

Looking at History in this light, as an account of Man, and as a record of his virtues, his vices, his acts, and his inventions; it seems a science which yields to none in importance or interest. As regards importance, it teaches us to *know ourselves*, by holding a mirror in which all our kind is pictured; as regards interest, it presents us with a series of facts, splendid, romantic, terrific and noble to an extreme degree.

If the study of *Mathematics* yields us valuable information respecting *Numbers* and *Lines*, and teaches us to produce very wonderful results from simple premises; History, when properly read, directs Nations and Individuals, “so to *number* their days that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom;” and so to *measure* actions, that they may reject the evil and choose the good; and thus greatly increase the stock of general happiness.

If *Mechanical* science enables us to comprehend, and account for, and turn to use, the motions of vast bodies; if it makes us acquainted with *Force*, *Gravity* and *Velocity*, until the laws of matter become subservient to our purposes, and we can perform labours which seem rather the work of Gods than of Pigmies; *History* enables us to judge of the spirit and nature of the *Lord of Creation*, and to form a just estimate of the results of his acquisitions and borrowed powers.

If *Astronomy* is attractive as informing us of the wonders and glories of the visible Heavens, and *Geography* delightful and useful as unfolding to our view the various features of the multiform Earth; History, which exhibits all the phenomena of that race, for whom the great globe was made, and whose destined home is “another and a better world,” must be a science exceedingly interesting to every enquiring mind. It is a golden mine to the Poet and the Painter; and brings the wisdom and glory of past ages, to the assistance of the Philosopher.

Independant of those individual excellencies of the subject under consideration, it seems the connecting link between Science—commonly so called—and Literature; between those studies which relate to the *nature* of things, and those, which, more imaginative, relate to interesting and picturesque *combinations*. It has the severe system, the general principles, the important deductions of the one; and is replete with the affecting and striking situations of the other. As such a *link*, it comes in its proper place, before the members of this Institute, at a time after they have been studying the Pure and Mixed Sciences, and before they have entered on the more florid range of miscellaneous literature.

In this paper I will endeavour to point ont some of the sources of