and boldly presents it to the British public, which is forthwith just as much shocked at it as he is.'⁴¹ These words are as true a description now as they were when they were written, of the average Exeter Hall disputant. But one hardly expected that Mr. Symonds—however masterful his prejudices—would sink to such a level. Surely it is not unreasonable to demand that so elegant a writer should make sure of his facts before he uses them to point the rhetoric which he dignifies with the name of history.

W. S. LILLY.

THE DEPOSITIONS RELATING TO THE IRISH MASSACRES OF 1641.

I AM obliged to Mr. Dunlop for his admission that I have 'successfully impugned' Mr. Gilbert's arguments that the above-mentioned depositions are 'wholly untrustworthy.' But I hope, as a matter of simple justice, I shall be allowed to say that Mr. Dunlop is wholly mistaken in supposing that I believe them to be the converse of this, i.e. what he calls 'almost perfectly trustworthy;' or that Mr. Froude and I are agreed in our opinions about them or about Irish history in general. My opinion about those documents is much nearer to that which, as far as I can judge, is held by Mr. Lecky, but at the same time by no means identical with his, and utterly opposed to Mr. Prendergast's, whose ability and powers of research are greatly clouded by his strong prejudices against the long parliament and Cromwell. Mr. Lecky told me, with characteristic fairness, when I was about to write my work, that he could pronounce no opinion on the depositions, as he had never examined them. I understood from Mr. Prendergast that he had merely glanced at them, and I think in his published works he follows Warner in his now sufficiently proved great error as to the so-called cancellings. Reid was the only historian who examined the manuscripts with the slightest care, and even he failed to perceive the true meaning of the crossed-out passages. But Mr. Lecky and Reid were not writing on 1641-49, their subject was wholly different, and I am sure that if they had been writing a special history of those years or of the Cromwellian settlement they would have carefully sifted and examined the manuscripts, and that no important point would have escaped them. When I undertook to write a short sketch of the history of Ireland in the seventeenth century, and to prepare for publication the historical records, depositions of 1641-49, letters and records of the high court of justice in 1650-54, which through want of opportunity, or leisure, on the part of Reid and Mr. Lecky, and other eminent historians, or through carelessness, prejudice, and a design to suppress facts unpleasant to political parties, on the part of less conscientious writers, were virtually unknown, I had no other object than to serve the interests of historical truth. Mr. Dunlop sets out by saying:

'Are we then to accept the simple statement of such men as Dr. Robert Maxwell, rector of Tinane, no matter how estimable he might otherwise (?) be, without making some and a very considerable deduction owing to his prejudices? What should we think of an ordinary Irishman's deposition if to-day an insurrection were to break out in Ireland

⁴¹ *The Present Position of Catholics*, p. 320.

on the part of the Orangemen, in which the nationalists suffered what the English colonists professed to have endured in 1641, provided it were made before a commission composed of nationalists and that the Orangemen were neither heard nor allowed to cross-examine the deponent? Surely we should consider such evidence well-nigh altogether worthless. And yet this is just what Mr. Froude and Miss Hickson decline to allow in the case of these so-called Irish massacres. They seem firmly convinced, and perhaps no arguments will shake their conviction, that those depositions are almost perfectly trustworthy. But I venture to assert that it is impossible to make any historical use of them without making very considerable deductions owing to the circumstances under which they were taken.¹

A few newspapers in their reviews of my book took the same wholly mistaken view of it which Mr. Dunlop has taken, but I did not think it worth while to correct them. Newspaper notices of books must often be very superficial, hasty, and largely influenced by party politics. When the mistake, however, is perpetuated in the pages of the *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW*, I cannot pass it over so lightly. It is amazing to me how Mr. Dunlop, if he has read my work, can have believed that I consider the depositions taken between 1641 and 1649 by the royal clerical commissioners 'almost perfectly trustworthy,' or that I 'decline to allow' (as does Mr. Froude) that 'considerable deductions' must be made for them 'owing to the circumstances under which they were taken.' What Mr. Froude's opinion may be I cannot say; the only suggestion he ever made to me when I was writing the work was that I might rely on Sir John Temple as a contemporary authority. This I refused to do, because on comparing Temple's versions of the depositions with the original manuscripts I found he had grossly garbled them, omitting and altering as suited his purpose. Mr. Froude made no further suggestions about the work, and never saw it, I believe, until it was in the press. At my request he kindly made considerable alterations in his preface, because as he first wrote it I feared it might tend to make the volumes appear as if written for a political purpose. But, so far as I am concerned, if Mr. Dunlop and his readers will only turn to the following passages in my work, which passages he seems never to have read, they will find that I have done exactly what he charges me with *not* having done.

