



*J. F. Maubert.*

Dhansajverao Gadgil Library



GIPE-PUNE-003298

3298

THE  
MISCELLANEOUS  
WORKS  
OF  
EDWARD GIBBON, ESQ.

WITH  
MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

COMPOSED BY HIMSELF:

ILLUSTRATED FROM HIS LETTERS,

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND NARRATIVE,

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, LORD SHEFFIELD.

---

A NEW EDITION, WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS,  
IN FIVE VOLUMES.

---

VOL. III.  
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, 50, ALBEMARLE STREET,  
*By C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar.*

1814.

Vn L37

A814.3

32.58

# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

*FIRST EDITION.*

---

THE following Pieces have already been noticed in the Introduction to the First Volume. Many of them were juvenile performances; and under the persuasion that they will be candidly received as such, they are now delivered to the Press. They certainly are entitled to greater indulgence than could be claimed for Compositions more finished and elaborate, and written at the time of mature age.

The minute account of Mr. Gibbon's studies each day, extracted from the Journal of his actions and opinions; and his observations on the several Works he had perused, evince a singular and unremitting industry.

In that view they may afford an useful lesson and example to such young readers as shall not already be convinced of the necessity of assiduous application in the acquisition of every kind of learning.

My

My first intention was, to have given only a short specimen of the observations made by Mr. Gibbon, in the course of his reading; but I found them so interesting, that I could not desist, so soon as I intended, from making Extracts; and, upon the whole, I thought that the part to be published would be more curious, if given exactly as it stands in the Journal.

I hope I shall not be thought to have published too much: in truth, there still remain in my possession many Papers which I think equally worth attention.

Mr. Gibbon's manuscript Observations were much detailed, from the year 1754 to 1764; and he afterwards continued to write remarks and hints on all subjects, in various common-place books, on detached papers, and even on cards, till a short time before his death, although not so copiously, nor so regularly and methodically, after his return from Italy, in the year 1765. His common-place books are voluminous. One of the largest has for title, "Common-place Book; in which I propose to write what I find most remarkable in my Historical Readings; begun at Lausanne the 19th of March 1755." In this he introduces a great variety of Observations on almost every subject, particularly on History.

In another Book, dated the 19th of January,  
1756,

1756, he says, " J'ai pris la résolution de lire de suite tous les Classiques Latins, les partageant suivant les matières qu'ils ont traité. 1. Les Historiens. 2. Les Poètes. 3. Les Orateurs; dans laquelle classe je renfermerai tous les autres auteurs qui ont écrit en prose, sans être ni Philosophes ni Historiens. 4. Les Philosophes." He begins with Observations on Sallust; then proceeds to the Commentaries of Cæsar, Cornelius Nepos, Livy, always mentioning the edition which he used.

There are other Books, containing various Dissertations on ancient and modern Weights, Measures, Monies, Coins, Finance, Number of the People, Chronology, ancient Geography, and on several States of the ancient and modern World.—" Mémoire sur la Monarchie des Mèdes, pour servir de Supplément aux Dissertations de Messieurs Freret et de Bougainville."—" Du Gouvernement Féodal, surtout en France."—" Remarks on, and an Abridgment of, Blackstone's Commentaries."—" Remarques Critiques sur le Nombre des Habitans dans la Cité des Sybarites."—" Remarques Critiques sur le nouveau Système de la Chronologie de Newton."—" Remarques sur quelques Prodiges."—" Remarques Critiques sur les Dignités Sacerdotales de Jules César."—" Remarques sur quelques Passages de Virgile."—" Sur un Passage de Plaute."



Plaute."—"Examen de la Mort du Poëte Catulle."—"Réflexions sur l'Etude des Belles Lettres, (*i. e.*) des Anciens, et de l'Antiquité Grecque et Latine."—"Remarques sur les Mémoires de l'Académie des Belles Lettres."—A very considerable Work on Ancient Italy, intitled, "Nomina Gentisque Antiquæ Italiæ," with many curious Dissertations on several Parts of that interesting Country.—"Observations on the Churches, Palaces, Pictures, Artists, Antiquities, &c. of Italy."—"Index Expurgatorius."—"Chronological Tables."—Many loose sheets of Geography,\* the Greek and Arabian Cosmography, the Navigation of the Portuguese, &c.—"Digression on the Character of Brutus."—"Introduction à l'Histoire Générale de la République des Suisses."—Detached sheets on the subject of the Antiquities of Brunswick, and many fragments on separate papers.

His well-known and acknowledged learning may have made this display of the proofs of his industry unnecessary; but it may be acceptable to many to have a short sketch of the very various subjects on which he had occupied himself.

\* His attention to Geography had always been very great, and few were better informed in that science. His friend Major Rennell was of that opinion, and I cannot cite a higher authority.

# CONTENTS.

## VOL. III.

### HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

	Page
OUTLINES of the History of the World--The Ninth Century to the Fifteenth inclusive. (Written in Mr. Gibbon's early handwriting between 1758 and 1763.)	1
Mémoire sur la Monarchie des Mèdes, pour servir de Supplément aux Dissertations de MM. Freret et de Bougainville. (In Mr. Gibbon's early handwriting between 1758 and 1763)	56
Les Principales Epoques de l'Histoire de la Grèce et de l'Egypte, suivant Sir Isaac Newton, comparées avec les Chronologies ordinaires, et Remarques critiques sur l'Ouvrage de Newton. Jan. 13, 1758	150
Extrait de trois Mémoires de M. L'Abbé de la Bletterie sur la Succession de l'Empire Romain et d'un sur le Prænom d'Auguste. Fev. 20, 1758	169
Remarques Critiques sur le Nombre des Habitans dans la Cité des Sybarites. Date uncertain; early writing.	178
Gouvernement Féodal, surtout en France. Date uncertain, but in Mr. Gibbon's early writing between 1758 and 1763	183
Relation des Noces de Charles Duc de Bourgogne avec la Princesse Marguerite, Sœur d'Edouard IV. Roi d'Angleterre. Date uncertain	202
Critical Researches concerning the Title of Charles the Eighth to the Crown of Naples. Written 1761	206
An Account of a Letter addressed to Cocchi by Chevalier L. G. Aretino respecting some Transactions in the Cisalpine Gallic War, A. U. C. 529. Written 1764	222

