

The Study of History:

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

Freehold Young Ladies' Seminary;

FREEHOLD, N. J.,

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YOUNG LADIES OF THE FREEHOLD SEMINARY:

It is very natural that we should desire to shun, on such an occasion as this, every thing trite and hackneyed. The great subject of Education,—its principles, developments, and results, as well as its importance to the female sex,—is an exhausted field, and offers no fresh laurels. It is proposed, therefore, to choose a theme at once suitable to your years and studies, agreeable to a promiscuous audience, and instructive to all. Such a theme presents itself in **THE STUDY OF HISTORY.**

History has ever, and deservedly, held a high place in the estimation of mankind. Of the daughters of Memory, Clio, the eldest born, has not been least honored. To her have appertained the birth-right, and the double portion. In the anaglyphs of Egypt, the arrow-heads of Nineveh, and the picture writings of the Aztecs, we discern the labors of the never-absent annalist. Of the Sacred Scriptures, revered by us as traced under the superintendence of a hand from heaven, a third part are historical.

The uncertainty of History has sometimes indeed been objected against this branch of knowledge. We are told that while Sir Walter Raleigh was preparing his History of the World, he saw a fray from his window; and mixing afterwards with some of the spectators, he was amazed at the discrepancy of their accounts, accounts varying from each other not only, but totally irreconcilable with the facts as they had appeared to himself. The story adds that Raleigh

returned to his chamber, and in a pet threw his manuscripts into the fire, saying, that if it was so difficult to learn the truth, in regard to the most recent affairs, no reliance could be placed upon traditions collected and recorded by historians at a distance from the scenes they described. The story reads smoothly, and hath a sharp twang of a moral; pity it is, that the work specified, the History of the World, survives in print, to stamp the whole of the narrative as apocryphal.

If History is uncertain, where is the blame to rest? It is the historian's office diligently to collect all the traditionary notices within his reach, and exercise his judgment in sifting and assorting them. He makes up his mind not from isolated, but concurrent, sources of information. This is a work of discrimination solely. If the traditions are incomplete, or incorrect, or discolored by prejudice, he is not at liberty to travel beyond the record. He dares not invent facts or incidents. He must be content to take what he finds ready made to his hand. Invention is the prerogative of the Novelist, not his.

History is neither an exact, nor an experimental science. The principles of Geometry are as much settled, and beyond amendment as they ever will be. Cubes and cones have been always the same; and Euclid, and Diophantus were perfect within their proper limits. As for the Experimental Sciences, they have improved greatly of late years, and are taking rapid strides towards exactness. The dreamer of olden time bent over his crucible to transmute base metals into precious; or, amid fumes and formulas of the Red Lion and the Lily, and mayhap less innocent adjurations, sought to extract an Elixir of perpetual youth. The Scientific Chemist of modern times, pursuing his researches only as the Interpreter of Nature, adjusts atom to atom, and volume to volume, with almost mathematical precision.

History belongs to another department. It is one of the Moral Sciences. Its aims and ends are of a high moral

character. To it Ethics and Politics confess their obligations. Like them, its field is indeterminate, and not capable of being measured with rule and callipers. It does not claim to work out its results with the precision of geometry; nor is it able to repeat the past till it has modelled it to its wishes. The materials it employs are sometimes the most shadowy, indistinct, and imponderable; a word, a look, a thought. Why then should History be judged more harshly than the other Moral Sciences? It has to grapple with Human Nature in its ever shifting, slippery, Protean phases, and opal lights, that mock the hues of the dying dolphin. The Chemist, the Naturalist, the Geologist, appeal to records, traced by the finger of Nature, which is incapable of deceiving; but the Historian depends upon testimonies often involuntarily, and sometimes designedly, unreliable. His is a silent and sombre path among the catacombs. He needs to hold fast to his clue, or he will speedily lose his way, and be stifled by the dust from a thousand crumbling skeletons.

Judgment and discrimination are therefore the prime qualifications, which fit the Historian for his task; and there is no reason why we should not confide the opinion or the guidance of a judicious writer in the domain of History, as much as in the domains of Law or Commerce.

Who can help admiring the noble spirit that pervades the opening paragraph of Tacitus. "Even in the time of Augustus there flourished a race of authors, from whose abilities that period might have received ample justice; but the spirit of adulation growing epidemic, the dignity of the historic character was lost. During the lives of those emperors, [succeeding Augustus,] fear suppressed or disfigured the truth; and after their deaths, recent feelings gave an edge to resentment. For this reason, it is my intention shortly to state some particulars relating to Augustus, chiefly towards the close of his life; and thence to follow downward the thread of my narration through the reigns of Tiberius, and his three immediate successors, free from an-

imosity, and partial affection, with the candor of a man who has no motives, either of love or hatred, to warp his integrity."—(Annals, bk. I. 1.)

