

as remained became tenants at will.<sup>1</sup> In England, on the contrary, custom and public sentiment and royal policy had no such counteracting influence to contend with, and the outcome of the contest was the law as we find it in Coke. But even there, in many of Coke's phrases, we can discern how recent and how severe the struggle had been.<sup>2</sup>

Before I sit down I should like to express the feeling which, I am sure, from time to time comes over those who are working at economic history. It is of how very little we as yet know about it. I will not venture to discuss what may be the value of historical work as an aid in handling the problems of the present; nor to distinguish between the half a dozen different things which are commonly confused together under the name of "the historical method." Our President, in the treatise we have all been reading, has held out the olive branch,<sup>3</sup> and even those whose general position is most undeductive will do well to listen to his overtures of peace. But he confesses that it is, after all, very much a matter of temperament whether a man works at economic history or economic theory.<sup>4</sup> Well, if a time should ever come—I do not say it ought—when, after puzzling over "final utility" and "disutility," it should, even mistakenly, occur to anyone that the abstract method scarcely gives him results sufficiently tangible to satisfy his particular temperament, he will not do amiss to remember that there is an alternative field of work. Putting it on what some will regard as the lowest ground—the satisfaction of intelligent curiosity—it is not worth while to try to remove some part of the veil which still conceals from us the life of our forefathers.

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<sup>1</sup> Hanssen, *Agrarhistorische Abhandlungen*, i. pp. 431-2.

<sup>2</sup> *E. g.* "But now *magistra rerum experientia* hath made this clear." Co. Litt. 60 b: and such phrases as "Note that Littleten alloweth," etc., *ib.* 62 a, 63 b.

<sup>3</sup> Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, especially p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.