

will never forget or lose sympathy with the primal waters upon the far-off mountain side. More and more, and in all departments of learning, men are employing the historical method as an instrument of progress, running backward that they may the better leap forward. Not satisfied with the ordinary records of history, they are turning with growing interest to the obscure relics of pre-historic times, the ruins of ancient cities, and the customs and traditions of savage tribes, seeking everywhere to find the human footprints on the sands of time—now in the wilds of America, now in the dark continent of Africa, and now “where the gorgeous East showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

The history of thought, not less than other forms of history, still returns upon us, again and again, under new points of view, and with larger revelations; but the history of thought proper begins with Greece, and it can no more dis sever itself from that mother-wit of all the schools, than the child can cease to feel the hereditary bias of natural parentage. Back to Kant is the urgent cry lately set up among modern metaphysicians; back to Plato is a cry equally urgent; if indeed it has ever been possible to get wholly away from either the one or the other. Nor is it merely with a view to what some would call barren speculation that men counsel thus, for our eminent and orthodox theologians use the same language. It is in the interests of religion that Prof. Flint and others speak, when they tell us to seek in Plato an antidote against this modern monstrosity of pessimism, that most melancholy of all phases of human thought.

“ . . . Whose cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go.”

By a diligent study of these grand old masters, with their enduring “majesties

of light,” we are enabled to counterpoise a narrow materialistic empiricism, which, in an age like ours, inclines to a kind of usurpation in the kingdom of knowledge. The discoveries of natural science seem to reach the masses sooner, and more beneficially, than philosophic speculations; but, sooner or later, they both alike travel down into the hearts and homes of the people, interpenetrating each other for good, and sometimes, as in our day, contending in their encounter for the mastery, like the fresh waters and salt, where a great river meets the rising tide of the sea. All honour to the teachers of physical science who are doing such wonderful things for the promotion of human comfort, and for what Bacon terms “the relief of man’s estate;” but equal honour to those interpreters of the spiritual order, who reveal to us the eternal realities behind the shadows of time; who teach us to remember that man does not live by bread alone, and that Lazarus in his rags feeding upon crumbs may be nearer to God than Dives in his palace, though clothed in fine linen and faring sumptuously every day. But regard for the old system of academic drill can blind our eyes to the fact that the educational problem and university work have undergone an immense transformation. The physical and so-called practical sciences have come to the front with multiplied claims and attractions that cannot be resisted and should not be resisted. They combine with those historical researches to which I have already referred; they give new and fruitful lessons in the laws of health, the origin, the prevention, and the cure of disease, including many ills of a moral kind; they seek to remould the institutions of society; they assert themselves effectively in the several provinces of moral and religious truth; they throw floods of light, and some very per-