	Page
An Examination of Mallet's Introduction to the History of Denmark. July 14th, 1764.	231
Introduction à l'Histoire générale de la République des Suisses. Written 1767	239
Remarques touchant les Doutes Historiques sur la Vie et le Règne du Roi Richard III. Par M. Horace Walpole. Written 1768	331
Antiquities of the House of Brunswick.—Written 1790. Introductory Letter to M. Langer	353
<i>Section I.</i> —The Italian Descent	359
<i>Section II.</i> —The German Reign	393
<i>Section III.</i> —The British Succession of the House of Brunswick	423
<i>Section IV.</i> —Additional to the above Sections	478
An Address recommending Mr. John Pinkerton as a Person well qualified for conducting the Publication of the "Scriptores Rerum Anglicarum," our Latin Memorials of the Middle Ages. Written 1793	559
Appendix to an Address explanatory, &c. by Mr. Pinkerton	578

## APPENDIX

TO

AN ADDRESS, &c.

---

### N° I.

IN the Advertisement to the first edition of Mr. Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, it is observed, that the Address, which recommends the publication of our Latin memorials of the middle ages, the *Scriptores Rerum Anglicarum*, in a manner worthy of the subject and of the country, was interrupted by death. It appearing to me to be highly desirable that interesting design should be promoted, I took the liberty of applying to Mr. Pinkerton for an explanation of the plan arranged by him with Mr. Gibbon: he has favoured me with the following Letter and Extract.

*London, 24th October, 1814.*

MY LORD,

IN compliance with your desire, I send the papers necessary to illustrate Mr. Gibbon's "Address," on the publication of our ancient national

national historians; consisting of my Address, which was to have accompanied his, and of some of the Letters in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1788, which he said contributed to engage his attention to the subject. Your lordship will perceive that, in his letter to me, he rather objected to the appearance of his name, as he was only to lend his advice, and to write a General Introduction; which would have been a master-piece of historical criticism, a Corinthian capital to this national column, consecrated to the memory of our ancestors. But our plan was chiefly arranged in conversations; and he afterwards consented that his name should appear as conjunct editor. He seemed to regard this collection as a favourite pursuit; and said he still hoped for twenty years of existence, so that he might live to see its completion. How vain the views and hopes of man! For he died, alas! on the very day that our joint Prospectus was to have appeared.

*Spirantesque crocos, et in urna perpetuum ver!*

The transcendent merit of Mr. Gibbon was, that his mind always rose superior to his vast erudition, which often oppresses the mental energies, but invigorated his. The stomach was so strong, that all food became salutary. In the works of Hume or Robertson, we see that they had read what was necessary for their subject; but in those of Gibbon, we are surprised with lights from every department of universal literature.

No man of extensive learning, or genuine taste,

will object to the pomp and magnificence of Gibbon's historical diction. The more a reader is conversant in the diversified styles of the Greek and Roman classics, the less will he be disposed to blame a manner majestic as its subject. The grandeur of the Roman empire, in which modern kingdoms were but provinces, required a correspondent elevation of thought and language, which might be justly objectionable, if employed on a more confined topic, on the history even of the chief among European sovereignties.

That Gibbon excels in the epistolary style is allowed by all. The letters of Pope are the affected themes of a school-boy; and those of his fair antagonist, Lady M. W. Montague, are more indebted to the topics than the language: in rapid description, brilliant thought, sudden flashes of wit, effusions of the heart, intuition of human life, condensed views of characters and manners, she can never be compared with Madame de Sevigné. Our epistolary eminence is shared among a triumvirate, Gray, Gibbon, and Cowper: the last being preferred by many; though his style be more feeble and relaxed, and his topics more confined, both by his personal and chorographic situation. He had, however, an excellent heart, which gives an ineffable charm to any composition.

Your lordship will pardon this little tribute to the memory of our eminent friend. His last great plan would not have expired with him, if a war of twenty-one years had not engaged the whole attention of those distinguished characters, who could

could alone promote such an expensive design. At present, it is hoped, it might be resumed with some prospect of success; and, among our monuments of triumph, this literary temple might be erected to the ancient glory of our country. *Esto perpetua!*

I have the honour to be, with every sentiment of respect and esteem,

Your lordship's

Most faithful servant,

J. PINKERTON,

*Extract from an Address to the Eminent, the Learned, and the Lovers of the early Literature and History of England; concerning an intended Publication to be intituled "Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores;" or a Collection of the Original Historians of England, chronologically arranged; collated with the Manuscripts, illustrated with Notes, Chronological Tables, Maps, Complete Indexes, &c.—By JOHN PINKERTON, 1792.*

THE GERMANS, ever to be applauded as the inventors of what is most useful in arts and sciences, instituted, it is believed, the first memorable example of assembling national historians; but, as is usual in first attempts, only in a small number.

In 1566, Schardius published at Frankfort four of the ancient German writers, collected into one volume; and in 1574 the work was enlarged to three volumes. Pistorius began his collection in 1583, but the third volume was not published till 1607. Reuber's curious assemblage appeared in 1584; that of Urstisius in 1585; of Freher in 1600; of Goldast in 1606.

ITALY being divided into numerous small states, no general collection of the writers of that country deserving notice appeared, till, in the present century, Muratori's great design was executed with singular rapidity. Some of the Spanish historians were printed at Frankfort, the great literary mart of Europe



Europe in 1579, published from the library of Mr. Bell, an Englishman: but Schott's collection, commenced in 1603, is superior.

