

highest eulogy is, that his field was the world. Messengers of grace went forth from the little village of Herrnhut to the snows of Greenland, the burning deserts of Africa and the pestilential swamps of South America. While kings and princes were listening to the impassioned appeals of the pious nobleman in Amsterdam and Berlin, his disciples were proclaiming, in persuasive accents, the love of Jesus to barbarous fishermen near the northern pole and to naked savages under the line. The silent industry and peaceful joy which reigned in the modest dwellings at Herrnhut, were copied in the commercial capital of the world and in the forests of Pennsylvania. Of few individuals among our race can it be affirmed with more truth than of Zinzendorf, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them;" or that other sentence, engraved on his monument, "He was ordained to go and bring forth fruit, and that his fruit should remain."

ARTICLE V.

HISTORICAL STUDIES.

By Rev. B. Sears, D. D. President of Theol. Institution, Newton.

1. *Grundzüge der Historik von G. G. Gervinus, Leipzig, 1837.*
2. *Lectures on Modern History, by Thomas Arnold, D. D. with an Introduction and Notes by Prof. Henry Reed, New York, 1846.*

WE have placed these two works at the head of the present article, not for the purpose of making them the subject of a critical examination and review, but rather as indicating the general topic on which we propose to remark. The study of history and the historical art itself are beginning to receive from our countrymen a larger and more just share of attention, while in Europe men of the profoundest erudition, and of the most exalted genius and talents, are consecrating themselves to the cultivation of this department of knowledge. Examples are numerous, but it is unnecessary to cite them. The most careless observer of the literature of the age, must have noticed that, among the more substan-

tial and magnificent works which are issued from the press in England, France and Germany, those of a historical character hold a conspicuous place. This circumstance suggests the propriety of our devoting a little space to the consideration of the qualifications and labors of the historian, with some observations on the importance of this branch of study in general.

That investigation should precede historical composition, though a truism, has often been regarded as untrue. Of those who have undertaken the sacred office of historian many are found who have neither the means nor the inclination for historical research. Secondary sources of information are all that they seek, and in the use of these they are, too often, not over scrupulous. The consequence of this abuse is that, among intelligent readers, history having lost its freshness, has ceased to awaken general interest; and the only wonder is that the disgust has not been greater. Writers of this description seem not to have been aware, or if aware, not heedful of the boggy nature of the soil in some of the tracts over which they have travelled, or rather flown, nor of the rich mines that lie scarcely beneath the surface, in others. Nothing is more ludicrous than the gravity with which fables are sometimes set forth as veritable history, or more contemptible than the stupid indifference with which, at other times, things of intensest interest, lying, too, directly in the path of the historian, are unheeded, as the remains of ancient art are by the self-satisfied Turk. Most of our compends of general history are, for this reason, unworthy of the place which they occupy, and many a larger work, of respectability, would poorly abide the test of searching criticism. We might here instance the early history of Rome, which, often and confidently as its story has been told, is, to the true scholar, what the polar regions are to the geographer. Some of its seas have been navigated; some of its coasts have been touched; but as to the rest, there are impenetrable fields of ice, which have to this day baffled all the skill of the explorer. Since Niebuhr has shown how little reliance can be placed upon much that passes under the name of Roman history, others who have come after him are in a situation like that of merchants whose store-houses have been consumed by a general conflagration, and who must content themselves for a while with sheds and stalls till they shall have time to erect something more substantial.

In respect to Grecian history, the state of things is more favorable; but it has not long been so. Less than thirty years ago, little comparatively was known of the many-sided life of

the Greeks. The entire subject of the legal antiquities of Athens, to give but one instance, was a chaos, too faithfully exemplified in the Notes to Dobson's edition of the Attic orators. How great the change since the investigations of Böckh, Müller, Wachsmuth, Hermann, Meyer and Schömann! It is inspiring to see, with what restless activity almost every subject connected with Grecian history has within a few years been investigated. With this multitude of historical dissertations, it has, at length, become possible to compose a tolerable history of Greece. Instead of what has been done, let us suppose that modern scholars had been satisfied with the method of good old Rollin, and laid out their strength in rhetorical exhibition, and in setting forth by way of ratiocination vague and uncertain generalities. How different would have been the state of our knowledge! Of what use, then, is this perpetual varnishing up of old furniture, while the very frame-work is in danger of falling in pieces; this outside stucco-work and polish, while the building itself is crumbling and tottering? He who settles one disputed question, who clears up one obscurity, who corrects one error, does a better service to mankind, than he who fills the shelves of booksellers with "libraries" of superficial and unauthentic history. After the days of poly-history, the age of the Scaligers, of Casaubon, of Salmasius, of Gronovius, of Heinsius and others, there was some value to be attached to the labors of those who converted the accumulated mass of historical collections into readable histories. But that ore was long since all worked up. If men will now write history, they must begin with research, the want of which it is in vain for mere cultivated taste or even genius to attempt to supply. The true historian, who understands the condition of that branch of study to which he is devoted, will not only feel the necessity of laying anew the foundations of history, but will be almost oppressed with a sense of the greatness of the undertaking. His only encouragement will be that, while it is the work of an age, and perhaps of many ages to accomplish what is needed by way of investigation, it is in his power to select some single part of the work, and perform it so thoroughly that it shall be of permanent value. Greater undertakings will be left for the few, if such there be, who are adequate to them. Even a Niebuhr was not able to complete the examination of the history of a single people. Heeren could explore thoroughly but one of the aspects of the ancient world, that of its material or economical interests. Schlosser has at-

tempted more, and with partial success; but who will venture, single-handed, to undertake what a Schlosser has failed to accomplish? The attempt to write, from original investigations, a general history, where others have not before critically explored the ground and furnished innumerable helps and guides, is too gigantic for the powers of the human mind. As in erecting an Egyptian pyramid, so here, many laborers must be long employed before the pile can be reared. All efforts in anticipation of this preparatory work are misdirected and nearly useless. The present generation of historians must, if they would meet the demand that is made upon them, limit their ambition chiefly to the accurate investigation of details. Without these, nothing of real and lasting importance in history can be produced. After that work shall have been accomplished, men of the requisite genius and industry will be able to construct the fabric of a general history from safe and durable materials.

