

FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

AN unfortunate incident in the visit of that criminal and in all senses abominable person who came to drive out the Queen's deputy from Canada, has caused several of our contemporaries to deliver themselves in regard to "free speech." It is one of the consequences we suppose of our enlarged freedom to be without any knowledge of the questions involved in this phrase, for the subject has been shelved. Had some of those who have been exhibiting excitement over the treatment shown Mr. O'Brien by the loyal population of Toronto, been less anxious to say what would please the Fenian Irish Romanists, they would have made their remarks less open to ridicule. The position taken amounts to an assertion that every man has a right to say what he wishes anywhere about anybody, in whatever language he likes without let or hindrance; to hinder him, "is to put shackles on the most sacred right of freemen—free speech!" But surely a schoolboy has sense enough to see that this is mere "buncombe," that speech is fettered, shackled, repressed in every direction, and that "free speech" as claimed by the Press is only enjoyed by lunatics and never desired by the sane. What a brute he is who observes no "shackles" in his speech! At home, in the mart, on the street, wherever such a man goes he is an insufferable nuisance. How could any meeting be conducted if "free speech" as Mr. O'Brien's friends demand, were conceded? Shackles are imposed on men's tongues from morn to night, yet no sensible man feels the terrible "tyranny" that the Press has of late been denouncing as "grinding down" those who are not allowed to say what they like. Freedom would be impossible were speech not shackled, for freedom implies subordination to mutual interests and to order. In Pandemonium free speech prevails, but liberty there, is not enjoyable in consequence, and it is freedom of speech that makes it Pandemonium. It is so elementary that we are half ashamed to write this; but when "able editors" are clearly ignorant of the alphabet of social questions, we must teach them the A B C of matters they discuss. In the particular case that has raised this discussion a man who is said by the *Times* to be "the most violent public speaker in Europe," announced that he was visiting Canada to hoot the Governor-General out of the country. He said he would raise for this purpose one million Irishmen who would carry the war up to the gates of Government House to drive the Queen's deputy out of the Dominion. Now if any man however humble were threatened to be hooted at and driven from his home by a mob he would have a right to demand that his assailant's tongue be "shackled," and his body bound over to keep the peace. When however we regard the position of the Governor-General, and the frightful calamity that would have occurred had Mr. O'Brien's episcopally blessed mission been successful, for the raising of a million of Irishmen meant civil war, with its untold horrors, we see

that some "shackles" upon the right of free speech were demanded in the interests of free speech itself, for such an insurrection of violence and blood as Mr. O'Brien aimed at inciting, would have seriously hampered every civil liberty we possess. In our judgment it was the duty of the government to place this firebrand under the "shackles" provided by the statute law to protect all law abiding people against criminals who attempt to commit a serious breach of the peace. That Mr. O'Brien was not listened to when he attempted to speak was no interference with his right of free speech, even granting such right to exist, which we deny. He called a meeting in a citizens' park, and those who went sang "God save the Queen," while he howled in vain the vilest slanders against her representative. The vocalists were merely exercising their rights of free speech, and any interference against their utterances would have been a distinct act of unlawful tyranny. But says the *Globe* and says the *Canada Presbyterian*, it was infamous to sing "God save the Queen" in a public park; the singers ought to have been driven away by the police; but it was most commendable for an Irish Roman Catholic dynamiter to use this public park in order to inflame the passions of his countrymen up to the necessary heat for engaging in a bloody insurrection against the Queen's authority! These and other Ross Bible papers, for strange to say they all play the same treasonable tune, are furious at loyalists exercising their right of free speech because it happened to interfere, with the free speech of a scoundrel who was endeavouring to bring about a civil conflict between the Irish Romanists and their neighbours. The attack made on Mr. O'Brien was largely provoked by his violent language. He called our people "asses" and "dogs," and so used his right of free speech to incite them to break the peace that he ought to have been arrested and bound over to keep the peace. The authorities however chose to allow this dangerous man the liberty he had forfeited, and seeing the law was suspended the people took the law into their own hands. This example ought to learn some persons a lesson. If lynch law is to be kept down we must put statute law in force, but those who suppress or obstruct statute law must be prepared for lynch law. That is the lesson of the O'Brien excitement, and a very valuable one if heeded. Able editors and astute unscrupulous politicians may bid for the Irish Romanist vote by denouncing those who made Mr. O'Brien's visit disagreeable. But they would serve their country and show their fitness for the responsibilities of journalism and public life, even in Opposition, better by teaching the people that "free speech" involves restraints in the interests of civil liberty, and that free speech if used and exercised as it was by Mr. O'Brien to rouse racial passions up to the commission of deeds of bloodshed, is criminal, and so far from being "a right," is a terrible and wicked wrong to all peaceably disposed citizens, and is an offence punishable by a wise law. We repeat, these people elect

to have lynch law who obstruct statute law. But law of any kind is a bagatelle to those who are hunting to secure the vote controlled by Dr. Lynch.

CLERGYMEN IN NONCONFORMIST PULPITS.

THE conduct of Canon Wilberforce in preaching in a dissenting pulpit has excited a lively discussion. There are two ways of regarding this act, which may be called the masculine and feminine ways, for one class look at this matter from the sentimental stand point, the other regard it as affected by the obligations of official position. In a word one class judge of it by *feeling*, the other by *duty*. The question was recently debated by the Bishop's House, in the Convocation of Canterbury on the following motion, which was moved by the Bishop of Winchester and seconded by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and carried unanimously:

"In the opinion of this House it is contrary to the principles of the Catholic Church as maintained at the English Reformation, that clergymen should take part in the public religious services of those who are not in full communion with the Church of England, and it is desirable that the Bishops should use their authority and influence to induce the clergy of their respective dioceses to abstain from the practice. Nevertheless, the House deeply sympathises with the desire to bring all Christians into sincere communion with each other through an union with the great Head of the Church, and recognises the fact that there are many ways of maintaining kindly intercourse with Nonconformists which are not open to reasonable objection."

The Bishop of Winchester said "he ventured to think that the preaching or taking part in religious worship of those who were not in communion with the Church of England, was against all primitive practice, against all Catholic usage, and especially against the principles of our own Reformation. He need not refer to the primitive customs or Catholic usage, because they were all very well aware that in cases where there was any great difference of opinion, or any great division in the early Churches, it was not permitted for presbyters to take part in the services of those who were divided. He would rather speak of the Reformation, because the Reformation was to a certain extent referred to as having justified every sort and kind of division. Now the Reformation did not mean what a great many people attached to it. In the first place, it did not mean the right of private judgment; it did not mean the Bible, and the Bible only. That might have come from the Reformation, but that was not what the Reformation aimed at or what the Reformation meant. The Reformation meant this: The Church had been suffering for a long time from intolerable oppression and tyranny, and that was not only galling in itself, but more than that, it imperilled the truth of religion and faith of the people. It was extremely difficult for the people to live in true faith and to follow Christ-like principles if they were under the