

James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce

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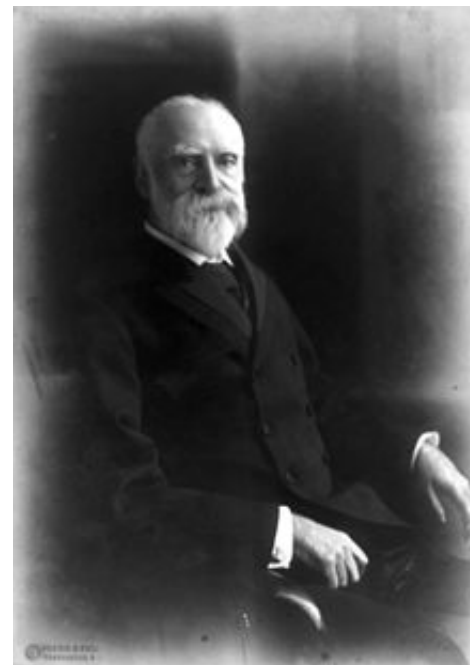
James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce OM GCVO PC FRS FBA (10 May 1838 – 22 January 1922) was a British academic, jurist, historian and Liberal politician.

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Background and education

**The Right Honourable
The Viscount Bryce
OM GCVO PC FRS FBA**



Ambassador to the United States of America

In office
1907–1913

Monarch Edward VII, George V

Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman,
H. H. Asquith

Bryce was born in Arthur Street, Belfast, County Antrim, the son of James Bryce, LL.D., of Glasgow, by his wife Margaret, daughter of James Young of Whiteabbey, County Antrim. The first eight years of his life were spent residing at his grandfather's Whiteabbey residence, often playing for hours on the tranquil picturesque shoreline. John Annan Bryce was his younger brother.^[1] He was educated under his uncle Reuben John Bryce at the Belfast Academy,^[2] at Glasgow High School, the University of Glasgow, the University of Heidelberg and Trinity College, Oxford. He was elected a fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, in 1862, and called to the Bar, Lincoln's Inn, in 1867.^[1]

Academic career

Bryce went to the bar and practised in London for a few years,^[*citation needed*] but he was soon called back to Oxford as Regius Professor of Civil Law, a position he held between 1870 and 1893. From 1870 to 1875 he was also Professor of Jurisprudence at Owen's College, Manchester.^[1] His reputation as an historian had been made as early as 1864 by his work on the Holy Roman Empire. In 1872 he travelled to Iceland to see the land of the Icelandic sagas as he was a great admirer of Njals saga. In 1876, he climbed above the tree line on Mount Ararat and found a slab of hand-hewn timber, four feet long and five inches thick, which he believed was from Noah's Ark.^[3]

Preceded by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand

Succeeded by Sir Cecil Spring Rice

Chief Secretary for Ireland

In office

10 December 1905 – 23 January 1907

Monarch Edward VII

Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman

Preceded by Walter Long

Succeeded by Augustine Birrell

President of the Board of Trade

In office

28 May 1894 – 21 June 1895

Monarch Victoria

Prime Minister The Earl of Rosebery

Preceded by A. J. Mundella

Succeeded by Charles Thomson Ritchie

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

In office

18 August 1892 – 28 May 1894

Monarch Victoria

Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone

Preceded by The Duke of Rutland

Political career



The Rt. Hon. James Bryce and Prof. Goldwin Smith 1907.