Though SPAIN has begun to publish her contemporary chronicles from the fourteenth century, yet she still neglects an accurate republication of her earlier writers: as, for instance, the Chronicles of the four Bishops, in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, published by Sandoval, at Pampeluna, in 1615—1634; not to mention the history of Dulcidius, written about 883, and committed to the press by Pellizer, at Barcelona, 1663.

But next to Germany, FRANCE must be regarded as claiming precedence in this department of literature. The collection of Pithou, in 1588, was confined; that of Du Chesne, in 1636—1641, was ample; and had not his death occasioned the failure of the plan, it would have been nearly complete. The grand collection by Bouquet, *Historiens de France*, which extends to twelve or thirteen volumes in folio, was begun in 1738; and, though objectionable in some parts of the plan, is a model of accuracy and typography.

Having thus briefly considered the progress of this study in the other chief countries of Europe,\* let us proceed to watch its dawn in ENGLAND. Of *Beda* there are several early editions in foreign countries:† and to *Polydore Virgil* we are indebted

\* The *Historians of BRUNSWICK*, collected by the celebrated and universal Leibnitz, and those of Denmark by Langebek, deserve especial praise.

† Argent. 1500. 1514. Hagen. 1506.

ed for the first edition of *Gildas*, London, 1526, 12mo. But after this no edition of any early historian is recollected till 1571, when the able work of *Mathew Paris* issued from the London press, soon followed by *Mathew of Westminster*; and in 1574 by *Walsingham* and *Asserius*.

In 1587, the earliest collection of English historians appeared at Heidelberg, or, as some of the title-pages bear, at Lyons. The writers contained in it are *Geofrey*, *Gildas*, *Beda*, *William of Newburgh*, and an abstract of *Froissart*.

In 1592 Howard published *Florence of Worcester*.

At length *Sir Henry Saville*, in 1596, gave his valuable collection; the London edition of which is inaccurately printed, but far from being so faulty as that of Frankfort, 1601, which Spelman justly execrates; nor is Camden's Collection, Frankfort, 1602, much superior in the important typography of proper names.

During the seventeenth century many valuable editions appeared. Particular commemoration is due to *Wheloc's* first publication of a Saxon Chronicle, at the end of his *Beda*, 1643; and to the excellent collections of *Twysden* and *Gale*, the latter in particular deserving eminent praise among our learned editors of early history.

Nor has this interesting study relaxed its efforts till within these fifty years, down to which period fresh treasures have gradually accumulated. Among the editors *Hearne* deserves especial notice. Endued he was with singular industry; but his pre-  
faces,

faces, and articles of subsidiary compilation, violated the dignity of the useful works which he published. The insignificance, the indiscrimina- tion of his antiquarian pursuits, justly excited the ridicule of contemporary wits: and, by a sin- gular fatality, the editor is mentioned with neglect or contempt, while the editions, though loaded with extraneous matter, are allowed to possess every praise of exactness and utility.

It is almost unnecessary to remind the reader, that most of the valuable works, above mentioned, are now arrived at an exorbitant price; which, in a complete collection, far exceeds that proposed for this chronological and uniform compilation.

The defects of preceding editions of our histo- rians are too well known to men of letters. In the publications of Saville and Twysden, and not rarely even in that of Gale and Fulman, the names of persons and places are so mangled, as hardly to be intelligible even to the skilful. The various read- ings which, when important, should have been annotated, rarely appear; and indeed few MSS., and those sometimes not the best, have been con- sulted. Amid similar instances of neglect shall be selected one specimen. The *Saxon Chronicle* (im- properly so called, for there are many Saxon Chro- nicles) is perhaps the most important of all our historical monuments, as being the only civil history of England preceding the year 1100; not to men- tion that no nation can boast of so valuable a remain of ancient language. Yet in the publica- tion of this invaluable piece the grossest inattention appears.

appears. *Gibson* only used the MSS. at Oxford, where he resided; and has omitted to consult the two best, in the Cotton Library, Tib. B. i. and Tib. B. iv. upon collating which near fifty pages were recovered, unknown to him, though amounting to more than a fifth part of his publication.

This neglect of our early historians is the more unpardonable, as their merits equal, if they do not exceed, those of any other modern country in Europe. And it will be difficult to name rivals to William of Malmesbury, Simeon of Durham, the Abbot of Peterburgh, Walsingham; far less to the ample and authentic Hoveden, and the undaunted truth of Mathew Paris.

It would be prolix and unnecessary to give more enlarged details concerning the plan of the new publication: but a brief view shall now be submitted to those patrons of our literature, by whose encouragement alone so large and expensive a design can proceed.

The first volume, as containing all the writers preceding the Conquest, may be regarded as complete in itself. The plan of Bouquet will not be followed, in respect to the extracting so much from each author as belongs to a reign, or a century; but every author will be given at once, with the additions made to his work, if any such occur. In this part of the plan, Bouquet's edition, though perhaps more advantageous to the modern compiler of history, presents many embarrassments to the reader, or consulter, of ancient historians; and  
each

each production appears in such a state of mutilation, as not only to give additional labour, but some distrust that there may be a defect.

In the compilation of a work intended to be complete in itself, and to present to the reader an universal body of ancient English history, it has appeared indispensable, and is consonant to the opinion of the best judges, that those parts of the Greek and Roman writers, which relate to this island, should be extracted, as has been done with regard to Gaul in the edition of the French historians. But even this part will not be deficient in new advantages. The extracts from Cæsar shall be collated with the *Editio Princeps*, and others, the best editions: nor shall a similar care be wanting in regard to Strabo, Tacitus, Herodian, the Panegyrists, Ammianus Marcellinus, &c.

Of Ptolemy's Geography, the original of which was published from a bad MS. by Erasmus, valuable variations have been printed by Montfaucon in his *Bibliotheca Coisleniana*: and the third volume of the minor Greek geographers presents various readings of Guido of Ravenna; all of which, and in short all the latest discoveries concerning the extracts used, shall be carefully given.