We have spoken of Greece and Rome; but the time is passed, when it could be supposed that in them, in their language and literature, is to be found the key which shall unlock the history of the ancient world. Not to insist on the point, that Asia had an influence upon the early civilization and subsequent fortunes of these countries so various and so extensive that it cannot be safely overlooked, that original seat of the human race had a history of its own, equal, at least, in interest and importance to that of Europe, a history which can never be written from Greek and Latin authorities. He who would contemplate Asia as she was, can do so only by following her to her own home and hearing the recitals of her history in her own language. Our knowledge even of western Asia was very imperfect, till the aids of Oriental literature and of modern travels were added to those already possessed in the remains of classical learning. Still much remains to be done, and probably many things pertaining to the early history of those countries, will always continue in obscurity. In regard to ancient Egypt, the age of utter incredulity in one class of men, and of despondency in another, has passed away. Nowhere is the value of patient research more apparent than in the results to which it has led respecting that country. It is impossible yet to say how much the study of Sanscrit literature, and the possession of so large a part of India by the British, and the various investigations which will grow out of these circumstances, will contribute to remove the obscurity which rests upon the history of that more easterly part of the world which was the

most exuberant source of influence in shaping the destinies of many nations. The comparative study of languages as now pursued, and applied to ethnographical inquiries; the discovery and interpretation of various literary productions in the different languages of Asia descended from a remote antiquity; the study of the face of the country and of its monuments of art by scholars who shall be able to follow out every hint of ancient authors, may yet conspire to increase our knowledge of ancient India beyond the present expectation of the most sanguine inquirer. Nor can we believe it a vain hope that, in a historical point of view, China will yet be more widely opened.

There is another quarter from which we may confidently expect additional light on the history of Asia. We refer to the occupancy of all the north of Asia by the Russians, and the culture of the languages of the country both ancient and modern, and the study of its history as now successfully prosecuted under the auspices of the government. There is, for example, a Mongolian literature existing to an extent which is yet unknown. In this literature there are, according to scholars now in the employ of the Russian government, numerous historical works, relating to that part of Asia where originated those great military movements which agitated the whole world from Spain to China. Now as we have only fragments of information on this great subject, a knowledge of Tartar and Mongolian history would furnish a key to much that is unknown and enigmatical in the history of other nations both in Europe and in Asia. So far as we know, von Hammer, of the historians, has directed most attention to this subject.

In no period of history is the necessity of further research more obvious than in that of the Middle Ages. The learning of a Hallam suffices but for two or three of the western and southern States of Europe. With the language and literature of the two great political powers of that age, the Imperial and the Mohammedan, he appears to have no intimate acquaintance. Yet an accurate history of the Middle Ages, without such knowledge, is utterly impossible. And in regard to the Latin chronicles of this period, it is to be observed, that many of them have recently been brought to light for the first time, and that all the others need to be examined anew with sounder principles of historical criticism, and to be interpreted in connection with all the remains of the vernacular literature of the age. This last circumstance suggests what is particularly needed at the present

time. Scholars have begun,—and they have but begun,—the study of the Scandinavian, the Teutonic and the Romance dialects. The Anglo-Saxon history can never be thoroughly written, till all the relations of the Anglo-Saxons with their continental ancestors and kindred are more definitely ascertained. Not only their descent and language, but their institutions and laws, the very germ of their political character, must be traced to the continent, and illustrated by the history of similar institutions and laws, that were in force all along the north-western coast of Germany. On these points of vital interest, neither Turner nor Palgrave, excellent as they are in other respects, have given us any information; and Lappenberg has rather indicated what is to be done than accomplished it.

The history of Germany is now awakening very general interest. The German grammar of Grimm has created an era not only in philology, but in history also. The history of a language and the history of a people are found to be very nearly allied. The religion, the laws, the customs and the fortunes of a people are constantly alluded to in all literary productions as well as in grave histories. Thus during the study of the dialects of the old German, German history itself has been, as it were, raised from the dead. Now a fresh effort is made—and it is indispensable that it should be made—to investigate anew every portion of the history of the country. The history of single institutions, religious, political and literary, of single towns and cities, of dioceses, of provinces, of small states, no less than of kingdoms is now employing innumerable individuals of unquenchable curiosity and unwearied research. This is the more necessary, on account of the great variety of laws and usages which prevailed in an age when every petty prince and almost every considerable city was aiming at independence. In such cases, all generalizations drawn from a few facts are uncertain and often deceptive. On some important subjects a general ignorance, on others serious errors have prevailed. This is proved by a multitude of special investigations which have, of late, been made and published. Until very recently, there has been no documentary and authentic history of the Peasants' War; and the work of Bensen is complete only in respect to the southern part of its theatre. The early history of Prussia proper, the country formerly occupied by the Teutonic Order of Knights, was almost an entire mystery till Professor Voight opened, for the first time, its many volumes of manuscript records, documents and correspondence,

and revealed to the world things more interesting than Romance itself. The veritable history of the Swiss reformers, and of the subordinate German reformers, we may truly affirm, is just beginning to be written. The amount of manuscript records and of epistolary correspondence, hitherto wholly unnoticed and nearly unknown, but now brought to light, may well excite our astonishment.

The history of the Anabaptists still remains in great obscurity. Some of the principal facts, particularly the political misdemeanors both of public bodies and of individuals, are well known; but an accurate knowledge and classification, according to their philosophical tenets and their theological creeds or fancies, of the heterogeneous characters who passed under that vague and merely accidental appellation, will be sought for in vain in any book on the subject. Scanty as the printed authorities are at the present day, there are unpublished papers relating to the subject, written, too, at the very time of the transactions, scattered in various archives in Germany and Switzerland, which, if carefully and systematically examined, would certainly settle many doubtful points in the history of those enthusiasts. Sufficient evidence of this may be found in what is said by Schreiber in his life of Hubmayer, by the editors of Zuingli's works,—the new and first complete edition,—and by Hagen on the literary and religious state of Germany at the time of the Reformation. We forbear here to go more into details. A volume might be written, showing how much of the present knowledge of German history is of recent growth, and how much that is now unknown is within the reach of the curious and industrious historian.

