

events of the lesson, trying to feel them himself, trying to think of the persons as actual, eating and drinking, tax-paying Christians, and then to have a talk with the class about them, with a short skeleton on the black-board in view of the class.

The present teaching of history suffers from three diseases. The first is the disease of Encyclopædism; the second is the disease of Anæmia; and the third is the disease of Hysteron-proteron, or the cart before the horse. Let us look for a few minutes at the symptoms of each of these diseases.

The disease of Encyclopædism plainly results from the desire to put too many figures into one very small canvas. This brings with it, as a necessary consequence, a highly exaggerated degree of compression or abridgment. The result is that, instead of taking into the mind a clear and full impression of a historical personage, you have to put up with the very smallest fraction of his mental face. It is true that a great anatomist like Owen can construct the whole skeleton of an animal from the datum of one small bone; but it is given to very few of us to be Owens, and, in the sphere of human history, constructive intellects of such power are even rarer than in that of the history of nature. You cannot compress the history of two thousand years into a volume of five hundred pages; you cannot tell the story of such a period in three volumes, or in thirty volumes, or in three hundred volumes. In point of fact, you have, at the outset, to admit that you are in a state of intellectual bankruptcy, and to propose a composition with your creditors; and, with the enormous number of incidents and persons that have appeared within these two thousand years, it will go very well with you if you can pay sixpence in the pound.

Then, when you look at the question from the practical and educational

point of view, you find that the majority of your pupils can only pay a fractional percentage on their attention and understanding; and if a fraction be multiplied by a fraction, the result is smaller than either of the two factors. You cannot compress the "Encyclopædia Britannica" into the size of a Prayer Book, any more than you can paint the picture of a battle on your thumbnail, or dance the Highland fling on the surface of a threepenny-piece. In fact, when you write a history of this kind, you are reduced to making it a mere catalogue, and it is no more a history of your country than the "London Directory" is a history of the growth of London, or of the human souls that have been born into it and died out of it.

The second disease, of Anæmia, or bloodlessness, is the result of the first. Human beings are not spoken of as human beings, but as dots, or lines, or surfaces, or geometrical figures; and this view of history has resulted in the production of date-books, in which you have from twenty to forty dates given in each reign, and events put opposite each date, which have no more connexion with each other than the names of the shops which stand side by side in Oxford Street. Such books may be learned by heart, and are learned by heart every year, and then they are forgotten; but they have, in the meantime, maimed the memory and weakened the natural desire and intellectual appetite for a proper study of history.

The disease of Hysteron-proteron I can best explain to you by taking a notable example. An able writer on education says, in his chapter on Teaching History:—

"How, then, should we begin to teach English history? Not certainly by plunging at once into the story of Julius Cæsar and the Druids, nor by giving a number of dates to be learn-