To the extracts from the Greek and Roman writers succeed Gildas, Nennius, Beda, with the chronicle at the end, collated with that in the Heidelberg edition; some passages of Alcuin, Eddius, Fredegod, Asserius: extracts from ancient lives of Saints, the lives of Offa, Edward the Confessor, Emma. These are to be followed by two

of

of the largest Saxon Chronicles, translated by skilful hands, and collated with all the others; with *fac similia* of the autographic Chronicle begun in 891, and continued by divers hands till 924, and after to 1075. This invaluable monument is preserved in Bennet College, Cambridge, whence it was published by Wheloe, but in a careless manner. Extracts from the Icelandic authors, but only in the Latin translations, shall next be given, with any other passages, though rare, to be found in extraneous writers concerning Britain during this period. Nor shall the Saxon laws be neglected, nor such genuine charters and coins as illustrate history.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the original historians of England are numerous and intelligent; and many of them eminent in style and ability. The fourteenth century rather declines; but after Walsingham, the last of our early Latin writers, deserving the name even of an annalist, the series closes almost in darkness, just before the dawn of the revival of letters. Hence, of the domestic transactions of the fifteenth century, during the reigns of Henry VI. Edward IV. Richard III. and a part of that of Henry VII. or from 1422 to 1500, we have but little and unsatisfactory evidence. The French contemporary writers supply a great part of the chasm. Fabian, and the other early chroniclers of the sixteenth century, must likewise be extracted; but any MS. annals of those reigns are of singular value, and every care shall be exerted to procure them, and print them in the manner that Godefroy has published

lished the French historians during this, the fifteenth, century.

At the year 1500 the compilation will finally close, there being no occasion to throw further light on centuries completely luminous.

The manuscripts and editions shall all be carefully collated, and any variations of consequence annotated at the bottom of the page. Numerous chronicles and historic articles still remaining in MS. shall be inserted in their proper places, and no research shall be spared in libraries, foreign and domestic, to recover any valuable documents.

As the work is national, and can interest only a few curious foreigners, to whom the English language is known, and as many matters both important and minute, can be far more clearly conveyed to the English reader in his own speech, than in the Latin, the editor has been advised to give the prefaces, chronological tables, and illustrations, in English; but the Latin shall be preferred, if more agreeable to the favourers of the publication.\*

To the first volume will be prefixed a general review of the early English historians; and a preface to each volume will present a literary notice of the authors contained in it, their lives, periods, works; editions and manuscripts consulted. A large chronological table of all the events will be prefixed to each volume: and in addition to the indexes, on the plan of Bouquet's, and which, as

\* Mr. Gibbon insisted on the English.

in a book of consultation, shall be very ample, one will be added of manners and customs.

The names of Du Chesne, Leibnitz, Muratori, Bouquet, Langebek, editors of vast works of this nature, sufficiently indicate that the united toils of a society are so far from essential to a publication of early historians, that, on the contrary, scarce one can be named produced by a literary association. The want of unanimity, the delays incident to democracies of all kinds, the power of accident, more extensive when spread over a wide surface, present obstacles to the labours of many, which are unknown to the industry of one. Yet assistance will be called in when necessary or expedient, and the advice of the best judges will be requested and venerated.

---



N<sup>o</sup> II.

---

LETTERS

ON THE

CULTIVATION OF OUR NATIONAL HISTORY,

*Extracted from the Gentleman's Magazine, 1788.*

•• Some of these letters are omitted as merely introductory, or as relative to Welch, Scottish, and Irish history. The two last present a proposal for the foundation of an Historical Society. The following may be considered as having chiefly engaged Mr. Gibbon's attention.

LETTER 'II.

If our National History be not neglected, these letters would be absurd; and it is therefore proper, in the first place, to shew that it is neglected, and to a degree capable of exciting surprise and regret in every mind at all interested in the glory of the nation.

To evince this neglect, it is proper to turn our eyes upon foreign countries. Were the neglect general, there would be no occasion to complain; but this is so far from being the case, that Britain, a country from its wealth, free government, and superior abilities of its natives, entitled to take the lead of most countries, is here about a century behind all; nay, yields to Russia, a country where literature was unknown till the present century!

That

That this is no bold assertion, will appear from a slight deduction from what has been done, and is doing, for their history, by some other countries; for to dwell upon all, would occupy more room than these letters will admit.

Let us begin with France, our great rival in sciences, arts, and arms:—but, alas! in this all rivalry ceases. Next to the glory of national arms, is that of national history; without which the greatest actions are as if they had never been. Britain, which ought to have led the example, is so far behind France in the cultivation of her history, that the utmost exertion will hardly compensate for the inglorious remission. In poetry, philosophy moral and natural, mathematics, divinity, medicine, law, the belles lettres, and the arts, Britain is, it is believed, superior to France. But so fatal is the term *History* to this island, that we have no Natural History anywise comparable with Buffon's. Our Gibbons and Robertsons perhaps exceed any modern French historians, though no Frenchman will allow this. But historiography is foreign to my subject, which concerns the *foundations* of historiography, the publication and illustration of the original writers and documents.

