

what is for the best interests of Humanity, and if we can get them to read the Torch of Reason a few times an honest doubt will enter their minds, and "to doubt is to be lost" to the old dark dogmas and saved for the everlasting Truth.

Comment on Mr. Priestley's Criticism.

We are greatly obliged to Mr. Priestley for his able review of Mr. Underwood's article, which we especially submit to our readers and students. We think his case would have been stronger without the last paragraph. It is not just to Mr. Priestley himself. He had just said that "what is verified by several witnesses is probably true". Now suppose these several witnesses speak of themselves as "us", do they thereby become a "myth"? and if so, how can a "myth" "verify" anything? This would be nonsense which Mr. Priestley is too sensible to mean. He and everybody knows that the agreement and co-operation of two or more persons is a FACT; and such is the agreement of all the persons of a family, city, State, Republic—and more still, that the co-operation of the whole family of Nations as a Common HUMANITY, would be the greatest human fact on this Planet. To bring this fact about is now the highest object of all advanced people. Everybody knows that U. S. and Old Glory are not "myths," and that Mr. P. is not saying what he means. When he drives his yoke of oxen, does he consider them a myth because they are a "team"?

This recalls a little story which is not a myth, but which may show us all the sense of sticking to common sense in our talk—even with each other. Chief Justice Thomas J. Oakley, of the N. Y. City Superior Court, was noted for years as one of the ablest and most COMMON SENSED of judges. A Methodist clergyman was a witness in an important case, and, when sworn, the judge said: "Residence and business?" "Number so and so, Fisherman," said the Reverend, and went on with his evidence, in which it soon appeared that he was a clergyman. "Look here," said the judge, "you swore five minutes ago that you were a Fisherman; now what do you mean?" "I mean that I am a Fisher of Souls," was the reply. "Well," said the judge, "if you are a man of sense, this is the place for you to talk like one. How can the jury or I tell when you are romancing and when not?" T. B. W.

Let Them Tumble!

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:
Inclosed find one dollar for the Torch of Reason for one year, beginning February 1, also twenty-

five cents for Mrs. Turner's book.

I am glad to know that the Liberal University bids fair to become a success. I hope students will increase in numbers so you will be obliged to build more and more buildings—so it will become known and celebrated throughout the country and the world. How rich men would tumble over each other in making their wills in her favor! "To him that hath", etc.

I. S. CURTIS.

Brunswick, Me.

The First Stage of Free Thought: Its Nature and Limitation.

[Concluded from 1st page.]

True Freethought requires special qualities to insure itself acceptance. It must be owned that the thinker is a disturber. He is a truth-hunter, and there is no telling what he will find. Truth is an exile which has been kept out of her kingdom, and Error is a usurper in possession of it; and the moment Truth comes into her right, Error has to give up its occupancy of her territory. And as everybody, consciously or unconsciously, harbors some of the emissaries of the usurper, they do not like owning the fact, and they dispute the warrant of truth to search their premises, though to be relieved of such deceitful and costly inmates would be an advantage to them.

An inalienable attribute of Free-thought, which no theology possesses, is absolute toleration of all ideas put forward in the interests of public truth and submitted to public discussion. The true Free-thinker is in favor of the free action of all opinion which injures no one else and of putting the best construction he can on the acts of others, not only because he has thereby less to tolerate, but from perceiving that he who lacks tolerance towards the ideas of others has no claim for the tolerance of his own. The defender of toleration must himself be tolerant. Condemning the coercion of ideas, he is pledged to combat error only by reason. Vindictiveness towards the erring is not only inconsistency, it is persecution. Thus Freethought is not only self-defense against error, but, by the toleration it imposes, is itself security for respectfulness in controversy.—[English Secularism.]

Amelia Anne, Princess of Russia and sister of Frederick the Great, said: "I can not bring myself to condemn those whose object is to investigate the truth and shake prejudice. I am even convinced that those who accustom themselves to reflect must be virtuous, for in all inquiry after truth we learn to reason accurately, and in learning to reason with accuracy we also learn to love virtue."



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