

present prices or lower, it follows that the production would be immensely increased if much better prices could be got. Then, since this country must remain the principal market for Cuban sugar, either much more sugar must be sold here, or else the supply from other quarters (which is not now nearly so great as that from Cuba) must be very greatly curtailed. But, on the one hand, our people already use extravagant amounts of sugar, almost as much as they would if it cost nothing. Hence, a very considerable reduction of price would be necessary in order to increase the consumption in any large proportion. Nor, on the other hand, could the production of cane-sugar elsewhere than in Cuba be greatly curtailed unless there were a motive for partially abandoning its production, in the shape of a considerable diminution of the profits of that production. In either case, therefore, the price of sugar to consumers in the United States would be very considerably reduced.

Let anybody who thinks that, even granting the facts alleged, the above is not a sound argument (as most of our readers will probably agree it is not), endeavor to detect the flaw in it by any ordinary syllogistic rules, or let anybody show it is sound reasoning by those rules (without throwing the gist of the argument into the premises), and in either event we will admit that something has been done to rehabilitate the logic of the schools.

Mr. Lafleur may remonstrate that he puts forth no argument in his preface, but merely states a fact. John Dryden might on the same ground protest against Mr. Lafleur's Illustration No. 1, which is Dryden's couplet--

"All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey."

But the compiler would rightly reply, "Mr. Dryden, you perhaps had no definite intention of arguing, but in fact you did argue essentially as in the stock example, 'All men are mortal; Sortes is a man; hence, Sortes is mortal.'" In like manner, Mr. Lafleur's statement of fact does convey to the reader's mind an argument, and, if insidiously, so much the more dangerously.

After all this tirade, we desire to say that Mr. Lafleur's little book will certainly be an enlivening and useful agent in the classroom. We wish that somebody would supplement it with a collection of real illustrations of relative reasonings, of striking problems in the doctrine of chances, of moot cases in inductive reasoning, and of examples in hypothetical investigations.

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A Short History of Free Thought, Ancient and Modern. By John M. Robertson.
London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan Co. 1899. 8vo, pp. 477.

Free thought about religion has, far more than science or philosophy, been broken up into a hundred separate movements; and this circumstance compels, in any single-volume review of them, so succinct a treatment of each movement that, though this volume is not small and a good deal of it is in fine print, the history is rightly named a short one. Had sufficient references been given to other works to make this a guide to the literature of the special topics, it would have been a valuable manual; but, that not having been done, it remains a short history and nothing more.

Some general theories regarding the course of free thought that the author seeks constantly to illustrate, serve to connect the different morsels and to maintain the reader's interest. Mr. Robertson's own rationalism is extreme. It does not seem to have struck him as possible that thinking for one's self may bring a man to entertain a higher respect, in the matter of religion, for those elements of our nature that bind men together than for the speculations of his individual reason. Nor does he seem to recognize any conceivable outcome from rationalistic speculation but unbelief. Nor does he remark, what everybody perceives, that prevalent unbelief in any age is quite as gregarious and wanting in independence as prevalent belief, the vanity with which it is tinged being rather a levitating quality than adding to its weight. He has not a word to say in favor of religion, but deems its influences irredeemably bad from first to last. It always tends, he finds, to grow more and more corrupt and corrupting. Christianity he seems to rank pretty low in the scale of religions, and thinks it could have gained predominance only after paganism had become very grossly superstitious, as it did after the establishment of the Empire. Christianity was itself a relative free thought. Free thought can, says Mr. Robertson, arise only out of the conflict of faiths. Still, skepticism is found everywhere, even among primitive and savage peoples. Persecution of it begins only when the material interests of the priests appear to be in jeopardy. So, religious wars cannot break out without political causes. Mr. Robertson holds to the unity of human nature in all ages and among all races, and says that pretending to explain an historic phenomenon by "national characteristics" is like explaining the action of opium by a soporific virtue—a remark which his readers may think becomes just or otherwise in proportion to the failure of the explanation to colligate different phenomena.

The modern part of the history, though drawn up with some ability, is not detailed enough to bring out its full interest. French and Dutch free thought, from Descartes to Robespierre, fills only thirty pages, and English deism another thirty. The ancient part is much more entertaining because of the author's theories.

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