Bryce was an ardent Liberal in politics, and in 1880 he was elected to parliament for the Tower Hamlets constituency in London.^{[1][4]} In 1885 he was returned for South Aberdeen, where he was re-elected on succeeding occasions and remained a Member of Parliament until 1907.^{[1][5]}

Bryce's intellectual distinction and political industry made

him a valuable member of the Liberal Party. As soon as the late 1860s, he acted as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education.^[*citation needed*] In 1885 he was made Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs under William Ewart Gladstone, but he had to leave office after the electoral defeat the same year. In 1892 he joined Gladstone's last cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster^[6] and was sworn of the Privy Council at the same time.^[7] In 1894 he was appointed President of the Board of Trade in the new cabinet of Lord Rosebery,^[8] but had to leave this office with that whole Liberal cabinet as soon as 1895.^[1]

The Liberals were to remain out of office for the next ten years. In 1897, after a visit to South Africa, Bryce published a volume of *Impressions* of that country, which had considerable weight in Liberal circles when the

Succeeded by The Lord Tweedmouth
Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

In office

7 February 1886 – 20 July 1885

Monarch Victoria

Prime Minister Gladstone

Preceded by Hon. Robert Bourke

Succeeded by Sir James Fergusson, Bt

Personal details

Born 10 May 1838
Belfast, Ireland

Died 22 January 1922 (aged 83)
Sidmouth, Devon, South West
England

Political party Liberal

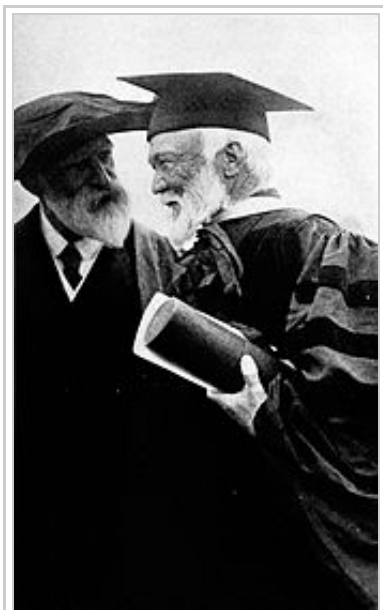
Alma mater University of Glasgow,
University of Oxford

Occupation Politician

Profession Academic

Second Boer War was being discussed. He was one of the harshest critics of British repressive policy against Boer civilians in the South African partisan War. Taking the risk of being very unpopular for a certain moment, he condemned the systematic burning of farms and the imprisonment of old people, women and children in British concentration camps.^[*citation needed*] Bryce was made Chief Secretary for Ireland in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's cabinet in 1905.^[1]

Ambassador to the United States



Bryce (left) with Andrew Carnegie

However, even this time Bryce's cabinet post was held only for a brief period, because as soon as February 1907 he was appointed British Ambassador to the United States of America.^[9] He kept this diplomatic office until 1913 and was very efficient in strengthening the Anglo-American friendship. Bryce made many personal friends in American politics, amongst them US President Theodore Roosevelt.^[*citation needed*] The German ambassador in Washington, Graf Heinrich von Bernstorff, later admitted how relieved he felt that Bryce was not his competitor for American sympathies during the World War period, when Bernstorff managed to secure the neutrality of the USA at least until 1917.^[*citation needed*]

As an author, Bryce quickly became well known in America for his 1888 work, *The American Commonwealth*. The book thoroughly examined the institutions of the United States from the point of view of a historian and constitutional lawyer, and it at once became a classic. In developing material for his book, Bryce painstakingly reproduced the travels of Alexis de Tocqueville, writer of *Democracy in America* (1835–40).

Although Tocqueville emphasized the egalitarian nature of early 19th century America,

Bryce was dismayed to find vast inequality a half-century later, stating "Sixty years ago, there were no great fortunes in America, few large fortunes, no poverty. Now there is some poverty...and a greater number of

gigantic fortunes than in any other country of the world"^[10] and "As respects education...the profusion of...elementary schools tends to raise the mass to a higher point than in Europe...[but] there is an increasing class that has studied at the best universities. It appears that equality has diminished [in this regard] and will diminish further."^[11]

First World War

After his retirement as ambassador and his return to Great Britain he was raised to the peerage as **Viscount Bryce**, of Dechmount in the County of Lanark, in 1914.^[12] Thus he became a member of the House of Lords, the powers of which had been curtailed in the Liberal Parliamentary Reform of 1911. Following the outbreak of the First World War, Lord Bryce was commissioned by Prime Minister H. H. Asquith to give the official Bryce Report on alleged German atrocities in Belgium. The report was published in 1915, and was damning of German behaviour against civilians; Lord Bryce's accounts were confirmed by Vernon Lyman Kellogg, director of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, who told the *New York Times* that the German military enslaved hundreds of thousands of Belgian workers, and abused and maimed many of them in the process.^[citation needed]

