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IT was in the year 1909 that there was first established in this University a Chair exclusively ascribed to the study of modern history; and in the forty-five years which followed its creation it was held by no more than three men. Each of them was a scholar of remarkable quality. Sir Maurice Powicke, the first of them, is a historian whose achievements it would be superfluous to enumerate, and impertinent to praise: with his retirement from the Regius Chair at Oxford, that University lost one of the great mediaevalists of his generation. My immediate predecessor, Professor Sayles, upon whose acquisition the University of Aberdeen is now congratulating itself, is likewise a mediaevalist of distinction, albeit of a different school; and his ripe and vigorous scholarship has put all students of mediaeval Ireland in his debt. It was never my privilege to meet Professor Todd; but it is impossible to be long in Ireland without catching the mellow reverberations of his personality: few historians, surely, can have built for themselves a more enviable monument in the undimmed affection and respect of an exceptionally distinguished band of pupils.

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It is not easy to come after such men; and the task is made no lighter by the circumstance that they combined to build up here a flourishing school of mediaeval studies. For I, alas, am no mediaevalist; and my interests lack both the local and the universal appeal which attached to theirs. I concern myself with a small country, peripheral to the main centres of European development; its history neglected, and almost unknown to English scholars; its language untaught in our schools, and unblessed, I am afraid, by any very high priority in our universities. In these circumstances, the cultivation of Swedish history is bound to be something of a purely personal hobby; and that is one reason why I have felt it better not to take it as my subject for this lecture. But in pursuing it I have

