

PAPER VI.—RECREATIONS IN HISTORY.

BY THE LORD BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

(Read before the Society March 15th, 1871.)

I AM afraid that the title of my paper is, in a measure, misleading. I am afraid that I may be considered to have held out the hope or the promise of recreation to you; whereas, all that I really propose is to tell you something about the way in which I procure my own recreation. This is, in fact, all that I can do; and ever since our late president did me the honour to ask me to read a paper before the Society, I have been casting about for a subject, without much success. The fact is, that mine has been but an old-fashioned education, such as was to be had before useful knowledge was invented; and lecturing comes hard to me. However, I have undertaken to read a paper before you; and in fulfilment of my promise, I will now proceed to sketch the manner in which I have been used to seek my recreation in history.

It has always given me more delight to catch my glimpses of history by peering through the cracks and chinks of the material than I could obtain by looking through the window held open by the historical showman, and, I think, as much instruction. In plain words, I find more pleasure, and more success, in calling up the life of the past, by studying such bits of contemporary evidence as are within my reach, than by passively absorbing the narrative of compilers. Glimpses of history are, of course, all that most of us in this way can get; for bits of evidence are all that we have the means of investigating. A thorough knowledge of history we can only have by a thorough knowledge of all the contemporary sources of history; and this belongs to the opportunities and the abilities of a few. Very thankful we are, and must be, to read their fine and flowing tale; but the storing-up of this in the memory is not a knowledge

of history. We cannot be sure of the facts till we have read at least the writings of two historians taking opposite sides—or, at any rate, till the narrative we follow has been subjected to keen and competent criticism. And the facts, when we get them, uncoloured by the writer's opinions of motives, characters, and causes, are but bare and meagre husks. The colouring and complexion—the flesh and blood with which Macaulay or Hume clothes this lifeless skeleton—the informing-spirit which they breathe into it,—all this is the creation of their own minds—the result of their own inferences—the reflection of their own capacities, tastes, and predilections. How much so, the different ways in which different men of equal ability and equal honesty represent the same events, or course of events, will sufficiently prove. Their narratives are delightful and instructive so long as they are taken for what they are ; they are misleading and deceptive when they are taken for what they are not. Now, we are not all qualified to pronounce upon the accuracy of these men in all the particulars they relate ; but we can qualify ourselves to read their works without having our wits run away with. And before going further, I will point out how necessary it is to be on our guard against errors of fact in our most trusted historians.

Macaulay, as is well known, painted a not very flattering portrait of William Penn. This he founded, in great part, upon some discreditable transactions respecting the sale of pardons after Monmouth's rebellion. These, at any rate, were the facts, or seeming facts, which threw the blackest shades upon Penn's fame, and seemed to justify, beyond cavil, the historian's disparaging estimate of the man. But it turns out that the real offender was another man—one George Penn. This, however, is by no means the worst of the matter. It appears to have been Sir James Mackintosh who made the mistake ; and Macaulay, taking his blunder without verification, adopted it as his own. And this is what, more or less, discredits all historians—second-hand information doing duty for original research.

I cannot at present lay my hand upon my authority for this correction; but I well remember seeing it in the criticisms and discussions which followed upon the publication of Macaulay's history. I believe Macaulay never owned that he was wrong; but that does not make him right.

I will now take another case, in which the same historian's bias and predilection made him—not suppress anything, certainly, but—so state and paint some things as to make them not very visible. Macaulay adored William and hated James. Now, there is the same blemish in the life of each. Each was married to a young and beautiful wife, and each neglected her; and Macaulay tells the fact in regard to each. But I will venture to say, that everybody who has read his history has James's fault ringing in his ears; but that most, if they have not been reminded from other sources, have forgotten all about William's failing. So much for what a popular writer calls "the way of putting things."

