

uppermost, we should conclude that there was a reason for this. And searching keenly we might find a reason, either in some slight irregularity in the shape of the coin or in the distribution of the mass of metal between its two surfaces. Enquiring still further, we might find other disturbing elements, and we might be obliged to play off one against the other in order to prove the exact preponderance of "head" over "tail" which we discovered empirically by our thousand tosses.

Mr. Buckle hoped to prove that the actions of mankind, taken on the grand scale and cast into the crucible of history would yield sufficient data from which to construct the great laws that have governed the development and the decline of nations. It is admitted that these actions and their resultant laws are far more complicated than those which govern the gyrations of a penny, but at the same time the field of enquiry is also wider, and although we cannot test our views experimentally, we can check them by asking if the laws we have evolved from the history of one nation hold good (*mutatis mutandis*) when applied to a different race and another epoch. This may be said, shortly, to be the novel view of history propounded by our author.

He intended to have done more than propound it, he hoped to have put it into practice, and to do so in a field of study dear to every Englishman,—the history of civilization in his own native country. It was on this subject, he tells us, that his deepest sympathies were centred, to English literature he acknowledged that he owed his best lessons, and it was the most cherished wish of his heart that it might be given to him to apply his novel principles in elucidating the successive phases of English history. Those who have read the *torso* which is all that remains of his projected

work, can imagine how deeply interesting the completed history would have been. His untimely death frustrated these hopes and left even his introduction incomplete. For it was part of the vast plan of this great scholar to conduct the student through selected eras of French, of Spanish, of Scotch, and of German history, which would lead on his mind to the appointed end as a succession of fair vestibules and noble court-yards lead on the eye to some grand temple or magnificent palace. We were to study in France the evil effects of state patronage upon national literature and science, and the deeply rooted causes of that centralizing or protective spirit which reappears under the most diverse forms of government in that country. In Spain we were called on to see, in the physical conformation of the country, in its early religious wars, and the long struggle which it waged for life with the Moors, the seeds of that predominance of the religious classes which has run its course almost unchecked in that isolated country. Without going over all the ground covered by this introduction I may shortly state that Buckle expected by its means to discover and give *prima facie* evidence of those general laws which he intended to apply, to elaborate, and to illustrate, in the body of his work.

About the middle of his third volume, his heart failed him lest he should have miscalculated his powers. In a touching passage at the close of his third chapter* he owns that the plan he had sketched out for himself must be curtailed. In order to avoid sacrificing the work to its introduction he had to reconcile himself to a slighter construction and a less detailed method of proof. He refers, pathetically, to those earlier days when the field of knowledge, then suddenly re-

* Vol. III., p. 188.