



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

VOL. 3.

SILVERTON, OREGON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1899.

NO. 47.

The Coward.

BY HATTIE TYNG GRISWOLD.

Who fails to strike when man's
assailed,
For fear of selfish pain or loss;
Who weakly cowers when Right is nail'd
Upon the proud world's heavy cross;
Who fails to speak the splendid word
Of bold defiance to a lie;
Whose voice for truth is faintly heard
When party passions mount on high—
That man's a coward; and no deeds
Of valor done on fields of strife
Can prove his courage. Battle meeds
Are naught beside a tested life.

Who dallies with temptation's lure,
Nor hurls his tempter to the ground;
Who champions not the weak, the poor,
Whom power and strength with cords
have bound;
Who crouches 'neath opinion's lash,
Nor dares his own true thought pro-
claim;
Who never, with an impulse rash,
Ran on before his time, is tame,
Is coward, and no work uprears
Which lasts. Truth's edict from on
high
Says courage shall outlast the years,
But every coward soul shall die.
—[The Commonwealth.]

Who Is An Atheist?

BY HORACE SEAVER.

Men tremble at the very name
of an Atheist. But who
is an Atheist? The man
who brings mankind back to reason
and experience, by destroying the
prejudices inimical to their happi-
ness; who has no need of resorting
to supernatural powers in explain-
ing the phenomena of nature.

It is madness, say the theolog-
ians, to suppose incomprehensible
motives in nature. Is it madness
to prefer the known to the un-
known? to consult experience and
the evidence of our senses? to ad-
dress ourselves to reason, and pre-
fer her oracles to the decision of
sophists who even confess them-
selves ignorant of the God they an-
nounce?

When we see priests so angry
with Atheistical opinions, should
we not suspect the justice of their
cause? Spiritual tyrants! 'tis ye
who have defamed the divinity by
besmearing him with the blood of
the wretched! You are the truly
impious! Impiety consists in in-
sulting the God in whom it be-
lieves. He who does not believe in
a god cannot injure him, and can-
not of course be impious.

On the other hand, if piety con-
sists in serving our country, in be-
ing useful to our fellow-creatures,
and in observing the laws of nature,
an Atheist is pious, honest and vir-
tuous when his conduct is regulat-
ed by the laws which reason and
virtue prescribe to him.

It is true, the number of Atheists
is inconsiderable, because enthusi-

asm has dazzled the human mind,
and the progress of error has been
so great that few men have courage
to search for truth. If by Atheists
are meant those who, guided by ex-
perience and the evidences of their
senses, see nothing in nature but
what really exists; if by Atheists
are meant natural philosophers,
who think everything may be ac-
counted for by the laws of motion,
without having recourse to a chim-
erical power; if by Atheists are
meant those who know not what a
spirit is, and who reject a phantom
whose opposite qualities only dis-
turb mankind—doubtless there are
many Atheists; and their number
would be greater, were the knowl-
edge of physics and sound reason
more generally disseminated.

An Atheist does not believe in
the existence of a god. No man
can be certain of the existence of
an inconceivable being, in whom
inconsistent qualities are said to be
united. In this sense many theo-
logians would be Atheists, as well
as those credulous beings who pro-
strate themselves before a being of
whom they have no other idea than
that given them by men, avowedly
comprehending nothing of him
themselves.—[Occasional Thoughts.]

Need of Toleration.

BY W. H. MAPLE.

The only infallible criterion of
right action, and the only
true foundation of human
legislation, is natural law. To dis-
cover what that underlying law of
nature is, should be the great aim
of every legislator and ethical
teacher.

The writer would not leave ques-
tions as to what is or what is not
in conformity with natural law, to
individual judges or courts; but
would crystalize into legislation the
aggregate wisdom of the body of
the people, and recognize and en-
force this, as the governing law,
until changed by the people,
through peaceable and established
methods.

It is right for individual men to
differ in opinion. Such difference
is natural, unavoidable and neces-
sary. Friction between mind and
mind, occasioned by the expression
of conflicting thoughts, brightens
and polishes such minds as certain-
ly as friction polishes pieces of met-
al when rubbed together. Human-
ity at large owes its past progress
in knowledge wholly to such fric-
tion; and if better things are to be
attained in the future they must

come through the same process.

