I must at the very beginning make two confessions; in the first place, the formal subject of this address is largely an excuse for introducing the subject indicated in the sub-title. I want to give a sketch of this plain country squire as a pretext for saying something about the relations between genealogy and history. I have long felt that genealogists are wasteful of their opportunities and do not do their fair share, or at least do not do as much as they might, toward the great object to which this Society and this building are dedicated, the increase of our knowledge of the past. There are no more industrious, more intelligent, and more devoted workers in old records than those engaged in genealogical research. There are few persons engaged in any kind of research who are brought into contact with such vivid and such enlightening sources of historical information. Yet they often come back from their rich harvest fields not, like reapers, loaded with heavy sheaves of historical knowledge, but, like gleaners, with only a scanty store of names and dates and relationships. This somewhat amateur intrusion of a student of history into the unfamiliar field of genealogy is intended to test the correctness of this statement.

Secondly, I must confess that my interest in this Chester County Squire, Thomas Cheyney, is greater because his name is the same as

* An address delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Society, May 11, 1936.
my own, though he is not my direct ancestor. I do not know that I need make any excuse for this interest. It is a common human proclivity; at least it is a normal interest of our later lives. The historian Gibbon in the introductory paragraph of his Autobiography remarks: "A lively desire of knowing and of recording our ancestors so generally prevails that it must depend on the influence of some common principle in the minds of men. We seem to have lived in the persons of our forefathers.... Our imagination is always active to enlarge the narrow circle in which nature has confined us. Fifty or a hundred years may be allotted to an individual, but we step forward beyond death with such hopes as religion and philosophy will suggest; and we fill up the silent vacancy that precedes our birth by associating ourselves to the authors of our existence.... The satirist may laugh, the philosopher may preach, but reason herself will respect the prejudices and habits which have been consecrated by the experience of mankind."

When we are young usually we take little interest in our ancestry. We ourselves and those about us are too important in our eyes and too personal to be looked upon as merely the progeny of those who have gone before; too clearly individualized to be considered only as members of a clan. Somewhere about middle life, however, the idea of family continuity, of the fact that we are the descendants of our forefathers, that we are somewhat like beads on a string, grows upon us. It is then, unfortunately, mostly too late to get the best results. It is a familiar experience that, by the time we have become really interested in our ancestors, so many of those who could have answered our questions about them have passed on that we are driven for the most part to written records for our information. The death of the older members of the family is one of the irreparable losses of life.

So much for introduction. Now for the man himself. He lived in Thornbury Township in that part of Chester County that has since been separated from the rest as Delaware County. His house was of the familiar type of eastern Pennsylvania farmhouses, built of native stone—mica-schist, with occasional black heads of hornblend and rusty pieces of quartz to break the uniformity, the delight of architects, the envy of New Englanders and Southerners who live in frame houses. It still lies nestled in a fold of the low hills of that region. Here he lived his eighty years, and his remains lie in the family graveyard on the top of a hill nearly where, on every
Memorial Day, they are now decorated by the more patriotic of his descendants. His people were already well established on Chester County soil. He was of the third generation in this country. The family had taken literally the Biblical injunction to go forth and multiply and replenish this new land. He was the oldest of five children and himself had nine. His younger brother, my great-grandfather, had fourteen; one of his sons had eight children, another six. One brother had a large farm adjoining his own, another had a sawmill on Chester Creek; some of the family were scattered on farms in that region; one relative had a country store, another was a saddler, and still others migrated west and south.

Thomas Cheyney was born in 1731. He was all his life a farmer, although, as will appear, he had public duties which must often have interfered with those of the farm. In 1778, when he was forty-seven years old, he was made a justice of the peace and his docket book, from that year to 1803, lies among the manuscripts of this Library in the gallery above this room. During the Revolution, from 1777 to 1783, he was one of the six sublieutenants of Chester County. His accounts for those years, in printed form, are also preserved in this Library. In his later years, from 1792 to 1796, he opened up a lively correspondence with some English relations and friends of the family. He kept copies of these letters and these copies are preserved among the Chester County papers in the manuscript room above us. There are, besides, a number of letters to and from him in the Persifor Fraser correspondence, a few other scattered documents, and the usual mass of unverified and unverifiable tradition which is the temptation and the despair of the biographer and the historian.

From this material emerges a somewhat well-marked personality. The period of his life is an interesting one, covering later colonial times, the critical years of the Revolution and three decades after its close. He seems to have been well-to-do, at least there are no complaints of privation beyond the harshness of the elements; and, since he owned his farm, and since such wheat as was sold then seldom brought less than a dollar and seventy-five cents a bushel, and such farm implements as were used were of home or local manufacture, not raised in price by a protective tariff, he did not have to meet the problems of the modern farmer's low prices of his product, high prices of his farming equipment and enhanced interest on his mortgage. His
education must have been mediocre to say the least. His expressions are good and his handwriting at least as good as that of some of his descendants, but his spelling is execrable. The old "Shady Grove Schoolhouse," which lies on the Street-Road at the edge of his place, where my father went to school, may have been in existence then, but was probably the product of a much later campaign for public education. He gives little evidence of wide reading. On the other hand he seems rather to have liked to write long letters, and occasionally he drops into poetry.

For instance, while his neighbor Persifor Frazer, then Colonel in the American army, was with the troops at Ticonderoga, Squire Cheyney one time visited Mrs. Frazer and, to relieve her depression, recited some verses he pretended he had heard in a dream the previous night sung by a voice emerging from a bottle on his candle stand:

Cheerful spirits here we'll stay,
And guard against despotic sway;
Though Britain's numerous frightful fleet
Makes oceans groan in wrath, its weight
And guns and drums cry out so loud
To appease the vengeance of their Lord,
Yet America will be free
Yet America will be free.

and so through three more bad stanzas.

I am afraid this poem belongs among the traditions I have spoken of, but some authority is given to it from the fact that such verses under the heading "Squire Cheyney's Dream" are to be found in more than one early collection.

There is, however, positive evidence of his poetical predilections in verses which remain, written by his own hand, in his docket book. Some are mere doggerel. He records, for instance, that the 19th of January 1790, was "very foggy and windy," then drops into rhyme:

I have lived 58 years the 12 of last December
And so far never seen such a winter that I remember.

Another is rather too broad for our more refined age. Still another is more serious in character. Like many other farmers of eastern Pennsylvania, he had one or two or more slaves who served in the household rather than in the fields. For instance, among the plunder the
British seized from his neighbor Persifor Frazer and carried to Philadelphia with them on their march north, after the Battle of Brandywine, were a negro girl named Rachel and another woman. After the retirement of the British from Philadelphia, Mrs. Frazer came to the city to look for them, but could hear nothing of them. She believed they had been taken by the British to New Jersey, where there was good sale for slaves, and probably sold as their captors fell back on New York.

Squire Cheyney had a negro slave boy, Isaac, born in 1774, of whom he was evidently fond. Under the Pennsylvania gradual emancipation law of 1780 he would have become free at 28, though there was a wide-spread feeling that freedom should be granted at twenty-one. Isaac died when he was sixteen years of age and his master, two days after his death, June 4, 1790, wrote and entrusted to his docket these memorial verses, which testify rather to the warmth and liberality of his feelings than to his poetic gifts:

Had it Been the divine Decree
That thee hadst Stayd with me
Five years more thou should been free.
Fate interposed Shortened the date
All all must yeald to fate
And I must Quickly Follow thee.
No Envy harboured in thy breast
No pride thy passive spirits molest
Thou weart happy Still at work or Play
But now thou must be happyer farr
By Sympathy Drawn to thy Native Starr
Than in thy borrowed Lump of Clay
Such Negro Boys their wass but few
He is Gone he is Gone and bid a Long adue.

Depression will express itself in verse, good or bad, in all ages. Two years later, in 1792, the Squire granted freedom to one of his slaves, in a form so characteristic of him and typical of the time that it may well be quoted in full:

These are to certify that Elizabeth Labourer a Negroe Girl who was born a slave to me the Subscriber and regestered or Entered in the Clark of the Peace's Office befor the first day of November the year 1780, Agreeable to an Act of the General Assembly of the State of Pennsylvania, and whereas the
said Elizabeth is now arrived to the age of 18 years and being desirous of Doing by others as I would they Should do to me,—I do here by acquit and forever Discharge her the said Negroe Elizabeth from the said Service and Servitude not only from me myself but from my Heirs, Executors, Administrators and Assign for Ever in witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and seal the first day of May one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one, 1791 (witnesses present) Thomas Cheyney Thos. Cooper Jonathan Levey

The squire seems to have been of a cheerful disposition. One of his correspondents in England tells him that among themselves over there they speak of him as “the Merry Mr. Cheyney.” They may well have done so, for his letters to them in 1794, 1795 and 1796, are full of banter and an old man’s mild jocularity. In a letter to an English cousin he had never seen, Mrs. Ann Westbury, he says: “Thee tells me if thee hadst the advantage of the feathered race, Should direct thy corse this way. My dear Nancy, if thee wass drest in Feathers thee would make a drole appearance indeed. The wiggs some years ago used to Dress the Torys in feathers with the addition of Tar.”