And, if I do not weary you with these animadversions, I will now take another admirable writer, who has established for himself a name of great authority, by his brilliance of style and his reputation for research, and shew him in his weakness. But before I go on to criticise his accuracy and reliability, I must, in passing, since I have mentioned it, say just one word regarding the style of Mr. Froude. It is not faultless; but it is beautiful—far better, in my judgment, than that of Macaulay, which, masterly as it is, has, with all its unvarying clearness and force, an artificial and rhetorical ring that—lowers it, shall I say?—or elevates it into mannerism. An admirable manner it is, no doubt, but still a manner, something unique. If you or I were to try to write like Macaulay, we should seem ridiculous. If we could write like Froude, it would only seem that we wrote uncommonly well. That is his charm, his naturalness. There is no affectation of fine writing, though there is plenty of it. Always the style rises and falls with spontaneous flow. His eloquence comes of the

passionate feeling which the course of his narrative has kindled within him; and when he is picturesque, it is because the scenes he describes rise vividly before him. When his diction is most polished, you can see no mark of the file. What could excel, for instance, the felicitous touch and graceful keeping of his picture of the attack upon Leith, where, after telling the story of the unsuccessful assault, he concentrates his description into a single image of matchless beauty, and, coupling to it a touching incident, holds it out before us, luminous in the light of a dramatic sympathy? A few lines—a couple of sentences—and the scene is imprinted upon the mind for ever :

“The dying Mary of Lorraine had been carried from her bed to the walls of the castle, to watch the fight. As the sun rose out of the Forth, she saw the English columns surge like the sea-waves against the granite ramparts, and, like the sea-waves, fall shattered into spray.”

But this by the way. What I intended, when I brought in Froude's name, was to criticise his accuracy.

In his seventh volume, page 479, he says :—“On the 12th of January parliament opened, and with it the first convocation of the English Church. The sermon at St. Paul's was preached by Nowell, the Dean; that at Westminster by Day, the Provost of Eton. The subject of both was the same, the propriety of ‘killing the caged wolves’—that is to say, the Catholic bishops in the Tower, with the least possible delay.”

In a note he gives his authority, and adds, as from the melancholy musings of his own saddened mind: “It is mournful to remember that Nowell was the author of the English Church Catechism in its present form.” I read this with astonishment. How anybody could call Nowell the author of the English Church Catechism in its present form, it passed the powers of my imagination to conceive. “In its present form”:

there was an air of preciseness and authority about that phrase that perplexed me. That Nowell wrote a Catechism, I well knew. But that was a very different affair. It is a long treatise, written in Latin, containing 125 closely-printed octavo pages—which, certainly, is not the Church of England Catechism in its present form. The source of the error was not, however, far to seek. The author of the English Catechism in its present form was a Dean of St. Paul's—Dean Overall—Nowell's successor, who wrote the last part relating to the sacraments. Here was the mistake: Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's, wrote a catechism; a Dean of St. Paul's is the author of the English Church Catechism in its present form; therefore, Nowell is the author of the English Church Catechism in its present form. This is the style of reasoning called by somebody—Locke, I think—"seeing a little, presuming a great deal, and jumping to a conclusion." The mistake might have been pardonable in some men; but in one of Mr. Froude's antecedents, ignorance of such matters did seem strange. It was not, however, till some time after that I fell upon a passage throwing light upon the matter. Consulting, one day, Shepherd's "Commentary on the Common Prayer," I found that Gilpin, in his lectures, had spoken of Nowell's book—confounding it, apparently, with older editions of the Church Catechism—as our Catechism, "nearly in its present form." Froude, writing from his recollection of this or some similar statement—this very one, I should think—drops out the "nearly," and says, "in its present form"—absolutely evacuating the looser statement of whatever ground-work of truth it may have contained, and incorporating his own residuum of pure, unmitigated error into a sigh for human frailty, which is, under the circumstances, touching;—a slight and unimportant matter this, in itself, but significant as revealing the historian's habits of composition and the value of his assertions.

These instances illustrate, I think, sufficiently, the necessity of some verifying process to which historical compilations may

be subjected. One, and, of course, a very valuable one, is the sieve of hostile criticism. We should hear the other side. The plan I wish to speak of is not so extensive and exhaustive; but, so far as it goes, it is a still more satisfactory one.

