

**ADDRESS DELIVERED BY JAMES
STUART: ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS INSTALLATION AS LORD
RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST.
ANDREWS, 23RD JANUARY 1899**

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JAMES STUARD

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gratis

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delivered by

JAMES STUART, M.P., LL.D.

on the occasion of his installation as

LORD RECTOR

of the University of St. Andrews

23rd January 1899

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Gratis

ADDRESS

I SHALL endeavour in the course of this Address to pursue the following argument :—

We are in a period of great change. The Universities should form the connecting link between the past and the future. To do this they must respond to new demands and take a more extended view of the professions for which they prepare and of the subjects which they teach. If they do, it will be greatly to the advantage both of them and of the Nation.

The ceremony in which we take part to-day carries us back at one step to ancient times. The very gowns and caps and hoods, and all the pageantry involved, connect our busy present with a bygone period when these things were not strange to the eyes of those who assisted. The face of the world is very different now from then ; so is

the everyday life of each of us here from the everyday life of those who, nearly five hundred years ago, looked on similar ceremonies in this City by the Sea. The world has moved on since these halls were founded. But in what has it moved on? The change has not been universal; it has been confined to one section of human circumstance. The change has been a physical change. Men's minds remain the same. We pass more quickly from place to place. We have different forms of government. We communicate with each other with infinitely greater facility. We know more. But the forms in which we know it are the same. Our passions, our hopes, our fears, may attach to different objects, but they are themselves unaltered. Where does man come from? Whither does he go? These are still the questions which vex our philosophy. The long series of trooping generations still pass out of the darkness across the narrow beam of light, and into the darkness again, and they still ask, whence, and whither? We stand for a moment on the rock above the

river. The gleam of light which comes athwart its stream to our feet may pass for us across a different portion from that by which it reached our fathers or will reach our children ; but the river, still crossing for us one bright streak alone, flows out of the misty uncertainty of the past into the tremendous obscurity of the future.

The change is external, but the mind of man remains unchanged and unchangeable.

Listen to this :

“And if thou hast become great after thou hast been lowly, and if thou hast amassed riches after poverty, so that thou hast become, because of this, the first in thy city, and if the people know thee on account of thy wealth and thou art become a mighty lord, let not thy heart be lifted up because of thy riches, for the author of them is God. Despise not thy neighbour who is as thou wast, but treat him as thy equal.”

Was this written by Ruskin or Carlyle ? it might have been ; or was it written by Marcus Aurelius ? it might have been ; or was it penned among the Psalms of David ?

it might have been. It was none of these—it was carved in letters an inch deep in granite among the Pyramids of Egypt five thousand years ago.

The change, indeed, is external only. The mind of man remains the same.

It is not unnatural therefore that the link which binds the past with the future among our institutions should be found in our Universities. They deal with the minds of men. They seek to mould, to form, to embellish these minds; and, as the matter they deal with remains unaltered amidst the changing circumstances of things, it is but natural that they should form the connecting link between the past and the present—the string which binds these and the future together. They are the gift to us from a period most improperly called the Dark Ages. It was a time rather which was golden with the first tints of the coming dawn.

Since the first Universities were founded, the Roman Empire has gone, Feudalism has gone, the Rule of Kings has gone: Parliaments have come, the Reformation has come,

the Steam Engine has come. The Universities stretch from the one to the other and bridge over a great gulf. But now their own day of trial has come. Are they to respond to the call, or are they not? For of all the changes which have come in the history of the world, the greatest have taken place during the past eighty years.

Mr. Gladstone once told me that Sir Robert Peel remarked to him as a noteworthy fact that when he (Sir Robert Peel) was summoned from Rome to form a Government, he travelled back in precisely the same manner, along precisely the same route, and in precisely the same time, as the Emperor Hadrian had travelled seventeen hundred years before. So long had been the period of little or no change in roads, ships, and means of locomotion; and so, indeed, in very little else had there been any noticeable change in the daily habits of men, except perhaps so far as came from the invention of printing.

In particular, with respect to the rate of travelling, I may quote from an article