



For the Torch of Reason.

Apostrophe to Torch of Reason.

Torch of reason, thou quenchless flame
From out the realm of nature came,
Down through the evolution plan
And settled on the brow of man.
Through primal laws, evolving thought
Thou'st order out of chaos brought.
By evolution's magic plan
Deific force evolved a man—
The flower of creation.

All matter now before man lies
In earth, in air, in sea, in skies.
No atom on this earthly ball
Is to his ken too great or small
Not to be measured by his reed
And truth from error dark to lead.
Thou lookest back adown the vista
Of ancient time, dark and misty—
And revealest the gods of law and force.

Thou brilliant torch, exalted high,
Gives man sweet joy for sorrow's sigh.
Thou guardest well the pearly gate
Where wisdom sits enthroned in state,
Dispelling superstition's pall
And marshals out at reason's call—
A mighty host of thinkers.

Thou brilliant light, with magic power,
Illumines thought and cheers the hour
Where mental gloom and dark despair
Once burthened all the ambient air
Within the cells of prison pens,
More to be feared than lion's dens;
Where priestly hate with scourge and
chains
Would rack and torture flesh and brains
For dear opinion's sake.

Hail torch of reason, quenchless flame,
From out the realms of nature came,
And, struggling upward, in thy might
Thou hast from darkness brought to
light
An age of thought and reason pure
And given the mind a potent cure
For freedom's blight and folly's doom,
Superstition and mental gloom—
The curse of wild fanaticism.

Torch of reason, thy matchless flame
Has opened up to deathless fame
Those martyrs who for truth and right
Have died; and from crown and crosier's
blight
Have suffered wrongs no tongue can tell.
They tried to banish down to hell
The noblest souls in times of old,
More precious than the mines of gold,
More precious than dogmatic lore
That wielded such soul-blighting power—
O'er men, forsooth, who dared to think.

Aye, torch of reason, holy flame,
Thou hast thrown back from whence ye
came
A flood of light to cheer and bless,
And handed down through type and
press,
The matchless power of thought and
brain—
And mighty wonders in their train—
How men from thralldom were set free
To gather fruit from knowledge's tree—
Where no serpents dared beguile.

But now thy torch, transcendent light,
Dispels the dark and dismal night
Which like a pall hung o'er the mind
Of nearly all the human kind
For ages, in their weary flight
From mental gloom to mental light,
Awakening thought, reviving hope,
Dispelling fear—the mind to ope—
Because some men did dare to think.

Now, matchless torch, exalted high
Thy rays bid million souls to cry:
"Hail! holy light, effulgent beam,
Truth from thy blaze doth ever gleam
Piercing the covers of mental night
And ushering in the reign of right
Against the power of ignorance—
Assisting millions to advance
Along the line of progress!"

Aye, torch of reason, matchless flame
From out the womb of nature came—
Thy potent light illumines the soul
And takes man from false creeds' con-
trol
And lifts him to the highest plain
Of reason grand, there to remain.
No creeds will now his mind enthrall
With dogmas crude; at reason's call
He now will dare to speak his mind.
—W. F. BENJAMIN.

Roseburg, Ore., April 18.

Struggle for Existence.

By Darwin's admirable investi-
gations we have been taught to
recognize as the principal cause of
the transmutation and evolution of
the organic world in its natural
state that struggle for existence,
which has now become so celebrat-
ed, in combination with the in-
fluences of variability, natural
selection, inheritance, etc. All
these influences, (perhaps with the
exception of inheritance), must act
with the more intensity, the greater
the power of nature over the or-
ganic being. This applies also to
the momentum of migration, upon
which much stress has lately been
laid, and to the influence of al-
terations in the external conditions
of life, which Darwin, as is well-
known, did not sufficiently estimate.
For the less the individual being
was able to resist these influences
by intelligence or independency, or
by the extreme simplicity of its
conditions of existence, the more
strongly must they have made
their dominion over it felt. If the
perfectly purposeless co-operation of
all these causes, in themselves pure-
ly mechanical, has produced not
merely a transmutation but at the
same time a general advance in the
organic world, so as finally to lead
to the birth of a being destined to
put its own spontaneity in the
place of the mechanical forces of
nature, this is due neither to any
preconceived plan, nor to any per-
sonal merit, but it is merely the
necessary consequence of definite
natural conditions coinciding pre-
cisely in a particular manner and
no other. Man has therefore no
one to thank for his existence, and
must seek the purpose of his exist-
ence only in himself and in his
own welfare and that of his race.
This welfare, however, is synonym-
ous with the greatest possible eman-
cipation from the influence of, and

