

ask; for it is evident that one individual has not the right to deprive another of the privilege of developing himself in such a way as may seem best to him. But is it true that society is willing to allow this degree of freedom to the individual? I think not, for we need only look at our political issues, and we see a majority ready to crush out all views differing from those which seem right to them. Not by violence and force, perhaps, but by a power that is still more destructive to individuality, the power of society. When a man's opinions are opposed by violence, he can and generally does cling to them; but when he has to endure the scorn of society, to bear the name of eccentricity, to be shunned as if he were afflicted with some contagion, and contact meant death; with rare exceptions, he will suppress his own better judgment, and become a mere reflector of the ideas of others. To prove the truth of this, glance at the two great parties of the day as controlled by the caucus. A few men, and often the most unscrupulous ones, determine upon a course of action; the rest follow as though they possessed no will of their own. They sacrifice their own better judgment to the ties of party; and the result may be the precipitation of another struggle that will rend our land assunder.

Again Communism and Socialism are making rapid strides; and if they once gain the ascendancy, they may decree an equal division of property between the rich and the poor. And why not? They believe such a division would be just; and they have been taught that the majority have the right to determine what privileges the minority shall enjoy; and also to compel the acceptance of their decision.

But in no subject have the principles of personal liberty been so little acknowledged as in that of religion. Here the majority have almost universally claimed that the view held by them was the right one, and that no other doctrine could possibly be correct. The stake and the fagot were formally brought into requisition

to bring the wandering and the erring back into the true belief, which was whatever the majority held at that particular time and place.

War followed war, massacre succeeded massacre, because *some* men dared assert their individuality, and deny the commonly received interpretation of the Bible. Among the more civilized nations, arms and armies are no longer employed for this purpose. And why not? Simply because the principles of individuality—the right of each man to hold such views as he chooses, provided he does not attempt to force them upon others—has been recognized and established to a limited degree. But such a doctrine, it is said, will destroy all religion, and fill the world with such men as Mill, Higginson, and Arnold. Perhaps it may, but let us see where the denial of liberty of opinion to these men would lead us. If it is right to stamp them and their views out of existence, why should not the Catholics have prohibited Luther, and Wicliff, and Calvin from propogating their doctrines? The Catholics of that day believed they were right just as earnestly, as do the opponents of the new doctrines of the present day.

But it is suggested that these men are reformers, and that no reformation should ever be suppressed? How did the people of that day know they were reformers? How do you know that every new doctrine proposed is not a reformation till it has been tried. Opponents of change are you not as liable to be mistaken as the persons you would prevent, by all the power of society from spreading his views?

No man, nor any combination of men, has the right to restrain the liberty of another, either by force or by the scorn and contumely heaped upon him by society; they may persuade, they may reason with him, but farther they have no right to go, unless he in his turn would deprive others of the the right of developing themselves fully and freely; then society may step in and compel him by law, if necessary, to observe her rights. The object of every