

and catholic view of men and things takes their place. A general soundness of opinion upon practical subjects arises. The man of one book, of one idea, is seldom found. Social intercourse becomes more agreeable when the subjects of common interest are so much more numerous.

Yet the picture has its dark side,—superficiality is almost necessarily engendered. Men learn to talk, and to talk with fluency, upon subjects which they but imperfectly understand. Nothing can be thoroughly known without time and reflection, and these, in the multiplicity of subjects to be studied, cannot be sufficiently given. Intellectual culture, for its own sake, is less valued. Concerning any subject of study, any branch of education, the question is asked, not how far it will benefit the student, by disciplining his mind, by bringing into play and exercising his faculties, by cultivating habits of application, but of what material use it is, how far it will aid its professor to gain the material goods of the world, wealth and social position. In short, it is not education, it is instruction, that is valued.

Now, while we avail ourselves of the advantages which a general diffusion of knowledge holds out to us, we must, I think, be careful to guard against this danger of superficiality. Study, if you will, subjects which have a material practical end, but study them thoroughly. Do not be satisfied with a shallow superficial knowledge. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

These remarks have been suggested by the fact that the student of history lies particularly open to this danger of superficiality, which makes it requisite to impress upon him the necessity of systematic reading—of real study. To read a volume of Gibbon or of Robertson just as you read a novel of Sir Walter Scott is not to study history. You read Robertson's Charles the Fifth for instance, and follow with interest the story of his rivalry with Francis I, and with still more interest his transactions with Maurice of Saxony. You watch the penniless cadet of the Electoral house, Protestant, and sincerely so though he be, aiding in the ruin and destruction of his near kinsman, the head of his house and the champion of his faith. Yet no sooner is the Elector John captured and stripped of his dominions in favour of his traitorous cousin, and Protestantism everywhere on the extreme verge of destruction, than the spoiler turns round against his ally and benefactor; shews himself as energetic and politic a leader of the Protestants as he had before been of their enemies; attacks defeats and nearly captures the Emperor; and settles Protestantism on a firm basis throughout the empire. Having read or run through this with breathless interest, you say it is as interesting as a novel, and gratify yourself with thinking that you have been reading history. But