

world his merits will one day be appreciated, and the memory of his tyrants visited with deserved execration, consoled him,

"When with a pierced and broken heart,
And scorned of men, he goes to die." *

Time indeed may be necessary, but we may be satisfied that, sooner or later, history, with all its imperfections and shortcomings, does judge truly.

Again, what can be more important than the internal life of a nation, the social condition of a people, their degree of civilization, their opinions, and the whole of their social life? M. Guizot has well remarked that there are moral and general facts, and that these are no less than the material and visible facts of history. The relation of events to each other, their causes and effects,—in a word, what we call the philosophy of history,—is surely as important as, if not more so than, the history of dynasties, ministers and battles.

History is also a source of pleasure,—it is a story with heroes and catastrophes, and is often calculated to delight and interest the imagination in the highest degree. "It is," says Macaulay, "a debateable land lying on the confines of two hostile powers,—reason and imagination,—and instead of being equally shared by both, it falls alternately under the sole and absolute dominion of each. It is sometimes fiction, it is sometimes theory. Every writer has failed either in the narrative or the speculative department of history." Though this last assertion is, I think, too general,—for there are surely some historians who unite beauty of language, vividness and clearness of narration, with a profound and philosophical spirit,—yet we cannot wonder that so few have done so; and we must agree with Lord Bacon, that "to carry the mind backward in writing, and as it were to make it old; diligently to investigate and faithfully to record, and by the light of language to place before our very eyes the movements of the times, the characters of persons, the hesitations of councils, the course and flow of actions as of waters, the hollowness of pretences, the secrets of empire, is truly a work of great labour and judgment."

The taste for diffusive and general reading so prevalent at the present day has undoubtedly some advantage. Men's minds are no longer confined to some one study, but range at large through the regions of universal knowledge. The mists of prejudice become cleared, and a broad

* Bryant.

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