When he gets a letter from another English woman cousin, Mrs. Pennell, he writes to her: “Nancy Westbury had enjoyed my whole heart in Respect of the friendship I had for the females in your country, but I find Nancy Pennell must have a part and so for another and another, so my heart must be Divided and Sub-Divided; I will not say into attems, For I feel my friendship increasing like the widdow’s Cruse of Oil and a few favors more of the Like kind would make me feel much Younger, nay I know not but it might Drive the Ciattick out of my hip.” He spells his trouble “Ciattick” but that probably does not diminish its value as a test of affection. He seems as a matter of fact always to have had some physical indisposition. He gives it as the occasion for not going into military service on the outbreak of the Revolution, though he chose the national cause promptly; and he refers to it repeatedly in his letters.

He confesses further to Mrs. Westbury “I allways wass particularly favored with the Good wishes of the female race,” and furthermore, “I am a credulous old man and take for granted Every Sentence thee has expressed of Friendship for me.” “Thee tells me Mr. Westbury can Play on the Violin. I have an ear for music and thee can Sing a Song. O how happy we should make each other. With the first opportunity I have I shall take Betsy or Polly Cheyney (my brother Richard Cheyney’s daughters) on my knees and they shall sing me a
song in thy name. They have voices like sirens.” He appeals to his English Waldron relatives in 1796, to “write to me and brighten the long neglected chain of friendship which bound our ancestors firmly to each other.”

His letters are full of his views on politics, social questions and religion, all of which were in a special condition of flux in the seventeen-nineties. He speaks with rather reckless severity of clergymen. He congratulates the French in 1795, for having “adopted a Constitution much like ours. They have played the Devil with their Clergy. I morn them not. I believe they are in Genral in Every Country the most Proud, idle drones in the community. You may find them in all manner of Mischief they are the fag end of the Human Race.” However, he apologizes later for this bitterness and draws up his creed in full for his English friends—a mild form of that self-generated Deism which was so general in America and in England at that time, much the same essentially as that of Franklin, Paine and Jefferson. He is convinced that America, by throwing off all monarchical rule, has “regained her Paradisical Liberty nor acknowledges any Supreme Governor but the Creator and Governor of the Universe.” He thinks, in 1796, that France and Holland will soon be in possession of this liberty, but believes that “England’s Political Sun hass long since past its meridian Glory,” and that unless her government listens to the demand of her people and makes amendments in her national constitution, her sun may set under clouds, like the Jewish, the Persian and Roman Empires. So long ago was England “through”!

This was in 1795, when the wave of English lower class sympathy with the French Revolution was at its highest, and the outbreak of the war between England and France had led the British government to stamp out all movements for reform. It is curious how closely this Chester County farmer was able to watch from afar the course of events in England. He comments on a recent letter from his friends in Berkshire: “Thee tells me England is now the seat of oppression and discontent;” the American newspapers likewise report from London “malencoly accounts of serious city riots, mobs, heavy taxes, discontents, Petitions to Parliament, Bribery, Corruption, that the Humble prayers of the People are treated with disdain and contempt. . . . I have an anxious conscience for you.”

There had been times, however, especially during the Revolution,
when he and his neighbors felt much the same way about a government nearer home. In July 1777, two months before the Battle of Brandywine drove Congress from Philadelphia, his neighbor Persifor Frazer, patriot as he was, declared his dissatisfaction that “Robbers, plunderers and villains in Philadelphia and other places are accumulating immense Fortunes in ease and safety.” The Revolution, like all war periods, seems to have been a time of lowered standards of morality. Even ten years after the peace the Squire makes the complaint, familiar to modern ears: “We groan under the greatest and most oppressive taxes and what is worse, high prices for all things.”

The Squire was a Conservative. He sends to an English relative a full account of the Whiskey Rebellion, which he calls “an insurrection of 4 of the Frontier Counties of Pennsylvania.” He has no sympathy for the rebels and is full of complaints of their outrages. He says the scoundrels profess themselves to be Presbyterian, but “prefer the spirit of their Rye to the spirit of religion or government.”

As to Radicals in general he says: “Their is a Set of men amongst us that their Politicks bear the same features of those of the Jacobbins of France. They had almost the whole Power of the Government in their own hands at the time of the Revolution and Since untill the Federal Constitution was adopted ... by this means a very Different Set of men came into Power. This they wear well awear of before the Federal Constitution was Adopted and wass the Reason they made so much opposition to it.”

