

FREE-THINKING.

Our English neighbors are what Mr. Toole calls "going it" in the way of free-thinking. They always "have gone it." From the time when Henry VIII. had his free thought about marriage, and subsequently introduced the same cheerful elastic spirit into his views about the Christian religion, free-thinking has been the boast of the British people nor have they boasted without ample justification. The only ungenerous limitation to their free-thinking has been that they have obliged others to agree with them. "You may believe what you like," they have said to one another, "on condition that you do not differ from me; but, if you are Catholics I shall persecute you; if you are Non-conformists I shall bully you; or if it so happens that I am myself a Nonconformist, I shall only not bully both Catholics and Anglicans, because it so happens that I can't." This spirit has been rife for three centuries. Of late years it has assumed a different attitude; so that whereas persecution and bullying have gone out of fashion, a certain jauntiness and indifference have "set in." Politically, there is still a use of the "odium theologium"—we have had experience of this use within the last few months in some of the political campaigns in our own country—yet such a use is but incidental to rotten principles, and is not common to the best politicians. Jauntiness and indifference are now the vogue. Religion has come to be regarded as speculation, with no backbone save egotistic conceit. Agnosticism which is the negation of Revelations, reveals in pert egotism and sublime vanity. The sublimity and the pertness are on a par. A new dictionary of hard words has been rendered necessary to meet the colossal demands of the new science. No man can now affect to be an Agnostic unless he has a wealth of syllabic culture which makes him a kind of peripatetic glossary. Agnosticism has made it a hard time for compositors. And our poor heads have been made to ache by laborious articles on pure reasoning, which, if summed up in a few plain English sentences, would have meant either nothing or nonsense. Philosophy; which was supposed to lead to the highest ends, is now employed to make us confident that there are no ends; so that the venerable Plato and Aristotle, who reasoned solely to reach truth are snubbed by modernists who reason to prove that "there is none." This is progress. But it was the natural issue of the Reformation. The "evolution of freethinking is as necessarily a rush downwards as the "evolution" of Divine faith is a winding upwards.

The latest example of religious liberty in England has been the permitting emissaries of the "Free Thought Company" Limited to air their eloquence in public thoroughfares and public parks. The "Free Thought Company" may be "limited" in financial hazards, but it has no limitations whatever in roaring blasphemy. Emissaries are dispatched to the places "where roads meet and are there encouraged by grinning youths and smirking girls to abuse the Old Testament, the New Testament and the clergy. Probably the "company" would deny that they send such emissaries, nor have we any proof that they do so. We must therefore apologize beforehand for the assumption. It is only because the same men who are profound students of their literature are also public preachers of its profanities that we jump at the conclusion that unless such men were "sent" they could have no mission in seeking to corrupt the public mind. With what object, for what advantage, can a half-educated vulgarian stand up at a corner "where ways meet" and seek to destroy every vestige of popular belief unless because he has a motive, which is materially above mental hazards, being grounded on the "auri sacra fames?" We cannot even conceive of a human mind which should propose to itself the mission of holding all religion up to scorn, unless there were a tangible gain to be derived from the overt profession of seeking to destroy the "only happiness of the Christian poor."

To ridicule the Old Testament and the New Testament in the presence of a more or less illiterate mob is a diversion of too equivocal a character to be motivated by honest love of "teaching truth." An assassin, if he be hired, has a motive and all such hirelings are known to deplore their task; but an assassin of men's souls, hearts, intellects, and deathbed peace must demand a very extravagant sum for his crime. It is for this reason we must assume that such men are paid. If the "Free Thought Proselytizing Company, Limited," does not hire these assassins, we think it should publicly disown them and anathematize them. The "company" owes it to its own 'principles'

to do so. Freethinking should bet the exact opposite of blasphemous preaching. If it have any 'principal' in it at all must be the leaving of the human intellect to work out its own conclusions without outthrust from the opinions of other persons. To force negations on the mind of another person, or even to hazard religion without being asked, is the contradiction of the "first principal" of freethinking—which is to leave every man to be the architect of his own belief. If freethinking mean anything it means "let alone." Yet in London and in other towns there is quite an army of freethinkers who devote themselves to public dogmatizing against religion. Their text is "Down with every dogmatic teacher," and their sermon is the rabid advocacy of negative dogmatism. Now, a dogma is not less dogmatic because it is negative. "Christianity is a lie, and your clergy are deceivers," are two dogmas which are inclusive of a score of dogmas. These Freethinkers, therefore, first deny their principles and then proceed to insult the crowd which denies them also. They stand up before a crowd—which they know to be mainly Christians—and they say: "I am a Freethinker; I wish every man to be the same; and I tell you that what you believe is rank nonsense, and that your clergy are imposters or ignoramuses. Your religion is a compound of falsehoods and absurdities, and your dearest hopes and tenderest yearnings are delusions. As a Freethinker, I am bound to insult your inmost soul, to laugh at the divinest sympathies of your spiritual being, and to mock the calmest and grandest convictions of your best intelligence by telling you that you are fanatics or fools." This is the temperate philosophy of freethought! Now, we are compelled to ask: Why does the Executive, which affect to protect the public morals—as well as to protect the public from being insulted—permit these maniacs to corrupt and insult a million Englishmen, instead of ordering the police "to run them in," or to muzzle them—like the poor dogs, who are irresponsible?