One would have imagined that, upon the invention of printing, the first care, in every nation, would have been to publish their historical documents. For the very nature of history demanded this attention; inasmuch as every other science can recover its materials, when lost, except history alone. If poetry perish, as good may again appear:

pear: if natural or moral philosophy, mathematics, divinity, medicine, the belles lettres, the arts, &c. were lost, they may be recovered, nay exceeded, as nature and man remain the same. BUT IF ONE HISTORICAL FACT PERISH, IT IS LOST FOR EVER. Yet this irrefragable consideration was, as usual, forced to yield to the fashionable writing of the day: and near a century elapsed, after the invention of printing, before any attention was paid to the publication of the original historians of modern nations. France distinguished herself among the first; and Du Chesne's *Bibliothèque Historique de la France*, published in 1619, contains a list of published historians, which England cannot exceed at present. Since that time France has been constantly proceeding in that noble pursuit; and hardly a learned man of France can be mentioned, who did not contribute somewhat to illustrate the ancient history of his own country, while our literati were lost in the antiquities of Greece, Rome, India, China; and, in short, of every country but their own.—But, not to dwell on this, it is sufficient to observe, that in the year 1738, half a century ago, that magnificent collection of all the old French historians was begun, of which twelve or thirteen large volumes in folio have now appeared; and, compared to which, all our historic labours, put together, appear as nothing. Every volume contains original writers and documents, generally for one century; and the elegance, accuracy, and completeness of the work, exceed all praise. It must also be added, that our polite

scholars and men of genius, our Lowths, Wartons, Joneses, Gibbons, Jortins, Warburtons, &c. never think our history worthy notice; whereas in France, Du Bos and Montesquieu, to name no more, have deeply examined the early history of their country.

To avoid prolixity, let us pass the great labours of Leibnitz, &c. in German history; of Muratori, &c. in Italian; and let us turn our eyes upon kingdoms which in other matters of science we infinitely exceed. Yes, let us shew that Denmark, a remote and unwealthy state, and Russia, whose sciences are of yesterday, excel Britain in attention to national history! Denmark, in fact, rivals France, by the elegant edition of her ancient historians, published by Langebek and now going on. Why mention the Society appointed by the King to publish all the Icelandic monuments of Danish history? Why mention the expenses of the Princes of the Blood in Denmark upon such publications, and institute odious comparisons? For who does not know, that the whole study of the Danish nobility, gentry, and literati, is bent upon their history? And surely no stronger proof of a solid and manly mind, and of true patriotism, can be given, than this pursuit.

If we pass to Russia, we shall find the present Empress the patroness of history, as of other sciences. Let the works of Muller, the publications of Nestor's Chronicle, and that of Sylvester in 1767, under the title of *Letopis Nestorova*, Strit-ter's *Memoria Populorum*, &c. and other works,  
speak

speak the present attention of Russia to her history.

And what is Britain doing? Nothing.—Her published historians are lost in slovenly-printed editions; and many remain unpublished. Bold assertions! But where are the proofs? The proofs are to be found in every bookseller's shop; and in the catalogues of the Bodleian, Harleian, Cottonian, and other libraries. Yet, after a prefatory remark or two, one instance shall be given, which will of itself prove, that our history is neglected to a degree exceeding all belief.

Ever since the time of Thomas Hearne, of black-letter memory, *carbone notandus*, the publication of our old historic writers has been discontinued. The names of Saville, Camden, Selden, Gale, are most respectable in this line; but such is the effect of weakness, that it dishonours all it touches; and surely a weaker man than Tom Hearne never existed, as his prefaces, so called, lamentably shew.

Pox on't, quoth Time to Thomas Hearne,  
Whatever I forget you learn.

Instead of manly erudition, thought, and elegance, such as became a publisher of important works, his prefaces shew the most trifling and abject pursuits of antiquarian baubles. We are forced to despise the man to whose labours we are obliged: and it is suspected that the notorious character of Hearne has not a little contributed to the contempt into which our history has lately fallen, for great events often spring from small causes. This remark was

thought necessary here, as those very publications of Hearne, which might be urged as a proof that our history is not neglected, on the contrary afford a lamentable proof that it is, and has long been. For in no other country would he have been forced to publish a few copies, by an extravagant subscription, of books important to national history, and of course interesting to all. Old plays, and dead pamphlets, are greedily fed on, perhaps in other countries as well as this; for it is not to be conceived that literary disease, and mental sickness, are confined to Britain: in other countries virtuosi and collectors of toys also abound. Yet it seems certain, that the curse foretold by Dr. Browne, in his *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, has come to pass; that we are not vicious, but insignificant; that we are incapable of that exertion in which either vice or virtue consists; and that our taste has, as he foretold, become trifling even to childishness; and so weakened, as to be incapable of wholesome gratification. Hence our greediness for the silliest literary baubles; and our neglect of the manly and austere provinces of literature. Such, indeed, are the effects of great wealth and luxury in all countries, enervating both body and mind. Herodotus finely calls poverty, "the nurse of Greece;" and the effects of wealth on Roman literature may be seen in the dialogue on the causes of the decline of eloquence, ascribed to Tacitus, though most probably by Quintilian.

Let us now proceed to the instance formerly promised,

promised, to shew at once that our history is neglected to a surprising degree. It is well known that Italy, France, and Germany, are the only countries in Europe which exceed England in the series of early historians. From Gregory of Tours, who wrote A. D. 591, France has historians of every century. England, on the contrary, has no historian after Beda, who wrote in 731, till the year 1100. For Ethelwerd certainly did not write till that time; and his work is a mere translation of the Saxon Chronicle: and Asser gives only the life of Alfred. I say, no English historians are found from 731 till 1100, EXCEPT the Saxon Chronicle. Nay, Beda, who alone precedes, is merely an ecclesiastical historian, as his title, *Historia Ecclesiastica Anglorum*, and his whole work, declare. So that the Saxon Chronicle is, in fact, the ONLY civil history of England preceding the year 1100: and without it we should know nothing of English history for SEVEN centuries. The English historians, who begin to be numerous after the year 1100, borrow all their intelligence of preceding times from it, as Gibson shews; who also deservedly remarks, that no nation can boast of so valuable a monument of their ancient language.

This noble monument is therefore chosen as an instance of the shameful neglect shewn in publishing our ancient historians. It was natural to expect, that our best literati should exert themselves in translating and collating this work. But how has it been done?—Gibson confesses, in his preface, that he was not much versed in the Saxon

language. This may be modesty; but—if true! Supposing him qualified, how has he executed his work? He only used five manuscripts.