Such was the old squire personally and such were some of his opinions. His English correspondents, bright women as they seem to have been, had evidently, from what he quotes from their letters, expressed the wish that they might know him more intimately. I have the same wish. But his connection with the community and what it suggests rather than his personality is the reason for this paper. Judging from his letters and other records, he touched the world about him at some six or eight principal points. In the first place he was a farmer, cultivating about 100 acres, with some 20 acres more of meadow along Chester Creek and along a little stream that still bears the family name. In one of his letters to his English cousins he describes at great length the changes that were then going on in agriculture in Pennsylvania. What was this eighteenth century revolution in farming so curiously contemporary with the well-known agricultural
revolution in England? Apparently part of it was the invention of those sidehill barns that still survive, here and there, in actual use or in picturesque ruin; another was the adoption of the four-fold rotation of crops, corn, oats, wheat, sod, familiar to those of us who are country-bred. However much is explained, much remains untold, to be sought for in other similar records. What kind of labor supply did he have? How did he reach his market? What did he raise? What was early American agriculture really like? Why did the farmer of that age have such prosperity that, as he says, some of them are worth several thousand pounds, while his modern successor has such troublesome times?

Secondly, he was a rural dweller, living far from the city. How did he and his neighbors solve the problems of school and church and supplies and sickness and sociability? Thirdly, Thomas Cheyney was, as has been said, for twenty-five years or more a justice of the peace. What was a justice of the peace of that period? How was he appointed? What were his powers and duties? Was his social position above that of his neighbors? In England a justice of the peace was, above all, a gentleman, a member of the aristocracy, treated with respect and even distinction by the government and by his neighbors. How far did those characteristics extend to the colonies? Was there any element of aristocracy or social preëminence in the position of a Pennsylvania country squire? We get a glimpse occasionally of a court of quarter sessions he attended at Chester. Was this like an English “court of quarter-sessions of the peace,” which exercised wide powers of local administration, tried criminal cases, imposed fines, ordered imprisonment and inflicted the death penalty? Does this narrative throw any light on the harsh penal code of that period?

Judging from his docket book, he was much occupied with fining disorderly persons or binding them over to a higher court, deciding small questions of debt, recording declarations of bastardy and performing marriage ceremonies, like any modern marrying squire, though the names of witnesses generally indicate that the parties were neighbours, and not infrequently they were his own relatives.

During the Revolution, the public contacts of Squire Cheyney were closer and his part was played on a wider stage. There is the old story of his intervention at the Battle of Brandywine. Howe had landed his troops at the head of Elk River, Maryland, and was marching north-
ward with the object of capturing Philadelphia, then the largest and wealthiest city in the colonies. Washington brought his troops from New Jersey through Philadelphia, southward, hoping to stop the British at the line of the Brandywine, a deep creek bordered by meadows and bodies of woods, twenty-five miles south of Philadelphia, making a natural line of defense. Skirmishing bodies were sent across the creek to delay and perhaps prevent the advance of the British. But if Howe broke through, as he almost certainly would, where would he attempt to cross the Brandywine? After some hesitation, Washington established himself at Chadd's Ford, where the main travel from Baltimore usually crossed the creek (on Route No. 1 of modern automobile traveling). He placed divisions a few miles further up and down the creek, but was fully expecting the main conflict to take place at Chadd's Ford, which, in fact, a part of the British forces were, on September 11, reported to be approaching. Howe and Cornwallis, however, adopting the same tactics as at the battle of Long Island, with the main body of British troops had left the direct route at Kennet Square, some miles back, detoured to the west along the Great Valley Road and were preparing to cross, in fact did cross the Brandywine far up stream.

Squire Cheyney, at Thornbury, some five miles away, the morning of September eleventh, hearing the firing or in some other way learning of the movements of the armies, is reported to have dressed hurriedly and ridden off toward the Brandywine. He may have gone straight out Street Road toward the house of a cousin of his at an upper ford, or he may have ridden through familiar by-roads and lanes directly toward the sound of the skirmish firing. Either of the routes would bring him to the Brandywine, far above Washington's encampment, and, as a matter of fact, he came in sight of the main body of the British troops crossing the stream at Jefferies Ford, six miles above Chadd's Ford, where Washington was expecting them, and well above the furthest outposts of his army. It was evidently an encircling movement of the very greatest importance and the British, if not stopped, might well have taken the American army in the rear.