And in order to open it, let me illustrate for a moment from another branch of knowledge. Suppose a man to master the best manuals of geology—to be thoroughly conversant with all its accepted facts and principles;—suppose him to be able and accustomed to follow intelligently the reasoning of the theorists and investigators, who, from time to time, propound new views and fresh applications of the science: well, he has that in his head which is a great deal better than emptiness; but, still, it is only information; it is not knowledge—at least it is other people's knowledge, not his own. But suppose that he is used to go into the quarries, and along the rocks, hammer in hand, and to search and to see whether these things be so: he will then get a knowledge of a different sort. So far as he is an original geologist, he will know these things as he could not know them from books; and he will get a higher and better standing-ground from which to view the information which he receives from the researches of others. His mind, so stimulated and educated, will develop a faculty which will transmute information into knowledge.

And, here, I must illustrate my illustration:—In the familiar process of brewing, we know that the barley must be converted into sugar. This is done in the malting. All the farina, however, in the barley, is not in malting converted into sugar; but a certain substance, called diastase, is evolved, which, at a certain temperature, will convert the rest of the farina—and, for that matter, a large quantity of unmalted barley besides.

Now, this transmuting power is just what original investigation develops in the mind. A mental diastase is

evolved. The more original research there is the better ; but even a little goes beyond itself in the mental habits it creates, and has a very mellowing effect upon the information which we obtain from the observations and reasonings of others. And as in science, so in history. By questioning and sifting the monuments and remains of other times for ourselves—the ruined walls—the incidental and undesigned notices of literature—any fragments of contemporary thought and activity—we can call up some portion of the past ; and this knowledge, however scanty, will be true and real knowledge, and will help us, moreover, to read between the lines of the narrative or compilation we may have in hand.

Contemporary historians, such as Clarendon or Thucydides, will, of course, be seized with avidity by one willing to know the times of which they treat, when they are to be had. And for their command of current knowledge, and their presentation of society in its outward aspects, they are invaluable. They may have a true and penetrating insight into its inner spirit—into the characters of men, and the tendencies of events ; but they may not. The influences of the age are upon them ; and they may view men and measures through the discoloured and distorting medium of party feeling. Still, even in its defects, if intelligently studied, contemporary literature is always instructive ; and, until we have walked some way in its light, we can have no conception “how far that little candle throws his beams.” When I read Livy, I read a romance ; when I read Niebuhr, I read another ; but when I get hold of the satires of Horace, or the letters of Cicero, then old Rome lives around me. I am amongst the men themselves. Their ambition, their successes and failures, their public sentiment, and their domestic manners, disclose themselves with all the charm of truth and unconsciousness in every page. I am present at the Roman gentleman’s levee at early dawn. I attend him to the forum. I mark the humours of the sovereign people. I see the knots of bankers and men

of business discussing their affairs; witness the trial of a pro-consul for the oppression of a province; or hear Cicero address the people for the promulgation of a law. Or, turning in another direction, I stumble against Horace taking his customary stroll along Holy-street. I accompany him, as he saunters through the fruit-market, or looks on at the tricks of the jugglers; or I listen to his chat about the weather and the prize-fight, as he rides in his patron's carriage. In the afternoon and evening I sit with these people at their entertainments; watch their enjoyments; and listen to their jokes. The busy and the idle, rulers of men and unappreciated poets, pedants, and epicures, all pass before me; and I see them with my own eyes, and hear them with my own ears, as I can see them with no other man's eyes, and hear them with no other man's ears—see them in their undress—hear, not the sonorous roll only of the orator's flowing periods, decorous with sentiment suitable for the occasion; but hear him brag of his performance afterwards to his friend.

And something more than mere amusement comes of this poring over these old illustrations of by-gone manners. There is a collection extant of some 122 letters, mostly very short, which passed between Pliny and the Emperor Trajan, relating to the administration of the province over which Pliny presided. One of these gives an outside view of Christians and the Christian religion, very interesting to us.

