

are only names, and nothing more. Now the writers of school histories have followed the greater historians in endeavouring to crowd as much as possible into their canvas; only, having a smaller canvas to work on, their persons and events are drawn on a much smaller scale, and have generally no human expression in their faces. With the fear of the examiner and the schoolmaster before their eyes, they have not the courage to omit the most insignificant person or the most niggling event. The result is a strain upon them as writers, and a greater strain upon the young students as readers.

Let me give you an example, taken from a History in daily use in many schools:—

“At the same time the Protestants of Enniskillen routed the Irish army at *Newtown Butler*. Early in August William III.’s general, Marshal the Duke of Schomberg, one of the Huguenot refugees from France, landed with 10,000 men in the North of Ireland, and took Carrickfergus. On June 14th, 1690, William landed at Carrickfergus with a powerful army of English, Dutch, and Germans, and, on July 1st, encountered and totally defeated James at the *Battle of the Boyne*, near Drogheda. On William’s side Schomberg and the heroic Walker, of Londonderry, were killed; James II. fled to France, to appear no more in any part of his former dominions. William III. then entered Dublin, took Wexford and Waterford, but was repulsed at Limerick, and returned to London in September. The Dutch general, Ginkell, drove James’s commander, Sarsfield, from Athlone in July, 1691; in the same month he defeated (at Aughrim, in Galway) the French general, St. Ruth, who was killed in the battle; he forced Sarsfield to surrender Limerick in October, 1691. The struggle for James II. in Ireland ended with

the *Pacification of Limerick*, by which treaty the Irish Roman Catholics were allowed to worship freely, and those who wished to leave the country were conveyed to France by the Government. An Irish brigade of about 12,000 men, with Sarsfield, entered Louis XIV.’s service, and fought fiercely against England in his cause. The terms of the treaty of Limerick were not carried out by the Protestant Government in Ireland, and new penal laws of a cruel character were enacted against the Irish Roman Catholics.”

Now, in this extract we have twenty-five facts stated in twenty-two lines. To any one who knows the history of Ireland at that time, the facts are all aglow with the reflection of courage, both active and passive, with loyalty, with noble heroism. But look how this “History” has managed to squeeze everything that is human out of the narrative. Marshal Schomberg is a mere name; the Rev. Obadiah Walker, who took upon his shoulders the help and the rule of starving thousands and fought a trained army with townsmen and mechanics, dwindles down to a name and an epithet; the terrible battle of Aughrim, in Galway, and the deeds of the general, St. Ruth, are petty items in a dry catalogue; and the hideous sufferings of the Irish Roman Catholics are passed over in nine words: “New penal laws of a cruel character were enacted.”

This kind of thing is just like a series of dissolving views: before the first picture has had time to impress itself on your memory, another and another appears, and the different sets of scenery and personages become inextricably mixed and jumbled up in your brain. Moreover, it leads us to this ridiculous and even farcical conclusion and result: that the age—the age of childhood and youth—which wants and needs interest in the highest degree, gets it least, and is