dominion over those natural forces
which originally called him and
the whole organic world into exist-
ence. If the struggle for existence
be the vital phenomenon which
most closely unites man with ani-
mality, then this must be strongest
and fiercest in the primitive or
natural state, and at first so occupy
the whole of life that no opportunity
is left for intellectual development,
such as we now regard as the task
of mankind. On the other hand,
however, the unfavorable position
of man in the natural state and
his natural defencelessness face to
face with the animal world, must
have forced him all the more to the
greatest possible exertion of his
mental and bodily powers in the
struggle with the nature which
hemmed him in and overpowered
him, thus becoming a main incite-
ment to human advance in the
matters of weapons, dwellings,
clothing, food, etc. The difficulty
of the struggle also impelled him
to mutual assistance and social
union, and this union again be-
come a mainspring of progress. It
was only when the struggle with
the animal world had been brought
to a successful issue, that the con-
tests of man with man commenced,
leading to those perpetual sangui-
nary wars which constitute the
history of all tribes and nations in
the backward state of civilization.

But what more than any thing
else assisted man in his struggle for
existence, was the circumstance
that the knowledge or experience
gained by the individual did not
die with him as is the case of
animals, but by the agency of ed-
ucation and tradition each success-
ive generation was enabled to
develop a greater power of resist-
ance than its predecessor in its
struggle for existence. This in-
fluence may have been very im-
perfect in its action in those earliest
periods of humanity when man ap-
proached most closely to the
animals, and thus the advance
during those periods may have been
excessively difficult and slow; but
the conditions must have become
more and more favorable the
further man developed from his
animal origin and brought into use
the innumerable aids of advancing
civilization.

In the present state of our knowl-
edge there can be no doubt that
corporeal peculiarities or advant-
ages of organized beings (whether
congenital or acquired during life)
are inherited by their progeny, to
which, when they are useful in the
struggle for existence, they commu-

nicate an impulse towards a more
perfect development. Experience
leaves no doubt that this is the case
also with intellectual peculiarities,
advantages, etc., in an equal, if not
in a higher degree. The material
reason for this may lie in the extra-
ordinary delicacy and flexibility of
the organ of intellectual activity,
the brain, the gradual improvement
of which, both in the animal and
the human species, admits of no
serious doubt. By means of this
organ and by the aid of its activity
man has easily compensated for all
the disadvantages of his bodily or-
ganization in comparison with ani-
mals, and has gradually elevated
himself to the position of the un-
disputed lord of creation. Even
the powers of nature he has con-
quered and forced into his service
to such an extent, that in his case
the original relations of nature to
the organized being are exactly re-
versed. The struggle for existence
itself, which was at first, as in the
animals, almost entirely a struggle
for the external conditions of exist-
ence, has become changed in its
whole nature by the progress of the
human intellect—from the domain
of mere material life, it has passed
to the region of the mind—to the
political, social, and scientific do-
main. At all events this is the case
in the civilized nations, but it is
true that among savage tribes and
on the more unfavorably situated
parts of the earth's surface the
struggle for mere existence still
rages here and there in its rudest
form.—Buchner.

Which Is True?

Divinity has revealed itself in
the different parts of our globe in a
manner of such little uniformity,
that in matters of religion men look
upon each other with hatred and
disdain. The partisans of the
different sects see each other very
ridiculous and foolish. The most
respected mysteries in one religion
are laughable for another. God,
having revealed himself to men,
ought at least to speak in the same
language to all, and relieve their
weak minds of the embarrassment
of seeking what can be the religion
which truly emanated from him, or
what is the most agreeable form of
worship in his eyes.

A universal God ought to have
revealed a universal religion. By
what fatality are so many different
religions found on earth? Which
is the true one amongst the great
number of those of which each one
pretends to be the right one, to the
exclusion of all others? We have
every reason to believe that no one
of them enjoys this advantage.
The divisions and the disputes
about opinions are indubitable
signs of the uncertainty and of the
obscurity of the principles which
they profess.—Meslier.