its material and explains it anew, we expect no more. The task of the historian is at once both learned and literary, for history is at once both art and science. It must fulfill the same demands of criticism and learning as a philological study, yet offer the educated reader the same pleasure as the most accomplished literary production. One might perhaps incline to the belief that beauty of form can be attained only by a sacrifice of the truth. Were this so, then we would have to give up the ideal of joining art and scholarship, and condemn it as false.

But I am convinced of the contrary. I think that the effort to improve the form also improves the investigation. On what should we base our narrative if not on living knowledge? But this is not to be achieved without penetrating and creative research. A free and great form can be the result only of something most fully understood and apprehended.

This is truly an ideal, which will never be attained, and which is unendingly difficult to strive toward. Successful poetic creations are undying; historical works of great reputation and usefulness become obsolete. This is especially true of modern history, where the nature of the subject makes it inevitable that much will remain hidden for a long time, and where an author will have no means other than his suspicion with which to discover (or perhaps conceal) events which he will nonetheless present as recognized truth. Facts which later come to light reveal the attempted reconstruction as erroneous. The chief requirement for an historical work remains always that it be true; that events actually happened as they are described. The scholarly service performed by the work is by far the most important. In order for us to put together a work which does not bear the imprint of the past, our research must proceed to a stage at which the whole truth in its full extent can be safely determined.

from the *History of France* (SW 12:5).

THE HISTORIAN'S IDEAL

To look at the world, past and present, to absorb it into my being as far as my powers will enable me; to draw out and appropriate all that is beautiful and great, to see with unbiased eyes the progress of universal history, and in this spirit to produce beautiful and noble works; imagine what happiness it would be for me if I could realize this ideal, even in a small degree.

(SW 53/54:261).

THE HISTORIAN'S OFFICE

To his son Otto

May 25, 1873

I was overjoyed by the hearty reception which you have accorded the Correspondence [of Friedrich Wilhelm IV with Bunsen]. One requires an inner sympathetic understanding which can arise only from conviction to appreciate the book. Had I felt duty bound to public opinion or anxious to win its applause, I would never have written it. But that was never my intention. Historical scholarship and writing is an office which can be compared only with the priest's, no matter how secular the objects with which it is concerned.

For the running current seeks to dominate the past and force it into its course. The historian exists to understand and to learn to understand the significance of every epoch in and for itself. He must impartially keep in view only the object itself and nothing more. Over everything hovers the divine order of things, which, though it cannot be directly proven, can be intuited. In this divine order, which is identical with the succession of the ages, significant individuals have their place; and in such a way must the historian comprehend them. The historical method, which seeks only the genuine and the true, thus

enters into an immediate relationship with the highest questions of humanity. . . .

from "Erinnerungen an Leopold von Ranke mit bisher ungedruckten Aufzeichnungen desselben . . ." (*Gartlenlaube*, 51 [1895], 874).

AN HISTORIAN MUST BE OLD

January 1877

The proverb tells us that poets are born. Not only in the arts, but even in some scholarly fields, young men develop into full bloom, or at least show their original energy. Musicians and mathematicians have the expectation of attaining eminence in early years. But an historian must be old, not only because of the immeasurable extent of his field of study, but because of the insight into the historical process which a long life gives, especially under changing conditions. The great writers of antiquity lived among the movements of republican politics: the most read and perhaps the best of all historians, on the very threshold of the republic and the monarchy, nourished by the first and not hindered by the second, at the moment when the latter gathered into itself all the strands of civilization.

It is fortunate for a modern historian to belong to a monarchical state, especially in an age which does not limit his genius. But it would hardly be bearable for him to have only a short span of experience. For his personal development requires that great events complete their course before his eyes, that others collapse, that new forms be attempted. It is often said that an historian must be active in public affairs. This may well be true, if one is thinking of an account of the particulars of government. But this experience is not universally required of all historians. What is necessary is that they have a vital participation in the events of the time, that where possible they make intimate acquaintance with the principal leading personalities, so that the changing pattern of events appears before their eyes as it occurs. My own sympathies belong to a monarchy, which offers a secure basis for cultural life, and acts independently in world affairs. But I have never felt allegiance to any particular or narrowly restrictive form of monarchy.

a diary entry (SW 53/54:613).