

none is surer of a competence, and the value of a farmer's investment is far easier to calculate than a share in a company, the stocks of the railroads, or even the public funds year for year. Whether five or ten years, the net gains from farming show greater yields than those of city traders. If the young men of the cities could be induced to look to farming for a living rather than hazard their lives in an uncertain race for mere existence in the town, they would enjoy a security of possession not surpassed by the most fortunate broker or merchant. No better outlet could be found for the latent energy of the city youth, or the country town lad, than the devotion of a part of his evenings to study those subjects having a direct connection with his industrial occupation. One subject need only absorb three hours per week, and if two subjects were taken, the time given to them would be well spent, and would well repay the student.

The success of these classes in England is regarded with satisfaction by everybody associated in the work. Hitherto they have supplied the only machinery available for technical knowledge for the artizan and labouring population of the country.

### SUCH IS HISTORY.

The sagacity of the French King's famous saying, "*Telle est l'Histoire*," is being proved to us every day by the curious conflict of assertions touching past events, real or fictitious. Many public speakers and writers are apt to look more to the telling qualities of the anecdote they are relating than to the historical accuracy of the story. There is a class of historians of the Niebuhr school, who are for stripping from our memory all of the epigrams and maxims that ages have created and youth so eagerly seized upon. Even grave Professors of Yale College may be numbered among these historians. It is not so very long ago since an onslaught was made on some of the most popular historical sayings and stories which have been handed down to us from time immemorial; and nowadays the schoolboy of not many years back is required to rid his mind of many pleasant fables. He must no longer cherish the story of Romulus and Remus, the incident of King Canute and the sea, the adventure of Alfred in the shepherd's hut, and the apple-shooting of William Tell. He must give up the episode of Columbus and the egg because it is claimed that the illustration was employed by another man long before the birth of the great discoverer. Nor is it at all improbable that the identity of Christopher Columbus himself will be destroyed because of Mark Twain's anecdote of the Genoa guide. They were standing beside a certain monument which the guide said was that of "the man who discovered America," and Mr. Clemens quite nonplussed the fellow by saying that he had just arrived from the country mentioned, and that was the first he had heard of such a discovery.

During the past twenty-five or thirty years we have been compelled, though with sorrow, to play the skeptic with regard to some of the best-known historic phrases. A revered one of those lately demolished is the story told of the great German poet. It was long believed that Goethe, when dying, exclaimed: "Light, more light!" whereas what he did say was, according to our Yale Professor: "Bring the candle nearer." If we may believe the same reliable authority, the saying attributed to Louis XIV.—"The State! I am the State!"—was never uttered by him at all, but was said by Mazarin some twenty years before the King's time; and, for that matter, before the Cardinal by Elizabeth of England. Nor was the late M. Thiers the author of the constitutional maxim, "The King reigns, but does not govern," for it was said by John Zamorski, a Pole, two hundred years before the time of the distinguished Frenchman. The last words of William Pitt have been variously rendered as, "Oh, my country! how I love my country!" and "Oh, my country! how I leave my country!" The latter words are the best authenticated ones, and yet in the more obscure circles of political gossip in England there has been current a strange story that the real last words of the English statesman were, "I should like one of Bellamy's pork pies." A denial is made of the story that Nelson's last signal at Trafalgar was, "England expects every man to do his duty," and it is now asserted that what he did signal the fleet was, "Have the men had their breakfasts?" The oddest story we can now call to mind about the last words of a commander before going into battle, is that related by a certain Gen. Bismarck, who flourished several generations ago. He declared that at Blenheim, just before the battle, the Duke of Marlborough was in his coach surrounded by his servants, who were making up his dirty linen. An aide-de-camp to Prince Eugene rode up to ask if the allied forces should begin the advance, whereupon his Grace replied, "Not till my washing is ready." It was Carlyle who deprived the French guard of the credit of saying, "Fire first, Messieurs, the English"; and the saying, long attributed to Talleyrand, that "language was given to us to disguise our thoughts," was, it appears, first made by Voltaire. More than 150 years before General Lee talked of "dying in the last ditch," William of Orange wrote to the States General to say that it was the duty of every Dutchman to die, if necessary, in the last ditch to defend the country from the ambition of Louis XIV.