Though he felt bound to punish the Christians as an illegal sect, Pliny, after careful enquiry, confesses that the sum of their offence was, "that on a stated day they were accustomed to assemble before day-light, and to sing among themselves, verse and verse about, a hymn to Christ as to God; and to bind themselves by an oath (sacrament) not to the commission of any crime, but that they would be guilty of no robbery, no breach of the marriage vow, no breach of trust; after which their custom was to disperse, and again to meet, in order to

partake of a common and harmless meal." To us, who can read between the lines, how much that simple statement means. And then the wide extent to which Christianity had spread, not in cities only, but into villages and country places, is noticed. And that old letter stands an imperishable monument of the purity of the early Christians' lives, and an unassailable witness to the broad simple outlines of their faith and worship.

Now, this home-brewed history, which we extract for ourselves, is, I maintain, the very best that we can have. And we can have it in abundance. Not even the re-opened streets and houses of Pompeii, where we look in upon the habitations of the old Romans just as they left them, nearly 1800 years ago, give a more adequate picture of old Roman life than that which rises to the eye, which has been trained by observation and thought to look with discriminating and constructive vision upon the letters, the poems, the fragments and remains of the old Roman mind.

Since I have mentioned Pompeii, I must say a word about it. Very much can be seen there, no doubt; and those are fortunate who can see it. There is to be seen the eating house, just as it was left, with its marble slab, on which the smoking meats were exposed; its iron cooking-stove; its jar of wine, which had been 32 years in bottle; its oven, containing 83 loaves, just like the modern double loaf, scored at the top, and so on. There are still the election-placards on the walls. "Vote for Capella!" writes one enthusiastic supporter of that gentleman; and another, of the opposite party, I suppose, curiously chronicles the antiquity of log-rolling. One of those incorruptible electors is asked to vote for Sabinus, and Sabinus will vote for him. There, too, is the inn with the sign of the elephant. And there is his Greek alphabet scratched on the wall by the small boy, who could not lift his little hand above three feet from the ground.

And here is an affecting picture, which I take, as I do all this account of Pompeii, from the "Quarterly Review," April, 1864 :

" At some distance from this group lay a third woman. She appears to have been about twenty-five years of age, and to have belonged to a better class than the other two. On one of her fingers were two silver rings, and her garments were of a finer texture. Her linen head-dress, falling over her shoulders, like that of a matron in a Roman statue, can still be distinguished. She had fallen on her side, overcome by the heat and gases ; but a terrible struggle seems to have preceded her last agony : one arm is raised in despair ; the hands are clenched convulsively. Her garments are gathered up on one side, leaving exposed a limb of beautiful shape. So perfect a mould of it has been formed by the soft and yielding mud, that the cast would seem to be taken from an exquisite work of Greek art. She had fled with her little treasure, which lay scattered around her—two silver cups, a few jewels, and some dozen silver coins. Nor had she, like a good housewife, forgotten her keys—after having probably locked up her stores before seeking to escape. They were found by her side."

Well,

" Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum."

We cannot all see these things for ourselves. Nor can we see the tombs at Thebes, where the old Egyptian life is depicted with such wonderful fidelity ; but the remains of antique life, which are entombed in literature, are more accessible. And, though I am lingering too long, perhaps, upon this subject, there are a couple of letters from that same Pliny, whom I have before quoted, to his friend Tacitus, the historian, descriptive of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, by which Pompeii was destroyed, to which, before passing to other matters, I should like to refer, both because the letters

are so interesting in themselves and because they afford so excellent an illustration of the historical value of private letters and contemporary evidence, upon which I am insisting. In them we see the event with the eyes of an eye-witness. Pliny was at Misenum, the north-western extremity of the Bay of Naples, with his uncle, Pliny the naturalist, when, on the 24th of August, early in the afternoon, his mother came to tell his uncle, who was lying down and reading, that a strange appearance was visible in the sky. The old man called for his shoes, and ascended an eminence, from whence he could obtain a better view of the phenomenon. He saw a cloud, in shape like a pine-tree, with its lofty spiral trunk and drooping branches—brilliantly white at first, and then changing to a stained and dirty colour. The man of science, with his thirst for observation, would make a closer inspection. He ordered out a light, swift craft, to cross the bay, and offered to take his nephew, the writer, with him; but he, wishing to continue some study in which he was engaged, preferred to remain at Misenum; and the old man went off, with his note-book in his hand. He landed at the house of a friend, near Stabiæ, where the danger, though imminent, was not immediate. The quiet calm with which he took his dinner and lay down to rest, reassured the panic-stricken household. After he had been sleeping some time, the ashes fell so thickly that if he had not been roused from his slumber the passages leading to the room where he slept would have been blocked up, and his escape cut off. All now sought the open air. Though still daylight elsewhere, it was dark as night with them. They walked toward the shore; but the suffocating vapours were insupportable. The old man lay for some time on a piece of refuse sail-cloth. The rest fled. He called, more than once, for cold water, and drank. Then he tried to rise, leaning on two slave-boys; but again he fell. And after three days, during which the eruption appears to have continued, his body was found in the quiet attitude rather of repose than of death.

