

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE  
PRESIDENT RICHARD P. CARTON, ESQ.  
BARRISTER-AT-LAW AT THE  
OPENNING MEETING OF THE SESSION,  
1867-8, NOVEMBER 18TH, 1867**

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An address delivered by the President Richard P. Carton, esq. barrister-at-law at the opening meeting of the session, 1867-8, November 18th, 1867 by Richard P. Carton

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**RICHARD P. CARTON**

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Legal and Historical Society.

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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

THE PRESIDENT

RICHARD P. CARTON, ESQ.

BARRISTER-AT-LAW

AT THE OPENING MEETING OF THE SESSION, 1867-8,

NOVEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 1867

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"There is an eloquence that aims at talk,  
A Muse though winged that prefers to walk."—*St. Stephens.*

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1867,

TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

LEGAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This Address is Dedicated

BY

THEIR SINCERE FRIEND

THE AUTHOR.

December, 1867.

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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES  
OF THE  
LEGAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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THE Society held the Opening Meeting of the Session 1867-68, on the evening of Monday, the 18th of November, 1867, at the Society's Rooms, 212 Great Brunswick-street.

The Chair was taken at Eight o'clock by

The President, RICHARD P. CARTON, Esq.

who then delivered the Inaugural Address.

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GEORGE ORME MALLEY, Esq. then moved "That the President's Address be printed and circulated at the expense of the Society."

LESLIE S. MONTGOMERY, Esq. seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The Society then adjourned.

## A D D R E S S .

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GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

My first words from the chair to which your kindness has elected me, shall be words of thanks. I wish you to believe in this I am not merely following the example of my predecessors. I assure you I am deeply grateful to you all for the honour you have conferred upon me. The place I fill to-night has been, in past years, given to those who have from time to time best furthered the interests of your Society by generous help and active zeal. I cannot flatter myself that I sit here in right of any such conduct on my part. I am conscious of my shortcomings as a member, and of the small part I have taken in the Debates of bye-gone Sessions. But I think I can say this—that I bring to the office of your President a sincere and heartfelt interest in the honour and well-being of your Society, and an honest desire to uphold its good name, and to extend its usefulness by every means in my power.

Gentlemen, I deeply regret that I cannot here



adopt the language of my immediate predecessor, and describe, as he did, "the position of the Society as satisfactory, and its prospects as hopeful." As well as I can gather from our annals, the Session through which we have just passed has been the most unsatisfactory they have yet recorded. Mr. Houston told you, in words I have no doubt you all remember, of the necessity for listeners, but unfortunately during the greater part of last year we have too often felt the still greater necessity for speakers. For a considerable period during the Session, from the 28th of January to the 13th of May—in other words, during the most favourable portion of the Legal year—the business of the Society was entirely suspended. In the whole Session there were only ten Meetings and but seven Debates; and four of these were on general, as distinguished from purely Legal subjects. The average attendance was five; and only two new members joined the Society. These figures force me to make the sorrowful confession which was made fifteen years ago by Mr. Montgomery, "that there is exhibited amongst some of our members a greater listlessness, apathy, and apparent indifference, than is consistent with our permanent welfare as a body." \*

This is not a hopeful or a pleasant picture; but I would not be doing my duty if I did not draw it for you, and ask your attention to its details. Gentlemen, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that our Society is not in a healthy state. I believe, myself, that this

‡ Address at the Opening Meeting of the Session, 1852-3, p. 9.

state is not due to any inherent weakness, but has been induced, for the most part, by accidental circumstances. It will be for us, however, to take care lest this state should be the forerunner of decay and dissolution, and not a merely temporary disorganization; and we should now seriously take counsel together, and adopt measures for watching over our Society during a time which I have reason to fear will be a crisis in its history.

From time to time you have been accustomed to hear at our Opening Meetings, a luminous and thoughtful essay on some subject of Legal Reform, or else some well considered and suggestive words of advice on the studies required to fit the Barrister for his profession. The importance of supplementing the study of formal law by some knowledge of the principles of Jurisprudence—the manifold uses of History and Literature—the Codification of English Law—the Reporting System—the relations of Landlord and Tenant, and the fusion of Law and Equity, have been all brought under your notice. And so when I was appointed your President I was not without the ambition of adding something, however unworthy, to the stores of careful research—of patient thought—of far-seeing speculation—of generous sentiment, and of lofty hopes, which the Addresses of your Presidents contain. But when I considered that state in our affairs, of which I have just spoken, it occurred to me that I would do better to take somewhat lower ground; and so I put aside—and I confess I did so with reluctance—the attempt to imitate what I could not

hope to excel ; and I will ask you to-night to consider the past history and present position of the Legal and Historical Society, the part it was intended to play in the education of the Irish Barrister, and the changes which altered circumstances and new modes of thought may have rendered necessary, if we would keep its existence free from peril, or its usefulness unimpaired.

The Society has now been in existence for upwards of 19 years. During that time it has been silently and unostentatiously doing the work for which its founders intended it. It has often been obliged to change its dwelling place. It has had its years of struggle—of success—and of failure. The chances of promotion have come to some of its Members, and taken them away to careers of honour and usefulness in distant lands. The longing for wider and perhaps richer fields of action has done the same with others. Death, too, has been in its midst ; and although his visits have been happily but few, it has to mourn the loss of two of its oldest members, who filled, with credit to themselves and to its great advantage, the chair I occupy to-night.\* But we are happy to know that with all the changes which even so short a period as twenty years must bring along with it, the greater number of those who were the founders of the Society, and who have since been its chief supporters, are still amongst us. They are known to you all—but there is one of them to whom, in an especial manner, the Society is indebted. One who toiled long and actively in its ranks, and

\* Mr. R. W. Osborne and Mr. Arthur Clere.