



The Path of Independence.

An easy task it is to tread
The path the multitude will take;
But independence dares the stake
If but by fair conviction led.

Then haste, truth-seeker, on thy way,
Nor heed the worlding's smile or frown,
The brave alone can wear the crown
The noble only clasp the bay.

Go, worker of the public weal;
When knaves combine, and plot and plan,
Assert the dignity of man,
Teach the honest hearts to feel.

Still keep thy independence whole;
Let nothing warp thee from thy course,
And thou shalt wield a giant's force,
And wrong before thy foot shall roll.

—Selected.

Man, the Final Product of Terrestrial Development.

Man did not come upon the earth spontaneously, but by the meditation of the same natural forces and causes to which all life owes its origin. He did not descend from above or from the ether, but he has sprung up from below by the same processes which lie at the foundation of all terrestrial development. In accordance with the present state of our knowledge, he can be regarded as nothing more than the last and highest product of that slow process of development and evolution by which our planet, the earth, in the course of enormous periods of time completes its natural cycle of life, which in turn is only a single phase of eternity. What higher or more perfect structures than ourselves may still slumber, to come forth hereafter by the same process, we know not. But upon one point our science leaves no doubt, namely, that hitherto nothing higher or more perfect than man has been produced by Nature, and that it is not only the right, but the duty of man to regard himself as the ruler over all existences accessible to him, and to guide and change them as much as possible for his own necessities and purposes.

It is easy to see that by this a perfectly new and previously unknown principle was introduced into nature and the world in general, a principle which is essentially distinct from any thing that preceded it. For it is only in man that the world becomes conscious to such a degree that it rises out of its previous dream-like natural existence and allows dominion over nature to take the place of a nearly involuntary subjection to it. Nevertheless this did not take place suddenly or all at once, but very gradually and only a long time after

the birth of those creatures which we may regard as the earliest representatives of the human type, for only the gradual evolution and inheritance from generation to generation of the faculties awakened in those creatures by their more perfect organization could originate that advance or continual improvement of mankind which we must at present regard as the final and highest object of all earthly existence. But whilst, in those earliest periods of his development, man was subjected to precisely the same natural laws or conditions as the forms of the vegetable and animal worlds which had preceded him in a long series of influences, whether injurious or beneficial, to which he could oppose but a feeble resistance, he has subsequently, in the lapse of time, by the further development of his mental faculties, emancipated himself more and more from those influences, and has finally attained a point at which he may say to himself with no little pride that his present and future fate has become more or less independent of nature, that is to say, it is in his own hands. Nature has, as it were, recognized herself in him—has consciously advanced in opposition to herself—and has thus undertaken a peculiar task, the fulfillment of which will remove both nature and man further and further from the rude and imperfect states of the past.—Buchner.

Secularism.

BY R. G. INGERSOLL.

Secularism is the religion of humanity; it embraces the affairs of this world; it is interested in everything that touches the welfare of a sentient being; it advocates attention to the particular planet in which we happen to live; it means that each individual counts for something; it is a declaration of intellectual independence; it means that the pew is superior to the pulpit, that those who bear the burdens shall have the profits, and that they who fill the purse shall hold the strings. It is a protest against theological oppression, against ecclesiastical tyranny, against being the serf, subject, or slave of any phantom, or of the priest of any phantom. It is a protest against wasting this life for the sake of one that we know not of. It proposes to let the gods take care of themselves. It is another name for common sense; that is to say, the adaptation of means to such ends as are desired and understood. Secularism be-

lieves in building a home here, in this world. It trusts to individual effort, to energy, to intelligence, to observation and experience, rather than to the unknown and supernatural. It desires to be happy on this side the grave.

Secularism means food and fire-side, roof and raiment, reasonable work and reasonable leisure, the cultivation of the tastes, the acquisition of knowledge, the enjoyment of the arts, and its promises for the human race comfort, independence, intelligence, and, above all, liberty. It means the abolition of sectarian feuds, of theological hatreds. It means the cultivation of friendship and intellectual hospitality. It means living for ourselves and each other; for the present instead of the past; for this world rather than for another. It means the right to express your thought in spite of popes, and priests, and gods. It means that impudent idleness shall no longer live upon the labor of honest men. It means the destruction of the business of those who trade in fear. It proposes to give serenity and content to the human soul. It will put out the fires of eternal pain. It is striving to do away with violence and vice, with ignorance, poverty, and disease. It lives for the ever-present today, and the ever-coming tomorrow. It does not believe in praying and receiving, but in earning and deserving. It regards work as worship, labor as prayer, and wisdom as the savior of mankind. It says to every human being: "Take care of yourself, so you may be able to help others; adorn your life with the gems called good deeds; illumine your path with the sunlight called friendship and love."

Secularism is a religion—a religion that is understood. It has no mysteries, no mummeries, no priests, no ceremonies, no falsehoods, no miracles, and no persecutions. It considers the lilies of the fields, and takes thought for the morrow. It says to the whole world: "Work, that you may eat, drink, and be clothed; work, that you may enjoy; work, that you may not want; work that you may give, and never need."—The Free-thinker.

Science and Imagination.

It is not uncommon for those who know very little or nothing of science to put science and imagination in opposition to each other, as though one were inconsistent with the other. It is said of such a one,

he is a man of science; of another, he is a man of imagination. The fact is, science and imagination are not only compatible, but there can be no really great scientific man who is deficient in imagination. Science does not consist merely in collecting facts. It does not consist in enumerating things that have been observed. It consists rather in the observation and collection of facts, in their classification and the discovery of the principles which underlie them. The popular idea that a man who brings together a basket of bones or a box of shells is a scientist is a very great error. The man of science is the one who can distinguish between the different bones, can put those of the same genera species of variety together and reconstruct the frame of the creatures to which they belong. He is the one who can take those shells, separate them and describe the creatures which live in them and their relations with one another. In the higher sense, the man of science is one who from the observation of facts has the ability to arrange them in order and to explain their meaning, as Newton explained the cause of the fall of the apple, when he by the power of imagination conceived that the same force which brought the apple to the ground was that which held the planets in their orbits. No great discovery is made without the use of the imagination. It enables the man of science to think beyond what has been actually discovered; then by the use of the scientific method, he can verify what he has conceived as possible. Imagination is to the scientist what the lamp is on the cap of the miner; it enables him to see a little beyond his present position. Men like Humboldt, Huxley, Tyndall, are those in whom imagination is strong and vivid. Darwin and Wallace never could have discovered the principle of natural selection without imagination to enable them to look beyond the popular theory as well as the scientific knowledge to see that the popular theory was untenable.

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Like most garments, everything in life has a right and a wrong side. You can take any joy, and by turning it round, find troubles on the other side; or, you take the greatest trouble, and by turning it round, find joys on the other side. The gloomiest of mountains never casts a shadow on both sides at once.—Investigator.