

If you have arrived at this page from note 88 in my interviews with Lady Birdwood, you are in the right place.

The text of the Santayana quote in context appears on the third page of this document, below.

As will be seen from the second page, I have used the Second Edition of the book, which is dated 1932. The complete work can be found at the Internet Archive.

THE LIFE OF REASON

OR THE
PHASES OF HUMAN PROGRESS

BY
GEORGE SANTAYANA

SECOND EDITION
WITH A NEW PREFACE

INTRODUCTION
AND
REASON IN COMMON SENSE

ἡ γὰρ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ζωή

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1932

stability. This stability is relative, being still a mode of flux, and consists fundamentally in repetition. Repetition marks some progress on mere continuity, since it preserves form and disregards time and matter. Inheritance is repetition on a larger scale, not excluding spontaneous variations; while habit and memory are a sort of heredity within the individual, since here an old perception reappears, by way of atavism, in the midst of a forward march. Life is thus enriched and reaction adapted to a wider field; much as a note is enriched by its overtones, and by the tensions, inherited from the preceding notes, which give it a new setting.

Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. In the first stage of life the mind is frivolous and easily distracted; it misses progress by failing in consecutiveness and persistence. This is the condition of children and barbarians, in whom instinct has learned nothing from experience. In a second stage men are docile to events, plastic to new habits and suggestions, yet able to graft them on original instincts, which they thus bring to fuller satisfaction. This is the plane of manhood

Continuity
necessary to
progress.