

# TORCH OF



# REASON.

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For the Torch of Reason.

## Brotherhood.

GRACE E. GRUBER.

On heights ethereal, let us stand;  
I mean the heights, which hold com-  
mand  
Of mind — of soul; then judge and find  
This problem: Brotherhood—Mankind.

Does it mean those who hold a creed?  
Does it mean those while planting seed?  
They drop them, with such rarity  
The seed bloom snot with charity.

Ah, no! for they, could never see  
That wheat is found where chaff may be.  
True charity will find the good,  
And flower will bloom, as flowers  
should.

What means this struggling human  
mass  
Incaised within a frame of glass?  
Each like a bubble—born to fall—  
'Tis human, and the lot of all.

It means that ne'er a human form  
Can breast the wave of every storm,  
Yet, in each faulty wave we could  
Find virtues rare, if understood.

The thought dispatches to the mind  
Its telegraphic source defined;  
And who shall say the message sent  
Was not dispatched with good intent?

We're all too prone to view the face  
Nor deeper thought give to the case;  
We'd hold the things which some call  
good,  
And lose the view of Brotherhood.

Then let not censure, let not blame  
Be heaped on those who bear the shame;  
The problem's solved; the goal we'll find,  
When we'll be just and read the mind.

## Gods.

RY JEAN MESLIER.

Originally, savage nations, fero-  
cious, perpetually at war, adored,  
under various names, some god con-  
formed to their ideas; that is to say,  
cruel, carnivorous, greedy of blood.  
We find in all the religions of the  
earth a god of armies, a jealous  
god, an avenging god, an extermin-  
ating god, a god who enjoys carnage  
and whose worshippers make it a  
duty to serve him to his taste.  
Lambs, bulls, children, men, here-  
tics, infidels, kings, whole nations,  
are sacrificed to him. The zealous  
servants of this barbarous god go  
so far as to believe that they are  
obliged to offer themselves as a sac-  
rifice to him. Everywhere we see  
zealots who, after having sadly  
meditated upon their terrible god,  
imagine that in order to please him  
they must do themselves, in his  
honor, all imaginable torments. In  
a word, everywhere the baneful  
ideas of divinity, far from consol-  
ing men for the misfortunes inci-  
dent to their existence, have filled  
the heart with trouble, and given  
birth to follies destructive to them.  
How could the human mind, filled  
with frightful phantoms and guided  
by men interested in perpetuating  
its ignorance and its fear, make

progress? Man was compelled to  
vegetate in his primitive stupidity;  
he was preserved only by invisible  
powers, upon whom his fate was  
supposed to depend. solely occu-  
pied with his alarms and his unin-  
telligible reveries, he was always at  
the mercy of his priests, who re-  
served to themselves the right of  
thinking for him and of regulating  
his conduct.

Thus man was, and always re-  
mained a child without experience,  
a slave without courage, a logger-  
head who feared to reason and who  
could never escape from the lab-  
rynth into which his ancestors had  
misled him; he felt compelled to  
groan under the yoke of his gods,  
of whom he knew nothing except  
the fabulous accounts of their minis-  
ters. These, after having fettered  
him with the ties of opinion, have  
remained his masters or delivered  
him up defenseless to the absolute  
power of tyrants, no less terrible  
than the gods, of whom they were  
the representatives upon the earth.  
Oppressed by the double yoke of  
spiritual and temporal power, it  
was impossible for the people to in-  
struct themselves and to work for  
their own interests. Thus, religion,  
politics and morals became sanc-  
tuaries, into which the profane were  
not permitted to enter. Men had  
no other morality than that which  
their legislators and their priests  
claimed descended from unknown  
empyrian regions. The human  
mind, perplexed by these theolog-  
ical opinions, misunderstood itself,  
doubted its own powers, mistrusted  
experience, feared truth, disdained  
its reason, and left it to blindly fol-  
low authority. Man was a pure  
machine in the hands of his tyrants  
and his priests, who alone had the  
right to regulate his movements.  
Always treated as a slave, he had  
at all times and in all places the  
vices and disposition of a slave.

