

As a general rule, there is but little satisfaction to be derived from controversial history. The dust and smoke of the battle prevent us from ascertaining who are the real victors. We are too ready to be carried away by eloquent statement, when we should alone be moved by certain fact. When religion has entered into the matter of the discussion, men's passions have become so heated that they can see nothing as it is. Evidence is twisted, and oftentimes destroyed; so that it may not be permitted to damage the character of a party. Exploded tales are again brought forward as though they were veritable truths. It is but rarely that we find a man who, laying aside passion and prejudice, sets himself honestly to the task of finding out the truth which is unpalatable to one party, while it is eagerly sought after by another. We fear that, though we must give the historian credit for good intentions, we cannot admit that he has altogether succeeded in the presentation of the Anglo-Irish question in the clear light of truth, and as little do we think has his critic arisen to that plain of vision where the lights of history are undimmed and undistorted. The historian, as an Englishman, tries to make the case of his country appear as fair as possible; the priest being the advocate of a cause tries not only to defend his client but to damage as much as possible the position of his antagonist. Yet from their opposing statements we can, at least in some important particulars, eliminate the truth.

We are not satisfied with the historian's reasons for the interference of the English in Irish affairs. If he had been able to shew, that when Henry first took Ireland under his protection, it was likely to become a formidable enemy, or that it was about to be seized upon by Spain, or some other power, to the detriment of England, we could have admitted the force of the reason. The fortunes of war may be the justification of the victors treatment, and policy may require a nation to anticipate an enemy in seizing the territory of a free but weak people. Self preservation is a law which justifies much, that without such plea is highly condemnable. It is not pretended that there was anything of this kind, which might be pleaded in justification of the English in their going to Ireland at first. There was no great enemy of England about to make a descent upon the shores of Ireland. The Danes had been defeated and driven off. Religion had not as yet become a bone of national contention. Henry went to Ireland to settle a quarrel between its rulers. It was as the