Cheyney with this news, galloped down the line of the stream till he came to Sullivan's division, the extreme right wing of the American army. For some reason his report was received there with doubt, and he insisted on being taken to Washington's headquarters. Here he
repeated his information, assuring the general besides that there was a narrow gap in the hills further up stream where a small detachment could hold back a large number of the enemy. There is no official or direct personal record of the occurrence—there being no better authority for the whole story, apparently, than the recollections of a daughter of Colonel Persifor Frazer and some other neighborhood tradition. Apparently Washington and his staff, either uncertain of the loyalty of the farmers of the region or unfavorably impressed by the careless dress and disordered appearance of the hurrying messenger, justice of the peace though he was, hesitated to accept his statement, drawing from him the protest that if General Anthony Wayne or Colonel Persifor Frazer, his neighbors, who were, in fact, in another part of the field, were there, the General would know whether to trust him or not. However, valuable time was lost, the British had by this time crossed in force at the upper ford and thrown the right wing of the American army into confusion. The main battle had to be fought and was lost by the Americans on the hills about Birmingham meeting house on the north side of the creek some three miles above Chadd’s Ford.

How did it come that Washington’s intelligence was so much at fault as to have to depend on the chance observation of a neighboring farmer? Was it true that the devotion of the population to the national cause was so doubtful as to make their information suspect? It was certainly not true of Thomas Cheyney. Soon after the Battle of the Brandywine, perhaps as a result of his experience there, he was appointed one of the sublieutenants of the county. Was that position a military or a civil one? His main duty seems to have been the collection of fines for failure to perform military service or to take the oath of allegiance, though occasionally, with other sublieutenants, he was required to help in obtaining recruits and in purchasing supplies for the troops. According to his printed reports, to which I have already referred, he seems to have collected fines from a large proportion of his neighbors, including his brother Joseph, of whom it was said that “being an Englishman (though he was really born in America) he did not care to take either side of the conflict.” I am afraid that was not an unusual attitude. The sentiment for independence was certainly not by any means universal in Eastern Pennsylvania. The Squire speaks in one of his letters of his neighbors “Grumbling at Every Measure
that has been taken to secure their Liberty." A woman neighbor writes: "Tory Joe White made shift to fall of a hay stack and break his back, of which he is since Dead, if all his sort was in the same condition this Neighborhood would be pretty wel thing." On the other hand another neighbor, Mrs. Frazer, writes hopefully in August, 1776, just six weeks after the Declaration of Independence: "The people middling well reconciled to Independency, but very much fear the heavy taxes that is to come upon us, but above all they fear the new Inglanders." In this age of national unity it is hard to realize that the national feeling of attachment was as much a result of the war of Independence as a cause of it. Even Colonel Frazer says of the soldiers from New England: "The most of them look like spectres, miserable Creatures they are, the more I am acquainted with them, the worse I like them."

The British army, however, made small distinction between friends of the King, lukewarm adherents and hearty supporters of the popular cause. Among the sublieutenants' papers are bitter complaints from him and his colleagues to the Pennsylvania State Supreme Council of the depredations of the British troops and their seizure, without payment, of cattle, horses, sheep and grain while on their march from Elkton to Philadelphia. Later, while they were in occupation of Philadelphia, during the winter of 1777 and 1778, British foraging parties operated through the whole of what is now Delaware County. Once, while passing through Thornbury township, they drove off without payment the cattle of the patriotic Thomas Cheyney and his half-Tory brother Joseph, alike. Squire Thomas, who was known by this time, by what right I do not know, as Colonel Cheyney, went to Valley Forge, secured a pass from Washington which his brother's wife used in going in to Philadelphia. She had an interview with Lord Howe, was courteously treated, fairly paid for the looted livestock and took the money home with her.

The question of how far the rural population of Pennsylvania was patriot or Tory is only one of an endless series of problems raised by this somewhat perfunctory examination of the papers connected with one rather undistinguished career. I am asking all these questions, not to answer them, but to suggest that the genealogist is the one that should answer them. Above all, students of the past, the genealogists are the most familiar with contemporary records that show what
ordinary life in earlier times was like. Students of family history con-
stantly come into contact with large bodies of historical sources of the
greatest interest and value, full of life and color, containing the
records of still unfamiliar facts and otherwise unexplained customs.

