



## The Creed of Hope.

By A. M. Paswell.

[Naturalized by John P. Guild.]

"The text is beholden to him that reads upon it for improving it."—R. L'Estrange.

The world is growing better every day,  
Though crime and greed and cruelty  
Join hands  
To forge fresh chains to bind the  
weary lands.  
The sun ne'er sinks but that his setting  
ray  
Gilds some new broken fetter freshly  
thrown away.

The waves of reformation ebb and fill,  
And earnest watchers for a rising tide  
Grow sick at heart and deem their  
hopes denied;  
But soon and sure the wave returning will  
Thunder exultantly, "Truth's tide is ris-  
ing still."

The darkness is herald of the light,  
And gathers blackness just before it  
flies  
In swift retreat adown the radiant  
skies;  
And evil still but serves to prove the  
might  
And certain victory of human good and  
right.

The star of hope leads onward to the fray;  
Nor trails its standard ever in defeat;  
Nor evolution from its goal retreat,  
And they who march where Reason leads  
the way,  
In Nature's strength shall win the glor-  
ious day.

## Perversion.

By F. L. Oswald.

There is a tradition that a year before the conversion of Constantine the son of the prophetess Sospitra was praying in the temple of Serapis, when the spirit of his mother came over him and the veil of the future was withdrawn. "Woe to our children!" he exclaimed, when he awakened from his trance, "I see a cloud approaching, a great darkness is going to spread over the face of the world." That darkness proved a thirteen hundred years' eclipse of common sense and reason. There is a doubt if the total destruction of all cities of the civilized world could have struck a more cruel blow to science than the dogma of salvation by faith and abstinence from the pursuit of free inquiry. The ethics of the world-renouncing fanatic condemned the love of secular knowledge as they condemned the love of health and the pursuit of physical prosperity, and the children of the next fifty generations were systematically trained to despise the highest attribute of the human spirit. Spiritual poverty became a test of moral worth; philosophers and free inquirers were banished, while mental castrates were fattened at the expense of the toiling rustics and mechanics; science was dreaded as an ally of skepticism, if not of the arch-fiend in person; the suspicion

of sorcery attached to the cultivation of almost any intellectual pursuit, and the Emperor Justinian actually passed a law for the "suppression of mathematicians."

When the tyranny of the church reached the zenith of its power, natural science became almost a tradition of the past. The pedants of the convent schools divided their time between the forgery of miracle legends and the elaboration of insane dogmas. The most extravagant absurdities were propagated under the name of historical records; medleys of nursery tales and ghost stories which the poorest village school teacher of pagan Rome would have rejected with disgust were gravely discussed by so-called scholars. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," quotes samples of such chronicles which might be mistaken for products of satire, if abundant evidence of contemporary writers did not prove them to have been the current staple of medieval science.

When the gloom of the dreadful night was broken by the first gleam of modern science, every torch-bearer was persecuted as an incendiary. Astronomers were forced to recant their heresies on their bended knees. Philosophers were caged like wild beasts. Religious skeptics were burnt at the stake, as enemies of God and the human race. It was, indeed, almost impossible to enunciate any scientific axiom that did not conflict with the dogmas of the revelation-mongers who had for centuries subordinated the evidence of their own senses to the rant of epileptic monks and maniacs. And when the sun of Reason rose visibly above the horizon of the intellectual world, its rays struggled distorted through the dense mist of superstition which continued to brood over the face of the earth, and was only partially dispersed even by the storms of the Protestant revolt.

The light of modern science has brought its blessings only to the habitants of the social highlands; the valley dwellers still grope their way through the gloom of inveterate superstitions and prejudices, and centuries may pass before the world has entirely emerged from the shadow of the life-blighting cloud which the son of Sospitra recognized in the rise of the Galilean delusion.—The Bible of Nature.

## Impulse to Virtue and Honesty.

By Dr. L. Buchner.

Just as no single atom or smallest conceivable particle of matter can disappear or be destroyed in the life of nature in general, so not the smallest deed or most insignificant thought of a man can perish or be lost in the general life of mankind. For both propagate themselves in unending sequence, by virtue of the impulse given by them, just as the oscillations of the surface of a piece of water produced by a falling stone vibrate onwards in constantly larger and weaker circles. And although this movement itself must by degrees be lost or come to rest just like these oscillations, it has in the meanwhile set free a certain number of other (physical or intellectual) movements, which on their part renew and continue the same action. Thus the life of the individual is at the same time the life of humanity, and the life of humanity that of the individual! Whoever cannot or will not allow this great truth to suffice for him, whoever is unable to find in it a sufficient impulse to virtue and honesty, will also be incapable of being kept permanently in the right path by any external force or agency. Neither philosophical nor religious creeds are capable of furnishing even distantly an equivalent for it, or of replacing by means of their mixed egotistical and imaginary motives that firm moral position which the individual must attain by the recognition of the imperishableness of his being in connection with humanity at large.

## All Religions Are Ridiculed.

By Jean Meslier.

Nothing appears more ridiculous in the eyes of a sensible man than for one denomination to criticize another whose creed is equally foolish. A Christian thinks that the Koran, the divine revelation announced by Mohammed, is but a tissue of impertinent dreams and impostures injurious to Divinity. The Mohammedan, on his side, treats the Christian as an idolater and a dog; he sees but absurdities in his religion; he imagines he has the right to conquer his country and force him, sword in hand, to accept the faith of his Divine prophet; he believes especially that nothing is more impious or more unreasonable than to worship a man or to believe in the Trinity. The Protestant Christian, who with-

out scruple worships a man, and who believes firmly in the inconceivable mystery of the Trinity, ridicules the Catholic Christian because the latter believes in the mystery of the transubstantiation. He treats him as a fool, as ungodly and idolatrous, because he kneels to worship the bread in which he believes he sees the God of the universe. All the Christian denominations agree in considering as folly the incarnation of the God of the Indies, Vishnu. They contend that the only true incarnation is that of Jesus, Son of the God of the universe and of the wife of a carpenter. The theist, who calls himself a votary of natural religion, is satisfied to acknowledge a God of whom he has no conception; indulges himself in jesting upon other mysteries taught by all the religions of the world.—"Superstition in All Ages."

## If Death Ends All.

By R. G. Ingersoll.

And suppose, after all, that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being forever with those we love and those who have loved us,—next to that, is to be wrapt in the dreamless sleep of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear.

I had rather think of those I have loved, and lost, as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world; I would rather think of them as unconscious dust; I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the stream, floating in the clouds, bursting in light upon the shores of other worlds; I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten night, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls may have been clutched by an orthodox god. But as for me, I will leave the dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs in my heart I will cherish; I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears.