

the other conclusion right, that the others (B) must have their way and the opinions be tolerated. If we cannot decide whether the opinions are harmful or innocent, (A) has as much right to have his way as (B), has he not? Let me suggest a solution, for there is no *impasse* here. (A) wants the opinions of (B) suppressed; he has no right to interfere with other people's opinions, unless they are harmful to society; on him therefore lies the *onus* of proof that the opinions that he seeks to suppress are harmful. If he cannot prove this (and in the supposed case he cannot) nothing is done; and the decision is not that (B) is right, but that (A) has not made a case for interference with him. The normal condition is liberty. Let him who desires to circumscribe it prove his right. If he cannot, then he has no title to interfere.

But why elaborate all this? No one now-a-days thinks of interfering with opinions. Think you so, my friend? So far I have been endeavoring to get you to agree with me upon general principles, before proceeding to apply them, and I fancy that I have found little difficulty; but now we are going to separate. You see very little or no intolerance in the world. On the contrary, I see as much there as ever there was, and more, for the population is rapidly increasing. I do not mean that we are burning or jailing one another just now—that was the *form* merely which intolerance in rougher times assumed. But I do say that the incapacity to appreciate and sympathetically understand an opinion contrary to our own, is as rare to-day as ever in the world before. I know that education is more widespread, but in my opinion intolerance *commences* with knowledge (as disease with life), and succumbs to nothing but much culture, which is far from being widespread; and the cocks are as sure now as they ever were. The "important fact in the nature of man, that he tends to reckon his own in-

sight as final, and goes upon it as such," has, by many centuries of culture, to be eradicated out of human nature, before its offspring, intolerance and persecution, will leave the world in peace. No doubt asperities have been rubbed down and the more dreaded penalties for non-conformity to majority-opinion probably for ever ended; but the old intolerant spirit is still alive, manifesting itself, and dominating as far it can, in strict conformity with the softened manners of the times. Principal Cave (I think it was) said that "It should be made an unpleasant thing for a man to call himself an infidel"; and he is but frankly stating the tactics of modern inquisitors. With social penalties, if not with hanging; with sarcasm and contempt, if not with thumb-screw and boots, the bigot still insists upon conformity to *his* plans and specifications; and to the best of his ability limits and controls the liberty and the opinions of others. Cocksure and its brood "with fierce emphasis" are still vigorously dragooning the world.

My purpose in this article, however, is not to call attention to this pigmy war, which must be left to burn itself out (after various centuries more have passed), but to enter a *caveat* against its incursions into a new realm, against the irruption of intolerance in our public schools. Men seeing that it is becoming more and more difficult to force their opinions upon adults, are now turning their attention to the children, where their conquest will be easy if their access be permitted. I want to see impregnable walls opposed to the incursion of all proselytizers into the schools.

And, as a basis for my argument, I have been endeavoring to win assent to these few propositions: (1) That human thought is, even at the best of it, upon social and religious questions, far from being infallible; (2) that other people of equal intelligence, who honestly differ with us, are as likely to be right as we are; (3) that relig