

4-1928

Some Lessons from Our Legal History, by William Searle Holdsworth

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Recommended Citation

Sayre, Paul L. (1928) "Some Lessons from Our Legal History, by William Searle Holdsworth," *Indiana Law Journal*: Vol. 3: Iss. 7, Article 9.

Available at: <http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol3/iss7/9>

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Some Lessons from Our Legal History, by William Searle Holdsworth. New York: Macmillan Co., 1928. Pp. vii, 198. Price \$2.00.

This book contains four addresses by William S. Holdsworth, Vinerian professor of law in the University of Oxford and author of the great "History of English Law." The addresses were delivered by Professor Holdsworth during his visit to the United States in 1927. The first three of them were delivered as the lectures for 1927 under the Julian Rosenthal

Foundation at Northwestern University Law School. The fourth address was the dedicatory address on the occasion of the dedication of the new law buildings on McKinlock Campus of Northwestern University. The addresses are entitled: (1) The Importance of Legal History, (2) The Common Law's Contribution to Political Theory, (3) The Rule of Law, (4) A New Discourse on the Study of the Laws. The first three addresses are substantial in character and inspiring in content. They may be said to constitute a sort of *apologia pro vita sua* for the legal scholar who loves legal history for the service it can render rather than for its own sake after the manner of the antiquarian. Professor Holdsworth does not undertake to discuss various interpretations of legal history in so far as they are significant for legal philosophy and jurisprudence; he undertakes merely to set forth the service which an understanding of legal history can render in the interpretation and development of law today. In considering the service of legal history to the study of law, Professor Holdsworth refuses to regard our modern law as a separate system sufficient unto itself; he insists that the law is a social science and that the full significance of legal history will be found not only in its explanation and interpretation of the rules of law but also in an understanding of our system of government and the whole philosophical outlook of our people and their assurance of political freedom and individual liberty under law.

It seems to the reviewer that the fourth address in this collection is not of the same high significance as the first three. It was delivered upon the dedication of the law buildings at Northwestern University, and in its nature it was perhaps required to be rather popular and general in character. Its title "A New Discourse On the Study of the Laws" seems to promise more than its content fulfills. While Professor Holdsworth says something of the study of law in the middle ages in England, the system of the Inns of Court and the Law Society, and the teaching of law in the Universities both in England and in America, it does not appear that he sets forth any critique of these methods of legal education nor does he venture an estimate of the present-day legal education in England and America, or suggest valuable developments that the future may hold for us. The address is interesting in its cursory account of the history of legal education and it is gracious and happy in its references to the distinguished work of Dean Wigmore and the future usefulness of Northwestern University Law School.

It is very stimulating for the legal student to read the first three addresses in this book. The reviewer ventures to suggest that every merit and useful service that Professor Holdsworth claims for the study of legal history is justly claimed. He will be an unusual reader who can go through this book without feeling pride in his profession and a new will to make greater use of the past for the service of the future.

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