These are the true sources of the  
corruption of habits, to which reli-  
gion never opposes anything but  
ideal and ineffectual obstacles; ig-  
norance and servitude have a tend-  
ency to make men wicked and un-  
happy. Science, reason, liberty  
alone can reform them and render  
them more happy; but everything  
conspires to blind them and con-  
firm them in their blindness. The  
priests deceive them, tyrants cor-  
rupt them in order to subjugate  
them more easily. Tyranny has  
been, and will always be, the chief  
source of the depraved morals and  
habitual calamities of the people.  
These, almost always fascinated by  
their religious notions or by meta-

physical fictions, instead of looking  
upon the natural and visible causes  
of their miseries, attribute their  
vices to the imperfections of their  
nature and their misfortunes to the  
anger of their gods; they offer to  
heaven vows, sacrifices and pres-  
ents in order to put an end to their  
misfortunes, which are really due  
only to the negligence, the ignor-  
ance, and to the perversity of their  
guides, to the folly of their institu-  
tions, to their foolish customs, to  
their false opinions, to their un-  
reasonable laws, and especially to  
their want of enlightenment. Let  
the mind be filled early with true  
ideas; let man's reason be cultivat-  
ed; let justice govern him; and  
there will be no need of opposing  
to his passions the powerless bar-  
rier of the fear of gods. Men will  
be good when they are well taught,  
well governed, chastised or censur-  
ed for the evil, and justly rewarded  
for the good which they have done  
to their fellow-citizens. It is idle  
to pretend to cure mortals of their  
vices if we do not begin by curing  
them of their prejudices. It is  
only by showing them the truth  
that they can know their best in-  
terests and the real motives which  
will lead them to happiness. Long  
enough have the instructors of the  
people fixed their eyes on heaven;  
let them at last bring them back to  
earth. Tired of an incomprehensi-  
ble theology, of ridiculous fables,  
of impenetrable mysteries, of puer-  
ile ceremonies, let the human mind  
occupy itself with natural things,  
intelligible objects, sensible truths,  
and useful knowledge. Let the  
vain chimeras which beset the peo-  
ple be dissipated, and very soon ra-  
tional opinions will fill the minds  
of those who were believed fated to  
be always in error. To annihilate  
religious prejudices it would be suf-  
ficient to show that what is incon-  
ceiveable to man cannot be of any  
use to him. Does it need, then,  
anything but simple common sense  
to perceive that a being most clear-  
ly irreconcilable with the notions of  
mankind, that a cause continually  
opposed to the effects attributed to  
him; that a being of whom not a  
word can be said without falling  
into contradictions; that a being  
who, far from explaining the mys-  
teries of the universe, only renders  
them more inexplicable; that a be-  
ing to whom for so many centuries  
men have addressed themselves so  
vainly to obtain their happiness  
and deliverance from their suffer-  
ings; does it need, I say, more than  
simple common sense to understand  
that the idea of such a being is an

idea without model, and that he is  
himself evidently not a reasonable  
being? Does it require more than  
common sense to feel that there is  
at least delirium and frenzy in hat-  
ing and tormenting each other for  
unintelligible opinions of a being of  
this kind? Finally, does it not all  
prove that morality and virtue are  
totally incompatible with the idea  
of a god, whose ministers and inter-  
preters have painted him in all  
countries as the most fantastic, the  
most unjust, and the most cruel of  
tyrants, whose pretended wishes are  
to serve as rules and laws for the  
inhabitants of the earth? To dis-  
cover the true principles of moral-  
ity men have no need of theology,  
of revelation, of gods; they need but  
common sense; they have only to  
look within themselves, to reflect  
upon their own nature, to consult  
their obvious interests, to consider  
the object of society and of each of  
the members who compose it, and  
they will easily understand that  
virtue is an advantage and vice an  
injury to beings of their species.  
Let us teach men to be just, benev-  
olent, moderate and sociable, not  
because their gods exact it, but be-  
cause it pleases men; let us tell  
them to abstain from vice and from  
crime, not because they will be  
punished in another world, but be-  
cause they will suffer in the present  
world. There are, says Montes-  
quieu, means to prevent crime, they  
are suffering; to change the man-  
ners, these are good examples.  
Truth is simple, error is complicat-  
ed, uncertain in its gait, full of by-  
ways; the voice of nature is intelli-  
gible, that of falsehood ambiguous,  
enigmatical and mysterious; the  
road of truth is straight, that of  
imposture is oblique and dark; this  
truth, always necessary to man, is  
felt by all just minds; the lessons  
of reason are followed by all hon-  
est souls; men are unhappy only  
because they are ignorant; they are  
ignorant only because everything  
conspires to prevent them from be-  
ing enlightened, and they are wick-  
ed only because their reason is not  
sufficiently developed.—[Preface to  
Common Sense.

Fear paralyzes the brain. Pro-  
gress is born of courage. Fear be-  
lieves—courage doubts. Fear falls  
upon the earth and prays—courage  
stands erect and thinks. Fear re-  
treats—courage advances. Fear is  
barbarism—courage is civilization.  
Fear believes in witchcraft, in dev-  
ils and ghosts. Fear is religion—  
courage is science.—[Ingersoll.