Bryce also strongly condemned the Armenian Genocide that took place in the Ottoman Empire mainly in the year 1915. Bryce was the first to speak on that subject in The House of Lords, in July 1915, and later, with the assistance of the historian Arnold J. Toynbee, he produced a documentary record of the massacres, published by the British government in 1916 as the *Blue Book*. In 1921, Lord Bryce wrote that the Armenian genocide had also claimed half of the population of Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire, as similar cruelties were perpetrated upon them.^{[13][14]}

During the last years of his life, Bryce served at the International Court at The Hague, supported the establishment of the League of Nations and published a book about Modern Democracy in 1921 that was rather



Robert Baden-Powell, William Taft and James Bryce at the White House in 1912

critical of post-war democracy; specifically, he strongly opposed the new right to vote for women.^[*citation needed*]

Honours and other public appointments

Bryce received numerous academic honors from home and foreign universities. In September 1901 he received the degree of Doctor of Laws from Dartmouth College.^[15] He became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1894.

In earlier life he was a notable mountain climber, ascending Mount Ararat in 1876, and publishing a volume on Transcaucasia and Ararat in 1877; in 1899–1901 he was president of the Alpine Club. From his Caucasian journey he brought back a deep distrust of Ottoman rule in Asia Minor and a distinct sympathy for the Armenian people.^[*citation needed*]

In 1907 he was made a Member of the Order of Merit by King Edward VII. At the King's death, Lord Bryce arranged his Washington Memorial Service.^[16] At the time of Lord Bryce's memorial service at Westminster Abbey his wife, Lady Bryce, received condolences from King George V who "regarded Lord Bryce as an old friend and trusted counsellor to whom I could always turn."^[17] Queen Victoria had said that Bryce was "one of the best informed men on all subjects I have ever met".^{[18][19]} He was also President of the British Academy from 1913 to 1917.^[1]

Personal life

Lord Bryce married Elizabeth Marion, daughter of Thomas Ashton and sister of Lord Ashton, 1st Baron Ashton of Hyde in 1889. They had no children. He died on 22 January 1922, aged 83, in Sidmouth, Devon, on the last of his lifelong travels, and was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium.^[20] The viscountcy died with him. Lady Bryce died in December 1939.^[1] In 1965, the *James Bryce Chair of Government* (changed to Politics in 1970) was endowed in his honour at the University of Glasgow.

Publications

- *The Flora of the Island of Aran*, 1859
- *The Holy Roman Empire*, 1864 (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/44101>)
- *Report on the Condition of Education in Lancashire*, 1867
- *The Trade Marks Registration Act, with Introduction and Notes on Trade Mark Law*, 1877
- *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, 1877
- *The American Commonwealth*, 1888, volume I (<http://archive.org/stream/americancommonw18brycgoog#page/n5/mode/2up>), volume II (<http://archive.org/stream/americancommonw14brycgoog#page/n4/mode/2up>), volume III (<http://archive.org/stream/americancommonw22brycgoog#page/n14/mode/2up>)
- *Impressions of South Africa*, 1897
- *Studies in History and Jurisprudence*, 1901, volume I (<http://www.archive.org/details/studiesinhistor03brycgoog>), volume II (<http://www.archive.org/details/studiesinhistor02brycgoog>)
- *Studies in Contemporary Biography*, 1903 (<http://archive.org/stream/studiesincontemp00bryc#page/n7/mode/2up>)
- *The Hindrances to Good Citizenship*, 1909 (<http://archive.org/stream/hindrancestogoo00brycgoog#page/n6/mode/2up>)
- *South America: Observations and Impressions*, 1912 (<http://archive.org/stream/southamericaobse00bryciala#page/n5/mode/2up>)
- *University and Historical Addresses*, 1913
- *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16*, 1916
- *Essays and Addresses in War Time*, 1918 (<http://archive.org/stream/essaysandaddres01brycgoog#page/n6/mode/2up>)
- *Modern Democracies*, 1921 volume I (<http://archive.org/stream/moderndemocraci07brycgoog#page/n8/mode/2up>), volume II (<http://archive.org/stream/moderndemocracie02bryc#page/n7/mode/2up>)