At p. 88 of my second volume, in a note to the depositions of George Littlefield and Edward Saltinhal, taken before two of the royal commissioners in 1642, I said:

'I have given the foregoing as a specimen of one of those very unreliable depositions which the royal commissioners sometimes received. One-fifth of it may be reliable, the rest is evidently mere hearsay.'²

Again, at pp. 184, 195, 202, and 374, 375, I showed how untrustworthy were some of those depositions taken in 1641-49, and in words almost identical with those used by Mr. Dunlop, in the passage where he ventures to assert 'that deductions must be made owing to the circumstances under which they were taken,' and wrongly charges me with not allowing for those circumstances. I said:

¹ *ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW* for October, p. 741. ² *Irish Massacres*, vol. ii. p. 88.

'The circumstances under which those depositions were taken made the royal commissioners and the deponents more liable to err and to magnify the reports of the horrors going on around them.'³

Dr. Maxwell's deposition was one of those I had in mind when I said in my introduction to the whole :

'Such depositions must be accepted with great caution, and only after they have been carefully collated with others of a more trustworthy kind.'⁴

But because I reject, as I do, at least one-half of Dr. Maxwell's deposition as mere worthless hearsay, am I therefore to reject it all, when portions of it are shown to be perfectly truthful by trustworthy documents, and even by the admissions of Sir Phelim O'Neil himself? As, for instance, the horrible butchery of Dr. Maxwell's brother, when he lay ill of fever, and of the same-deponent's sister-in-law when she was *enceinte*, the details of which butchery as given by eye-witnesses amply justify Judge Lowther's words when sentencing Phelim O'Neil: 'What! was he born of woman who did this?' Mrs. Constable, a woman of good position, sworn before the royal commissioners in 1648, stated that her husband, mother-in-law, and brother had been murdered by Sir Phelim's soldiers and others, who stripped them of all their goods, and that three Irishmen bragged in her presence that they had drowned Mrs. Maxwell and her infant, and that she heard an Irish priest, O'Corr, rebuke them for the fiendish act, and tell them that 'the blood of that child cried for vengeance against them, and that corn or grass would not grow, nor anything prosper, where they did any of those bloody acts.'⁵ There is a good deal of second-hand evidence in Mrs. Constable's deposition, but almost all of it is proved true by other deponents, who saw for themselves the massacres which she had heard of. I reject the mere hearsay, but I accept facts as related by eye-witnesses. Irishmen and Irishwomen, as well as English, swore they had seen Mrs. Maxwell drowned by the Irish, and her husband dragged from his fever bed and hanged. Anna Sherring swore before Dean Jones and the Reverend H. Brereton in 1648, that while her husband, an English miner, and thirty-two others, some of them women and infants, were being massacred at the silver mines in Tipperary, a great thunderstorm occurred, which she believed was a token of God's anger. Am I on account of the poor woman's superstitious belief to reject her truthful evidence? It is confirmed in all essential particulars by two other witnesses in 1645, and by a narrative drawn up by Mr. Kearney, a Tipperary Roman catholic (brother to a Roman catholic dignitary), after the Restoration for the information of the marquis of Ormond, when the act of settlement was about to be passed. This narrative I gave from the Carte MSS. in the Bodleian.⁶ I might say more to the same purport, but I think enough has been said to show that Mr. Dunlop is not only mistaken in supposing I believe all those earlier depositions to be 'almost perfectly trustworthy,' but that he is equally mistaken in supposing that there is a 'special significance' (he evidently means a special spirit of bigotry and calumny) in the words

³ *Irish Massacres*, vol. i. p. 200.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 294.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 135.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 251.

'butcheries' and 'massacres' when applied by 'English protestants to Irish Roman catholics.' The judgment of the Irish priest O'Corr and of the Irish Roman catholic Mr. Kearney in 1641 and 1661 'specially signify' what all honest men, English or Irish, thought of the 'butcheries' and 'massacres' perpetrated by too many of the Irish in those terrible years. The words of another high-minded Roman catholic priest, the Rev. Dr. O'Connor, living in the last century, which I placed on the title-page of my book, are as emphatic on this point as are those of O'Corr and Kearney a century before.

