

Advertiser, July 16/12

### MR. JAMES BRYCE.

#### A GREAT PERSONALITY.

The Right Hon. James Bryce, Ambassador for Great Britain to America, who is to arrive in Adelaide to-morrow on a short visit, was thus described by Mr. Justin McCarthy when he was still a member of the British House of Commons. Mr. Bryce relinquished the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1907 to take his present important position at Washington:—

#### A Scholarly Man.

“James Bryce is universally recognised as one of the intellectual forces in the British House of Commons. When he rises to make a speech everyone listens with the deepest interest, feeling sure that some ideas and some instruction are sure to come which no political party in the House can well afford to lose. He would be considered an effective and even a commanding speaker in any public assembly, nevertheless his speeches are thought of mainly for the truths they tell and the lessons they convey, and not for any quality of mere eloquence which adorns them. He has always been an Irish Nationalist, and has shown himself a steady and consistent supporter of the demand for Irish Home Rule.

“Before he turned his attention to active political life he studied for the bar, became a member of the profession, and practised in the law courts for some years. He is probably above all things a scholar. He is, I may venture to say, the most scholarly man in the House of Commons. I doubt whether there is in England so widely-read a man in all departments of literature, art, and science as Bryce. It is not too much to say that his great historical work, ‘The Holy Roman Empire,’ is destined to be an English classic and a book for all countries and all times. His turn of mind has been always that which distinguishes the practical student—the student of realities, not the visionary or dreamer. His most important work after his great history of the Holy Roman Empire is undoubtedly his book on ‘The American Commonwealth.’ This has been read as generally and studied as closely on the one side of the Atlantic as on the other.

“One could hardly have looked for so much versatility even in Mr. Bryce, as to favor the expectation that he could accomplish, with something like equal success, two historical works dealing with such totally different subjects and requiring such different methods of analysis and contemplation.

#### Mr. Bryce and South Africa.

“More lately still he brought out his impressions of South Africa. It appeared when the prospects of war with the Transvaal Republic were opening gloomily for the lovers of peace and fair dealing in England. If Mr. Bryce’s impressions of South Africa could only have been appreciated and allowed to have their just influence with the leaders of the Conservative Party at that critical time, England might have been saved from a long and costly war, and from much serious discredit in the general opinion of the civilised world.

“But if Mr. Bryce had spoken with the tongue of an angel he could not at such a time have prevailed against the rising passion of Jingoism and the overmastering influence of mining speculators. The warning which Mr. Bryce gave, and gave in vain, to the English Government and the English majority, was a warning against the credulous acceptance of one-sided testimony, against the fond belief that the proclamation of Imperialism carried with it the right to intervene in the affairs of every foreign State, and against the theory that troops and gold-miners warrant any enterprise.

#### In the House of Commons.

“Mr. Bryce’s Parliamentary career began in 1880, when he was elected for a London constituency. At a later period he represented a Scottish constituency, and when Mr. Gladstone came into power Bryce received the important office of Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Later still he became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with a seat in the Cabinet. In 1894 he became President of the Board of Trade, one of the most important positions in any Administration. I have often noticed the effect produced in the libraries and committee rooms when the news is passed round that Mr. Bryce is on his feet. Everybody knows that something will be said to which it is important that he should listen, and there is forthwith a rush of members into the Chamber. There can hardly be a higher tribute to a man’s importance as a debater than the fact that his rising to address the House creates such an effect, and I have seen it created again and again whenever the news went round that ‘Bryce is on his legs.’

“The tribute is all the higher in this case, because Bryce is not one of the showy debaters whom everybody wants to listen to for the mere eloquence and fascination of their oratorical displays. Everybody knows that when he speaks it is because he has something to say, which ought to be spoken, and therefore ought to be heard. He is no lover of paradox; he has no desire to create a sensation; he merely wants to impress the House with what he believes to be the truth, and his great quality is that of a beacon, and not of a flashlight. His arguments appeal to the intellect and the reasoning power, he speaks of what he knows; he has large resources of thought, experience, and observation to draw upon, and his listeners feel convinced beforehand that he will tell them something they did not know already, or will put his case in some new and striking light.