In the history of France, scarcely a period is to be found in which there is not a similar demand for investigation. The whole subject of the relative influence of the old Gallic and the Roman elements of social order, after Gaul became a Roman province, is yet debatable ground; and the bold theories of Amadeus Thierry tend but indirectly to settle the points in dispute. Nor are the social relations of these more ancient inhabitants of the country, the Gallic Romans, with their conquerors, the Franks, yet sufficiently explained. The earlier French writers found in the origin of the French government pretty much what their political biases led them to prefer.¹ Boulainvilliers discovered that the Franks, whose individual rights were equal, were the lawful masters of

¹ Löbell's *Gregor von Tours*, p. 550.

the conquered country, and that the French nobles were the descendants of the Franks. Consequently Louis XIV. had invaded the freedom of the nobility; but the common people being the descendants of the conquered Gauls, had merely the right of existence. Dubos denied that there was such a conquest, and maintained that Gaul was defended against its enemies by the Franks, and that, when delivered, it consented to be governed by the Merovingian kings with absolute authority, the right of property and that of holding civil offices alone being reserved. Montesquieu rejected both theories, and set forth an intermediate and more rational view, but fell into many errors in detail. Mably wrote in the spirit of the French revolution, and could carry by force what could not be carried by reason. One of the ablest, most accurate and diligent inquirers on this and other connected subjects, is Fauriel in his history of southern Gaul under the Germans. Still Löbell thinks him not free entirely from French prejudices. Augustus Thierry is certainly one of the most attractive of the late French historians, and paints with the hand of a master. Yet, though his pictures are admirable, and his details correct, the combination is sometimes that of the artist, and one which never existed in nature. He, also, is a champion of the ancient Gauls, and maintains that they formed a third and distinct element pervading all the periods of French history, and that the Germans were their brutal masters through successive generations; not remembering that history records as many instances of Roman as of German violence to the original natives of the soil. Guizot seems to be the freest from prejudices of any of the men of his class, and to unite in himself, more than others, the highest qualities of the historian. He has given glimpses on this subject which tend to bring the investigation to a successful issue. As might be expected, the Germans have not been idle spectators of a controversy which was so closely connected with the early history of their own country. Eichhorn, in his history of German law; Savigny, in his history of the Roman law during the middle ages; Pertz, in his history of the Merovingian mayors of the palace; Schmidt, in his history of France; Löbell, in his life of Gregory of Tours, and many others have contributed much to the solution of this great historical problem. Further investigations, however, will be indispensable to a complete history of the subject. We have read Michelet on this point with mingled feelings of delight and disgust,—delight at the evidence of the abundant means which he possessed for prosecuting his in-

quiries, his industry in using them, and at many brilliant passages in his work; but disgust with the flippancy with which he often dismisses the gravest subjects, and with the puerile conceits and fancies to which he as frequently resorts in sustaining a theory or in solving difficulties.

The historical problem upon which we have accidentally fallen in these remarks, is but one of a thousand which might be brought forward to show the necessity of more investigation in regard to the history of France. Its religious history, in particular, requires the labors of able, sound and candid critics. On nearly all points of interest, we have been, until within a very few years, almost entirely dependent on catholic and even monastic writers, or on a few Protestant polemics. Notwithstanding the credulity of the monks, and the partiality for Romanism which everywhere pervades their writings, we are obliged to award to them, especially to the Benedictines, the praise of more diligence and even more profoundness of learning, than to others who have treated on the same subjects. Reuchlin, in his history of the Port-Royalists, and the biographers of some of the mystics and of other great men of the Gallican church, have given specimens of what is needed; but that part which remains to be done is immense. Unhappily, the French historians of the new school, are deficient in the earnestness of religious character, and in the theological learning requisite to the skilful and satisfactory performance of the task just indicated. Nothing in this line could be more desirable than a philosophic history of Jesuitism as a moral system. Reuchlin, in his life of Pascal, has given admirable hints on the subject. None, however, but a profound and philosophic theologian, can explain the nature and causes of that system, as well as its effects—with which last most men satisfy their curiosity; and none but a laborious student will read, and take the necessary pains fully to comprehend those voluminous works of the Spanish Jesuits on moral theology which alone can furnish a true basis for the investigation.

Besides the Catholic history, there is the Protestant history of France, some parts of which have for a long period lain in a lamentable state of neglect. Here more than almost anywhere else, new research, not a new dress of the scanty materials already before us, is what is needed. The few individuals who have interested themselves lately in these inquiries, have contributed much to the instruction and gratification of the intelligent Christian reader, and created a desire for more information. May

others soon be found to follow the example of Coquerel and Schmidt.

It were unnecessary to seek to illustrate the importance of the truth with which we started, by a particular reference to the present state of the study of English history. . Men are everywhere opening their eyes to the astounding fact that they have no history of England. Books in abundance there are on the subject, but which of all the number gives us the true history of the country? Never has the tyranny of prejudice been more fatal to the interests of truth, than in the English writers who are known to the world under the name of the historians of their country. No mere mediation between partisans will suffice to remedy the evil. The original witnesses on which later authors have relied, spoke so much under the influence of prejudices, there is so much of false coloring in the standard literature of certain periods, that the witnesses must be more searchingly tried, and the facts more carefully investigated one by one, before the frame-work of a national history can be reared. The labors of a Niebuhr are demanded, classifying authorities, increasing their number by diligent search, carefully interpreting, correcting and illustrating each by the light of the whole, till truth, so far as it is not already utterly beyond our reach, shall be brought out and demonstrated. True, indeed, works thus elaborated will bring with them as an accompaniment much of the process by which the author has conducted his investigations, and will stand in the way of that artistic arrangement of the mere results, which constitutes the charm of historical narrative. But such is the state of doubt and suspicion on the part of the reader, that he will no longer take the mere authority of the historian, but will demand the evidence in the case. Until the most important facts which are now the subject of dispute, shall be settled and demonstrated, no good histories can be written after the manner of Hume or Lingard. No one, unless himself a historian, knows where the latter is to be trusted and where he is not, where he has made new investigations, and where he has merely given us a recollection of the old repast. Having dwelt so long on the necessity of farther and more accurate investigation, we must hasten to take another view of the historian's work.

A powerful and well cultivated intellect, familiar, too, with the nature of all the public interests which give to the events their importance, is essential to a great historian. Histories of individual public interests, as those of politics, war, and the like; or

of professions and studies, as of law, medicine, theology, philosophy, literature; and of the several arts and sciences, all of which are in the highest degree both useful and attractive, plainly require a particular acquaintance with these subjects, without which it were absurd to undertake to write upon them. That which is so obvious in the instances here given, is not less true nor less important in all other cases. To do justice to a general history, therefore, in which so many subjects need to be treated, is impossible for one in whom high mental endowments and much general culture are not united. The ideal, indeed, can never be fully reached; but on all that constitutes the groundwork of any history, the author must be an adept in order to be a competent critic. Here the great masters of the art whose works have descended to us from antiquity excelled. Of Herodotus we will not speak; his history is a sort of epic, and is good in its way. But Thucydides received into his capacious soul and fully appreciated everything of which he treated. Polybius is well known to have excelled in this respect. Livy's deficiencies sprung from other causes; he would not have been incompetent to treat of such high subjects, had his method and aims, in other respects, been right. Of Tacitus it is unnecessary to speak. Do the great modern historians equal their prototypes? Hume was an acute metaphysician, an elegant scholar and an incomparable writer; but how much better would Burke have understood political and practical subjects? Robertson had various knowledge, and great historical tact in presenting his materials in the simplest and most attractive form. But he did not comprehend the subject of his best work. The nature and workings of the great internal struggle between the Italian and the German spirit, between the spirit of the Middle Ages and the spirit of reform, of which the events of the age of Charles V. were but the visible tokens, this most essential point in the history of that emperor and his times, was not understood by his biographer. Gibbon seems to have understood his subject somewhat better. His deficiencies were chiefly moral and rhetorical. Great expectations were raised in respect to the historical project of Mackintosh, in consequence of his being known to possess, in a remarkable degree, the qualities above mentioned. The failure, so far as it was one, must be traced either to a want of suitable preparation, or to the effect of his conversational habits and advancing age, or to both. Among the Italian writers in this department none have a better reputation than Machiavelli and

Paul Sarpi. Their faults are, to a great extent, the results of the *pragmatical* school to which they belonged, not those of incompetency. Of the older French historians, Thuanus or de Thou and Bossuet, are remarkable, though in very different ways, for their comprehension of their subjects. The former, though highly learned, judicious and candid, is not very original; the latter is possibly too much so. At the present day, Guizot enjoys, in respect to ability, a singular preëminence. Heeren and Schlosser, among the Germans, the former contemplating rather the outer, the latter the inner life of a people, have as complete an understanding of their subjects as can be expected from University professors. The severest criticism ever made upon them, was that their knowledge was book knowledge. Niebahr, Rotteck and von Raumer had the advantage of being more or less conversant with public affairs. The first made a good use of it; the second owes to it much of his unbounded popularity; the last has, perhaps, in his later years, trusted too much to it. Of the ecclesiastical historians, none excels Neander in being completely master of his subject. Most of them want comprehensiveness, or an ability to appreciate Christianity in its essential features, as distinguished from the accidents of ecclesiastical usages and party interests, and to form a true estimate of those various influences which serve to render every successive age of the church what it is.

So many partial failures in eminent historians, show how necessary it is for every author to select his subject with special reference to his peculiar qualifications. Gibbon's subject required of him a careful, philosophic and candid estimate of the comparative influences of paganism and of Christianity upon society and government. Here lay his greatest weakness. Semler and Hencke hated the church; and yet they attempted to write its history. They have merely written the history of its follies. Mainbourg formerly undertook,—and Audin is now walking in his footsteps,—to explain the Protestant reformation. They were about as well qualified for their task as Luther would have been to write the biography of Zuingle or of Henry VIII. Southey must needs write the lives of Bunyan and Wesley. That is all very well so far as it respects the poetical elements of their character; but beyond that, nothing could be more odd than such a conjunction of names on a title-page.

In those cases where an entire period is made the subject of the narrative, the highest degree of perfection is reached when

the author studies it in the light of universal history, so treats it as to make it teach all the more important practical lessons of history, and, in short, exhibits human nature by giving a faithful picture of it with all its leading passions and aspirations. The conservative and the innovator, the cunning aristocrat and the honest yeoman, the believer in divine Providence and the skeptic, the patriot and the political knave, all ought to have their full length portraits in such a gallery, and each in such a way as to represent his class in all ages. Every well chosen and well executed general history will furnish a complete view of humanity, will be a fair specimen of the world, a knowledge of which would alone be sufficient to render one a sound practical historian. A man who, after having determined to write the history of Greece, Rome or England, should study to acquaint himself with human affairs generally, with the influence of laws and institutions, of industry, social habits and popular belief in other nations, and then should bring this large acquaintance with human nature, in all its social relations, to aid him in the study and comprehension of the particular subject he had chosen, would, beyond all question, be able to throw a broader light upon almost every theme of historical interest. Not that different nations, in pursuing the course predestined by Providence, all have the same experience, though they have much more in common than is sometimes supposed; but that history is best understood when, in connection with the representation of a period as it is in itself, and as it would appear to one who knew no other, all the estimates and judgments passed by the author upon the great questions of social interest are conformed to a fixed historical standard. This standard can be nothing else than the results to which man, with the accumulated knowledge of all past ages, have come in respect to political and moral science. In estimating the character and institutions of the republics of Greece, it would be necessary to refer to some principles unknown in that age, but developed since, and thus their history would be instructive to us, not only in regard to what they were, but equally so in regard to what they were not. The necessity of moral principle to the stability of government, may be taught negatively in the history of the last years of the republic of Athens, or positively in that of the old Roman republic. The connection of general intelligence with civil and religious liberty, is illustrated as much by the history of the Middle Ages as by the modern history of England. In respect to political insti-

tutions, Mitford's history of Greece is founded upon a right theory, that of comparing ancient and modern democracy. His fault consists not in being a modern statesman,—indeed no other could write a good history of Greece,—but in acting the partisan.

