INTRODUCTION

The proper study of mankind is not merely man. It is man within an historical context, man in relation to the larger currents of his age. And what is true of the study of man in general is no less true of the study of a man in particular. A biography is more than the portrait of an individual, it is something of a mirror to his age as well.

The portrait of Charles McLean Andrews reveals both an age and a distinguished historian. By the time of Andrews' death in 1943, he had made an impressive contribution to American historiography. His published works, containing some twenty volumes, considerably more articles, and several hundred book reviews, constituted a valuable legacy to the world of historical scholarship. The principal element of that legacy, and the one to which he had devoted over forty years of his labor, was his contribution to the field of American colonial history. Indeed, so signal was the contribution that his name became inseparably linked with the study of the early American past.

The writing of history was not the only component of his legacy. Andrews was also a maker of historians, a teacher, the founder of a school of American colonial history. He played an important role as editor, lecturer, and friend and adviser of historians. He served the needs of professional history as champion of the cause of documents and archives, as member of numerous historical societies, as president of the American Historical Association.

At his death, however, he left more than a monumental personal achievement in historiography. He left a monument to the times. By his work, indeed, may we know them. His own career was a summary of that new history[1] which arose in America during the late nineteenth century. Andrews was

trained in the 1880's at what was then the foremost center of postgraduate studies in history, the Johns Hopkins University; and his master was Herbert Baxter Adams, the outstanding leader and organizer of the new history. He grew to maturity at the very time that the advanced study, teaching, and writing of history was being organized and shaped into a formal profession. His training at Johns Hopkins brought Andrews into direct contact with the basic ingredients of the new history: the critical use of source materials, the individual research as well as the cooperative enterprise of the seminar, the publication of the findings of research in monographic studies for the benefit of a growing world of historical scholarship. That the world of the new historians was growing, and growing rapidly, there could be little doubt. Other centers of professional historical study were either opening up or expanding at the University of Michigan, at Cornell, at Harvard, at Columbia. University studies were beginning to appear, containing the monographic produce of the rising gild of historians. The rise of the gild was nowhere better signalized than by the organization, in 1884, of the American Historical Association. And when the *American Historical Review* was launched in 1895, it meant that the new history was speaking with a national voice.

But the new history was more than a matter of externals, more than seminars, sources, and societies. It had a standard, a goal to pursue, an ideal. That ideal was best defined by the famous precept of Ranke's that the past had to be presented as it actually was. If the precept had meant, to Ranke, a philologist's ideal for using the sources critically, it came to mean, to the American historian of the late nineteenth century, a scientist's ideal for recapturing the past. The simple motto of Ranke had, in the course of the middle decades of the nineteenth century, been enhanced and transformed by a variety of factors: by the convictions of a world astir with the possibilities of science; by the teachings of Comte, Darwin, Spencer, and Buckle; by the vitality of America's expanding and scien-

tific industry. Consequently, the new historian of late nineteenth-century America was, more than anything else, a man of science, a skilled worker of the most precise methods, a laboratory technician par excellence. And history was a science, a testing for exact information, a probing for incontrovertible fact, a rediscovery of the actuality of the past. This was the ideal which inspired the school in which Andrews belonged. The spirit and method of "historical science" were the very mainsprings of his system of historiography.

It is with that system of historiography—the principles and contents of Andrews' contribution—that the present study is primarily concerned. The study is nowhere designed to be a formal biography, nor does it purport to give a chronological account of his efforts. It is not concerned with his family connections or with his personality, except where they impinge upon the ideas and substance of his historical writings. These writings, indeed, constitute the focus of interest: it was through them that Andrews was known to the world of scholarship and through them that he at once influenced and reflected the new history. That very matter of the relation between the contribution of Andrews and that of the new school of American colonial history provides a second point of stress in this study. Attention is directed not merely to a system of historiography, but to a system of historiography set within the broader context of its times. An attempt is made, in this respect, to understand the achievement of Andrews as a product of the scientific age of American historiography, and to establish the degree to which he represented the school in which he belonged. The study seeks, further, to ascertain to what extent the new colonial history which Andrews helped write was a facet of the social thinking of his age. It seeks, finally, to examine the meaning for the contribution of Andrews of the rise of a newer colonial history during the final decades of his life.

The structure of the present study has been defined by its central theme: the growth and maturation of a great historian's system and the relation of that system to that of his age. Be-

cause this theme is treated both topically and chronologically, it is inevitable that there should be a certain amount of repetition of material. The first part of the study deals with the development of Andrews' historiography during his formative years, during the period, that is, when he was concerned principally with European history and before he fully entered upon a study of American colonial history. This part discusses the historiographic legacy he received from Herbert Baxter Adams and Johns Hopkins and presents the system of historiography which he formulated and practiced during his early years as professional historian. The second part examines Andrews' contribution to the field of his major interest, American colonial history. Analyzing the purely substantive elements of his system, the actual contents of his works, this part undertakes to reveal how Andrews came into this area, and what he said about the field of history to which he applied his larger historiographic principles. The third part attempts to see how those historiographic principles were reflected in the writings of his later years, the years he devoted to the study of American colonial history. It also attempts to see how these principles of historiography were reflected in areas other than his historical writings. The final part explores the system of Andrews in relation to that of the school to which he belonged; and, presenting his contribution as the product of a particular era, it indicates how that contribution grew obsolescent in the context of a changing history and of a changing history of history.

Ultimately, the problem is whether a system of historiography may not be merely an aspect of the corporate thinking of an age, bearing upon it a date-stamp, as much subject to change as history itself. And if, indeed, the history of history is essentially social thinking, what then is truth in history? Is it the established actuality of the past, the unalterable fact which the scientific historian so zealously pursued? Or is truth a variable commodity, answering for one age but questionable in the next? If it is, then nearly all our monumental works of history shall one day be colossal wrecks, stones standing in the desert, their epoch stamped on lifeless things.