I wonder how many members of this Society, or attendants at its
gatherings, know how rich are its collections, how full it is of material
for still unwritten history? For there is still no full and adequate his-
tory of Pennsylvania in existence; nor, so far as I know, a full history
written from the sources, of any one of its counties; nor a full and
scholarly account of any one period or aspect of its history. Yet
abundance of material exists in this and the adjoining rooms and fire-
proof safes, to write a history that would make the past of Pennsyl-
vania more vivid and clear than the daily newspaper makes the
present, for such records are more personal, more revealing and more
unprejudiced. For the past we have the inestimable advantage of per-
spective. Out of the mass of contemporary report of incident, of con-
troversy, of praise and of blame that is supposed to reflect contem-
porary life, what is important, what is purely ephemeral? Which speeches
are judicious and influential, which are mere bombast? Which letters
to the editor are genuine, which mendacious? It is only the selective
hand of time that discriminates what is significant and permanent from
what is temporary and trivial. It is only in the serene light of the past
that we can really see life.

Add to the treasures of this Library and its neighbor across the
street and other nearby collections, the private papers of many a
family and organization in an old community like Philadelphia, the
large body of official record that has been already put into print in a
 crude and incoherent form, and the many excellent but detached his-
torical studies and monographs that have already been published, and
no historical student need lack for material of greatest abundance and
the most enlightening description in which to work.

There are, generally speaking, three modes of access of past times
—three ways of treating them—genealogy, biography and history.
The proportionate amount of study now given to the past is, I think,
in the same order; the most time and attention is given to genealogy,
the next to biography, the least to history. This is, I suppose, natural,
for it is the order of their difficulty; genealogy is the easiest, biography
the next, history the most arduous. Genealogy sometimes seems to be
a branch of biological study. Who was descended from whom? What were the relationships and ramifications of a certain series of persons, sharers in the same blood? Sometimes, on the other hand, it seems like a branch of mathematics with complicated entrances of new personal factors and a vexatious frequency of unknown quantities.

When I said that genealogy is easier than either biography or history, it is only relatively so. I know very well the long and earnest inquiries it involves, the time-taking search for sources of information, and the careful analysis and comparison of evidence. I know also its charm, the long hunt and the joy of discovery, the satisfaction of solving a puzzling problem, its appeal to the human instinct for order and classification, the sense of comradeship that comes with finding one's own people in their own setting. I know there are elaborate manuals for its pursuit; a new one has just been published. Indeed the student of history or biography has often to struggle against the temptations of genealogy in order to save time for his own work. All the more important it is that the real genealogical student should bring back from his skilled researches much more than a table of relationships. Why can he not in magazine articles, in the printed proceedings of historical societies, in appendices to his genealogy, in an occasional monograph written in the intervals of perfecting his special work, bring out into the open what he has found alongside his path as he has progressed?

His ancestor for instance held a public office; stop and make a study of the duties and political and social implications of that office, and publish it. Such an essay will make its way into the bibliographical lists and references and not only will interest the reader, but be found ultimately by the historical investigator, who will be eternally grateful; for it is precious few such detailed studies the historian has time to make for himself. It would incidentally prevent such mistakes as that of the lady, a member of this society, who found her ancestor described as a "cordwainer" and came glowing to the Librarian to ask what grade of military officer a "cordwainer" was, only to learn to her disappointment, that a cordwainer was a shoemaker.

Biographies are the order of the day. It is a poor weekly publication that does not contain notices of several. No literary journal fails to review a dozen or more biographies every week or month. One publisher boasts that he has, among his recent publications, biographies
under every letter of the alphabet, from Alfred to Zenobia; another
offers, somewhat jocularly, to start a book-of-the-month club, made
up entirely of lives of Queen Elizabeth. This is all right; it is obvious
that readers as well as writers are interested in biographies, and many
of them are very good biographies; some bid fair to become classic
works.

But, after all, what are we going to reply to the intelligent general
reader who asks for a satisfactory history of Pennsylvania? There is,
as I have already said, none that can make such a claim; and, so far as
I know, none is being written. And this is generally true of history.
There are few large single historical works being produced in any
country. There are many text-books, and each one, it is true, is gen-
erally better than its predecessors. There are many composite or co-
operative works produced by a group of writers. There are detailed
histories of short periods. But where are the modern successors of
Macaulay and Froude, of Prescott and Motley, of Lea and Mc-
Master? Still more specifically, where are the one or two volume
works, written according to modern standards, yet written for the
general reader? All history needs to be rewritten in accordance with
our new materials and our new interests. But who is writing it?