There is reason to believe that History has suffered, also, from the parasites that have fastened, and fattened upon it. The glut of Historical Novels, and the Romance of History, have created a prejudice against the benefactress to which they owed their precarious existence, as if it were equally trivial and frivolous with themselves. But this objection should really have no more force than the barnacles that attach themselves to a ship's bottom. They form no part of the ship. Their adhesion is purely accidental. So it is with the writers of historical novels, and of books entitled the Romance of History. Their morbid and dainty appetite rejects solid reading, and they select the lighter portions only for their purpose. In fact this is the flag under which they sail. They do not attempt to deceive. They openly acknowledge that amusement is their aim. Since therefore they exsect so carefully the solid and weighty portions, and skim nothing but the froth upon the surface, it is unjust to make the Historic muse responsible for their levities. Enough of gravity and dignity will be found remaining for those who have sense to appreciate them.

The most brilliant and successful author in this line was Sir Walter Scott. The fecundity of his genius was astonishing. His learning was extensive, and of the rarest kind. The antiquarian lore lavished on the notes to his poems might have sufficed to give a reputation to other men. But with him it flowed without effort. His thoughts ran in that channel. He was under no necessity of rummaging his library, and cramming for the occasion. His antiquarian knowledge was not like a pump which requires force to make it yield its crystal hoard, but rather like a natural fountain, whose waters bubble and gush up in an exhaustless stream. Scott's mind resembled his own Abbotsford. That mediæval structure, a romance in stone and lime, was

the embodiment of his habitual turn of thought. But charming and fascinating as was this great master of the pen, his accuracy was not unimpeachable. He sacrificed truth to effect. He sometimes misrepresented characters, or held them up in a ridiculous light. The minstrel of princes, and the favorite of the drawing-room, in his eyes the splendor of chivalry atoned for the miseries of vassalage, and the *prestige* of high birth, like the mantle of Charity, covered a multitude of sins. His genius glorified only what was in harmony with Tory principles, and aristocratic usages; and what he disliked was sure to be painted in exaggerated colors. Had the sturdy Scots who fought for Christ's crown and covenant, been gentlemen instead of peasants, or Jacobites instead of Cameronians, or had they been "out in the '45," we would have had a very different picture of them. Balfour of Burley would have been made as attractive as Claverhouse, and the portrait of Mause Headrigg would have been supplanted by a counterpart of sweet Jeanie Deans. But with all his faults it must be conceded, that Scott drew the attention of many to history, that they might better understand his novels; and they who relished the productions of his pen, could not endure the stuff that flowed from his successors,

"In one weak, washy, everlasting flood."

Whatever abatements we might be willing to concede to the genius, taste, and negatively moral influence of the great Coryphaeus, we cannot extend the same indulgence to the tribe of his imitators. The effect of their labors has undoubtedly been to create a superficial taste, to emasculate the mind, to give a disrelish for solid and manly reading, to foster a morbid craving for stimulants, and to inspire a disgust for history itself apart from the piquant sauce of a prurient fancy.

Objections having been disposed of, let us turn our attention to the ADVANTAGES, which result from the study of History.

If *Entertainment* is the object in view, we know not where a more healthy and rational entertainment can be found. It brings into play enough of thought to prevent stagnation, and to give a gentle fillip to the mind; while it does not tax the intellect so severely, as the differential calculus, or some profound professional text-book. We may have been jaded by the toils of our daily occupation, but the perusal of Robertson's Charles V. or Macaulay's England, acts as a refreshing restorative. "When I mix with the world," observed Voltaire, "I am subject to every man's humor; but when I enter a library, every man's humor becomes subject to me." "A chair in a tavern," said Dr. Johnson, "is the throne of human felicity." "He would have been more correct," remarked Dr. Rush, "had he placed that chair in a library. It is in this repository of the fruits of intellectual labor, that we find an epitome of human knowledge. Here the historian informs, the traveller amuses, the poet delights, and the philosopher instructs us. Here, past and present time unite; here, all the quarters of our globe, with their kingdoms, and customs, are seen in miniature, and here we find an abstract of all the opinions and systems of knowledge, that have ever existed in the world."

People must have amusement, especially the young. And it is of the last importance, that they should have such amusements as will relax without debasing them. The degenerate Romans demanded bread and games; the modern Romans are bribed with fire-works and illuminations; the Spaniard is never so happy, as at a bull-fight, or a fandango; the Americans,

"Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band."

have scarcely any popular amusements at all. Hence it is that in the dearth of innocent excitement, so many resort to low and sensual stimulants, and prepare for themselves a downward path of shame and degradation. But our very amusements should contribute to the encouragement of virtue, and furnish a rational mode of spending time, and

relaxing the mind, without the aid of frivolity or vice. Such a rational, profitable, and elevating recreation we possess in History.

