

would there read carefully all the documents relating to it, and you would thus gain a far clearer view of the relative positions of the two states than by merely reading a sketch of the leading features of the treaty; other collections of public documents would be in the same manner referred to. The laws and acts of ecclesiastical councils of the period under consideration would next require attention. These have peculiar value, as being emanations from the minds of those who have the supreme government of the nation, and shew us the national character, modified by higher intellectual culture and by a calmer deliberation.

You would next inquire what great men, especially statesmen, had left writings behind them; these, especially, if they were their own lives, correspondence, or political treatises, you would read with the greatest interest, and from them you would gain, as it were a personal acquaintance with the writers.

You would then consult, I do not say study, the miscellaneous literature of the day,—the political and philosophical writings, the sermons, as well of the most popular as of the most learned preachers; the poetry, the dramatic writings and the novels. From all these you would gain a far clearer insight into the spirit of the age, than by any purely historical reading.

Such a course of study can only be carried out by those who have leisure, and the advantage of a good library of reference. No one, either, could study in this way more than a very few periods of history. Even a man who devotes his life to it, cannot hope to become intimately acquainted with all, or nearly all, history; and, indeed, he may, as many have done, confine himself for years to the study of a small, and comparatively unimportant period. The history of the Council of Trent, written to refute Paul Sarpi, was the work of Pallavicini's life. But thus completely to have studied one period, would be of incalculable advantage. It would enable a man to read history with far more profit for the future, and would give him a critical spirit of discrimination, and a facility for seizing the leading points, which he could not otherwise obtain.

Thus briefly have been set forth the benefits derivable from the study of history, and the mode in which it should be carried on. The danger of superficiality, and the necessity of a systematic course of reading have been shewn; and the still deeper recesses of history lying open to, and inviting the true historical student to enter, have been pointed out.

In conclusion, it must be remembered, that the true spirit in which to pursue historical studies, is a spirit of truth. We are not to try to wrest history into accordance with our preconceived opinions, but are to try them by it, and be ready to lay them aside if they are found wanting.—