

FREEDOM OF READING — "L'INSTITUT-CANADIEN."

WE hope we shall not be considered too boastful of the merits of our time, if we say that there never was an age more likely than ours to revolt against any application of the principle of the Index Expurgatory. Where their wide freedom of reading is going to land the thoughtful and inquiring minds of the present day, we do not presume to determine, nor are we oppressed with any fear as to the result. There is a good deal of cant, now, concerning darkness dreading the light — of cant which is canted by persons who have as much reluctance to have light thrown on their own darkness as any others in this world. This cant, however, springs from a basis of verity which abides with us to-day, and abides always. Darkness does not generally welcome the light — very frequently it fears it. Fixed systems of politics, philosophy, and theology, have their supporters and admirers, who do not wish to be disturbed by any influx of new thought. Even if such new thought does not shake their faith in the foundations of their favorite system, it seems to displace some portion of the superstructure, and they become startled by any symptom of change. Perhaps they have seen enough to be assured that if the wedge is permitted to enter, and becomes gradually pushed home, their system, though apparently firm as the granite rock, must be split clean open as in a granite cleavage. Or, perhaps, they have not sufficient penetration to perceive the working power, and destined result, of a moral wedge at all, but simply feel their prejudices annoyed by its presence. In either case they will wish themselves well rid of the disturbing force. And having the will, if they possess the power, they will discard it as speedily as possible.

This conservative sentiment has served, as well as injured, the world in time past, and it is of service in the