

away before we can reasonably look for the destruction of the world. Or again, when we consider the enormous mass of coal which the earth contains, which is capable (as we will show hereafter), of supplying all the possible wants of man for thousands of years to come, we think it contrary to all reason to look for the end of the world until there is a prospect of its being exhausted. In fact, we think the coal measures are a "material guarantee" of the continuance of the present state of things for a long time to come. P. T. O.

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## HISTORY AND HISTORIANS.

We think the great and good Dr. Arnold is right when he maintains that history is generally undervalued, and we think he is also right in the reason he gives for this—that it is seldom rightly studied. Formerly, when history meant merely a collection of facts chronologically arranged, the main requisites for a historian were opportunity of research, and a truthful, or at least a pleasing narration of what he had to relate. Indeed, the word truthful might almost be left out, for in those early times, corresponding to the childhood of individuals, when every tale that charms is believed, no one enquired too strictly into the truth of the tale, so it was but pleasing; and even now, after the insect eye of the critic has been so long at work, we little dream how many events and characters that are "familiar in our mouths as household words," are mere myths after all.

Now, however, that the genius of history has taken her seat of equality among her sister sciences, she requires something more from her high priests than a mere recital of her triumphs. She has mysteries, deep as those of Isis, to be expounded,—sequences of cause and effect so intricate that a Bacon or a Newton might throw up the task in despair,—yet an aim in view, and a means of attaining it.

The first historians were not writers at all, but minstrels. The frenzy-fired bard, who sang the glories of the classic pantheon—of the demigods of "remotest eld;" the weird Eubates, who grimly chanted their quaint triads in the oaken shades of Gaul and Albyn; the Skald, of the rude north, who rhapsodised, in wild numbers, over the triumphs of Odin the mighty, and Freya the fair—the Jove and Venus of the North, or inspired the Vikingir and Bersekir with emulation of the heroes of a still older and fiercer age; the Gaelic harper, who hymned in heathy glen the prowess of Fingal and his brother chief—those dauntless sons of Erin green and "Caledonia stern and wild;" the Saxon gleeman, who rhymed of Hengst the invader, and Alfred the truth-teller; and the more smooth-tongued troubadour and trouveur, who immortalized in their knightly Norman, or sonorous Provencal, the deeds of Roland and of Charlemagne, and "many a paladin and peer:" these were the foster fathers of history, when she was wrapped in the swaddling clothes of tradition and sweet legendary lore.