Freethinking in England, among the educated classes, has resolved itself into lassitude 'plus' vanity. The plebeian freethinker is merely an imitator. The class of freethinkers mentioned above are only half educated men, who have "coached up" Tom Payne or Bob Ingersoll, and retail their shallow sophistries at discretion. This class is only dangerous, because the persons who listen to them are on a level with their shallowness or superficiality. Knowing nothing, absolutely nothing, of Catholic philosophy, they find their pabulum in frisky comment on Scripture language, or in making sport of the wealthy clergy, or of Protestant controversies. They have, of course, a certain ground work in such materials. As to the harmonies of the Catholic philosophy, or the Catholic science of "the supernatural," they know as much about the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas or the mystic lore of any canonized saint. But when we come to speak of the educated classes we find a different attitude of the "animus," as well as a different armory of objections. Freethought in an English gentleman is, in nine cases out of ten an attitude of intellectual fatigue. He has wearied himself with thinking out everything about everything (at least, so far as he thinks he knows every thing) until he has come to the conclusion that that which requires so much thinking must lie outside the moral "necessaries" of obligation. He has no antipathy to a proposition in Euclid, because he believes that it lands him in a Q. E. D.; but he is bored to death by purely polemical excogitations which land him nowhere but in beginning over again. Hence fatigue. Add to this that he so habituates his intellect to processes of working from his own beginning—taking his own two-foot measure as the sole originator of difficulties which he has never dreamed of submitting to Catholic philosophy—that he cannot get himself to believe that his own beginning may be wrong, just as his own inferences may be wrong—because his own. It is a system of undisciplined egoisms. No can we wonder that it should be so, since he was brought up on the "principle that freethinking is the sovereign boon of the Protestant Englishman. His beginnings being wrong so are his ends. His freethinking has no axioms, no postulates. He is like a "Euclid" who should abhor definitions. His Q. E. D.'s are all built upon sand; so that, wearied with the giant tasks which he sets to his small brain, he gives up everything because his purely natural intelligence cannot reconcile divine conclusions with human premises. Thus his free-thinking makes him fretful and yet idle. Lassitude 'plus' vanity become the atmosphere of his being, because he cannot subject his will to divine authority.—Dublin

Nation.

THE BODY AND ITS HEALTH.

An exchange calls attention to disinfectant at hand in every household. The addition of a little vinegar to a plateful of common salt provides a disinfectant, at once active, innocuous, non-corrosive and odorless, and equal in effect to its analogues, chloride of lime and chloride of magnesium. Sufficient chloride is evolved, and not too much.

A physician of Philadelphia says that a great deal of what passes for heart disease is only mild dyspepsia; nervousness commonly is bad temper, and two thirds of the so called malaria is nothing but laziness. Imagination, he says, is responsible for a multitude of ills, and he gives as an instance the case of a clergyman, who after preaching a sermon would take a teaspoonful of sweetened water and doze off like a baby, under the impression that it was a bona-fide sedative.

Fainting and Epileptic Fits.—"I wish you would do something," said a physician, to teach people the difference between a fainting fit and an epileptic fit. You see a fainting fit is produced by the blood leaving the head, and these other fits are just the reverse, and come from the blood rushing to the head. It is important to remember this, because it determines the method of treating these afflicted people when no doctor is near and because every one occasionally finds it his duty to go to the help of some person in a fit without a moment of reflection, let alone inquiry. If a person faints, he ought to be laid down flat down on his back, for this will facilitate the return of the blood to the head. Indeed, nature was provided for this, for a person who faints will fall down and soon recover, if no one interferes. On the other hand, a person with an epileptic or cataleptic fit, indicated by convulsion and frothing at the mouth, ought to be propped up, so as to facilitate the flow of blood from the head to the lower parts of the body, which may be still further promoted by slapping the palms of his hands. Now I cannot account for it, but the fact is that all ignorant people, in an emergency, reverse this treatment. A person who simply faints is carefully supported in a chair, and the face is pried with cold application and fanned, the result being that the fainting is greatly prolonged. On the other hand a man who drops in the street with epilepsy or catalepsy is invariably laid flat on his back, which in most cases is enough to kill him.—Chicago Journal.

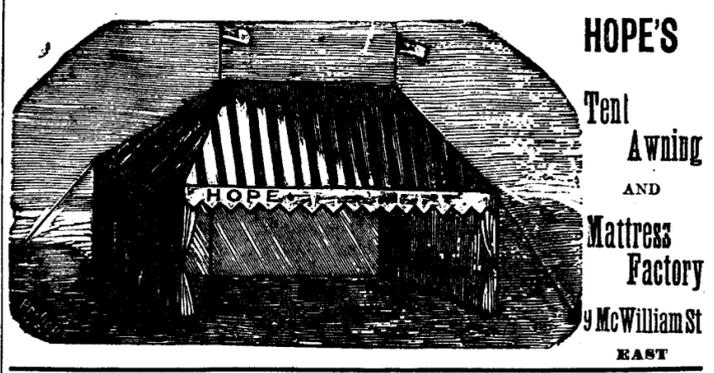
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Sketches showing the position, approximately of these berths together with the conditions upon which they will be licensed and the forms of tender therefor may be obtained at this Department or at the Crown Timber Offices at Winnipeg, Calgary, N. W. T., and New Westminster, British Columbia.
A. M. BURGESS,
Deputy of the
Minister of the Interior,
Department of the Interior,
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