His *Studies in History and Jurisprudence* (1901) and *Studies in Contemporary Biography* (1903) were republications of essays.

Articles

- "An Ideal University," (<http://archive.org/stream/contemporaryrev39unkngoog#page/n858/mode/2up>) *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. XLV, June 1884.
- "The Relations of History and Geography," (<http://archive.org/stream/contemporaryrev55unkngoog#page/n436/mode/2up>) *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. XLIX, January/June 1886.
- "The Age of Discontent," (<http://archive.org/stream/contemporaryrev25unkngoog#page/n22/mode/2up>) *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. LIX, January 1891.
- "The Migrations of the Races of Men Considered Historically," (<http://archive.org/stream/contemporaryrev59unkngoog#page/n140/mode/2up>) *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. LXII, July 1892.
- "Equality," (<http://ebooks.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=cent;g=moagrpxc=1;q1=Woman%20Suffrage;rgn=full%20text;view=image;cc=cent;seq=0469;idno=cent0056-3;node=cent0056-3%3A17>) *The Century; A Popular Quarterly*, Volume 56, Issue 3, July 1898.

Famous Quotations

- "Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong."
- "No government demands so much from the citizen as Democracy and none gives back so much."
- "Life is too short for reading inferior books."

Further reading

- Fisher, H. A. L. *James Bryce: Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M.* (<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069849670;seq=5;view=1up>), Vol. 2 (<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015069849688;seq=17;view=1up;num=iii>), London resp. New York (1927).
- Seaman Jr., John T. *A Citizen of the World: The Life of James Bryce*, London/New York (2006).

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1. [^] *a b c d e f g h i* thepeerage.com James Bryce, 1st and last Viscount Bryce (<http://www.thepeerage.com/p18647.htm#i186462>)
2. [^] H.A.L. Fisher *James Bryce*, p. 13
3. [^] noahsarksearch.com James Bryce (<http://www.noahsarksearch.com/BryceJames/BryceJames.htm>)
4. [^] leighrayment.com House of Commons: Tipperary South to Tyrone West (<http://www.leighrayment.com/commons/Tcommons2.htm>)
5. [^] leighrayment.com House of Commons: Abbey to Amersham (<http://www.leighrayment.com/commons/Acommons1.htm>)
6. [^] *The London Gazette*: no. 26319. p. 4801 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/26319/page/4801>). 23 August 1892.
7. [^] *The London Gazette*: no. 26318. p. 4742 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/26318/page/4742>). 19 August 1892.
8. [^] *The London Gazette*: no. 26518. p. 3181 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/26518/page/3181>). 1 June 1894.
9. [^] *The London Gazette*: no. 27995. p. 1065 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27995/page/1065>). 15 February 1907.
10. [^] Viscount James Bryce Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, p. 745
11. [^] Viscount James Bryce Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, p. 746
12. [^] *The London Gazette*: no. 28797. p. 810 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/28797/page/810>). 30 January 1914.
13. [^] Travis, Hannibal. "Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1809090)." Durham, NC: *Carolina Academic Press*, 2010, 2007, pp. 237-77, 293–294.
14. [^] Travis, Hannibal. "'Native Christians Massacred': The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians During World War I (<http://utpjournals.metapress.com/content/yv544142p5rn055/?p=91e7dbe895ec4cbf9eef0ad842fef76a&pi=6>)."