In the meanwhile, his nephew, then in his eighteenth year, continued at Misenum. In the course of time, the danger approached. The island of Capreæ could no longer be seen, and the promontory at Misenum itself was hidden. Then all fled. But the blackness, more than of night, overtook them. The trampling rush of the terror-stricken crowd, the shrieking of the women, the wailing of the children, and the shouting of the men, the confusion and the sorrow, are all told to the life. And in the midst of it all, we see the touching picture of the mother urging her son to escape, in the strength of his youth, and leave her to die alone ; and the son, steadfast not to live unless she lived, taking her by the hand and leading her, still chiding, because he will not leave her and save himself, with gentle force, unwillingly, away.

To pass now to our own history. In the pages of Froissart (of whom there is an admirable copy in your library, in the quaint translation of Lord Berners, made in the time of Henry VII., appropriately antique in its diction, but not too much so to be easily read,) we have our ancestors of the time of Edward III. brought before us, in all the pomp of their chivalry, by one who had lived amongst them. Those enchanting stories constitute one of the most precious monuments of the middle ages ; and by the perusal of them, we can compose our own historical novels, better and truer, for ourselves at least, than any that the most gifted genius can write for us.

A picture, too, has been left us of the same time, or a little later, by another great painter of contemporary manners. Chaucer, in the compass of some 900 lines, which form the prologue to his Canterbury tales, has left us what may be called a photograph of the 14th century. The knight, the squire, the monk, the nun, the begging friar, the serjeant at the law and the doctor of physic, the Oxford scholar and the poor parson of a town, with the shipman, the ploughman, and mine host of the Tabard, in Southwark, where the company assembled before they set out on their pilgrimage to

the shrine of Thomas-à-Becket, are all introduced to us with minute and felicitous descriptive touches. It is impossible to pass through this gallery of portraits without being convinced that they were drawn from the life, and that they were intended to constitute a picture of society at the time. As they ride together, we see the mingling of many ranks; and as we listen to their talk, we note how they bore themselves one to another. *Old England* lives, moves, and speaks around us.

If we now come down into the 15th century, another view of our forefathers and their fashions is opened to us in the Paston Letters. These extend over the last half of the 15th century, being a family correspondence; and, in many significant facts, they disclose the manners of the day; not the least striking feature in which is the strange absence or quiescence of the law. And, indeed, from what we do see of the law, its absence was perhaps as beneficial as its presence. It seems to have been a not unusual practice to push legal processes in a secret and clandestine manner, without letting the parties most concerned have any knowledge of the same till the case had gone against them. And there were strange ways, too, for men of influence to avoid the inconvenience of an adverse decision. Here is an extract from a letter dated 1440:

“Be ye remembered that an Esquire of Suffolk, called John Lyston, hath recovered in assize of novel dissension 700 marks (£466 13s. 4d.) in damages against Sir Robert Wingfield.”

And what did Sir Robert do? Pay it? Not a bit.

“In avoidance of the payment of the said 700 marks, the said Sir Robert Wingfield, subtely, hath outlawed the said John Lyston in Nottinghamshire; by the virtue of which outlawry, all manner of chattel to the said John Lyston appertaining are accrued to the King. And anon, as soon as the said outlawry was certified, my Lord-Treasurer

“ granted the said 700 marks to my Lord of Norfolk, for the arrears of his pay whilst he was in Scotland ; and according to this assignment aforesaid, tallies were delivered. And my Lord of Norfolk hath released the same 700 marks to Sir Robert Wingfield.”

