

any careful reader, but the persons are few who can so fasten facts in the mind as to be able to bring them forth in happy illustration during conversation; and, truly, nothing is more embarrassing than to make a historical blunder.

As books of reference, histories, perhaps, take the highest rank. They aid the writer in furnishing both facts and illustrations. History repeats itself, and it is by the close observation of this repetition that the interest is portrayed to us by the writer.

Hard and dry as it is to so many, history is one of the most important features in English, or any other literature, and one that is impossible to be dispensed with.

We have the pre-historic period, but, for the ordinary mind, history is a subject having neither beginning nor end. Some points in this great subject must be learned by every intelligent person, but in conning these over, the wish to have lived a hundred years ago, involuntarily arises. What a relief to the over-burdened mind, historically speaking, would life, or rather death, at such a time, have furnished! No facts to learn concerning this "Great and glorious Union!" And yet, there must have been beings then who uttered this same wish, to be relieved of the history of the last hundred years. But since this wish cannot be realized, such persons can, at least, coincide with the man who "would not live always."

Historical readers at the present day have ample opportunity for gratifying their tastes. At no time since the beginning of history, have books been so attainable. If you doubt this, open your

door to the next book-agent who asks admission. Further proof of the point is left to him. Looking down the past ages we feel a sympathy for the persons who were subjected to the rude manners and customs of that day. Sleeping on rudely made beds of straw, eating with the fingers, having no means for illuminating their abodes, except the means provided by nature, and a number of other so-called disadvantages. Perhaps the thought occurs to us, that the sympathy should have been *from* those of that day *for* us. There certainly was no time spent, then, in making beds, sweeping, dusting, arranging, etc., which now occupies so much of the house-wife's time. No brightening of silver and table cutlery, no polishing of glass, stole away the precious moments of the morning; and, certainly, no gentleman had occasion for blushingly acknowledging his ignorance of carving!

We are more enlightened and refined, but, whether we have really gained anything over the past, is an oft-argued, but still unsolved, problem.

History presents a prototype for nearly every phase of life, but it is doubtful whether these can be successfully imitated, or not. We may try, but there has been but one Beethoven, one Napoleon Bonaparte, one Michael Angelo, one Joan d'Arc; and, if history is to be repeated in the character of these the work is yet to be done. "Experience is the only school for fools," and we would be a very foolish generation, indeed, if, from the experience of hundreds, yes, thousands of historical characters, we did not derive some foundation for ourselves, physically, mentally and morally.

M.