- Genocide Studies and Prevention*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December 2006, pp. 327–371. Retrieved 2010-02-02.
15. ^ "Court Circular" *The Times* (London). Thursday, 26 September 1901. (36570),
 16. ^ Lord Bryce, Viscount James. "Telegram British Embassy, Washington" (<http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs/1910/reference/frus.frus1910.i0021.pdf>). Telegram British Embassy, Washington. Retrieved 8 May 1910.
 17. ^ New York Times (28 January 1922). ""Britain offers American President Bust of Lord Bryce"" (<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FA0C1EFD3E551A738DDDA10A94D9405B828EF1D3>). *New York Times* (New York Times). Retrieved 23 May 2013.
 18. ^ Martin, Stanley. *One Hundred Years of Matchless Honour - The Order of Merit* (http://books.google.com.au/books?id=zWVscq9SdgYC&pg=PA313&lpg=PA313&dq=The+history+of+the+Order+of+merit+++james+bryce&source=bl&ots=Xr-ue8TkCt&sig=86bZET_oBJ5hpG93q6QWMDI5Ky0&hl=en&sa=X&ei=LbmdUYr3GsSQiAf76oCYDQ&ved=0CGAQ6AEwCQ#v=onepage&q=The%20history%20of%20the%20Order%20of%20merit%20%20%20james%20bryce&f=false). I.B.Tauris. p. 315. Retrieved 11 May 2013.
 19. ^ *The London Gazette*: no. 27994. p. 963 (<http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27994/page/963>). 12 February 1907.
 20. ^ *The Complete Peerage, Volume XIII - Peerage Creations 1901-1938*. St Catherine's Press. 1949. p. 187.
 - This article incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press

External links

- Hansard 1803–2005: contributions in Parliament by James Bryce (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-james-bryce>)
- James Bryce, *Two Historical Studies: The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India; Diffusion of Roman and English Law Throughout the World* (1914) (<http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/bryce/TwoHistoricalStudies.pdf>)
- Text of the Bryce report on German atrocities (<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/brycereport.htm>)
- Works by James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce

- (http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Bryce_James_Bryce_Viscount) at Project Gutenberg
- Viscount James Bryce (http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Fperson=230&Itemid=28) at *The Online Library of Liberty*
 - James Bryce, preface to *Shall This Nation Die?*, by Joseph Naayem, New York: 1921, quoted in Native Christians Massacred, The Ottoman Genocide of the Assyrians during World War I (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=950428), 1.3 Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal 326 (2006)
 - *Atrocities Cured Pacifist* (http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9804E2DD1F3FE433A25753C2A9629C946996D6CF&oref=slogin), The New York Times, 20 April 1918, at 11
 - *The American Commonwealth*, with an Introduction by Gary L. McDowell (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995). 2 Vols. See original text in The Online Library of Liberty (http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=1850&Itemid=99999999).
 - Portraits of James Bryce (<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp00610/james-bryce-1st-viscount-bryce>), at the National Portrait Gallery
 - Works by or about James Bryce, 1st Viscount Bryce (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n50-41122>) in libraries (WorldCat catalog)

Parliament of the United Kingdom		
Preceded by Joseph d'Aguilar Samuda	Member of Parliament for Tower Hamlets 1880–1885	Constituency abolished
New constituency	Member of Parliament for Aberdeen South 1885–1907	Succeeded by George Birnie Esslemont
Political offices		
Preceded by Hon. Robert Bourke	Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1886	Succeeded by Sir James Fergusson, Bt
Preceded by The Duke of Rutland	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1892–1894	Succeeded by The Lord Tweedmouth
Preceded by A. J. Mundella	President of the Board of Trade 1894–1895	Succeeded by Charles Thomson Ritchie
Preceded by Walter Long	Chief Secretary for Ireland 1905–1907	Succeeded by Augustine Birrell
Diplomatic posts		
Preceded by Sir Henry Mortimer Durand	British Ambassador to the United States 1907–1913	Succeeded by Sir Cecil Spring Rice
Peerage of the United Kingdom		
New creation	Viscount Bryce 1914–1922	Extinct

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