Where can we find more varied or elegant entertainment than in the pages of Plutarch, or Froissart, or Robertson, or Carlyle's French Revolution, or Alison's Europe, or Macaulay's England, or Lamartine's Girondists, or Bancroft's United States? In truth, History may vie with Poetry and Romance in the thrilling interest of its revelations. Shakspeare diligently worked this rich mine in his Historical Plays, to which some, oblivious of the sources whence they were drawn, have acknowledged themselves indebted for nearly all their acquaintance with British annals! The student seats himself in his quiet nook, as the shades of evening close around; and other suns, long since set, rise again to view; "the famous dead" are evoked from their remote sepulture; and the panorama of the world's eventful progress silently unrolls before him.

" 'Tis pleasant through the loop holes of retreat
 To peep at such a world; to see the stir
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd:
 Thus sitting, and surveying thus at ease
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all.
 It turns submitted to my view, turns round
 With all its generations; I behold
 The tumult, and am still. The sound of war
 Has lost its terrors ere it reaches me;
 Grieves, but alarms me not. * * * * *
 He travels and expatiates, as the bee
 From flower to flower, so he from land to land;
 The manners, customs, policy of all
 Pay contribution to the store he gleans;
 He sucks intelligence in every clime,
 And spreads the honey of his deep research
 At his return—a rich repast for me.
 He travels, and I too. I tread his deck,
 Ascend his topmast, through his peering eyes
 Discover countries, with a kindred heart

Suffer his woes, and share in his escapes ;
 While fancy, like the finger of a clock,
 Runs the great circuit, and is still at home."

We are not shut up to fiction. Truth has a novelty and an interest not a whit inferior. Were we permitted to visit another planet, how eagerly would we investigate its productions, its inhabitants, its laws, its manners, and customs! We would be absorbed in this occupation to the exclusion of every other. But, in fact, the history of past generations of our own planet is hardly less new or strange, and may be made fully as attractive.

The sources of a river, the Niger or the Nile, have been investigated with the greatest eagerness; why should there be less curiosity to trace the history of a nation to its fountain-head, and learn what influence the character of the progenitors had on that of their posterity? We are not restricted to the limited range of our forefathers. We have escaped from the dreary prolixity of Rapin, and the parliamentary abstracts of Smollet. Modern writers have found out the difficult art of blending imagination with reason. Robertson, Michelet, Lamartine, but above all, England's latest brilliant and fascinating historian, have sufficiently demonstrated that a volume of history may be made as interesting, and as much sought after as the last novel. And why should it be otherwise? Imagination, well trained, is able to re-people the past, not with rigid, unimpassioned skeletons, but with warm, breathing, living men. It shows us the same human heart, with its susceptibilities, its deep emotions, its mysterious undertones, its faith, its enthusiasm, its strange inconsistencies, pulsating alike beneath the toga, the cuirass, the jacket, and the chasuble.

"The proper study of mankind is man ;
 and it is the office of History to make us acquainted with our species, and show us all the varieties of the race civilized or savage. Thus doth this Mysteriarch of the Ages revivify

the past, solve enigmas, reconcile contradictions, and hold up the lamp of Experience to the dim and misty future.

Such are the elevated entertainments, such the pure delights which the Muse of History unfolds before the youthful and observant mind, and which need not the false lights of fairy land, nor the exaggerations of as unreal romance to enhance their attractions. These are

"Cups that cheer, but not inebriate."

We do not rest our apologetics for the study of History upon the ground of entertainment merely; it claims respect for the rich *Instruction* with which it teems. The sentiment which the sage of Halicarnassus dropped near two thousand years ago, has been endorsed by the wisdom of succeeding generations, and has grown to the dignity of a proverb; "History is Philosophy teaching by example."

Instruction communicated in this way is very lively and impressive. Horace tells us that it was thus his father inspired his youthful mind with detestation of vice, and love of its opposite. The grave Senator, the spendthrift Albius, the profligate Trebonius, in turn were made the occasion of wholesome advice. But it is not always judicious, or safe, to make free with the names of contemporaries. It is more prudent to select illustrations from the storied page, "rich with the spoils of time." Let Phocion and Regulus, Aristides and Fabricius, continue patterns of integrity to the youth of future generations, as they were to our own. Let Alexander's drunkenness, and Cæsar's ambition still "point a moral, and adorn a tale." Let the Roman Emperors illustrate the precariousness and corrupting influence of irresponsible power. Let Cincinnatus and Washington furnish examples of pure and disinterested patriotism. Let Arnold and like names, "Whom 'tis unblest to mention," be the beacons to warn from a traitor's grave. Let Cornelia exhibit her jewels, and Cleopatra point her asp. Let Margaret of Anjou teach her own sex courage, and the fate of La Valliere confirm them in modesty.