It will sufficiently appear from this, I think, that our ancestors were at least equal to their posterity in the manipulation of a job.

These Pastons had a dispute with my Lord of Norfolk, in regard to the possession of a house and estate. The Pastons were in possession, and Norfolk's men laid regular siege to the house. His mother writes during the siege to her eldest son, to stir him up to a sense of his duties as head of the family.

“ I greet you well,” she writes, “ letting you weet that your brother and his fellowship stand in great jeopardy at Caister, and lack victuals, and Daubeney and Berney (two friends who had joined him in the defence) be dead, and divers others greatly hurt, and they fail gunpowder and arrows, and the place is sore broken with guns of the other party ; so that, unless they have hasty help, they be like to lose both their lives and the place, to the greatest rebuke to you that ever came to any gentleman, for every man in this country marvelleth that ye suffer them to be so long in great jeopardy without help or other remedy.”

It appears, from the answer to this letter, that impecuniosity was an affliction which our forefathers suffered in common with ourselves. Indeed, bad as times are, they were in worse case ; for here is a gentleman attending the court, and associating intimately with the first of the land, carrying on a little private war on his own account, who writes :—“ By my troth, I have but ten shillings, and wot not where to have more ; and, moreover, I have been ten times in like case, or worse, within these ten weeks.” Norfolk's men ultimately got possession of the place. These are by no means the

most striking passages of the letters ; but as I am now unable to refer to the book, I have been obliged to borrow the first extracts that came to hand.

A series of the private letters of a considerable family, extending over 40 years, must needs open up many interesting views of domestic life and of public affairs ; but these incidental and undesigned revelations come upon us from all sides, when we have the habit of observing them. Even sermons tell us a good deal. Those of Latimer teem with illustrations of the state and manners of his time. And here is a picture of Cambridge life, in a sermon preached before the University (portions of which are preserved in Strype's memorials), by Thomas Lever, fellow of St. John's College, in 1550, in considerable contrast to what is to be observed in that seat of learning now :

“There be divers there,” he says, “which rise daily about four or five of the clock in the morning ; and from five to six of the clock use common prayer with an exhortation of God's Word in a common chapel ; and from six until ten of the clock use either private study or common lectures. At ten of the clock they go to dinner, whereas they be content with a penny-piece of beef among four, having a few pottage made of the broth of the same beef, with salt and oatmeal, and nothing else. After this slender diet, they be either teaching or learning till five of the clock in the evening, wheneas they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after which they go either to reasoning in problems or to some other study, until it be nine or ten of the clock ; and then, being without fires, are fain to walk or run up and down half an hour to get a heat on their feet, when they go to bed.” They have changed all that now.

Coming down a little further, we encounter Bacon's mother, who was a learned, pious, shrewd woman ; and she writes a capital letter. A capital manager she was, and very ready to manage—a little too much so, perhaps—sending

up to her sons from Gorhambury barrels of beer, and good advice, with an occasional dash of sarcasm. There is a vigour and a downrightness in her letters—a worldly wisdom, coupled with womanly piety, which make them always of the raciest. And when we remember that she was the widow of the Lord-Keeper, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and that her sister was the wife of the great Burleigh, we understand that as we read we are entering into more familiar acquaintance with the great people of a great period. Here is a specimen of the way in which she writes to her sons, who seem to have been inclined to cut a dash:—"I am sorry your brother and you charge yourselves with superfluous horses. The wise will but laugh at you both; being but trouble, besides your debts, long journeys, and private persons. Earls be earls. Your vain man, straitly, by his sloth, and proud, quarrel-picking conditions, sets all your house at Redbourn out of quiet order, by general complaints, as I hear. Lately, young Morer was smote in the eye by him. And I pray God you hear not of some mischief by him. But my sons have no judgment." And here is more advice of a different sort: "The two countess sisters will neighbor you; both ladies that fear God and love His word—indeed zealously, specially the younger sister. Yet, upon advice, and some experience, I would earnestly counsel you to be wary and circumspect, and not to be too open, nor willing to prolong speech with the Countess Warwick. She, after her father's fashion, will search and sound, and lay up with diligence, marking things which seem not courtly; and she is near the Queen, and follows her father's example too much in that." And these letters are none the more interesting now, from the frequent injunctions with which they are interspersed, such as

"Burn, I pray, but read well first."