1. The Laudian, a fine one upon vellum.
2. The one he oddly calls *Cantuariensis*, also formerly belonging to Laud; on paper, and very bad in all respects.
3. One in Bennet college, Cambridge.
4. One in the Cotton library.

These two were transcripts of one another; and Gibson used them not, but tells us, he copied Wheloc, who, at the end of his Saxon Beda, published a *Chronologia Saxonica* from these imperfect MSS.

5. Another in the Cotton library, also never seen by Gibson, but only various readings which Junius had taken from it.

Thus we see, that Gibson, living at Oxford, publishes the most valuable monument of our history from two MSS. left by Archbishop Laud to that university; and is too lazy to go to Cambridge or London to collate MSS. but quotes them at second-hand! So much appears from the face of his book, from his own preface! But this is nothing.

There are other MSS. of the Saxon Chronicle, never seen by Gibson, though most easily accessible: In the Cotton library there are four: Tib. B. I.—Tib. B. IV.—Tib. A. VI.—Dom. A. VIII. The two last, and worst, are those he mentions. The two first he never heard of, as appears from his edition. Upon collating these two with Gibson,



son, and extracting the additions they have, they were found to amount to FIFTY pages; and his book has only 244! Both were written in the eleventh century; and superior to the Laudian in antiquity. It need not be mentioned, that these fifty pages contain at least as many facts in our ancient history, either unknown, or narrated with new circumstances.

Moreover, in Corpus Christi or Bennet college at Cambridge, is the AUTOGRAPH of the Saxon Chronicle, from which all the rest are taken; begun in 891, by King Alfred's orders, as would seem, and written up to that year by one hand; continued by divers to 924; and after to 1075. See Wanley's Catalogue, (Hickes's Thesaurus.) I know not if this be the one in Bennet college published by Wheloc. But certain it is, that this invaluable autograph of the chief monument of our history should be published *literatim*, by itself, without any additions from other copies; and illustrated with *fac-similia* of every various hand-writing in it.

It need hardly be mentioned, that a precious part of the Saxon Chronicle is published in Lye's Saxon Dictionary, from Mr. Astle's library, which much illustrates the history of the eleventh century. Instead of Saxon Chronicle, we should indeed say Chronicles; for the copies are written in different places, and vary in dates and events. The two fullest copies, which vary most, should be published apart; and the differences of the others thrown into the notes.

PHILISTOR.

## LETTER III.

In my last it was shewn that our history is neglected, from the carelessness and inaccuracy discovered in the publication of one of its most important monuments. It shall not be asserted, that our other ancient historians are published with equal inattention, and want of literary skill. But certain it is, that all of them should be collated afresh with the MSS: several of which have come to light, and passed into public libraries, since the publications were made. The spirit of philosophy and criticism was hardly known in antiquities till the present century; and the vast superiority of the recent publications of ancient monuments over the former is universally felt in all foreign countries.

That many important remains of our history still lurk in MS. is well known, and evinced from the catalogues of great libraries. Some may also be in private hands. That every care should be exerted to recover and print such pieces, needs not be insisted on. But there is another matter which claims consideration, as a convincing proof that our history is neglected; and, after stating this, it may be presumed that the reader will be convinced that these letters are not groundless; and, of course, this preliminary being adjusted, the other parts of the plan may be considered in their order. This other proof that our history is neglected, consists in the amazing deficiency of dissertations  
by

by our literati, upon curious or intricate points of ancient English history.

In most foreign countries, the works of this sort, written by the most eminent writers, are very numerous. If the reader will look into the Historical Libraries, published for the several countries, he will be struck with astonishment to see that English works of this kind, compared with those of France, Germany, Italy, nay, the Northern kingdoms, are in number about as one to one hundred. Let him only take up the large Historical Catalogue, in four volumes, at the end of Lenglet Du Fresnoy's *Méthode pour étudier l'Histoire*, ed. 1772, 15 vols. 12mo, he will find all the works published on English history thrown into a few pages; while those on French, German, Italian, almost fill volumes. It is believed, that single works of Selden, Verstegan, Sheringham, and Langhorne, form almost the sum total of books expressly written to illustrate our history: and all of them published before criticism was introduced into antiquities, and before we had got so far up the hill of science as to discover much around us. Selden was indeed a man whose erudition, independently of his other great merits, does high honour to his country. But he was quite immersed in Oriental learning; and his works on English antiquities are by far his worst, and abound with passages which cannot stand against sound criticism. The antiquities of the middle ages were but beginning to be studied in Selden's time. No Du Cange nor Muratori had appeared. The diplomatic science, in particular, was unknown: and  
Dugdale,

Dugdale, another very eminent antiquary, has, in his *Monasticon Anglicanum*, published charters, which Germon, *De Re diplomatica*, has evinced to be forgeries, from marks so gross as to need no investigation.

Unfortunately, we have begun quite at the wrong end of our history. We abound in general histories; but want the proper authorities and proofs, the foundations upon which they should stand. The object is, first to settle the grounds of our history; and, after that, build the fabric who will. A hundred points of the greatest consequence remain to be treated in detached dissertations, to be examined to the bottom by severe criticism, and all the authorities produced. Suppose, as parallel instances to similar dissertations of foreign writers, we had disquisitions, On the Commerce of the Phenicians and Greeks in Britain: Whether any British Nation paid Tribute to the Romans before the time of Claudius: On the ancient Languages in Britain: On the Use of the Latin Tongue in Britain; and how it comes to pass that Britain did not furnish one Latin Writer in the Roman Times, while Gaul and Spain produced many: If Severus built any Wall in Britain: What was the real Cause of the Arrival of the Iutes in Kent, Chance or Invitation: The Extent and History of each Heptarchic Kingdom: The Form of Saxon Government: Of Regal Power among the Saxons: Of the Power of the People: The Private Life of the Saxons: From what Year, and what Time of the Year, our old Historians reckon