There are, indeed, certain historical subjects which are better adapted than others to answer the general purposes of history; and the selection of such is one of the surest indications of a great historian. Besides the entire history of a civilized nation, there are certain great epochs with their antecedents and consequents, which furnish a perfect historical theme. Such was the decline of the Roman republic and the origin of the monarchy, the Papacy from Gregory VII to Boniface VIII, the German empire under the Hohenstaufens, the age of the emperor Charles V., the English, the French, and the American revolutions.

In regard to what is termed the philosophical treatment of history, many questions arise which can be properly solved only by using the nicest discrimination. A mere narration of facts without regard to principles would admit of no true system or order, and would no more constitute history than a pile of timbers or stones would constitute a palace. Otherwise, it were better to go back to the old chroniclers as our masters. The nature of an historical subject ought to be studied, a sound induction drawn from the sum of the leading results, then a new survey of the details in the light of the whole, and thus an organization effected, dictated by the materials themselves and not by any arbitrary method. Furthermore, human actions should be referred as far as possible to their causes, or, what is the same thing, events should be viewed in their real connections. These connections are manifold,—with the course of Providence, with human nature, and with special external influences. The more completely the entire web of these influences is given, if correctly given, the more perfect is the performance. Indeed, the value of history depends not on a knowledge of the events in themselves, but on a correct apprehension of the practical principles which they teach and illustrate. When these are falsely explained, then we attach little importance to the author's philosophy, and confine our attention to his facts; and in all cases, the historian can but aid us in our reflections; he cannot think for us.

We are aware that in advocating the claims of philosophical history, we are exposing ourselves to misapprehension. Our position is not, that philosophical history, as the term is often employed, must be insisted on, notwithstanding the evils inseparably

connected with it, but that history becomes truly philosophical only by avoiding these evils. What is sometimes termed *pragmatical* history is defective on account of its overlooking them. It often mistakes an occasion for a cause, and errs in attaching undue importance to external influences. It often converts the actors themselves into philosophers, and represents them all as acting from nice calculation and upon logical grounds. Not only does it ascribe to men many motives and reasons to which they were utter strangers, but it attempts, by a shallow philosophy, to solve the mysteries of Providence. This is the chief fault of the otherwise excellent historians, Pölitz and Planck. But a truly philosophical historian will be careful not to explain too much; he will be on his guard against referring to a subordinate cause that which more truly springs from a higher cause, and against explaining on any one principle that which is the result of many. Nor will he forget that there are some things which no mortal could ever comprehend, and others which will ever remain obscure, because those memorials which alone could furnish the key to their explanation, have perished.

There is another kind of history, called philosophical, which is now taking the place of the more antiquated pragmatical method: It is that by which an abstract philosophy attempts to discover the theory of the universe, and then to investigate and construct history accordingly. This method would meet with nothing but contempt, beyond the precincts of a certain school of speculative philosophy, were it not that men of splendid talents and astonishing research have recommended a bad method by a masterly execution. Germany itself, however, is becoming wearied with such vagaries, and such profane attempts to scale the heavens in order to look down upon the earth like gods. The wing of time will soon sweep all this mist away. Philosophy is modest just in proportion as it is sound; and this remark applies equally to philosophical history.

Still it may be deserving of serious inquiry, how far the historian should show himself in the character of interpreter. Here there are two extremes, equally to be guarded against, the one that of the chronicler, the other that of the theorist. If an author has studied his subject as profoundly as he ought in order to be justified in assuming the office of historian, long intimacy with his theme will have forced many reflections upon his mind. He will have a truer insight into the nature of that subject than others can be supposed to have. On what principles of safety or of

economy, then, can it be maintained that he ought to withhold those reflections? How can he do justice to his undertaking, or his duty to his readers, if he do not set forth the subject in as luminous a way as possible? It is not, however, so much the extent as the truthfulness of his reflections that will give the needful aid. A simple statement that will shine by its own light, when once communicated,—a hint that will give a right direction to a reader's thoughts, is, in most instances, especially if the plan and narration be philosophical and clear, all that is requisite. Historical theories, with the study and selection of facts to support them, even if conducted with candor and impartiality, have this disadvantage, that they make the reader the disciple of a particular man, rather than the disciple of divine Providence. For those who prefer such a teacher, and who are content to observe the course of human affairs on so narrow a scale, it may be well enough for men to speculate on history and publish their speculations. But what most men desire, and what all need, is select and connected portions of history,—as much as men will have time and ability to study and comprehend,—in which God, as the director of human affairs, teaches the principles by which they are regulated in his own way, and the author is the humble, but faithful interpreter. The interpreter best performs his task when, after having taken the necessary pains to learn what can be known of his theme, he sets it forth in its true character, preceded by such introductory views as shall put the reader in possession of what is indispensable to a comprehension of the general subject, and accompanied by explanatory observations, and by such summaries, comparisons and contrasts, at suitable intervals, as shall enable the reader to perceive its relations to other analogous subjects as well as the connection of its parts. Reflections much beyond these limits, though true in themselves and important in their place, do not properly belong to history. Certainly the historian should be the servant of history, not history the servant of the historian.

Not the least difficult part of the historian's task relates to the imagination. It is his business, from the multitude of disconnected facts which his industry has collected, to call up to life an age that is long gone by. A panoramic view of the living scene, either with his own eyes or with the eyes of another, is denied him. What others have related in different connections, what he himself has brought together in a laborious way from various and distinct sources, must be wrought into one grand picture. It

cannot, of course, be precisely identical with any one scene in the life and circumstances of the people at a particular moment; but it must nevertheless truly represent their general life, in a given period, and the outline, moreover, must be filled up by well ascertained facts. The very highest effort of the poet, that of forming an ideal, and giving it reality, is requisite in the historian, with this difference that the former may elevate himself above the actual world and construct his ideals from the choicest specimens of whatever has been observed, while the latter must keep on an exact level with the state of society which he would represent, and employ only the specific materials before him. The historian's ideal must be the nearest possible approach to a resuscitation. In order to this, he will endeavor to insinuate himself by sympathy into the very souls of the people, and then, by the aid of a well stored memory, to bring around him, in his fancied position, all the results of his previous inquiries, arrange them in their proper places, and then breathe into them the breath of life. The same penetrating and absorbing process by which Shakspeare possessed himself of his historical characters, is of the highest importance to the historian, only he must maintain the identity as well as the consistency of their actions and passions. Let any one compare, in this particular, a Goldsmith with a Keightly, and he will readily perceive why the former is read and the latter only praised. At the present day, the French historians, are, perhaps, cultivating the imagination the most successfully, but their pictures are too gaudy, the coloring too high. Besides, the imagination plays altogether too important a part with them. With the best of them, the situations are too interesting, there is too much of the buskin. Even D'Aubigné, with all his accurate research, and general sobriety, accumulates upon the leading characters more than belongs to them, makes them the authors of much which was accomplished by others, or which was the common property of the age.