As to Mr. Dunlop's second question, I admit that no man should be condemned on evidence given in his absence and without being allowed to bring counter-evidence and to employ counsel to defend him. But if the accused is a rebel out in open arms, I cannot understand how a royal commission, or a parliamentary commission, is to compel him to appear before it, and acknowledge its authority. If the imaginary rebel Orangemen accused before Mr. Dunlop's imaginary nationalist court or commission were out in war, and refused to appear before it on any terms, unless it were with revolvers and swords to kill the judges or commissioners, and dynamite the courthouse, surely no historian of the future could blame the poor nationalists. The notion of the clerical commissioners of 1641-9 haling into their courts or chambers all the wild tribes of O'Neils, O'Hanlons, O'Flaherties, O'Kennedys &c. who were ravaging the plantations in those years seems to me positively grotesque. One of the unfortunate commissioners was murdered on his way from Waterford to Dublin by the FitzGerald of Dromada, and his box of depositions was seized on, the rest moved about in peril of their lives. But here again Mr. Dunlop seems never to have read the most important of the state papers published for the first time in my work. Had he done so, he would have seen that as soon as the civil war ended in 1650 a high court of justice was at once established, and that these depositions were laid before it, not by any means to be accepted without careful investigation of their contents. Whatever may have been the designs or intentions of Dean Jones, however exaggerated were his narratives, they were not, any more than the depositions, entirely trusted by the court; on the contrary, all were sifted and tested with the greatest care; the deponents were re-examined in open court whenever they could be found. Precisely what Mr. Dunlop seems to say was *not* done in the case of the accused in those depositions, *was* done; the rebels, priests and laymen, noblemen, gentlemen, and poor men, were allowed to employ lawyers, Roman catholic Irishmen, to cross-examine witnesses, speak in their defence, and produce evidence on their behalf. Lord Muskerry's speech after sentence proves this if proof were wanting: 'I have,' he said, 'in the whole of these proceedings met with justice without any leaning to my prejudice.'⁷ He was acquitted of complicity in murder, but proved guilty of being in arms against the English parliament. The Rev. Edmund O'Reilly's trial, given at p. 219 of the same volume, and the case of Colonel MacSwiney at p. 205, show with what admirable fairness those trials were conducted. The high court also tried the protestants guilty of the murders of Irish Roman catholics at Island Magee and other places.⁸

⁷ *Irish Massacres*, vol. ii. p. 204.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 255.

Mr. Dunlop is of course fully entitled to hold his own opinion that the depositions from beginning to end are 'worthless,' and that 'Irish history can neither gain nor lose by their publication.' But considering that mainly in consequence of the facts sworn to in them (setting aside the mere hearsay) three-fourths of the whole soil of Ireland changed hands in 1650-4, many were hanged and many more were banished or transplanted, and considering that those documents were laid before the high courts of justice and the transplantation courts, and used (but less honestly) in the court of claims in 1680, I think few impartial and intelligent students of history will share in that opinion. Mr. Dennehy's notes to the sixth book of Clarendon's history, edited by Mr. T. Arnold, say that I have reduced my first estimate of the protestants massacred in those dreadful years from 27,000 to 25,000. This is not quite correct. What I did say was that not less than 25,000 could have been murdered, but that no accurate estimate of the numbers, as Reid had said, was possible. Sir William Petty, a born arithmetician, estimated the number at 37,000, but he seemed to me to make no allowance for the numbers (probably 8,000 or 10,000) who escaped to England between 1641 and 1649.

MARY HICKSON.

BATTLE OF EDGEHILL.

It is much to be desired that some competent military man, acquainted with the tactics and means of attack and defence which were in fashion at the time of the Thirty Years' war, would take in hand the campaigns of our English civil war, and give us accurate and rational accounts of what was done. Materials, so far as quantity is concerned, would not fail him; in quality indeed, owing to the loose style of narrative which was then thought sufficient, he would often find them unsatisfactory; but by carefully comparing and weighing different accounts, he would generally be able to arrive at something pretty near the truth.

The present writer has been lately attempting to make a study of the battle of Edgehill. Pending that full and searching inquiry by an expert which he hopes, in pursuance of what was said above, may before long be made, he would be glad of the opportunity to discuss in the columns of the Review two points: (I) the nature of the available sources of information respecting the battle; (II) the character of the difficulties and obscurities which the incompleteness or contradictoriness of the evidence opposes to the framing of a thoroughly consistent narrative.

I. In the following list of sources—which, it is believed, is nearly complete, though the indication of any others would be welcomed—the first class, A, contains narratives written by officers engaged in the battle; the second class, B, consists of narratives furnished by persons who were present at the battle, but as non-combatants; the third, C, includes the narratives of contemporary historians, not present—Vicars, May, Heath, and Whitelocke; the fourth, D, contains several pamphlets written at the time, which, though not professing to be reports of the battle, give information of more or less value in regard to it; finally, the fifth class, E, contains the names of a few of the modern historians of the battle, whose accounts it is proposed briefly to criticise.