This is perhaps too professional a problem for me to ask you to
interest yourselves in it. But I should like to defend my statement that
the writing of history is a more difficult task than one might suppose,
who had not seriously tried it, or who had met no problems except
those the compiler of a genealogy or the writer of a biography meets.
He has therefore a right to send out an S. O. S. call. For one thing,
the genealogist and the biographer each has the outline of his sub-
ject already indicated to him; it is the descent of a family or the career
of a man. The path through the tangled course of events is there;
he has only to find it. The historian, on the other hand, has to cut
his own path. There is no trail through the wide wilderness of the
past for him to find. He must explore the country, plot out its con-
figuration, and hew a road for himself. It is a common experience for
the teacher who has to guide research, to see his student collect with
infinite industry and much critical care a great body of materials, then
stand aghast at the problem of how to arrange them into a narrative.

Another difficulty of the historian is to make his work interesting.
As a matter of fact interest, in the cases respectively of the genealogist,
the biographer and the historian, is a quite different thing whether it is the interest of the writer or the reader we are thinking of. Their subjects are different. A genealogical tree is not a biography of the persons that form its branches. Nor does a series of biographies of the men of a period make up a history of that period. A collection of the lives of all the men and women of significance in the whole past of the United States makes an admirable Dictionary of American Biography; it does not make a History of the United States. A genealogy has a strong personal interest to those who are interested in it at all. A biography has the same natural human interest that people we know have for us. But history has to be so written as to create an interest. There is no lack of fundamental appeal in the events of the past themselves. They are in fact the genealogy and biography of the race. It is our difficult problem to bring out that interest; to put it before the ordinary man in such a way that he can read it with appreciative enjoyment and, perhaps, with profit. The writer of history should meet the reader of history half way.

My sympathies go out to the ordinary general reader. Driven in the rapid general pace of our time, hypnotized by the diffuse and easy statements of fact and opinion in the daily newspaper, tempted to find sufficient mental satisfaction in the weekly and monthly magazines, invited to rest in the unreal world of the novel, and lured to mental inertia by the siren voice of the radio, how can the man or woman of today find time and inclination for the reading of histories or any other serious book? It is true, histories actually have their readers. There are those who still revel in the great scenes of the past or take sides in ancient controversies. There are those who love to satisfy their curiosity, or increase their information, or perhaps even enlighten their judgment by reading diplomatic, or military, or economic, or social history. But these are hundreds; they should be thousands.

For one thing, I think the histories should contain more of human interest. As a matter of fact this is already a perceptible tendency. Historical writing is much more realistic than it used to be. It concerns itself more with the ordinary life of the people, less with the exceptional, the unusual, the catastrophic. But this normal, usual life of the people in the past is particularly hard to discover. It was not so well recorded; such records as exist are not so accessible and not so easy to interpret. But these are just the happy hunting grounds of those
engaged in research in family history. Before general history can be written as it is conceived of by many of those who wish to write it, I am convinced that much more intensive work must be done. More description of the ordinary life of the past and more tracing of the lives of plain people must be provided, ready for the historian. He cannot possibly do all this for himself. The genealogist, particularly, will have to publish the information that falls in his way, as material for the uses of the historian; or he must himself turn historian and place it in comprehensible and interesting form before the general reader.

I say "must"; I only mean must if such and such results are to follow. The very last wish I have in mind is to dictate to any student or writer what he should do. Absolute liberty is the very soul of any worthy achievement in these realms. In things of the mind, a man must be free to think, to pursue his line of thought and research where it leads him and to express the results of his thought. Anything less is mental servitude. One of the great dangers to freedom and progress in our time is the implied willingness of patriotic societies, well-intentioned as they are, to restrict thinkers and writers to one particular picture or interpretation of our national history, and to restrain or condemn the expression of views different from the traditional ones. Pacifism has just as much claim to the American privilege of freedom of thought and expression as militarism; and there is no monopoly recorded in the Patent Office of the United States on any particular definition of patriotism.

The man or woman who has come to the conclusion that the United States should set a high example to the rest of the world by restricting the size of its army and navy to the lowest possible limits, is no less a patriot than the man or woman who rejoices in our military and naval greatness. The man or woman whose thought and observation have led to the conclusion that the progress of society requires drastic amendment of our constitution may have just as good a historical, moral and patriotic conception of Americanism as the person wedded to an earlier definition of our national organization and ideals. It is all a matter of solidity of knowledge, carefulness of judgment and sincerity of conviction, and back of all is liberty of thought and of speech. There is no genealogical, or biographical, or historical justification for intolerance.
I suppose there are few scholars outside of those countries that do not anticipate a drying up of the springs of enlightened progress in Germany, Italy and Russia; and many scholars within those countries must be already realizing the paralysis of thought. Where a man can only think and speak within restricted limits; even worse, where he does not want to go beyond those limits, it cannot make much difference in the long run what he thinks or says. Our only hope is in liberty. So do not accuse me of laying down the lines that genealogical, biographical or historical work should follow, either for writer or for reader. I am only commenting on the needs and the attractions of each of those forms of intellectual interest.

