

ticular stage has produced them. They have been produced by the growth of science in general. Their roots are in the soil of universal civilization, not properly in our own English soil.

This remark has a somewhat wide application, and cannot be confined to scientific discoverers. It modifies our whole view of the subject, and makes us ask what after all is an age, when the word is applied to an individual state. I maintain that not everything, not even everything great, which happens in England, belongs to English history. What do we mean by England? A strange materialism is prevalent on this subject. Our political controversies often betray that when we speak of England or of Ireland we are thinking only of a country. But what we have to deal with is no mere country. It is a community of human beings who have a common organic life, a common development, owing to causes much more vital than mere juxtaposition. It is not the country England, but the organism which for convenience we name after the country, that we ought to have in view when we speak of the Victorian age. And the question should be, not merely what notable things may have been done, or what notable persons may have lived within the four seas during this half century. No mere country, and, what is more, no mere population. Not a mere multitude of individuals, but a great organic whole composed of individuals. By the Victorian age we mean a stage in the corporate life

of this great organism. The organs of this organism are institutions, magistrates, ministers, assemblies. They grow and are modified from time to time according to the needs of the whole. But its well-being depends upon the energy of its vitality, and this lies deeper than all institutions, and is to be studied in national character, in habits, in ideals, in beliefs.

Perhaps these observations may give a certain degree of distinctness to an idea which seems so vague. Nothing so easy, but nothing so useless, as to enumerate all the wonderful characteristics of the nineteenth century, and adding to them all the remarkable things that may be found in half a century of English history, to label the sum total "Victorian age." On the other hand it is quite legitimate, and it is profitable, to ask how much development there has been, and of what kind, during this half century in that great composite whole, the English nationality, of which the development through some fourteen centuries is what we call English history.

Nevertheless even this is too large a question to be profitably treated in a single lecture. The greatest branch of this development, the reforming and transforming legislation of the period, I am almost afraid at this wild moment of party strife to touch. And indeed that unity I spoke of, that English organism or body politic, becomes more easily visible when we stand a little aside from the political fray.

*(To be continued.)*

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THERE is no cant more hypocritical than that of the oratorical stock-jobber who exalts our public system of education, and then turns around and enslaves the teachers who have made it what it is. "A magnificent system!" they say, but the teacher is at once treated as a hireling who hasn't sense

enough to select his own text books, or arrange his own course of study. If our school system is grand, and the artist is greater than his work, then the teacher must be grander. Let us stop prating about the excellence of our school system, or else treat the teacher as one who is able to direct his own affairs.