

idea of his line of progress ; while the other will have made the country his own, by an acquaintanceship which cannot be shaken by accident or time. I would strongly recommend the latter course to members of this Institute.

Previous to commencing the study of any particular branch of History, it is of much consequence that we should obtain some degree of knowledge of general history. No National History can be altogether independent; and to have a right acquaintance with any, we should be informed generally respecting the state of the world, particularly at the time when our history commences, that we may know how to appreciate the rank of any individual nation, and its intercourse or transactions with other Countries. For this purpose, we should read some compendium of general history, and make such notes while reading, as would enable us to retain a distinct outline of its most prominent features. I would here remark, that the "Society for the Diffusion of useful knowledge," have published such a compendium, which costs but a mere trifle, and which may well answer for preliminary study with most persons. This work is ordered for the Mechanic's Library, but those wishing to reap the many advantages gained by a course of historical reading, should have a copy by them, to which they could easily refer; for which purpose its arrangement into short Chapters, its numerous headings, and numbered divisions, seem extremely well adapted. There are also Charts of History published, of much value to those who have some knowledge of general history; as by a glance their memory is refreshed, and they can refer to their Chart, as the reader of Geography does to his Map, when circumstances in their particular study make such reference exceedingly desirable.

We will now suppose that a man has obtained this preliminary information, and that he takes up the *History of England* in order to make himself well acquainted with its highly interesting details.

It would be absurd to read such a work, as one would read a romance or a novel. The writers of the latter endeavour to excite the fancy, by building interesting and picturesque combinations, of persons and actions and scenery, on a very slender foundation of assumed facts. The Historian, on the contrary, has an immense mass of facts of real life under his pen, and he endeavours to record them in a most brief and lucid manner; having simple and severe Truth for his instructress, instead of enthusiastic and credulous Imagination. In studying the works of the first, amusement is the end sought; the facts are unimportant and few, and the memory seldom tasks itself, however rich the fleeting banquet. The historical reader opens his book for information; his facts are multitudin-