

a sarcasm at the superior ferocity of Christian intolerance, as contrasted with the milder persecutions under the Roman Empire.

"The worst of these sweeping statements is the tenacity with which they fix themselves in the memory. Truth is moderate and hesitating. Fiction strikes boldly, and the point of its lance is barbed.

"Cardinal Newman says that Protestant tradition is based on wholesale unscrupulous lying, and this story may be taken as an instance of it. In the history of the Reformation, however, the lying is not always on one side. There will always be unconscious lying where passion is strongly excited. But I do not think the truth is forwarded by the method now in fashion of setting one version against another, and taking as certain the worst parts of both. This is perhaps a worse travesty than either would be taken alone. Two negatives may make an affirmative, but I never heard that two falsehoods would make a truth.

"I have another complaint to make, though I can only allude to it. I mean of the light manner in which popular historians scatter epithets, and distribute censures, with no authority but their own fancy. Rival queens may be supposed to have been jealous of one another. Elizabeth and Mary Stuart were rival queens, therefore Elizabeth's treatment of Mary was caused by jealousy. Robertson says that when Charles V. retired to Spain after his abdication he was 'sensibly mortified' to find that less attention was paid to him than when he was Emperor. Perhaps less attention *was* paid to him, and Charles may have observed it; but how does Robertson know that he was mortified? Probably it amused him, or it may have been what he expected and desired. Eminent men and women

ought to be spared these gratuitous ink-spots.

"I might mention a thousand such instances, but I must hasten on. I have to say before I end how I, myself, think that history ought to be written.

"Shakespeare is the greatest of human dramatists, but nature is a dramatist still greater, and Shakespeare is so great because he is nearest to nature. He does not moralise upon his Macbeths, or Lears, or Richards, or Henries. He gives you no opinion of his own, but he gives you the men themselves to look at, to study, to reflect on, and (if you please) to form opinions about for yourself, though this is not always necessary. He draws no lessons out of what he lays before you. He does not invite *you* to draw lessons. The more completely you have mastered these plays, the less you will be able to say what they have actually taught you. You cannot draw out in words even the judgment you form upon the characters. Hamlet will be argued over to the end of time, and people will differ about him as they differ about persons whom they know. There is always something in the actions of men, and in the men themselves, which escapes analysis. They may strike us with awe, pity, admiration, fear, or hatred. They may amuse us or revolt us, but the feeling created even by an Iago cannot be summed up in compact phrases addressed to the understanding.

"Well, then—

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."

"The historian and the dramatist alike represent the actions of men. If the historian would represent truly he must represent as the dramatist does.

"If you are to have from him a real trustworthy picture, he must show you the figures that he is talking