reckon the Christian Era, &c. &c. &c. These instances are only given as they flow from the pen; and the reader may easily suggest to himself other subjects more important and curious. It shall only be added, that such pieces would, in the hands of dull and illiterate writers, become insipid, as all other subjects would; but that, in foreign countries, such dissertations not only appear, but are produced by writers of the greatest learning, literary experience, and critical sagacity; often with every charm of elegant and vivacious language. The latter qualities are, indeed, more pleasing than necessary in treating subjects of instruction; and in which truth becomes suspicious if arrayed in the gorgeous dress of eloquence, so often worn by falsehood. Let this point be closed with enumerating a very few names of foreigners distinguished by the illustration of their national history, that we may consider what we have to oppose to them. The Germans boast of Cluverius, Conringius, Schard, Reineccius, Freher, Lindembrog, Schilter, Heinack, Leibnitz, Mascou, Schœpflin, &c. The French of Vignier, Pasquier, Du Chesne, Valois, Fauchet, Mezeray, La Carry, Masson, Hottoman, Pithou, Petau, Baluze, le Duc d'Espernon, Du Cange, Montesquieu, Du Bos, Le Gendre, Labbé, &c. Italy has so numerous names for each petty state, that the difficulty lies in the choice; but let Sigonius and Muratori be selected, names equal to a thousand.

Topography may be considered as an historical  
de-

department, which has thriven much in Britain of late, chiefly by the fostering cares of the author of the *British Topography*, and the editor of the *Bibliotheca Topographica*. It gives great pleasure to see that, in this branch at least, we are perhaps equal to other nations. But the warmest admirers of topography will not put it on a par with the general history, or even geography, of a whole kingdom. Local history, however, may contribute materials for general history; though, in the run of our topographers, the historical part be seldom profoundly treated. It is also remarkable, that while Germany has Cluverius and Cellarius; and France her Sansons, De l'Isles, and D'Anvilles; Britain cannot boast of any geographer who has obtained the smallest fame. In chronology, Usher and Simson yield to none.

As it is believed that the reader will allow, from the two grand considerations already stated, to wit, deficiency in the publication of our historical monuments, and deficiency in modern works illustrative of our ancient history, that these letters are not unfounded; but that our national history is really neglected; this preliminary shall be considered as allowed; and other parts of the little plan, laid down in the first letter, shall be entered upon.

PHILISTOR.

---

LET-

## LETTER IV.

IN considering the next part of our plan, namely, wherein the neglect of our history chiefly lies, it will be proper to point out, *first*, the period of our history which has been least illustrated; and, *secondly*, the particular provinces of historical research, which have been least cultivated among us.

The period of our history which has been least illustrated, strikes at once, as being that preceding the Norman conquest. It is, indeed, a mortifying reflection, that Englishmen should think the history of their own ancestors of no moment, in comparison with that of the Norman princes and their followers, who settled in this country; should seem to think England of no account till it became a prey to Norman ravagers! Perhaps it may be said, that the want of materials for our history, preceding the Conquest, is a sufficient excuse for our neglect of that period. Certain it is, that these materials are not large, being almost confined to the Saxon Chronicles above-mentioned; while, after the Norman settlement, our numerous historians, chiefly of Norman race, or under Norman patronage, throw a blaze of light around them, which renders even minute parts of our history conspicuous. But the attachment of these writers to the Normans made them pass the more ancient history of England with an invidious parsimony, while they regale us with every incident of Norman times in full display. This partiality of our original writers has affected our antiquaries and his-

historiographers; who, instead of running counter, as they ought, to this disposition, have been drawn into its vortex. Yet it is certainly a matter of the easiest conception, and most palpable truth, that the most obscure period of our history was exactly that which required the most illustration. So that our antiquaries, who have confined what little researches they have made to the Norman and later periods of our history, have acted in diametrical opposition to their duty, both as patriots and as antiquaries.

Another reason for neglecting the earlier parts of our history is, the difficulty arising from the heptarchic division. It is certainly a matter of some difficulty to give a clear history of six or seven small kingdoms; but, as the Greek proverb bears, *all excellent things are difficult*, and the greater the difficulty, there is the more merit in good execution. All modern kingdoms present the same difficulty, in their early history, and generally to a far later period than England: but their antiquaries have only been excited, by this difficulty, to exert the greater accuracy and care. Our heptarchic history is not only totally neglected; but our writers think proper to apologise for their own indolence, by informing us that it is not worth writing. Mr. Hume, sensible of the great carelessness with which he had sketched this part of English history, quotes Milton, as saying, that the wars of the heptarchic states are not more important than those of crows and kites. But this is like many of Mr. Hume's quotations; for Milton,  
in



in that passage, speaks not of heptarchic wars, but of a paltry squabble between two noblemen of that time. Take his own words, p. 183, edit. 1671, 4to. of his history of England: "The same day Ethelmund at Kinneresford, passing over with the Worcestershire men, was met by Weolstan, another nobleman, with those of Wiltshire, between whom happened a great fray, wherein the Wiltshire men overcame, but both dukes were slain, no reason of their quarrel writ'n; such bickerings to recount, met oft'n in these our writers, what more worth is it than to chronicle the wars of kites, or crows, flocking and fighting in the air?" The fact is, that the smallest of the heptarchic kingdoms was superior in size and power to any one of the heroic kingdoms of Greece, whose history we read with so much attention; and the whole Grecian story, till the period of Alexander, is not in itself more important or interesting than our heptarchic. The genius of the authors makes all the difference; and this genius, it is hoped, will not always be wanting in our's. Those, who think history becomes important in proportion to the size of the country concerned, should confine themselves to study the Asiatic empires, and leave real history to those who know its nature. It is in minute history that we find that picture of human society which most interests the philosopher.