Descending, now, to the next generation. One of the best of letter-writers was James Howell, who was born in 1596 and died in 1666—though the fact that his epistles were designed for publication, robs them of a good part of the

charm they would otherwise have. He was one of 15 children, the son of a Welsh clergyman, educated at Oxford; engaged abroad in commercial pursuits and in public employment; going secretary to Lord Leicester in Denmark; made clerk of the council in 1641; imprisoned in the fleet in 1643, as a malignant; and being, as he was, in constant correspondence with men of all ranks, he necessarily reflects in his letters the times in which he lived; and this he does with an ease, wit, and skill, which endow his epistles with an enduring fascination. I have given away my copy, which I used for several years, and am, therefore, unable to make any extracts; but I can assure you that there is good history in his book, and pleasant reading. And there is no lack of writers, easily accessible, who depict these times from their own observation.

The England of Charles I., the Commonwealth, and the Restoration, is nowhere better seen (that part of it, at least, which is shewn) than in the life of Anthony à Wood, the Oxford antiquary, written by himself. I had intended to give some extracts, descriptive of the fighting between the Cavaliers and Roundheads, some of which Wood saw with his own eyes, when a boy at school, at Thame, in Bucks, and of the state of society in Oxford in his day; but I must put these aside, and confine myself to one single extract, which will serve to shew how much more a simple, unadorned, but very significant fact, is to be learned from such books than from the historian's narrative; and how much more plainly facts speak for themselves than do the generalizations and reflections men make upon them. When the war between Charles and the Parliament began, "upon the first news at Oxford that the armies were going to fight, Mr. Wood's eldest brother, Thomas, left his gown at the town's end, ran

to Edgehill, did his Majesty good service, returned on horse-back, well accoutred, and afterwards was made an officer in the king's army." After the final defeat of the king's party he returned to Oxford, where, being involved in a projected royalist rising, which was discovered, he fled for his life, and joined Cromwell's army in Ireland, in which he rose to the rank of major. The atrocities perpetrated by this army in Ireland are well remembered by the Irish. And I do not say that English historians pass them over; but a generalized condemnation of undue severity, or a lament over the license of war, does not shew us the thing, or make us feel as we ought to feel about it. This brother of Anthony à Wood was present at the taking of Drogheda; and it is worth our while to see if just a single incident that he relates does not throw more light upon the matter than we get from our histories. In the voluminous pictorial history of England thus much is said about it:

"Drogheda was stormed on the 11th of September, Cromwell himself fighting in the breach. In the civil war in England he and his men had ever been merciful to the vanquished; but here, and everywhere in Ireland, little or no mercy was shewn to the Papists or idolaters."

Hume says something more. After describing the assault, he goes on to add:—"The town was taken sword in hand; and orders being issued to give no quarter, a cruel slaughter was made of the garrison. Even a few who were saved by the soldiers, satiated with blood, were next day miserably butchered by order of the General." Bad enough, that. But you observe that only the garrison, the fighting men, are mentioned;—not a hint is there that any of the inhabitants were ill-treated.

Now, listen to what Thomas Wood told his mother and his brother:—"He told them that when they were to make their way up to the lofts and galleries in the church, and up to the town, where the enemy had fled, each of the assailants would take up a child and use as a buckler of defence when they ascended the steps, to keep themselves from being shot or brained. After they had killed all in the church, they went into the vaults underneath, where all the flower and choicest of the women and ladies had hid themselves. One of these—a most handsome virgin, arrai'd in costly and gorgeous apparel—kneeled down to Thomas Wood with tears and prayers to save her life; and being stricken with a profound pity, he took her under his arm, and went with her out of the church, with intentions to put her over the works to shift for herself; but a soldier perceiving his intentions, he ran his sword through her body; whereupon Mr. Wood, seeing her gasping, took away her money, jewels &c., &c., and flung her down over the works." That is the sort of thing that has made Ireland a difficult country to govern.