Historical researches furnish a fruitful source of Political Philosophy of the profoundest and most practical sort. Once, battles, sieges, and the actions of kings were thought the sole facts worth recording; and these were set off with all the beauties of style and the particularity of an amateur. Whatever concerned the masses was kept in the back-ground as unworthy of attention; as in the wall-paintings of Egypt, the king is magnified into a colossus, while his own, and the opposing armies dwindle into pigmies. But those days are past. Wars now are viewed by the philosophical historian as blemishes and excrescences; subjects of regret rather than admiration; occasional and insignificant trivialities compared with the great sum of human destiny; retarding the progress of the human race, and putting farther off the *millennial* era of universal brotherhood,

“The parliament of man, the federation of the world.”

The old-fashioned buckram dignity of history has disappeared and nothing that contributes to illustrate life and manners is deemed unworthy of notice. The prying eye is carried into every nook and corner; literature, commerce, the arts, public ceremonies and private manners, are diligently scrutinized, and the entire Past is faithfully reproduced, and stands forth like a disinterred Pompeii.

Thus the hidden springs of action are unveiled, and their true motives are brought to light. We see the ambitious Richelieu, when the foundations of royal favor are tottering under him, secretly giving orders that a battle should be lost by the French army, that in the confusion which should ensue, the king might find himself compelled to retain him in his councils as the only man on whom he could rely in such an exigency.

We explore the rise and fall of empires. We behold Rome steadily rising from small beginnings, to the dominion of the world, and advancing the curule chair above thrones and sceptres, till at last grown unwieldy and corrupt, it gradually dies at the extremities before vitality ceases at the heart.

We scrutinize the revolutions of States, analyze their internal feuds, and detect the weak points of their institutions. What a subtle and sagacious parallel has Machiavelli drawn between the conflicting states of Greece, and those of Italy, in his *Decades on Livy*! While the British revolution steadily diminished the royal prerogative and advanced the popular influence, those of France have three times served only to show the facility with which a single individual, having firmly clutched the reins of government, may thwart the wishes of an entire people. From the instability of the French, some have inferred the unfitness of the national manners for a republican form of government; others behold in the condition of Spain and Ireland, the reciprocal evil influence of a bad government on the habits of the people; and nothing is plainer than that the foundations of our own political institutions were laid centuries ago in the habits of the colonies, and of their ancestry.

It is impartial History alone that can help us to understand these riddles, and which, lifting a corner of the veil that hides the past, lets in an affluent light upon all that it concerns us most to know. It exposes the evils of both anarchy and despotism, and shows how the one prepares the way for the other, by that fatal oscillation of all sublunary things, which forbids them to remain stationary. Action and reaction balance each other, and in some antagonisms so equally, that neither side can claim any advantage; as it was in that famous *sortie* commemorated by Sully. Two towns in France were at war; and on a certain dark night each plotted the surprize and capture of the other. The respective men-at-arms, sallying forth by opposite circuits, did not meet, and accordingly daylight revealed the ridiculous spectacle of each army in possession of the other hostile town, while their own wives and children were in turn captives. Nothing was now to be done, but to negotiate a mutual surrender on equal terms, as speedily as possible.— Thus we see in the strifes and controversies of by-gone days,

vanquished Greece giving Rome letters, Christianity borrowing ceremonies from Paganism, the Goths learning from the Italians, and the Crusaders importing improvements from the Saracens.

There is another lesson which History teaches in her most solemn tones, and which should be graven with a pen of iron on the rock forever. That lesson is the advantage of unity, and the mischief of faction. We read it in the fate of the small states of Greece, ever striving for supremacy.

“ Then first the change began, when Greece with Greece
 Embroiled in foul contention, fought no more,
 For common glory, and for common good :
 But false to Freedom, fought to quell the Free ;
 Broke the firm band of peace, and sacred love,
 That lent the whole unconquerable force.”

We read the same lesson in the virtue of the old Achaean league; and of the great Lombard league against Frederick Barbarossa. Warned by such testimonies, our nation should frown down every factious and divisive scheme, and nip it in the bud. For us the maxim has an awful and portentous meaning, Union is Strength, Division is political suicide.

History is invaluable to the Publicist. Such books as Hallam's Middle Ages, and Constitutional History of England, should be familiar to every one interested in the study of government. There he has a clear and comprehensive view of the nature of the feudal system, its tenures, its tyranny, and its villenage; the origin of franchises and of boroughs; habeas corpus, and trial by jury; the balance of power between the crown, the nobles and that middle class, which their neighbors across the channel were so much concerned to find, The Third Estate.

History is to the Statesman what the chart is to the sailor; marking the capes and headlands, the reefs and shoals, the sunken rocks and safe harbors. Thus he is admonished against the possible perils that may assail the ship of state and wreck its fairest prospects. Storms may indeed arise, which no pilot, however accomplished, can either prevent or

lay; but by his skill and experience he may keep all snug, and outride the storm in safety. Not only as regards general principles, is History thus useful, but it preserves the records of law and treaties, ignorance of which might subject to disastrous consequences. How much forgotten History was brought forward from its dusty crypts during the Oregon dispute, and in what a disgraceful dilemma would our Secretary of State have been placed, had he not been familiar with the stipulations of Utrecht. Some thoughtless youth might say, what have we to do with the old mouldy treaty of Utrecht? But if he had fallen in a war brought about by a supposed infringement of that Treaty, he would have found to his sorrow, what interest he had in it.