#### Courageous Amid the Despondent.

“It was during the time that Lord Salisbury was in power that many of the Liberal leaders seemed to have grown weary of the political struggle. A species of dry-rot appeared to have broken out in Liberalism, men on whom the Liberals of England had long been wont to rely suddenly showed an apparent loss of faith, and either relapsed into silence or spoke in language which suggested an inclination to cross over to the enemy’s camp. The two principal impulses to this mood of mind were the South African War and the Irish Home Rule question. There were at least three Liberal leaders who took a very different course. Three of them at least not merely nailed their colors to the mast, but stood resolutely in fighting attitude, and proved themselves determined to maintain the struggle. These three men were Campbell Bannerman, John Morley, and James Bryce. The Liberal cause in England owes a debt that never can be forgotten to the three men whom I have named for their unflinching resolve and activity in the House of Commons; and of the three none did better service than that which was rendered by James Bryce.

“Although always a student of books and men, he is never a recluse, and I do not know of anyone who seems to get more out of life than does this philosophic historian. His London home is noted for its hospitality, and one is certain to meet distinguished men and women from all parts of the civilised world; representatives of literature, science and art, of scholarly research, and political movement, and of travelled experience are sure to be met with in his home. Among his special recreations is mountain-climbing, and he was at one time president of the Alpine Club. Mr. Bryce has been made a member of most of the great intellectual and educational institutions of the world, has held degrees and honors from the universities of Europe and the United States, and could hardly travel anywhere abroad without finding himself in recognised association with some school of learning in every place where he makes a stay.”

but when invited to visit some ruins he said he was content to “let bygones be bygones.” (Laughter.) Philosophy again was a record of the efforts man had made to try and fix his place in the universe. People might say it allowed of no finality being reached. Nevertheless, the immense effort put forward in endeavoring to solve these problems was an integral part of the history of the race and part of what a university should teach. In the United States nearly half the men who went through the universities intended to follow a commercial life. In America they thought they would be better business men, for practical purposes, if they had a university training. He did not think they had quite reached that stage either in Great Britain or in Australia. He would like to see the legislative halls of this country, as of other countries, recruited from the universities. There were more difficult problems of government to be faced now than ever existed before. (hear, hear)—and this fact made it doubly important that there should be provided at the university a complete course of study for those who desired to be of service to their fellows as public men. (Loud and continued cheering.)

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### ADVANCING SCIENCE.

#### REMARKS BY MR. BRYCE.

MELBOURNE, July 15.

Mr. James Bryce visited the university to-day, and was presented with an address by Sir John Madden (the Chancellor) in behalf of the university. Mr. Bryce, who was tendered an enthusiastic reception, said he was glad to know that the State Governments were showing their appreciation of the work the universities were attempting and accomplishing, and he hoped that in this matter there was no need for any conflict of opinion between the Commonwealth and the States. He understood that the Commonwealth Government had shown its appreciation of the value of advancing science by the appointment of Professor Gilruth and Professor Spencer to conduct important work in the Northern Territory, and by making a handsome contribution to provide that the Association for the Advancement of Science might hold its annual conference in Australia. It would be of great benefit to Australia if the scientific luminaries of the old world visited its shores—of benefit both to them and to the people of the Commonwealth. Such a visit should promote, not only scientific investigations, but closer relations between the countries. (Cheers.) He would also like to see scholars from Australia go far more frequently to Europe. The Legislatures here might rest assured that all the money they expended in the promotion of science was a good investment, and would return large dividends to the community. The wealthy men of Australia might well follow the example of some of the American millionaires, who frequently devoted enormous sums for educational purposes. (Cheers.) There were special industrial problems engaging the attention of nearly all the Legislatures of the world. To deal with them a considerable amount of knowledge was required, and, therefore, too much stress could not be laid upon the value of education. Young men who intended to devote themselves to politics could bring themselves to the highest state of efficiency only by a close study of the past as well as of the present.