Numerous other illustrations might be given, as, for instance, the punning dispatch attributed to Gen. Sir Charles Napier, announcing in the single word "Peccavi" his conquest of Scinde. The witticism was invented by an Irish humourist. But the most recent denial of a popular myth comes from England. Not very long before Parliament was prorogued, in August, Sir William Vernon Harcourt happened in debate in the House of Commons to mention the battle of Navarino; and with reference to that event observed that it had always been supposed that a dispatch had gone forth from an illustrious quarter addressed to the Admiral in command of the British fleet in the Levant, and couched in these laconic words; "Go it, Ned." The relation of this anecdote elicited a letter from Gen. Sir William Codrington, the son of the Admiral in question; and in this communication the whilom Commander-in-chief of the British Army in the Crimea contradicts point blank the authenticity of the "Go it, Ned" story. The counsel of a celebrated cynic was to the effect that we should believe nothing that we hear and only half of what we see, and there certainly are many reasons against implicit acceptance of the proverb that "seeing is believing." The worst of it is that history has such a woefully short memory, or that the fogs of error begin so soon to gather about acted or spoken things, that we are often puzzled to find out the rights or wrongs of a matter that happened so late as the day before yesterday. "There's nothing new, and there's nothing true; and it don't much signify," said one of our cynical countrymen; but he was wrong, for literal accuracy in history is a matter always of the very highest importance. The great trouble is that a scrupulous attention to the minor details is unhappily either thought unworthy the pursuit or is beyond the capacity of most historians.—*New York Times*.

### SELF-CONCEIT.

Self-conceit is pre-eminently one of those traits of character of which cynics have been wont to remark that there is no harm in having them; the harm is in letting it be found out that you do have them. Some have maintained that although it is unwise to betray self-conceit, it is yet a point of wisdom to cultivate it. Many close observers of men and manners would go a step further than this, and would contend that not only is a certain amount of self-conceit desirable and legitimate, but that a reasonable display of it is often essential to success in life. "I have observed," said Lord Hartington on one occasion, "that the House of Commons is very apt to estimate a man a good deal according to his own value of himself;" and in this respect, his lordship added, the House of Commons was very much like all other assemblies. He might have said, indeed, that it was very much like the world at large. The world is often bound to take a man at what he shows to be his own estimate of himself, for a time, for the simple reason that, until he himself affords them, there are no materials upon which to base an independent judgment. Whether an individual's own estimate of his ability is fairly borne out by his characteristics or is above or below them, a little time is required to show, and it is just during this time that the House of Commons and men in general are willing to take him on his own valuation.

It may not be, however, altogether owing to a lack of knowledge of man with whom we come in contact for the first time that we are disposed to accept them for what they evidently believe themselves to be. There is an amazing amount of presumptuous conceit in the world which is the sheer and palpable result of the densest ignorance and inexperience, and which is simply a ludicrous nuisance wherever it is met with. Conceit originating in this course, never gets much consideration anywhere. But, coupled with much inexperience and consequent inefficiency, there is often to be seen a display of self-confidence which is far more respectable, because it has its origin in a consciousness of undeveloped power. All the world has read the famous words with which the present Premier of England brought his first speech in Parliament to a close. A similar ebullition of conceit is related of Sheridan, who had made his *debut* in the House of Commons nearly fifty years before. Moore tells us that he made his first speech on November 20, 1780. "It was on this night, as Mr. Woodfall used to relate, that Mr. Sheridan, after he had spoken, came up to him in the gallery, and asked with much anxiety what he thought of his first attempt. The answer of Woodfall, as he had the courage afterwards to own, was, 'I am sorry to say that I don't think that this is your line; you had much better have stuck to your former pursuits.'" On hearing which, Sheridan rested his head on his hands for a few minutes, and then exclaimed, with a vehement oath, that it was in him notwithstanding, and it should come out too. That it did come out, and that with remarkable effect very often, everybody knows.

Of course if Sheridan had failed after all, such an utterance might reasonably have been adduced in proof of the man's over-weening vanity and conceit. It has been a matter of common observation, however, that such conceit is often indicative of latent power, a consciousness of which is undoubtedly in many cases the secret stimulus to perseverance and a guarantee of ultimate success. No one is likely to accomplish anything of importance without a firm conviction that it is within the scope of his power. Of what that scope is, the man's own knowledge of himself is often the surest indication, and the greater