Each of our citizens may aspire to the highest office in the land, and does, by his vote, assist in placing some competent statesman there; and therefore each individual should have such an acquaintance with the important interests of which that statesman is to take charge, as that he shall know to what policy he is committing himself. Socrates, meeting Alcibiades, questioned him about the science of government and public affairs; but a few skillful queries compelled him to confess that he who aspired to lead the councils of Athens, was ignorant of the first principles that should guide him. Many such a blushing sciolist, it is to be feared, may be found in our country and in our day.

There is a fine illustration of the influence wielded by the accomplished Publicist, in the ancient tribe of Issachar. The heads of the tribes numbered not over two hundred on the roll; but they were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; they were versed in History and politics, and other cognate sciences; and mark the pregnant record so naively added! "All their brethren were at their commandment." That was a specimen of *commanding* influence.

Not only the Statesman, but the Orator is under obligations to the Historic Muse; for some of his choicest illustra-

tions and precedents. From Gamaliel, the learned Pharisee, down to Vergniaud, the eloquent Girondist, an apt citation of pertinent precedents from History, has never failed to prove a powerful weapon in the hands of the orator.

Who would venture to pronounce the Divine completely furnished without a knowledge of Ecclesiastical History? Not only should the clergyman be versed in the general history of the world, in common with all educated men, but he must add to this an intimate acquaintance with that of the Church. It will render him skilful in detecting and exposing the revival of exploded heresies; it will fortify him on doubtful or disputed points with the common belief of Christendom; it will qualify him to battle with schism, and put to silence the infidel. The history of a doctrine or a ceremony is sometimes as good as an argument for or against it. The relation of the Church to the State, and the degree of benefit or injury thence resulting to either; the gradual growth of hierarchical power; the vexed questions of concordats, investitures, and patronage, may be investigated with more or less interest even in the United States, on account of the important principles involved. So also the Theology and the Sects of the Middle Ages may form a study of intense interest to the laity of the present day, when so many strenuous efforts are made to revive and glorify them. The Church owes an incalculable debt to Neander and D'Aubigne for their inimitable contributions to this branch of science, and for their efforts to exhibit the Church as a living witness of the divine power of the gospel.

But it is not to grave Senators and public personages alone that we would restrict the study of History, it will be found both profitable and interesting by the Female Sex also, though of course they will not be expected to dive into its most recondite depths. This was the opinion of Dr. Fordyce, an old English author of repute, who not content with merely recommending the study, placed it in the front rank.

“First,” says he, I would observe that History, in which I include Biography and Memoirs, ought to employ a considerable share of your leisure. Those pictures which it exhibits, of the passions operating in real life and genuine characters; of virtues to be imitated, and of vices to be shunned; of the effects of both on society and individuals; of the mutability of human affairs; of the conduct of Divine Providence; of the great consequences that often arise from little events; of the weakness of power, and the wanderings of prudence, in mortal men; with the sudden, unexpected, and frequently unaccountable revolutions, that dash triumphant wickedness, or disappoint presumptuous hope;—the pictures, I say, which History exhibits of all these, have been ever reckoned by the best judges amongst the richest sources of instruction and entertainment.”

I am happy to be able to adduce in the support of this position, so high an authority as Dr. Sprague, whose elegant and facile pen is an ornament to our own country. The remarks about to be quoted are found in his Letters to a Daughter, an admirable work, which should be in the hands and in the heart of every young lady in the land.

“I have adverted,” says Dr. Sprague, “to History. This I would have you study not merely with a view to gratify curiosity, but as containing an instructive record of human actions, and as furnishing an important means of becoming acquainted with the operations of the human heart; for what the nature of man has been, so it is now; and its operations are the same, making due allowance for diversity of circumstances. * * * * *

While I would have you familiar with every part of History, both ancient and modern, I would recommend a special attention to the history of your own country; not only because it is your own, but because it is the land which seems to be marching forward in the order of Providence to a more glorious destiny than any other.”

I cannot refrain from adding here the views of this distinguished writer, on the subject of novel-reading. Speaking of works of fiction generally, and admitting the artistic skill and even moral tendency of some of them, he continues, "I cannot doubt that the time which you would occupy in reading them might be employed to better purpose in studying the actual realities of life, as they are exhibited by the biographer or the historian; and moreover, there is danger, if you begin to read works of fiction, with an intention to read but few, and to confine yourself to the better class, that your relish for these productions will increase, till you can scarcely feel at home unless the pages of a novel are spread out before you; and what is still more to be dreaded, that you will read indiscriminately, the most corrupt as well as the least exceptionable. You may rest assured that a character formed under the influence of novel-reading, is miserably fitted for any of the purposes of practical life. * *"

I say then, as you would avoid forming a character which combines all the elements of insipidity, corruption, and moral death, beware of the reading of novels. Many a young female has been obliged to trace to this cause, the destruction of her principles, her character, and ultimately her life; and if she have escaped these greater evils, she is still unfitted for solid intellectual enjoyment, and for a life of active usefulness."

"Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend,
Sniv'ling and driv'ling folly without end;
O that a verse had power, and could command
Far, far away these flesh flies of the land!"

But while I would lure you to the pursuit of the more solid branches of polite literature, far be it from my aim to expose you to the charge of pedantry or affectation. Pedantry is disgusting enough in man, but in a woman it is the incarnation of unloveliness. But there is no necessity for such a result. A modest woman, with a well-balanced and well-informed mind, will naturally fall into her place, and sustain her part in intelligent society, without seeking

to shine, to take the lead, or to show off her accomplishments. If there has been occasionally a De Rambouillet or a Montagu who has offended in this way, we can point to an Aspasia, who fastened Pericles to her side by the unaffected charms of her conversation ; to a Maintenon, who reclaimed her royal lover from his roving fancies ; to a More, more pure than the one, more pious than the other, whose society was eagerly sought to the very close of her protracted life. It is only the superficial and the half-taught that make a display of a little second-hand learning ; the well-instructed of either sex are not guilty of such impertinence. I would not have you a *Bas Bleu*, attracting the hatred of one sex and the ridicule of the other ; but on the contrary,

“ A creature not too bright or good
For human nature’s daily food ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, to command.”

Fraught with rich instruction as the Study of History must be confessed to be, there is another signal benefit resulting from its pursuit, its *tendency to enlarge and liberalize the mind*. This is an object of incomparably grander importance than even that which we have just been considering, the one being but a means, the other an end. What would be the advantage of storing the memory with facts, with dates, with names, if the capacity of making use of them is wanting? The true instructiveness of history consists in its aiding the reflecting mind to classify, to arrange, to discriminate, to generalize, to deduce sound and practical conclusions, and put the experience of past generations in a shape to benefit posterity.

It is difficult to conceive how a person versed in general history can be a narrow-minded man. The mere mathematician, the mere metaphysician, the mere linguist, the mere lawyer, the mere theologian, may gyrate within the very small circumference to which professional habit has chained him ; but the historian demands a wider range. He sails on bolder wing, and from a lofty elevation takes a bird’s-eye

view of the oceans and continents beneath. Petty details are merged in the grand effect of the comprehensive prospect, and the due relation of its various parts to each other and to the whole, is carefully noted.

In fact, History, like traveling, dissipates prejudices, and corrects or modifies preconceived notions. It teaches to make allowance for national differences and variant modes of education and thinking. It sees something that is good in all, as well as evil, and takes pleasure in discovering points of agreement and harmony. It detects the existence of the same common feelings under every variety of feature and complexion, and owns that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin." It is ignorance and want of intercourse that perpetuate national antipathies, which are in consequence, forced to justify themselves by the most frivolous pretenses; as the British sailor hated the French because they wore wooden shoes. If the different nations could see more, or learn more, of each other, they would find cause for mutual admiration and esteem. The Chinese, who hoot at the civilized European as a *Fan-qui*, or Foreign Devil, and in whose geography their own country monopolizes the map, while the rest of the world is thrust into the corners, would never be guilty of such ridiculous conceit, if they were better acquainted with the history and resources of the nations they deride. How can we be surprised that so much prejudice against our own country prevails in Europe, when scarcely anything is known of it, and half the people believe that the Americans are copper-colored! Even Tytler, whose *Epitome of General History* is the text-book in Great Britain, has not a single chapter on the United States; two or three paragraphs alone being allotted to the War of the Revolution, and that of 1812. In the editions which we use, the deficiency is supplied by an American writer. Perhaps after a few more yachts, and ocean-steamers, and statuary, and locks, and steam-plowing, the haughty Islanders will become aware of the existence of a rival

across the Atlantic which bids fair to transfer to herself the proud title of queen of commerce and mistress of the seas.

Religious intolerance also, as well as every other form of bigotry must disappear before the increase of historical knowledge. Intolerance, which is seen to be so unlovely in its faithful record, arises from inattention to the just limits of authority, to the natural right of freedom of opinion, and to the out cropping in one direction of what was suppressed in another.

“The time has gone by,” says an acute writer, “when more general knowledge and higher studies, were deemed superfluous, to all except professional men,—the lawyer, the physician, or the divine. It is now admitted by many of the best judges, that a more liberal education, either Academical or Collegiate, may be alike beneficial to the Farmer, the Mechanic, and the Merchant; as serving to expand and quicken the mind, and to prepare the aspiring youth, not only for engaging in the labors of his profession, but for adorning a higher station, and becoming more extensively useful, should prosperity attend his career. At least, the study of languages and calculative processes, of mental and physical philosophy, of historical and political truths, of the works of nature and of art, will lay a wide basis for intellectual cultivation; and it will be the student’s own fault if it is not improved, for his secular and eternal benefit.”

