

a late writer," that the mere historical consciousness of a past fact on the part of a nation, is often sufficient to preclude its recurrence. The revolution of 1688 could not be the same as the revolution of 1642, because the revolution of 1642 had taken place; because its events and character had been known and reflected on. For the same reason the French revolution of 1848 could not approach to an identity with that of 1789, not only because the state of society (produced in a great measure by the epoch of 1789) was essentially different from the state out of which that epoch itself had sprung; but also because it had become a part of the national memory." *

Yet though perfectly similar and parallel events can never take place, states and circumstances more or less analogous can and do constantly occur; and it is with a view to these that history is so practically valuable. In a free country almost every one needs a certain acquaintance with the science of politics; and history is the school of politics. The handmaid of philosophy, she has been said to guide the way to that higher region of science where she herself enters not. She shews us the causes of the rise, greatness, and fall of empires. She opens for us the hidden springs of affairs. She warns us by the example of some nations; she encourages us by those of others. She teaches lessons of moderation to governments; and shews with equal impartiality the evils of despotic power and the dangers of democratic license.

By the aid of history the seeds of liberty may be kept alive in the hearts of an enslaved people for generations, and may eventually burst forth. Had it not been for the recollections of Marathon and Thermopylee, would Greece, in this age, have shaken off the yoke of slavery which had weighed her down for so many centuries? And what but the memory of Morgarten and Sempach has preserved Switzerland free and independent against all the efforts of her grasping and powerful neighbours?

But the value of history is not confined to the statesman and politician; it teaches other besides political lessons. By it may all the laws of morality and the rules of prudence be tested, and we may be encouraged by examples of the highest virtue and nobility of mind. It is to history,—to posterity,—that the man of injured innocence, the man of neglected merit, has ever looked with a confidence not misplaced that by it justice will be done. How often has the thought that even in this

* Two Lectures on Modern History by H. H. Vaughan, M.A., Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford.