

TORCH OF REASON.



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For the Torch of Reason.

Doubt.

By Grace E. Gruber.

Brotherhood, sisterhood, that's what we need!
 Humanity's sowing this beautiful seed,
 Well done, Brother Progress, you're setting a pace
 For a braver, a better, a nobler race.
 The standard of science, for truth's noble cause,
 Will shatter the portals of myth and its flaws,
 'Twill enter, while bearing a light which will show
 All, the dark, narrow pathways where ignorance grow.

The world will be better, when progress and man
 Clasp the telescope, reason, to broaden the plan.
 Let truth's brilliant glances gleam in and it will
 Unveil the dark shadows which mysteries fill.
 Oh, let us be true, if we wish to be men!
 And let the heart gleam from the point of the pen
 For Humanity's children — if only we would,
 'Twould bind us together in true brotherhood.

'Twas years filled with mystery that caused man to dread
 Futurity's wondrous sphere of the dead;
 Yet brave, doubting minds found a wondrous prize
 And a bright light illumined their clear-seeing eyes.
 Now we find doubt is fleeing, and still it has gained
 All the freedom we're holding, unshackled, unchained.
 Doubt has broken the yoke; it has shattered the creed;
 It has laid our foundation and planted the seed.

Doubt hath entered a river, this river is Time;
 Let progress keep beating a march most sublime;
 Let your actions speak loudly, for truly 'tis said,
 Creeds are declining, but still are not dead;
 The key to the door of mystery is doubt;
 When it enters myth falters and mystery walks out.
 With Mystery still waiting, Myth whispers, "I see
 Doubt hath opened our door with his wonderful key."

For the Torch of Reason.

Manual Labor and the Professions

BY B. F. UNDERWOOD.

Says the Philadelphia Times:

The tendency of young men in this country to embark in the learned professions with no especial aptitude for anything except avoiding manual labor, is constantly on the increase. It is much to be deplored, for to such, failure is almost the inevitable result. The trouble with all these young men is that they do not understand the dignity of manual labor. They do not realize that honors and fortune may be more readily realized outside of these so-called learned professions than in them, and that it is just as honorable to swing a hammer or to hold a plow as it is to make a speech in court or amputate a limb.

This is true. All useful work is honorable. Furthermore, the demand for skilled labor in the me-

chanical and manufacturing industries increases, in ordinary times, with the growth of population and with the progress of the age. The demand is for the greatest skill, for the most efficient workmanship. Workmen of inferior ability, especially in times of depression when the labor market is overcrowded, stand a poor chance for steady employment. In every kind of work which requires more than mere automatic or routine movement, the need is for workmen of trained eye and hand, of disciplined mind and discriminating intelligence. The complaint today is that so many are deficient in these qualities.

This fact shows that young men in learning trades and arts must aim at excellence in their chosen work, that they must master its details and qualify themselves to be specialists in their line. To do this they must cultivate habits of concentration, of accuracy of observation and execution, promptness and punctuality, as well as those moral habits which in the "struggle for life" are of immense advantage to their possessors. Superior skill and efficiency will insure employment and good pay. Parents interested in the success of their sons, as well as young men themselves, should appreciate the great importance of these facts.

In these times skilled labor is specialized, and there is not the opportunity that there once was for all-around workmanship, but there is the possibility of great excellence in all the divisions of labor as well as in the specialties of the various professions. The young man must make up his mind what he will do and then go at it with the determination to do the best work possible, and not be content merely to "learn a trade," and get through with the work with the least thought and application possible.

Labor, when it is intelligent, when the laborer is interested in it and can watch and see its results, is ennobling, because then, however commonplace, it is in a degree at least, artistic; but labor without art is, as Ruskin says, brutal, merely an exertion of strength.

What is said here in regard to young men applies as well to young women who desire to engage in work which will insure good pay. They must aim at excellence. Of the many women (and men too) who offer their services as stenographers and typewriters, for instance, not one in twenty is capable of doing the work in an office where first-class service of this kind is re-

quired, and paid for according to efficiency.

In the professions only skill commands large fees. The proportion of inefficient lawyers and doctors whose earnings during a year are far less than those of a common mechanic, is very large, and the number that is annually starved out of these professions, after attempting to follow them, is greater than most people suppose.

It is the more skillful members of these professions who are successful practitioners. True, there are lawyers and doctors who get rich by their practices rather than by their practice, but these are exceptions, and they are very liable, sooner or later, to get into trouble. The rule is that, in whatever profession a man engages, to be successful he must have the skill as well as the personal qualities needed and in demand in that profession.

Neither in what is called the educated professions, nor in the skilled trades and arts of industry, can thoroughness and efficiency be attained without certain failures in business and in life. The sooner our young men and young women who are entering the avenues open to all skillful workers, understand this, the better it will be for them.

The Deist's God Contradictory.

By Jean Meslier.

The theist exclaims, "Be careful not to worship the ferocious and strange god of theology; mine is much wiser and better; He is the Father of men; He is the mildest of Sovereigns; it is he who fills the universe with his benefactions!" But I will tell him, do you not see that everything in this world contradicts the good qualities which you attribute to your God? In the numerous family of this mild Father I see but unfortunate ones. Under the empire of this just Sovereign I see crime victorious and virtue in distress. Among these benefactions, which you boast of, and which your enthusiasm alone sees, I see a multitude of evils of all kinds, upon which you obstinately close your eyes. Compelled to acknowledge that your good God, in contradiction with Himself, distributes with the same hand good and evil, you will find yourself obliged, in order to justify Him, to send me, as the priests would, to the other life. Invent, then, another God than the one of theology, because your God is as contradictory as its God is. A good

God who does evil or permits it to be done, a God full of equity and in an empire where innocence is so often oppressed; a perfect God who produces but imperfect and wretched works; such a God and His conduct, are they not as great mysteries as that of the incarnation? You blush, you say, for your fellow beings who are persuaded that the God of the universe could change Himself into a man and die upon a cross in a corner of Asia. You consider the ineffable mystery of the Trinity very absurd. Nothing appears more ridiculous to you than a God who changes Himself into bread and who is eaten every day in a thousand different places.

Well! are all these mysteries any more shocking to reason than a God who punishes and rewards men's actions? Man, according to your views, is he free or not? In either case your God, if he has the shadow of justice, can neither punish him nor reward him. If man is free, it is God who made him free to act or not to act; it is God, then, who is the primitive cause of all his actions; in punishing man for his faults, He would punish him for having done that which He gave him the liberty to do. If man is not free to act otherwise than he does, would not God be the most unjust of beings to punish him for the faults which he could not help committing? Many persons are struck with the detail of absurdities with which all religions of the world are filled; but they have not the courage to seek for the source whence these absurdities necessarily sprung. They do not see that a God full of contradictions, of oddities, of incompatible qualities, either inflaming or nursing the imagination of men, could create but a long line of idle fancies.—[Superstition in All Ages.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men. Although they have been preaching universal love, the Christian nations are the warlike nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. Above all other arts the Christian world has placed the art of war. A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians. Neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit which was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast.—[Ingersoll.