Without mental activity, without
the mixing and compounding of
ideas, no individual could gain any
great knowledge — could not, cer-
tainly, discover any general truth,
law, or rule of action; and it is
equally certain that without the
free interchange of thoughts be-
tween individuals the greatest pos-
sible progress can not be made by
collective man. And it should al-
ways be borne in mind that it is
only in the aggregate that man
is great or does great things.

The greatest individual, alone, is
narrowly limited, both in power
and time for action. He is "of
few days and full of trouble" He
thinks a few thoughts, adds a trifle
to the knowledge of the race, and
passes away. Mankind, however,
as a whole, is an organism that en-
circles the world; is million-eyed,
looking out into the universe in all
directions at the same time; lives
for ages—possibly for a number of
years so great as to be incompre-
hensible by a single mind. He
builds cities, establishes governments,
creates systems of philosophy,
weighs the earth and the other
planets as in a balance, measures
the distances of the more remote
heavenly bodies, and calculates
their positions in space a thousand
years ahead—utilizes nature's forc-
es, discovers her laws, and is fast
finding out the hitherto "secret
ways of God".—[No Beginning.]

Impulses To Progress.

BY DR. LUDWIG BUCHNER.

As may easily be imagined it
is precisely the first step in
the path of civilization that
must have been the most difficult
and therefore the slowest. On the
contrary, with every fresh advance,
both the means and the desire to
overcome the difficulties or obsta-
cles in the way must have been in-
creased. With regard to the ex-
ternal obstacles to progress no
doubt the large and powerful ani-
mals of the Diluvial period must
have disappeared and the mighty
geological catastrophes of that age
must have run their course, before
man could obtain sufficient space
and opportunity for the develop-
ment of his powers and the wider
diffusion of his race upon the earth.
And even after all this had taken
place, impulses of some particular
kind would be required to rouse the
primeval savage from that sluggish,
inactive and unintellectual state in
which one generation after another

had sunk into the grave like the
beasts surrounding them, and to
force upon him, as it were, the nec-
essity of advancing in civilization.

Among impulses of this kind I
reckon prominent natural pheno-
mena, geographical or climatic
changes, the immigration of old or
irruption of foreign races, wars,
famines, expulsions from dwelling
places, migrations, the commence-
ment of relations of traffic and com-
merce, the gradual improvement of
language, etc., and especially the
rise of certain highly endowed in-
dividuals who possessed themselves
of a political or spiritual sove-
reignty.

Without any such impulses it is
possible that the savage state in
which our oldest ancestor lived,
might have persisted to the present
day. It is true that many people
talk about the existence of an in-
nate and necessary instinct of pro-
gress in human nature, and believe
that this instinct must always and
necessarily produce its due effect.
But in the presence of so many elo-
quent facts which testify to the con-
trary, it will be difficult for any one
with an unprejudiced judgment to
believe in such a necessity. Thus
not only are there people who have
remained stationary at the same
degree of culture from the very
dawn of history, but there are oth-
ers, such as the Chinese, who have
certainly attained a certain stage of
progress, but have then remained
without alteration, whilst we can
only find one comparatively small
group of nations which has hitherto
been constantly engaged in a course
of progress and improvement. But
even this progress in them has not
always proceeded spontaneously
from within, but the impulse to-
wards it has come in historic times
only from without. We also see
those nations which were formerly
the greatest and most powerful and
endowed with the most advanced
civilization, such as the Egyptians,
Assyrians, Jews, Greeks, Romans,
etc., now in a state of almost com-
plete decay, whilst their place in
the scale of progress has been taken
by quite different peoples in other
lands. Thus it is quite conceiv-
able that the European primitive
man would perhaps never have
emancipated himself from his state
of rude servitude to nature, if im-
pulses from without, and especially
the occasional immigration of for-
eign races of a higher degree of cul-
ture, had not been brought to bear
upon him. Whether a complete
displacement or destruction of the
aborigines by the new-comers took
place under these circumstances, or
only a mixture and consequent
ennoblement of the native race, is
a question which can hardly be an-
swered directly, but the second case
is certainly by far the most pro-
bable.