

able answer to give to any man who, in Canada, echoes the opinions so freely expressed in England in favour of a separation between the Mother Country and the Colonies, is to knock his hat over his eyes. No one can deny the superior simplicity of this mode of argument, or that it has much of ancient precedent to plead in its favour; but, somehow we had imagined that other methods less summary had been found, upon the whole, more satisfactory, and that we should hardly again be recommended by any public authority to settle individual differences of opinion with fists or with bludgeons. Why, indeed, if this fashion is to be revived, we should content ourselves with simply knocking a man's hat over his eyes, is not very apparent. Suppose he calmly replaces it and continues his discourse; or suppose that, to save further trouble, he places his hat aside, what is to be our next manifestation of disapproval? Possibly what the Bishop of Oxford recommended in the case of the rural agitators—a ducking in the nearest horse-pond. This, however, is a minor question; once lay down the general principle that unpopular opinions are to be silenced, not by argument but by violence, and modes of application will suggest themselves *pro re nata*.

Mr. Stephen finds in Mr. Mill untenable views, not only in regard to Liberty, but also in regard to Equality and Fraternity. These three words, he says, constitute "the creed of a religion" which, though vaguer than any of the forms of Christianity, is "not on that account the less powerful." On the contrary, this "Religion of Humanity," as Mr. Stephen calls it, is "one of the most penetrating influences of the day," and has secured the devotion of men who are prepared "to sacrifice for it all merely personal ends." On each of the subjects referred to, our views are far more in accord with those of Mr. Mill than with those of his critic; but space would fail us in a single paper to follow the latter through the three divisions of his work; and we shall therefore confine ourselves to an examination of the objections made to Mr. Mill's views of liberty, especially in relation to thought and discussion.

The object, as Mr. Mill tells us, of his Essay on Liberty was to assert the simple principle "that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collec-

tively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection; that the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community against his will, is to prevent harm to others." We may remonstrate with a man for his own good, or reason with him, or entreat him; but unless his conduct is calculated to produce evil to some one else, we must not make use of compulsion. "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign."

To the principle thus set forth Mr. Stephen brings forward the strange objection that it is in opposition to every known system of theology, and even to the idea of a final day of judgment, since these bring a constraining influence to bear on men's conduct, irrespective of the effect of their conduct upon others. But how empty this objection is will be seen at once if we consider that the systems referred to are simply the beliefs which men impose upon themselves, and which therefore necessarily shape their actions. These beliefs may be either true or false; but in any case it is impossible to argue from the constraint which men, by adopting them, put upon their own conduct, to a right possessed by society or by a majority, to compel individuals to this or that course of action, in matters of no direct concern to any one but themselves. As regards a final day of judgment, the argument is far too strained and unnatural to require any refutation here.

"Mr. Mill's system is violated," the critic goes on to say, "not only by every system of theology which concerns itself with morals, and by every known system of positive morality, but by the constitution of human nature itself. . . . The condition of human life is such that we must of necessity be restrained and compelled by circumstances in nearly every action of our lives." Then because we have to fight with circumstances—because nature has to be subdued before she will lend herself to our purposes—because, in Matthew Arnold's words,

"Limits we did not set  
Condition all we do,"

we must forsooth recognise the right of our neighbours to thwart us at every turn. Because the wind blows our hat off, we must allow the first passer-by to knock it off. Because accidental fires occur, we must look