It is as yet an unsettled question, how far the taste for what is picturesque or scenic ought to be indulged in history. When it is entirely wanting, histories will lie unread; and so far as dryness results from giving mere facts without those passions and aims with which the bosoms of the original actors swelled, it is as false to history as it is fatal to interest. Still when everything is made to turn on dramatic representation, when costume is so profuse as to withdraw the attention from the person, when the description of manners obtrudes itself everywhere, the whole

thing becomes a mere show. We find moderation in nature itself. The course of life, public and private, as it appears to the living generation concerned in it, is neither all dry and prosy, nor all striking or tragical. Why should not the same moderation be observed, and the same due mixture prevail in works of history? When Ranke is pronounced a dull historian, as he has been by some, it is to be expected that Thiers and Michelet will be, by the same individuals, unduly praised. The former lays out his story as a work of art; but the art is Grecian, with a *ne quid nisi* at every turn. He paints with a skilful, but, at the same time with a sparing hand, and, for the taste of many, too much in the style of a Raphael. But what historian of the nineteenth century gives better specimens of accurate, substantial, profound and yet attractive history? In respect to this combination of sterling qualities he is not excelled, nor equalled by Hallam, Mill, Thirwall, Tysler, Turner, Mahon, Palgrave, Napier, nor Arnold. Guizot, though of a somewhat different character, in which genius preponderates, is his only rival. These two men stand at the head of the two great schools of living historians, and are a half a century in advance of the modern English school. The latter seem hardly able to rise above their national prejudices, or above the method of their predecessors. The imagination with them is more rhetorical than philosophical. Those expansive views which take the grand march of modern civilization within their scope, seem to be wanting. The reason may be, that the minds of great men in that country are not so much turned to these subjects as the minds of continental scholars.

It will, we fear, be of little avail to add anything, in commendation, of these studies. It is, probably, too much to expect, that any who have not a natural love for them will be induced by motives of utility to give them much attention. To such, however, as are already disposed to prosecute them, some considerations, adapted to confirm their purpose, may not be useless.

Few subjects can be invested with greater interest to a man of reflection, than that of the history of his species. It is only when an exclusive claim is set up for the study of history, that men are moved to call in question its justness. It were, indeed, absurd to set forth history as the rival of other liberal studies. The latter sustain to the former rather the relation of means to an end. As all branches of knowledge stand immediately connected with the pursuits of men, and as the more liberal portion of them are indispensable to a comprehension of the interests of

society, the historian cannot neglect the study of them without thereby disqualifying himself for his chosen occupation. If history be not itself the highest and crowning study of the man of general culture, it certainly verges very closely upon that universal philosophy which is so.

In many instances, travel is resorted to as a means of perfecting an education which was commenced in the schools. Its object is to bring a larger, a complex, and a living world before a mind that has long been given mostly to abstract subjects. History is but the extension of travel. As life is short, and its duties rapidly accumulate upon one as he approaches his maturity, it becomes necessary for him to resort to books as a substitute for travel. It must not be forgotten, in the mean time, that if a scholar could command all the wealth and the leisure he might desire, and were willing to sacrifice the pleasures and duties of home to the acquisition of a more extensive knowledge of mankind, still he could not travel out of his generation and observe the state of society in past ages. For this, which always forms the greater part of what ought to be known of a country, he is dependent on history. Besides, not even the present can be understood, with all the aids of observation, except as it is explained by a knowledge of the past. In fact, the chief benefit of visiting a particular country with which one is desirous to become acquainted, arises from the interest which is thereby awakened in its history, and the ability which is acquired to read and comprehend with facility its literary productions. He who, for example, makes the customary tour of Europe, without thereby originating a series of inquiries to be prosecuted for life, may be amused, but hardly instructed by what he sees. The history of a people, as has been already intimated, lies, in great measure, in its language and literature. Not merely nor chiefly its kings and their battles constitute its true history, but the life, character and condition of the mass of the population. When one's curiosity has been awakened in the manner above indicated, it is surprising to see with what vigor it acts in every direction. Early history will be eagerly read as a key to that which follows. Languages and dialects will be studied as the means of understanding historical documents. A knowledge of the former will lead to a love of the old literature, and of the latter to the study of the laws, usages and religious belief of the early inhabitants of the land. Thus the study of history will give an impulse to the study of language and literature, and will be their best interpreter, and

these in turn will reflect a new and brighter light upon history. The connection existing between them is like that of the nervous system; the excitement of one part kindles the whole into the intensest activity.

We forbear to illustrate particularly so obvious a point as that of the interest which attaches to the history of mankind. If we wish to contemplate man as a social being, where can we better follow him in his aims and struggles than in the path of history? If the works and ways of God justly attract our eye, we cannot direct it amiss. If it fall upon man in his activity, as the occupant and subjugator of the world we inhabit, the philosophic interest will be no less than if it fell upon any other part of the visible creation. History, no less than the sublimest of the sciences, has its wonders and mysteries. All alike are, as to their ultimate principles, lost in their wonderful connections with the mysterious Being who gave them their existence, and imposed the laws by which they are regulated. Christianity, in any of its aspects, is a subject of profoundest interest to man. If it is great and divine in its documents, it is scarcely less so in its history.

