

# TORCH OF REASON.



## When Life is Fled.

BY HARVEY PORTER LAYTON.

THE eulogy is spoken by the tongue  
Of a flatterer, and naught is said  
But grateful words. He tells not  
The truth,  
But mars it with flattery.  
He leaves my friends to study my life,  
For he has gotten nothing from it,  
And it is the eulogy spoken over others  
Of my clan. May my friends  
Think no longer of it, and let it pass.

With my mortal remains,  
They gaze upon my dormitive face  
That has no smile for them—  
Nor look of scorn to life's departure—  
No! my lips move not,  
Nor does my tongue speak,  
And my eyes, sealed with a sedative,  
Will not open to meet the vision  
Of my weeping friends, who sadly  
And quietly tread, that the dead  
Might not hear their footsteps.  
My friends who see me stilled  
Will think of deeds done, seed sown.  
Some touched heart may hesitate  
At the casket's side and stoop  
Above my cold form to drop a tear,  
An unnoticed tear upon my face.

My mother will not be there  
Where mourners tread, for it would be  
A mother who would feel the sorrow,  
Deepest sorrow for her child.  
All think as they see me motionless  
Within the casket's snowy brim,  
That they soon shall sleep  
The peaceful sleep of death,  
For the tints upon their cheeks shall  
fade,  
And lips grow pale to worthless waste.

The lid is laid upon the casket  
And fastened for an eternal end,  
And with slow and easy step  
My carriers consign me to my grave.  
The mound and the marble  
Conceal and reveal the beginning  
And the finish of a mortal  
Who loved life dearly,  
For it was his soul.

## Justice.

IN FIVE PARTS.

BY F. L. OSWALD.

PART. III.—PERVERSION.

JUSTICE, in the pristine pagan sense of the word, was too natural and too manly a virtue to find much favor with the whining moralists of Antinaturalism. The truth which a modern philosopher has condensed in the sarcasm that "an honest god is the noblest work of man," was recognized already by the ancient historian who observed that "every nation makes its gods the embodiments of its own ideals," though, happily, it is not always true that "no worshiper is better than the object of his worship." To some degree, however, the moral standards of the Mediterranean pagans were undoubtedly prejudiced by the lewd propensities of their Olympians, and it is equally certain that the extravagant injustice of Christian fanatics can be partly explained, as well as condoned, by

the moral characteristics of their dogma-God. According to the accepted doctrine of the Middle Ages, the administrative principles of that God seemed to imply a degree of moral perversity which even the poetic license of a sauer age would have hesitated to ascribe to a fiend. The same deity whom the creed of the Galilean church makes the omniscient creator of all the physical and moral instincts of human nature, nevertheless was supposed to punish with endless torture nearly every free gratification of those instincts, and demand a voluntary renunciation of a world which his own bounty had filled with every blessing and adorned with every charm of loveliness. The God who endowed us with faculties of reason, of which a moderate share is sufficient to perceive the absurdities of the Christian dogma, nevertheless avenges the repudiation of that dogma as an "unpardonable sin against the authority of his sacred word." The most natural action, the eating of an apple, is made the pretext of the supposed fall of man and of penalties affecting not only his progeny, but all his fellow creatures, and even the lower products of organic nature; while the greatest of all imaginable crimes, a deicide, the cruel murder of a god, is accepted as a basis of redemption. The doctrine of salvation by grace made the distribution of punishments and rewards a matter of mere caprice. The dogmatists of predestination distinctly taught that the "elect" were not saved by their own merits, but by an inscrutable, incalculable and gratuitous act of divine favor, while others were as inevitably foredoomed to an eternity of woe. By faith alone, or by faith and the ceremony of immersion, the guilt of a sinful life could, withal, be cancelled in the eleventh hour, while the omission of that ceremony doomed even children, nay, newborn babes, to the abyss of hell-fire. "There is no doubt," the Solomon of the Patristic Age assures us, "that infants, only a few spans in length, are crawling on the bottom of hell," a doctrine which the historian of Rationalism justly stigmatizes as "so atrocious, and at the same time so extravagantly absurd, that it would be simply impossible for the imagination to surpass its insanity." Yet for more than twelve hundred years Christians were in danger of being burnt at the stake for refusing to attribute such infamies to their creator.

## The Metaphysics of Buddhism.

B UDDHA never recognized or spoke of spirits, or of anything which he could not substantiate, and he frequently advised all to do the same. He said, in effect:

"Busy not yourselves anxiously and unprofitably

"About other worlds, gods, souls, spirits, or demons;

"Of thy coming hither and whence; of the soul's existence;

"And if it be, of its going hence, when and unto where.

"Naught is proven; all is unknown and unknowable,

"Whilst the duties of life are substantial and urgent."

He certainly "knew of no spirit entity in man, so there could be no such thing as an imistic vision in (true) Buddhism." "A sublimated edition of man located in the sky is entirely foreign to true Buddhism; and . . . Gotama deprecated as futile all speculations into the ultimate origin of things." "Buddhism therefore knows nothing of any immaterial existence," i.e., of anything spiritual or theistic divorced from matter.

Its great doctrine of Karma, as now voluminously written about, has become, says Prof. Rhys Davids: "A desperate expedient, a wonderful hypothesis, an airy nothing, an imaginary cause beyond the reach of reason," and is therefore clearly not what Buddha taught or intended. It is now a metaphysical abstraction—a confused combination of the doctrines of Heredity and Works, teaching that the accumulated effects or results of our lives pass down to all future times—surely the grandest incentive to a diligent, good and noble life offered to man in any religion.

The foundations of Buddhist literature rest on the assumption that life is worth living . . . that only ignorance leads to pain and sorrow, and that knowledge leads to their extinction. "I am not aware," says General Strong, "that the joys of life are wholly ignored by Buddhists. I may add, after living seven years in Burma—a land of the purest Buddhism in the world—that there is no better or happier race than the Burman. The priest, or rather Phungyi, is an ascetic, but, unlike the Hindu and Christian saints, Buddhists attach no merit to such practices, unless they conduce to the banishment of ignorance. Asceticism as a thing in itself is useless; only life and conduct, not creeds, rites, or professions, here avail."—[Ex.]

## Unwelcome Children.

F OR thousands of years men and women have been trying to reform the world. Why have the reformers failed? I will tell them why.

Ignorance, poverty, and vice are populating the world. The gutter

is a nursery. People unable to support themselves fill the tenements, the huts, and hovels with children. They depend on the Lord, on luck, and charity. They are not intelligent enough to think about consequences, or to feel responsibility. At the same time they don't want children, because a child is a curse, a curse to them and to itself. The babe is not welcome, because it is a burden.

These unwelcome children fill the jails and prisons, the asylums, and hospitals, and they crowd the scaffolds. A few are rescued by chance or charity, but the great majority are failures. They become vicious, ferocious. They live by fraud and violence, and bequeath their vices to their children.

Against this inundation of vice the forces of reform are helpless; and charity itself becomes an unconscious prompter of crime. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind. The question is, can we prevent the ignorant and the poor and the vicious from filling the world with their children? Can we prevent this Missouri of ignorance and vice from emptying in to the Mississippi of civilization? Must the world forever remain the victim of ignorant passion? Can the world be civilized to that degree that consequences will be taken into consideration by all? Passion is, and always has been, deaf. These weapons of reform are substantially useless. Criminals, tramps, and beggars and failures are increasing every day. The prisons, jails, poorhouses, and asylums are crowded. Religion is helpless. Law can punish, but it can neither reform criminal nor prevent crime. The tide of vice is rising. The war that is now being waged against the forces of evil is as hopeless as the battle of the fireflies against the darkness of night.

There is but one hope. Ignorance, poverty and vice must stop populating the world. This cannot be done by moral suasion. This cannot be done by talk or example. This cannot be done by religion or law, by priest or hangman. This cannot be done by force, physical or moral. To accomplish this there is but one way. Science must make woman the owner, the mistress, of herself. Science, the only savior of mankind, must put it in the power of woman to decide for herself whether she will or will not become a mother. This is the solution of the whole question. This frees woman. The babes that are born will be welcome. They will be clasped by glad hands to happy breasts. They will fill homes with light and joy. I look forward to the time when men and women, by reason of their knowledge of consequences, of the morality born of intelligence, will refuse to perpetrate disease and pain—will refuse to fill the world with failures. When that time comes the prison walls will fall, the dungeons will be flooded with light and the shadow of the scaffold will cease to curse the earth.—[Robert G. Ingersoll.]