He who lives entirely in the present and for the present, can attach little more dignity or importance to his pursuits than the ephemeral insect whose little life is comprised within the rising and setting of the sun, and which sports away its brief hour on careless wing. On the contrary, by studying the past, and scanning the future, we as it were, multiply our existence, and concentrate the light, the knowledge, and the glory of all ages on our own.

“We live, says Bolingbroke, with the men who lived before us, and we inhabit countries that we never saw. Place is enlarged, and time prolonged in this manner; so

that the man who applies himself early to the study of history, may acquire in a few years, and before he sets his foot abroad in the world, not only a more extended knowledge of mankind, but the experience of more centuries than the patriarchs saw. * * * * Experience is doubly defective; we are born too late to see the beginning, and we die too soon to see the end of many things. History supplies both these defects."

Time will not permit more than a word or two on *The Method of Studying History*. But we may observe that History should be studied systematically. As beginners, with the best intentions in the world, are sometimes at a loss to know what to select, the following books may be recommended as a brief course of Historical reading. To abridge it as much as possible, those works which must be regarded as absolutely indispensable, are put in italics;—*Gleig's History of the Bible*; Rollin's Ancient History; *Tytler's Universal History*; Plutarch's Parallels; Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; Sismondi's Italian Republics; Hallam's Middle Ages; Milner's Church History; Michelet's France; Kohlrausch's Germany; Hume's, McIntosh's, or *Macaulay's England*; Robertson's Charles V. and Mary Queen of Scots; *D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation*; Irving's Columbus; Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, Mexico and Peru; *Bancroft's United States*; *Alison's recent History of Europe*; Schlegel's Philosophy of History; Guizot's European Civilization.

History should be studied with the map. Geography and Chronology are the two eyes of History.

The habit should be formed of taking comprehensive views of the results, bearings and connections of past events. Glaring errors should be noticed, and an indiscriminate idolatry of antiquity avoided. Allowances must also be made for the peculiarities and different circumstances of nations. What is suitable for one is not suitable for others. Another thing against which we should be on our guard, is the par-

tialities of historians. One is to be modified and corrected by another. It is highly important to know an author's standpoint.

In perusing the history of the world, we should observe the hand of Providence in the course of events. God develops his will in the Holy Scriptures, in the works of Nature, in Conscience, and in History. By many writers the idea of God and Providence seems completely ignored; by others it is contemptuously opposed. Following the lead of Bolingbroke, who in his famous "Letters" rejected the Old Testament as an authentic or reliable guide, the wily Gibbon employed his seductive rhetoric to account for the early spread of Christianity by secondary causes alone. Watson, and Milman have done a good service in exposing the hollowness of his sophistry. To see God in History will afford delight to every well-trained and pious mind, for is not God the Maker of History! "History," said the eloquent Hungarian in one of those aphoristic gems that sparkled in his speeches, "History is the Book in which God records his counsels by deeds." To see God in History will furnish a key to many obscure and intricate affairs. It is a sublime thought that the march of Providence is holding on its undisturbed way, and accomplishing its great results, alike through the agency of individuals and the social life of nations. Although we may not be able to trace all its indistinct vestiges, and should be very careful not to form rash or presumptuous judgments, we may acquiesce in this momentous truth with a reposing confidence which will harmonize many an apparent contradiction, and impart to our reflections almost a prophetic value. The permission of evil, the calamities visited on particular nations, the fact that corruption works out its own punishment; these and similar phenomena indicate the overruling attribute of justice; a justice, which though it lingers, never sleeps. Consider that remarkable catalogue drawn up by Raleigh, illustrative of the tremendous threat of visiting the

iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. Time will not allow a detailed narrative, but you may trace the sentence fulfilled in the extinction of the race, or the diversion of the crown to another succession, in the cases of the I. IV. VI. VII. and VIII, Henries, the III and IV Edwards, and the II. and III, Richards of England; Lewis Debonair, and Francis I. of France; and Pedro, Ferdinand I. Charles V. and Philip II. of Spain. And if the great statesman were now alive, he might add to his list, the instructive example of the XVth Louis, and Xth Charles of France. These are solemn and instructive warnings; they are easily legible, and should not be disregarded.

In fine, History is not to be studied as an idle recreation, nor to foster bigotry and prejudice; nor to nurture a party spirit determined to find instances only on its own side; nor to minister to personal vanity and the pedantic ostentation of learning; but it is to be regarded with veneration, and conscientiously employed, as the handmaid of Truth, the Interpreter of Heaven, and the Instructor of mankind. Its aims and aids are neither trivial, nor superfluous; its high mission is to elevate and dignify: to introduce to

“an opening world

Diviner than the soul of man hath yet
 Been gifted to imagine—truths serene
 Made visible in beauty, that shall glow
 In everlasting freshness; unapproached
 By mortal passion; pure amidst the blood
 And dust of conquests; never waxing old;
 But on the stream of time, from age to age,
 Casting bright images of heavenly youth
 To make the world less mournful!”