For a man who is concerned in the affairs of public life, the practical principles by which he is to be guided are much safer when drawn from extensive observation and from the facts of history, than when drawn from an abstract theory. There is not a more impracticable class of men, one who commit greater blunders, than those who make a great parade about principles, while they mistake an abstraction for a principle. The error is nearly allied to that of the scholastic philosophers, who reasoned from definitions which were often nonexistent, instead of reasoning from facts. It must be borne in mind that the greatest discoverers in science regard their logical deductions, when they are purely of an abstract character, as problematical, till they can succeed in verifying them by experiment. These hints will suggest some of the reasons why men of the closet so often fail in the cabinet, why a mere theorist is so useless a man in time of need.

It is scarcely better when men of such intellectual habits, seeing the absurdity of the above-mentioned course, go but half way in avoiding it. This takes place when the facts which have come under observation, cover but a part of the ground, and yet a problem is wrought out from them as though they were all-sufficient for the purpose. The more precise the calculation in

such a case, the more certain the blunder. The whole difficulty lies in the defective character of the premises, or in reasoning from a part of what belongs to a subject as though it were the whole. A mind that has become skilled in taking a round about view in a complicated case, after obtaining a distinct outline of it, is more likely to come out right than one that enters into a nice examination of particulars, and yet fails to go through them all. Nothing, like a practical knowledge of the world, growing out of a familiarity with facts, formed by observation, as far as may be, and by reading and tracing out analogies, far beyond that point, will protect a man in practical life against the false deductions and mistakes of a theorizer. We do not overlook the circumstance, that the historian may be a mere man of books. But that is not the character which it has been our aim to set forth. He who would understand the world on a large scale, must have an intimate personal knowledge of it on a smaller scale. The practical man and the scholar must be united in the same person in order to constitute a good historian.

In an age like the present, when so many men are directing their attention and their efforts to the improvement of society, a correct historical view of the present state of society and of the causes which have led to it, is of incalculable importance. Inasmuch as the present is the offspring of the past, the whole course of previous events, so far as connected with it, must be studied by him who would comprehend it. Only as a period is thus viewed, and its tendencies accurately marked, can one reasonably hope to lay any plans of successful action in respect to it. We will draw an illustration from the method pursued by Divine Providence in establishing Christianity. There was a "fulness of time," a completion of the period preparatory to its introduction. It might have been introduced by Almighty power either before or after that juncture. But God, in his wisdom, though not from necessity, has regard to adaptations, which is no obscure intimation of the course which we ought to pursue. The unsuccessful experiments of the ancient pagan world, in respect to morality, philosophy and social organizations, had, by their very failures, prepared the way for a new religion which should renovate society and be a guide to mankind. Judaism, too, had accomplished its object, and reached its natural termination. When, in a historical point of view, all things were ready, Christianity was ushered in. The wise man will aim at imitating this procedure. He will find a necessity for it in his own im-

potency and in the power of what is sometimes called destiny. Almost every change in the world is according to the established order and tendencies of nature, and the weakness of man is never more obvious than when he is found struggling against these. We almost always err, when we ascribe great events to the agency of great men as the chief cause. The greatness of man consists rather in discovering and employing an agency far higher than his own. It is the study of the course of human affairs in their philosophical connections, the previous series of events, the present posture of things, the influences that are now at work, and the results, which according to historical laws, must follow,—it is this that prepares a man to act on society with effect. However patriotic the desire of Brutus to see the old forms of the Roman republic restored, the voice of history, could it have been listened to, would have pronounced the attempt as vain, and as contrary to the established course of things, as it would have been to undertake in autumn to produce the buds and blossoms of spring. Just as useless were all the efforts of the old *regimes* to perpetuate itself at the beginning of the French revolution. The old monarchies in Europe are, not a few of them, laboring to bring back the feudal age. It is a vain attempt. The streams of civilization, once scattered and small, have at length mingled together and formed a mighty current, which cannot be turned backward, nor very far from its natural course. The inventions of the last half century have put different parts of the world in new relations to each other, and he who disregards this fact in his projects for usefulness, will be likely to labor in vain. Where the character and habits of a people depended in past times on their seclusion, great changes are now unavoidable. The intelligent Christian will not attempt to alter these new social relations, as a means of restoring ancient simplicity. He might as well attempt to discover the Garden of Eden, and put himself and others into the primitive state of mankind. That which is historically the result of former times, is an essential part of our present condition. Like hereditary peculiarities in our physical constitution, they cannot be put away from us. It is not hereby meant that one must resort to history to learn from events the rules of morality, but to learn lessons of wisdom as to the manner of carrying out the invariable principles of right. And he who will doggedly refuse to heed the former, and boast of his false reliance on the latter, may escape being branded as a knave, but he will be lucky indeed if he is not set down as a fool. It is

just as necessary for a man to find the place which he and others with whom he lives, occupy on the chart of history, and to make that the point of departure in his calculations, as it is for him to know the hemisphere to which he belongs, or the particular country of which he is an inhabitant. There is a momentum acquired by the course of events, as certain in its effects as that of moving bodies. We come into being and into connection with these events, in the midst of the series, while the process is going on, and there can be no more fatal mistake than to suppose, that we are concerned only with those causes which began to act when we commenced our action. We are thrown, at the commencement of our existence upon a mighty current, and our first business is to learn to calculate its forces. Though we may seem to be on *terra firma* and to be ourselves the cause of all the motion we are subject to, we are perpetually in the whirl of an unperceived movement, as certain as that of the earth's diurnal or annual revolution.

There is another point of view, in which a knowledge of our relative position in the history of the world will appear to be of special importance. A principal fault in our countrymen who are seeking, on a large scale, to promote the interests of mankind, and particularly of other nations, is a narrowness of views in respect to our intellectual and moral condition. We often fancy ourselves as sustaining a relation to the old world, very different from that which would be assigned to us by the true historian. Before judging of our own national character, and of the inherent excellence of our peculiar institutions, we must obtain some universal standard which is above us and entirely independent of us. By this true standard an impartial estimate should be made of what is good or evil, right or wrong, first in our own nation and then in others, and after that, if impartiality be strictly maintained, a just comparison can be drawn. Simple and self-evident as this statement is, it is one of the greatest and rarest of virtues to carry out the principle. In addition to high moral integrity, such as few possess, an enlarged view of the social nature and relations of man, a view which philosophy itself cannot give without the aid of history, is indispensable. Some of the peculiarities of our national character were the result of external circumstances and accidental influences, both of which are beginning already to pass away. Some of our boasted security lay neither in our character nor in our institutions, but in the mere accident of our position, a security like that of the

monk whose only guard against licentiousness was a residence in the desert. The philosophic historian would inquire not what a people is in its infancy, and in its wide dispersion over a new country, and in its seclusion from other nations, but what it will be, according to the course of nature, when these temporary circumstances shall have passed away, and when the crowded city shall have taken the place of the hamlet, and wealth and luxury the place of poverty and simplicity.