I have spoken of the Squire and of genealogy, two-thirds of my theme. May I close by saying a few words of tribute to Chester County, my own county, especially of that portion of it which, in 1785, was separated from the rest and has since been Delaware County.

Kipling writes:

God gives all men all earth to love,
   But since man's heart is small,
Ordains for each one spot shall prove
   Beloved over all.
Each to his choice, and I rejoice
   The lot has fallen to me
In a fair ground—in a fair ground—
   Yea, Sussex by the sea.

But Delaware County is much more "fair" than Sussex-by-the-Sea. I have walked along the grassy edges above the chalk cliffs of Sussex, looking out across the Channel, and climbed the South Downs through the bracken fern to their lines of short, sturdy oaks and their remains of old Roman Britain. It is a varied and an interesting country; it is the scene of Hudson's "Nature in Down Land" and of some of George Meredith's novels; it was on the slope of Pook's Hill in Sussex that Kipling's two English children on midsummer eve, under Preck's tutelage, watched the progress of that inimitable drama of England's past; Sussex is the scene of many other English stories and of much stirring history. But to me it seems a sad and rugged rather than a "fair" country;—but, "each to his choice."

There is no city in the world that has more gracious surroundings than Philadelphia; and no part of that circuit is more green and
kindly than this stretch of farm and pastureland that borders it to the south. When the first explorers and the first settlers made their way up the noble river that connects it with the rest of the world, the country must have looked then, as it does now, like a wooded slope, gradually rising its 400 or 500 feet from the level of the river to the height of South Valley Hill. Then the woods were unbroken; but now, as one passes inland from the river along any of the old roads—Springfield, or Providence, or Middletown, that were laid out to connect its settlers with tide-water, the illusion of a wooded slope disappears and it becomes a region of detached hills and ridges and valleys, of cleared fields and meadows, alternating with scattered bodies of hillside woods.

Among these softly rolling hills the four Delaware County creeks, Darby, Crum, Ridley and Chester, wind their way from their sources in the spring-houses on the farms to approach one another as they reach tidewater among the Tinicum and Chester marshes. The outcroppings of rock along their course have discouraged cultivation and left them bordered with hemlock, the most graceful of evergreen trees, and flowing through ravines often as dark and remote as if they were in the Poconos, the Catskills or the Rocky Mountains. The creeks of Delaware County are only awaiting their poet, or their painter, or their novelist to be as famous in romance as Burns' "Bonnie Doon," or Hardy's valleys of Wessex.

The county, notwithstanding its dairy and wheat farms, is fortunate in not being all fertile. It has parts so rich otherwise that they produce crops not for the body but for the soul of man. There are not only the rugged sides of the valleys of the creeks and of their tiny affluents, where trailing arbutus can be found by those who know where to find it, but scattered barren stretches, like Castle Rock, the hideout of Sandy Flash, the Revolutionary highwayman; the Barrens, which run diagonally across the county, the delight of hunters and naturalists; the serpentine ridges, the "pink hills," which are even now, in early May, brilliant with their carpet of ground-phlox; and the stony pieces on the farms which it has never paid the farmer to clear. So these rough and wooded spots have survived the advance of improvement, and remained to give variety to our landscape through the year, their edges to be white with dogwood in May and scarlet with sumac in September.

I should like to speak of the works of man in the county; the
Indian trails that ran from the river inland; the sites of the Indian villages that Mr. Myers and others have done so much to determine and to mark; the fringe of Swedish reminiscence that borders the Delaware. It seems ungrateful not to mention the slow patient work of the farmers, cutting down the forest, fencing the fields and reducing the soil to servitude to the plow. I should like, if there were time, to speak of the traces at Avondale quarries, of the first railroad in America, of the ruins of old mills and milldams and mill villages along the creeks that testify to an economic era, the very vestiges of which are rapidly passing away. I should like to name some of the men of distinction who have sprung from Chester County soil—Oliver Evans, the inventor; Anthony Wayne, the soldier; Benjamin West, the painter; Bayard Taylor, the traveler; Joseph Pennell, the artist; the hundreds more who are named in our biographies, besides the thousands of nameless men who have lived their lives quietly within its limits, like Squire Cheyney, or who have migrated to the cities and the West to enrich the surging blood that has pulsed through the arteries of America.

But I do not want to try to rival one of the Victoria County Histories, and this address is already too long.

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