

deserve credit, except in so far as they make us acquainted with the sources whence they have drawn their information.

7. In order to judge of the respective merits of historians, and the preference we ought to give some beyond others, it is necessary to examine the spirit and character of each, as well as the circumstances in which they are placed at the time of writing.

Hence it follows :—That we ought to distrust an historian who is deficient in critical discernment, who is fond of fables, or who scruples not, in order to please and amuse his readers, to alter or disguise the truth : That as impartiality is an essential quality in a historian, we must always be on our guard against writers who allow their minds to be warped aside by the prejudices of their nation, their party, or their profession ; for, in order to be impartial, the historian must form his judgment on actions themselves, without regard to the actors : That historians who have had a personal concern in the transactions, or been eyewitnesses of the events they describe, or who, writing by the permission or authority of government, have had free access to national archives and public libraries, ought always to be preferred to those who have not enjoyed the same advantages : That among modern historians, he who has written last often deserves more confidence than those who have handled the same subject before him ; inasmuch as he has had it in his power to obtain more exact information, to avoid all party spirit, and rectify the errors of his predecessors.

There are several auxiliary sciences which may be said to constitute the very foundation of history ; and among these, geography, genealogy, and chronology, hold the first rank. In truth, no fact can be fully established, nor can any narrative possess interest, unless the circumstances relating to the times and places in which the events have happened, as well as to the persons who have been concerned in them, be previously made known, and distinctly explained. It is obvious, therefore, that geography, genealogy, and chronology, are the faithful interpreters and inseparable companions of history.

Geography may be divided into mathematical, physical, and political ; according to the different objects which it embraces. Mathematical geography regards the earth, considered as a measurable body. Physical geography has for its object to examine the natural or physical structure of the earth ; while political geography illustrates the different divisions of the earth which men have invented, such as kingdoms, states, and provinces. This science is also divided, relatively to the times of which it treats, into ancient middle-age, and modern geography