It may be very natural for the reader to apprehend, that he is expected to devote a greater amount of time and labor to the study of history, than it is possible for any one to bestow who is not a historian by profession. We have already more than once hinted at the manner in which this study should be prosecuted; but, in order to remove all grounds of apprehension like that just mentioned, we will be more particular in our specifications. It is, indeed, true that an immensely wide territory is spread out before us for occupancy. But it is also true that any part of it, however small, may be cultivated by itself. Let each one undertake only so much as is consistent with his other engagements; let him select that which stands immediately connected with them, the history, if he please, of his own profession or of whatever branch of study or of industry he has chosen for himself, and let him go out from that as from a centre in any direction and to any extent which his tastes and his circumstances may dictate. It makes but little difference what part of history is selected for study, provided it be adapted to the individual's wants. As a traveller goes abroad from his own home, and observes whatever comes before him comparatively, referring it always to what he has been accustomed to in his own country, as a sort of standard or measure by which to form all his judgments, so the student of history should constantly refer to his own stock of knowledge as the means of estimating whatever is brought before him by his reading. As in the former case various individuals might visit the same places, and observe the same things, and yet adjust their observations by very different standards, and apply them to very different purposes; so in the latter, history, in itself common to all, may be variously apprehended by different individuals each in his own way, and for his own peculiar ends.

It is not to be supposed that numerous large works on history must invariably all be read through in course. On the contrary, a man of sense, will ordinarily select a particular subject, and

after having ascertained the range of topics which it embraces, will proceed to the thorough investigation of each of those topics in their order. Instead of reading one book on many topics, he will read many books or parts of books on one topic. Having learned the opinions of one author on the point in question, he will need to turn to another of a somewhat different character and aim, in order to contemplate it under its different aspects, and obtain broader and clearer views on the whole subject. One's own curiosity will be the best guide here. No matter at how many points his course is arrested, and he is obliged to seek other helps to clear up difficulties. It is sometimes well for the reader to give way entirely to his feelings when a new interest is awakened on a subordinate inquiry, and prosecute it with all the ardor which is thus kindled up; and when these incidental questions shall have been solved and the interest in them begins to abate, then it is that nature bids him return from his digressions. A capital point secured by these indulgences of a natural curiosity, is a fresh and ever-growing interest in the subject. And nothing is of more importance than that the mind be set on fire by its own investigations. This one point gained, all the rest follows almost as a matter of course. Let no one be alarmed with the apprehension that there will be a loss on the score of order in reading. Order must come from within; the way from the known to the unknown, which is different in different individuals, can hardly be wrong. A historian can guide the reflections only of a passive reader. Every active mind will often be like a restive steed, and refuse to submit to the harness that is laid upon him, and to follow patiently the beaten track of the dray-horse. In the study of history especially, the spirit of inquiry, like a stream of water, ought to be left to seek its own course. Not only will the mind in this way work with more power, but it will leave behind it, as it proceeds, nothing but a conquered territory. When voluminous authors are read through in course, the memory is abused and rendered nearly useless. Errors will be treasured up for years, and be half forgotten before they are corrected, and thus leave the mind in confusion. It is not the succession of events as they happen to be recorded in any one narration, but rather the parts of a subject which are fully and perfectly treated by no single writer, but which must be ascertained by comparing what has been said on it by different authors,—it is this that ought to be fully adjusted at the outset and fixed in the mind by the laws of association. We must therefore read other works for

the purpose of enlarging or correcting our ideas, while the first is fresh in our memory, so that any modifications which are necessary, may be introduced at the proper time and place.

The suggestions here made will serve to meet another objection that may arise, namely, that it is unreasonable to expect that the common reader will become a critic. We say unhesitatingly, that only so far as he becomes a historical critic will his reading be worth anything to him. But if he study a subject and read several authors on it simultaneously and thoughtfully, he cannot avoid being a critic. He will necessarily judge for himself on many points, and learn gradually to form a correct estimate of the several books he consults. The process is one in which the intellect of the reader is necessarily less passive, than when he resigns himself to a single writer. Inquiries multiply in his mind, as he proceeds. He is perpetually pausing to clear up obscurities, to reconcile apparent contradictions, to correct false statements and false impressions, and he almost unconsciously becomes an earnest, and careful investigator, searching eagerly for truth, and never satisfied till he arrives at it.

In reading the history of a period, its thousand aspects should be successively viewed. It may be profitably read many times, with different objects in view. Its physical, political, military, social, moral, ecclesiastical, municipal, biographical history,—the history of education, of the arts, of literature, of amusements, of superstitions, are all subjects of deep interest and of rational inquiry. Besides works of a professedly historical character, the philosophical, poetical, oratorical, epistolary products of a nation, need to be read and studied. Such works though ordinarily excluded from historical studies, constitute by the far the most instructive part of them. It is comparatively of little consequence what monarchs reigned, what generals fought, what ministers intrigued, what prelates ruled over the church. It is the pulsation of the body politic, the throbbings, the strivings, and the doings of the people that we are interested in. We need to see them in all their states; in their sufferings and in their gay moods, in their labors and in their pleasures. In this respect, we fear, the history of mankind must be written anew. We need to have inquiries instituted in regard to subjects, on which former ages were nearly indifferent, but on which we cannot be so. In attempting to satisfy this want, now almost universally felt, the reader of history though limited in the subject of his inquiry, must go beyond his text-books, and must read—everything, and judge ultimately on all points for himself.