"The evil that men do lives after them."

I fully intended, when I began to write this paper, to have been rather large in my illustrations from the diaries and correspondence of Eveleyn, where the ways and feelings of the time are so finely portrayed; but above all, from the diary of the vain, the shrewd, the honest, the naive, the ever-amusing, the incomparable Samuel Pepys, to open whose book is to do nothing less than to step back into the times of Charles and James, and, unseen, ourselves to mingle with the motley crowd; but I have left myself no time for this. And it is the less needed, as the book is so popular and so accessible.

The literature of the stage, too, and of fiction, which has for its office to "catch the living manners as they rise," would be of great service to one endeavouring to reproduce the past. It is only to name the name of Mr. Justice Shallow, and country life in England 300 years ago comes back at the sound. It is put further back in the play; but the life depicted is the life that Shakespeare saw. It comes back in the conversation of country gentlemen, and their talk of sheep and of bullocks and of rural sports. They re-appear before us—the silly squire with his weak and wicked boastings of youthful follies, of which, if they were not lies, he ought to have been ashamed, and his moral prattle, and his justicing; and his pippin of his own grafting; and his cousin, the neighbour justice, whose son William is at Oxford still, to his cost; and old Double dead at last—old Double, who drew so good a bow, and of whose skill all the countryside was proud. And, to take another example, Lord Foppington, when he announces that "to mind the inside of a book is to entertain oneself with the forced products of another man's brain,—now, I think, a man of quality and breeding may be much amused with the natural sprouts of his own," serves to remind us that the race of puppies is perennial.

And there is another book, too, of infinite value for building up the structure of a bygone age, to which, though space will not permit me to illustrate from it, I must refer you—and that is "*Howell's State Trials*." I do not know whether it is, but it certainly ought to be, in your library. Always the records and incidents of courts of justice preserve authentic monuments and enduring fragments of the past. Go back as far as we will, if we can but get into court we are transported into the very times of which we read. When

we stand within the charmed circle where Demosthenes pleads for the honours and immunities of his friend, as he calls his evidence and cites his authorities, we are in the very tide and flow of Athenian life. Their trade and their finance; where they got their corn and how they raised their taxes—the place rings with it. Their customs are around us: we walk amid their usages, and we breathe an air charged with the public sentiment of the time. And when we listen to Raleigh, as, in Winchester Castle, from eight in the morning till eleven at night, he confronts his accusers and baffles the vulgar violence of Coke, our mind's image of this "courtier, soldier, scholar, all in one," is no longer the reflection of a reflection—the faint or faulty projection upon our apprehension of another man's notion, but the direct impression printed upon the tables of our brain by the very presence and bearing of the man himself.

In this manner, by bringing our minds into close and actual contact with the authentic monuments and genuine fragments of the days that are gone, we shall (if I may venture, without irreverence, to appropriate the prophet's imagery) reanimate and re-people that valley of dry-bones which we call history. Under the re-creating force of thought, there will be a shaking, and the bones will come together, bone to his bone; and the breath will come from the four winds, and breathe upon them, and they will live.

Well, then, if this is the fruit of applying our mind in the direction I have indicated, what shall we say of it? I think we may say that it is a very pleasant fruit. I, for my part, enjoy the flavour of it. I enjoy it; and there

is no reason why I should not. Rather there is every reason why I should, for it is a very wholesome fruit. The mind grows and increases in strength, stature, and suppleness, by feeding upon it. And this growth and development, in faculty and capacity, is no inconsiderable result. It is, of itself, the worthy and sufficient end and justification of intellectual effort. But it is not the only result. To train ourselves, as we direct our thoughts back upon the past, not idly to gaze upon "authorized romance," impalpable abstractions, barren generalities, truisms that never kindle into truths, and facts that have neither voice nor utterance; but in such manner "to hold the mirror " up to nature as to shew virtue her own feature, scorn her " own image, and the very age and body of the time his form " and pressure," is to learn to look through the "dry light" in which the secrets of truth are visible—to discern the "veiled " hand that guides the world," and to recognize the laws that regulate the progress of mankind. And when we have attained to that, history will be to us something better than an old almanac.