

# SCRAPS FROM MY NOTE BOOK.

BY THE STRANGER.

"While History's muse the memorial was keeping,  
Of all that the dark hand of Destiny weaves."

MOORE.

WE ought to observe, in History, besides events and chronology:

- i. The causes of the rise and fall of Empires;
- ii. The genius and character of Nations, and of the great men who governed them;
- iii. The origin and progress of Arts and Sciences,—and
- iv. The connexion between Sacred and Profane

## HISTORY.

PROFANE HISTORY, were it but the mere memorial of ancient transactions, would not be very deserving of serious attention. But its importance consists in the knowledge which it conveys of the means by which Empires were founded; the steps by which they rose to the exalted pitch of grandeur we so much admire; what constituted their true glory and felicity; and the causes of their decline and fall.

By it we acquaint ourselves with the manners of different nations, their genius, laws and customs, and with the talents, virtues and vices, also, of those men by whom they were governed, and whose good or bad qualities contributed to the grandeur or decay of the states over which they presided.

And by exhibiting to us thus the great objects of history, it instructs us, by example rather than precept, in the arts of empire and war, the principles of government, the rules of policy, the maxims of civil society, and the conduct of life, that suit all ages and conditions.

It moreover affords to those who have a taste for polite learning—that is, the manner in which arts and sciences were invented, cultivated and improved—an insight into their origin and progress. Now, the more nearly we approach those countries once inhabited by the sons of Noah, the more perfect do we find them; the more remote nations having so neglected or forgotten them, that, as often as, in later times, men attempted to revive them, they were obliged to go back to the source from whence they originally flowed.

And it is by observing the connexion between Sacred and Profane History, that we perceive, in the chimeras of a superstitious worship, and the

general irregularities into which human nature had fallen, when abandoned to itself, the greatness, the power, the justice, and the admirable wisdom with which the Almighty governs the Universe. For therein do we perceive consistency, harmony and grandeur eternally, while the nations have arisen, flourished and decayed, according as the Almighty mind has been, by their virtues or their vices, influenced from all time in the establishment of their destiny.

The Romans were permitted to rise above all other nations, because of their pious acknowledgment of, and reliance on a controlling deity, while Babylon perished by a sudden visitation, because she attributed her glory to idols of her own creation; for further than is reconcileable with the system of the universe—with God's Kingdom among men—the Almighty permits not human pride or ambition to reach, nor human punishment to be inflicted.

When he permitted his own Israel to be chastized, but not annihilated, and the haughty Assyrian presumed upon her destruction; then did

"The angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathe on the face of the foe as he passed."

And then did there lie there, withered and strewn upon the sacred soil of Israel, one hundred and eighty-five thousand of his host, while he himself is being led back to his kingdom amid the scorn of the nations, through which, but a little before, he had passed, in all the pride and exultance of deified idiotism.

In the establishment of other nations of the earth, man has ever been the mere instrument, whatever the motives by which he may have conceived himself thereto actuated. The Scriptures assure us (Gen. xi. 8, 9,) that amidst the descendants of Noah, did God preside invisibly in all their councils—that their every transaction was by His appointment—that He alone guided and settled mankind; and they, also reveal to us the influences by which the great men of old were actuated in all their illustrious achieve-