What is the proudest statue or national monument to the historic page, in point of value, extent, or durability? The one appeals to our eye, to our imagination, and fancy; it is picturesque, and poetical; it is the index of princely power, or of national enthusiasm; it is suited to a semi-barbarous age when reading is sparingly known: like its own marble,

it fixes one unvarying thought only, one result, one achievement, and it announces that achievement to but one people and one locality. The other appeals to the reflecting powers, our judgment and our reason; it commands the attention of the philosopher and the sage; it not only tells of power, but it unfolds the secret of success; it not only commemorates great exploits, but it informs who and what they were that achieved them; it delivers its utterances not to one locality alone, but in the ears of all mankind. Wherever books penetrate, there is carried the memory of the hero. On the banks of the Ganges, the Hindoo youth reads of the British Alfred, and under the shadow of the Carpathian peaks, the oppressed Magyar kindles his patriotism by the remembrance of Washington.

“ Though graven rocks the warrior’s deeds proclaim,
 And mountains, hewn to statues, wear his name;
 Though shrined in adamant, his relics lie
 Beneath a pyramid, that scales the sky;
 The mouldering rocks, the hero’s hope, shall fail,
 Earthquakes shall heave the mountains to the vale,
 The shrine of adamant betray its trust,
 And the proud pyramid resolve to dust;
 The Lyre alone immortal fame secures,
 For song alone through Nature’s change endures;
 Transfused like life, from breast to breast it glows,
 From sire to son by sure succession flows,
 Speeds its unceasing flight from clime to clime,
 Outstripping Death upon the wings of Time.”

59 H5

C I R C U L A R .

The Freehold Young Ladies' Seminary was established in 1844. Nine years have afforded sufficient time to test the correctness of the principles on which it was founded, and in accordance with which it has been invariably conducted. It has ever been our conviction that the Education of Females could be made thoroughly practical, and at the same time nothing need to mar its beauty as an accomplishment. We did not believe that the oft repeated assertion, that modern education unfitted its subjects for the stern realities of life, need be true. For the justness of our opinions we point to the large number of our Pupils scattered throughout the community, who are adorning the sphere in which Providence has cast their lot. But we have a still stronger and more dearly cherished confidence in the practicability of uniting the culture of the heart with that of the understanding. The gentle, yet powerful influence of the religion of Christ, is that which transmutes all human knowledge into intellectual gold. It is to a *christian home* that we would send our own children, and so far as power shall be given us, it is such a home that we would prepare for the children of others.

We are grateful to a kind Providence for His smiles upon our labors. Nor would we allow this opportunity to pass without an expression of gratitude to our patrons for the continued proofs of their confidence.—Every day's experience makes us more desirous of a free and cordial understanding between them and ourselves. On our part, we would gladly visit the homes of our pupils, that we might there converse with their parents, and learn most perfectly their every wish respecting their daughters; and with a coal from the altar of home, kindle anew our own ardor in the work that is given us to do. And, respected patrons, we wish that, on your part, you could become more intimately acquainted with our daily life. We wish you could stand side by side with us and participate for a little season in our pleasures, and see what are some of the trials and discouragements which we meet in attempting to discharge our duties. Of the *pleasures* of the teacher's life, we need not speak—since the world denies that there is such a thing in existence. *We know* that there are such pleasures, and long years of experience have taught us that they are far greater in number than the things of an opposite nature. Hence, though we may often be weary in the

profession of our choice, we are never weary of it. We cannot but think that if you could, for a season, become a part of our little community, and watch with us the current of thought and feeling as we watch it, and participate in all our anxieties for the health and happiness of your children, that you would at least, pardon us for kindly suggesting to you any of the many ways in which we think you could aid us in fulfilling your own just wishes.

Course of Study, &c. For full information respecting the Course of Study, Terms, &c., we would refer to our Annual Catalogue, which we shall be happy to forward to any desiring such information. We merely add here that the School year commences on the first Wednesday in September, and ends on the third Wednesday in July. The Vacations are from the third Wednesday in July to the first in September, and a recess of two weeks at Christmas. This arrangement sets us free from confinement during the warm weather of July and August, and affords a fine opportunity for another means of improvement—viz; travelling. The Principal will hereafter accompany such of the Pupils as may desire it, on excursions to the most interesting and instructive portions of our country. During the present vacation a large party propose to visit the principal cities and most interesting localities along the banks of the Hudson, and Lakes George and Champlain, and throughout New England. It is believed that this will do much to awaken an interest in, and extend a knowledge of History.

The next Session will commence on Wednesday, September 7th. Those who propose to enter at that time, will do well to make early application to

A. RICHARDSON, Principal.

Freehold, Monmouth Co. N. J., July, 1853.