

TORCH OF REASON.

VOL. 2.

SILVERTON, OREGON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 1898.

NO. 12.

For the Torch of Reason.

Sleeping.

By Grace E. Gruber.

When those I love pronounce me dead,
I'd have no mournful weeping;
Let not one tear of grief be shed—
I'm sleeping, grandly sleeping.

The sleep supreme, known not in life—
With it dies every sorrow—
Why should you mock the calm with
strife?
You'll join me on the morrow.

And whilst you're waiting here in tears,
Your morrow's surely creeping
Toward the evening of your fears,
When you'll be grandly sleeping.

I'd have no granite shaft so grand,
With epitaphs or phrases;
We all should leave behind, for man,
Kind deeds to sing our praises.

We're like a bubble, held by bands
Of most uncertain keeping;
We're but the dust, blown from the
sands—
We come, we go, we're sleeping.

Bohemian Evening No. VII.

BY C. ELTON BLANCHARD.

III. MYSTICISM IN SCIENCE.

Chemistry was thought to have originated in Egypt, and some writers say that "chem" meant dark, mysterious. Alchemy was probably introduced into Europe by the Arabs, then followed that long hunt for the "universal solvent" which would resolve everything into a common base. The "elixir of life" and the "philosopher's stone" were objects of special search, and, metaphorically speaking, many people are still looking for them. But all this searching and experimenting led to the discovery of many of nature's laws. Yet as late as the middle centuries the great minds like Bacon—that is, Francis Bacon—Luther, Spinoza and Leibnitz believed in the "philosopher's stone". Thus we see how from alchemy came the science of chemistry. Yet who can say that we really know of seventy-one elements? Perhaps their atoms are but different forms of crystallization of the ultimate units of "world stuff" called by Leibnitz the "monad". Not until microscopes show us the form of the atom can we say that no truth was in the theory of the early alchemists. In philosophy the mystic began in metaphysics. The mysteries of the Greeks probably came from Egypt or India. The older books of the bible show that the Jews had no idea of soul transmigration at that time. In contact with Greek thought, many fanciful ideas came into existence. Here is one: When a woman had a soul that had formerly been that of a man, she could not bear children

until God breathed into her some part of a woman's soul.

The whole history of ancient philosophy, from Thales down, is one mass of mixture of mysticism, of life concepts into a conglomeration of ideas. This mental trituration has been going on ever since, and such concoctions as have been turned out for us—in fact, we have been doped almost to death! Write upon the doors of your insane asylums, "Builed in honor of mysticism." Carve upon the cornerstones of your nunneries and monasteries, "Builed in honor of mysticism." Upon the portals of those churches which have not yet awakened to the demand for a practical, humane religion, write these same words, "Builed in honor of mysticism."

But to particularize a moment as to the influence of mysticism upon science, let me, as a student of medicine, give you some facts that I have observed. The primitive idea of sickness was that some mysterious evil had entered the body which only the help of the heavenly planets could drive away. The sick, therefore, sought the help of the gods through the intercession of the priests. The New Testament tells us many incidents which show how long this idea clung to human thought. Peter, Paul and others had this mystic power. Paul was especially strong in curative ability. It is written that at one time they had only to borrow his pocket handkerchief or apron (Acts xix.). Touching these to the suffering ones, the incurable trouble vanished, leaving the poor, afflicted bodies as good as new.

When at last Hippocrates, in the fifth century B. C., did cast off the influence of the primitive mysticism, the slightest ray of truth began to shine. Yet from his time to the third century A. D. no one thought of studying a human skeleton. We have records of the advice of scholars to students, to visit Alexandria, where they could see a real human skeleton.

The mysterious ideas of the resurrection prevented the science of anatomy from developing for many centuries. The church could not permit so great a wrong against a departed spirit as that it should return when the trump should sound and find its house of clay cut to bits by inquisitive medical students.

Pliny tells us that no physician could be found in Rome for six or seven centuries, and Julius Cæsar was the first to recognize the science of medicine. Pestilence was at this

time repeatedly staid and eventually driven out by building a temple to Apollo or by the dictator driving a nail in the temple already built. No doubt priests discouraged the use of medicine, for should it possess virtue they would be robbed of their business. No more prayers would be paid for by sick believers.

However, to the Christian church must be given the credit for having built and established the first hospitals, and to the church today we must give the credit of the first place in work intended to help the poor, sick and needy. But to offset this the same church has to its discredit the retaining that mysticism regarding evil spirits. Witches were persons possessed of the devil, and thousands of them were burned at the stake upon bible authority. This horrible practice even reached the shores of the United States, and we have the shame of the Salem Witchcraft. If any one possessed a devil it was the leaders of this movement, the Rev. Cotton Mather not excepted.

When the science of medicine once took a start for true growth, even then mysticism would not let it alone. Bleeding to the point of exhaustion was a favorite remedy for all physical ills. No doubt if disease was a something in the blood it would come away with the blood, and thus the patient would be rid of it. This was good reasoning, surely! From another quarter took birth the notion that drug power was a mystery, and the high potency theory grew and flourished like a green bay tree. Happily today the schools of medicine are fast ridding themselves of mysticism, and as they do so they find that science is but the revelation of a universal system of law.

In the science of biology and its kindred studies, we observe the work of magic. The trailings of this enemy are still to be seen. We find men who have minds still clouded by the mystic of dualism and who limit their thought, thus settling all doubts. This is a very popular way of surrender. We hear it said, "Oh, I can't understand that and I don't want to try." Or, "I can trace life to the single cell, and there I stop. The cell holds the hidden secret of life."

Another mist-cloud which mysticism has held before the eyes of science is the theory of spontaneous generation of life, or spontaneity. The early investigators proceeded along empirical lines, and it is confessed, with regret, that such is more or less the case today. The

early biologist saw behind the various manifestations of life a strange and mysterious "life principle". He decided that this something called life would, when the notion prompted it, animate the most lifeless matter. Amusing are the many experiments which the empirical investigator used to prove the spontaneity theory.

Today the microscope has shown us the secrets of protoplasm and the modern biologist finds daily substantiation of the well known law, "no life but from prior life." The barrier between organized and unorganized, between living organisms and inorganic matter, is broken down and vitality is seen as a universal property of matter. In spite of Mr. Spencer's conclusion that life is too profound a matter for solution, we see Haeckel and others of the Germans, Cope, whose recent death we lament, and others of the Americans, Binet and others of the French, all showing us that Herbert Spencer's unknowable is only partially unknown, and not an unknowable. These men say, "There is no unknowable; it is only the unknown."

But the empiric, whose brain is still under the spell of mysticism, inquires, "What is life? How did we get even non-sentient life, to say nothing of sentient organisms, from dead matter?" Such questions may be in the minds of persons present. The province of my subject will not permit a discussion of this topic, but as a suggestion, allow me one word. The phenomenon of organized life appears if conditions are right, and only as specialized forms of the life which belongs to all elementary matter,—to the water in the streams and the rocks in the fields.

That sentient life came from the non-sentient, all men of science agree. What the conditions were, whether those conditions exist today or ever will exist again in the history of this planet, is a subject for further investigation. Yet in the "moner" we find our first mother, the Adam and Eve of science. The moner will one day come under the analysis of improved microscopes and we will know what chemical affinity causes the wonderful formation of the pseudopodia, those exer-changing protrusions from the body of the minute animal. We will then know what is the chemistry of feeling, and last—the crowning work of science—the chemistry of thought.

It is true we can call the Ameba our first mother, and if all life be-