

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

CIVILIZATION GIBBETED.

From the N. Y. Tribune. The discussion in Michigan of the policy of restoring the public "hugger" whose abolition has, it seems to us, worked well, returns upon us some old considerations.

In 1774 the Grand Duke of Tuscany virtually abolished the death penalty, and in 1786 it was repealed by statute. Re-enacted in 1806, it remained almost inoperative till about 1830, when the sight of two executions caused a disgust which effectually banished it.

Such is the progress of this reform in a country which, though badly beset by brigands, and now and then by her politicians, claims to have been its cradle. Yet we are with our countless educational institutions, still deem the scaffold necessary, when the Italians, with comparatively few schools and legions of ignorant citizens, think they can afford to do away with it.

THE GALLOWAS AS A GATE TO HEAVEN.

A few days ago a murderer named John W. Moore was hanged at Greenville, Bond county, Ill. His victim was a young woman, eighteen years of age, and only a year married.

"AFTER BREAKFAST—I have been out and eaten a little breakfast have dressed myself ready to depart. I feel calm, and my trust is in God. There have been several in to see me this morning, so that I was somewhat annoyed; but my soul is calm in God, trusting in Him in whose hands our souls shall appear; but I feel that I am going to meet a reconciled Father instead of an angry God. Farewell, dear Hannah, farewell, my dear child. Oh! meet me in heaven. I am going soon. I shall be safely landed over on the golden shore. May the Lord bless you, and save you for His name's sake. God bless you."

This would-be adulterer, and violator, and murderer here talks of his calmness of soul in the very sight of death, and asserts his confidence of going straight to heaven, as thousands have done under like circumstances. Not only in their own estimation, but in that of others, their crimes have been expiated and their evil natures transformed by the piety of their last few mortal hours, and the gallowas has been to them the gate of eternal bliss.

According to the opinion of many intelligent people, the happiness of heaven is the reward not of acquiescence in a heavenly plan, but of the acquisition in the soul of a heavenly state. They hold that a man must have heaven within, as well as around him, in order to taste its delights; and that no matter what may be his superficial condition of mind, if he dies with a heart occupied by selfish, cruel, and devilish passions, the abodes of the blessed will be as uninhabitable by him as the air by a fish, or the depths of the ocean by a land animal.

Viewed in this light, the class of thinkers that we are speaking of argue that the mental condition of a condemned criminal awaiting the gallowas must be such as to render his chances of heaven more doubtful than they are commonly supposed to be. His repentance may be sincere and thorough; but he is like a man with a pistol at his head who is required to give up his money or sign some paper. Were he at perfect liberty he might possibly comply with the demand; and the pistol may really not control his action; but every one will admit that this is by no means

certain. So when a man under sentence of death, moved by the dread of the unknown future into which he is about to be launched, betakes himself to pious language and practices, and even attains to the ecstasy of religious enthusiasm as did that brutal murderer Anton Probst in Philadelphia, we may possibly believe him to be sincere, but at the same time, the common sense of mankind generally doubts it.

A zealous defender of the death penalty for murder once gave as a reason for its rigid enforcement in all cases when once pronounced, without interference from executive clemency, that, in his experience, whenever a criminal had thus escaped the gallowas, the pious contrition which had been previously developed in him was dissipated, and he relapsed into his former evil habits. He therefore humbly insisted that this calamity should be prevented by hanging the man and thus giving him no chance to apostatize. It does not seem to have occurred to him, as it does not seem to occur to many other good people, that a piety which will not stand the wear of life in this world may not be of any permanent value in the world to come.

IN SILK ATTIRE. From the N. Y. Tribune. What is to be the costume of the emancipated woman? There is evidently an increasing gorgeousness of array upon the platform, wherever she sets her courageous foot.

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It is a new problem for reformers—Where shall we be clothed? In the anti-slavery movement no such trouble came in. We slavely fail to recall any bewildering gorgeousness of dress on that platform. Concentrated on moral ideas, women bore no "trailing clouds of glory" in the form of dry goods, and men were plain in costume as in speech.

An eminent French writer has said that the artist or man of letters needs only a black coat and the absence of all pretensions to put him on the level of the best society. And the author of "Fanny Hill" sums it up more briefly, "There is safety in swallow-tails." This for men—and for women, every step into the vocations of men must involve something of that simplification of toilet which man has undergone.

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more so vast and vague an object as the salvation of the world. "I will leave the salvation of the world," says Mr. Carlyle, "to the maker of the world, and look a little to my own saving, which I am more competent to."

A more striking illustration of that proneness of our age to distrust individual effort and trust to co-operation, which Mr. Carlyle has expressly, and Mr. Emerson by inevitable inference, deprecated, might have been found than in the formation of an "association" to promulgate their views. The postulate of a society which professes to found itself upon the idea that they are wrong in one of the most distinctive of the doctrines which they hold and inculcate in common.

The truth is that the main value of the writings of Mr. Carlyle in particular is not that he promulgates a systematic scheme of religion or of morals, but that he is a continual stimulus to the feeling and the conscience of his reader, and forces him by the power of earnest appeal—all the more effective because it is unconscious—to live up more nearly to the reader's own ideal.

LIQUOR LAWS IN POLITICS. From the N. Y. Times. Last Tuesday's elections show that the prohibitionist people made good their threat to have a hand in State politics whenever they could; and their work is visible from Massachusetts to Minnesota.

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