It is suspected that a third reason why the period preceding the Conquest, by far the most important of our history, is neglected, originates from the writings of an English philosopher—Lord Bolingbroke.

lingbroke. In his Letters on History, this writer considers the early history of any country as quite useless, and regards the modern part, beginning at the Emperor Charles V. as alone worth study. This superficial opinion, of a once fashionable author, had perhaps great weight with those who knew not that it is impossible to have any real knowledge of the modern history of any country without beginning the study at its fountains, in ancient events and manners. One might, as well think of building a house by beginning at the garrets. Nay more, the foundation is not only to be begun at the proper place; but, as every part of the superstructure ultimately rests upon the foundation, this radical part must be examined with far more care and attention than any of the rest. Mr. Hume began his history with the Stuarts, and so wrote backwards. The consequence is, that he has quite mistaken the most glaring features of our constitution, and carried the despotism of the Stuarts along with him through all our history. Nor can any problem in mathematics be more certain than that it is impossible either to write or read history properly by retrogression. The knowledge of the ancient part is not only necessary in itself, but necessary to understand the modern. To a philosopher, the ancient part is the most interesting, from the strong and uncommon views of human nature to be found in it. Nay, to a common reader, it must be the most interesting, from the greatness and singularity of its events. In early history

tory alone are found those great incidents, and total revolutions, which elevate and surprise. The modern history of Europe consists merely of wars which end in nothing, and in the filthy chicane of politics, so disgusting to every ingenuous mind. Since the eleventh century, the several kingdoms and states of Europe remain almost the same; and any radical revolutions which have happened might be comprised in a few pages. The period of great events begins at the fall of the Roman empire, and lasts till the eleventh century.

The History of England, excluding that of the Romans in Britain, falls into two periods; from the arrival of the Saxons to the Conquest; and from the Conquest till now. Each period contains about seven centuries. In Greek or Roman History, either period would occupy much about the same room. But the proportion in ours is, that the former part fills half a volume; the latter, seven volumes and a half! In Mezeray, the part of French history preceding the year 1066 fills two volumes and a half; that succeeding, four volumes and a half. This latter proportion is superior to ours; and we might at least allot two volumes out of eight for the period preceding the Conquest. As it is, every one may judge that the former period of our history must be miserably abridged indeed; and it is much to be wished that some able writer would give us an history of England preceding the Conquest, at due length. Materials he will find not wanting, if he brings industry to discover and to use them.

PHILISTOR.

## LETTER VIII.

Some other particular provinces of our history, which have been peculiarly neglected, remain to be briefly hinted at, before proceeding to another part of this subject, namely, the causes which may have contributed to the neglect of our national history, and which shall be entered upon in the next letter.

The chronology of our history may be regarded as a neglected department. Events, narrated by our ancient writers, are frequently put, with a variation of one, two, or more years. This often depends merely upon the different modes they followed in calculating the commencement of the year. Some began it in the month of March; and antedated events near a year: thus the year 1000 with them begins 25th March, 999. Others began the year in March, and yet retarded it three months; reckoning for example, the space of the year 1000, preceding 25th March, as belonging to the year 999. Others began the year 25th Dec. Others, at Easter, and varied its commencement as Easter varied. Some, who compute from 1st Jan. still reckon one or two more years from Christ's birth, than we do. Gervase of Canterbury, who lived in the thirteenth century, tells us in the Preface to his Chronicle: *Inter ipsos etiam chronica scriptores nonnulla dissentio est. Nam, cum omnium unica et precipua sit intentio, annos Domini, eorumque continentias, supputatione veraci enarrare, ipsos Domini annos, diversis modis, et terminis, numerant:*

rant: sicque in ecclesiam Dei multam mendaciorum confusionem inducunt. Quidam enim annos Domini incipiunt computare ab Annunciatione; alii a Nativitate; quidam a Circumcisione; quidam verò a Passione."

The industrious and exact authors of *L'Art de vérifier les Dates*, from which work the above remarks are borrowed, have done every thing to adjust and settle, even to month and day, the events of French history. But a large and laborious work on the chronology of ancient English history is much wanted.

Another neglected province is the geography of Britain and Ireland in the middle ages. The *Notitia Galliarum* of Valesius, or Valois, 3 vols. folio, may be proposed as an example for such a work. Hardly a village or castle can be found in ancient French historians, but its situation is adjusted and illustrated in that great work, published last century; while to this day we have only Somner's Glossary at the end of Twysden's *Decem Scriptores*, and Gibson's at the end of the Saxon Chronicle; productions equally meagre and erroneous. Instead of solid and elaborate works on a subject so radically necessary to the understanding of our history, it is visible to see many of our antiquaries dealing in etymology of names; a matter of all others the most puerile, uncertain, and uninteresting. Our old writers drew all names from the Latin; *Britannia*, from *Brutus*, &c.; and though their etymologies were little better than his, who derived *Sebeca* from *ae-neas*, because he killed himself, yet

yet they were fully as rational as the Hebrew and Phenician etymology of names introduced by Bochart; or the Celtic etymology now in fashion. Of the Celtic dialects we have no ancient remains; and to derive ancient names from a language in its modern state seems complete absurdity. Swift, who ironically gives etymologies of Greek and Latin names from the English, may be regarded as the prophet of this new frenzy.

The diplomatic line has also been neglected by our writers, though the works of Madox deserve high praise. In England, the number of ancient charters preserved is amazing; and perhaps no country in Europe can boast of equal treasures in this line. If only the most valuable and curious were published, they would fill many volumes in folio. Rymer's Collection of Historical Muniments does honour to the nation; and Prynne's compilation has its value. But a collection of those preceding the Conquest is still wanting; and special dissertations on their authenticity, &c. Of later times, many valuable and curious charters remain unpublished; which, though perhaps of little importance to our history, might, nevertheless, illustrate ancient laws and manners.

END OF VOL. III.