Cicero - George Santayana -Nicolás Avellaneda

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Data de publicació: 20-01-2017

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George Santayana wrote (in The Life of Reason, 1905) was: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

A search including key phrases (“remember the past”…”condemned to repeat it”) did not bring any results. So we are inclined to believe he never repeated Santayana in so many words. Churchill worried not so much that those who forget the past are condemned to relive it, but that the loss of the past would mean “the most thoughtless of ages. Every day headlines and short views.” (House of Commons, 16 November 1948)

But perhaps his best remark on the subject was this:

“When the situation was manageable it was neglected, and now that it is thoroughly out of hand we apply too late the remedies which then might have effected a cure. There is nothing new in the story. It is as old as the sibylline books. It falls into that long, dismal catalogue of the fruitlessness of experience and the confirmed unteachability of mankind. Want of foresight, unwillingness to act when action would be simple and effective, lack of clear thinking, confusion of counsel until the emergency comes, until self-preservation strikes its jarring gong–these are the features which constitute the endless repetition of history.”

—House of Commons, 2 May 1935, after the Stresa Conference, in which Britain, France and Italy agreed—futilely—to maintain the independence of Austria. (My book* page 490).