

For the Torch of Reason.

"Eighty Years and More."

BY HELEN H. GARDENER.

Have you read the last book by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, that splendid old philosopher—outrider on the path of human progress? My husband and I have just been reading aloud to each other her "Eighty Years and More", and we are both charmed by its style and deeply interested in its substance.

Its steady flow of wit and gentle sarcasm is delightful. In all the years I have known and loved her it has been a wonder to me how she has "kept sweet"—has not been soured by the long struggle she has made for woman's freedom, and her right to live her own life in her own way without remaining in perpetual tutelage to man. It is all made clear in this book. She was saved by her keen sense of humor and her native wit—two of the greatest of blessings.

I have sometimes said, when oppressed by the sorrows and wrongs of the world, that had I not inherited a sense of humor I would have long since gone insane. For, with a lively imagination, those of us who see and think and feel the woes of those who suffer the worst cruelties of the world (which we daily seem to be a part of, in keeping it an inferno), we could not bear it if it were not for that other side of our natures, that safety-valve of sensitive souls, a sense of humor. That has kept Mrs. Stanton preeminently sane and sweet through all those years of contest before her greatness was grasped or appreciated by even those who were yearly reaping the benefits of her unequal struggle.

One of her chapters, however, made us wonder, amidst our laughter, if her slipping through life with a smooth temper and a suave spirit might not be due largely to that gum arabic and slippery elm diet in Kansas! Truly, the book is good for the blues. That chapter is funnier than Mark Twain. What a superb tribute she pays to "Aunt Susan" Anthony, and how glad we younger women are to know that both of them have lived to know that their work is like the soul of John Brown, "marching on" grandly and irresistibly and that the time is not so far off now when their names will stand in honor and glory beside those of Washinton, Lincoln and Ingersoll in the reverence of the lovers of freedom and liberty for man, woman and child. We are glad and happy to know that they have both lived to personally know and feel the love and admiration they have inspired in the noblest and best, and to be sure that their gratitude is given to them both.

Most delightful of all in her book is her absolute freedom from all cant and superstition, and the fact

that her mind has never ceased to travel onward into new light "even unto this present day." That is a rare quality in man or woman. Most people get their mental growth by the time they are fifty or so. After that they stand still or go into that state of inactivity or retrogression, variously called second childhood, or "conservatism."

Mrs. Stanton has simply gone bravely and sturdily on growing in grace and a sense of liberty and freedom and power, and an abiding self respect, and kept a youthful interest in, and a mature grasp upon, all new problems as well as upon old perplexities. That is superb. And I cannot recall at this moment six men of the past hundred years of whom it can be truthfully said. One fault I find with her book—the picture used as a frontispiece. It does not do her credit. It has a look that people who do not know her, would say, "Women who do things look like that. I should be afraid of her and I could not love her, however much I might admire her ability."

No, I don't like that picture of her to stand in front of that book. If she ever had that look I have never seen it, and I know that it does not convey the idea of her as she is and always was, a strong, sweet, high-bred, courtly, merry, tender, womanly woman. I want that frontispiece changed in future editions. The other pictures in the book are altogether lovely, including the one of that sturdy son on page two hundred and one. I don't know whether he is "my son Theodore" of whom she writes with such admiration and commendable pride, or whether he is Gerret or "Bob," but he is a fine chap, and I'm just glad she didn't make him take the tops and nails and bric-a-brac out of his trousers pocket before he posed for his picture. If she had we would have lost a part of the character of that boy.

The book should be in every public and private library which makes any claim to keeping abreast of the times. Its philosophy, its wit, its humor, its information and its rich fund of recollections make it of unique value to this and future generations.

I confess that, as a rule, "Reminiscences" are a drug in my mental market. Most of them are stupid in method and uninteresting in matter—or both. Those just put out by Mrs. H. put me to sleep. They are of the copy-book order, "Be good (as I am) and you will be happy." "Keep your face clean if you would be a lovely child," and equally profound and wise things. And the method. It is of the copy-book, copy-bookish. But Mrs. Stanton's is altogether delightful, and I congratulate her and the public that she has put so unique and interesting an experience in such charming form.

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"What's in a Name?"

BY D. PRIESTLEY.

Reverend Copeland has taken the trouble to correct the Oregonian in regard to Unitarian belief. He explains that Unitarians believe in Jesus the Christ—in Jesus the man—but not in Jesus the god. The Oregonian reminds him that Christ means divinely anointed and has no significance aside from the idea of the divinity of Jesus.

The idea is that Jesus was greased with sacred grease. His name, if he ever had a name, was Joshua. But as the character, as we have received it, is a Greek invention, it comes to us as Jesus. It became Jesus the Christ. Then "the" was omitted and he was called Jesus Christ, as if Christ was his surname. Then Jesus was omitted and he was called Christ.

There was once a man by the name of Alexander, son of Phillip of Macedon. Long after he was dead, to distinguish him from other Alexanders, he was called Alexander the Great. If historians or fabulists had omitted "the" and called him Alexander Great, it would have been strictly parallel with what ecclesiastical fabulists have done with the name of Jesus. Yet an extremely Liberal Unitarian seems to think what people believe about Jesus a matter of importance.

However short a man's religious creed may be, he seems to think himself wronged unless it is taken for granted that he believes something which is not supported by the slightest evidence. The very little that the Unitarian believes is just as far outside of the world of fact and objective reality as the creed of the most orthodox. The very idea of faith is the acceptance of some proposition upon authority of some priest or prophet without putting him to the trouble of proving it. Belief on evidence has never been supposed to have any merit. Even the ungodly will accept a proposition that can be proved. The pietist will testify as to gods and devils, heaven and hell, and other impossible entities and places just as emphatically as he will of the every-day facts of the real world. The sacred fabulists who wrote the gospels would describe a flock of angels in as commonplace a way as if they had been crows. They would give minute accounts of the conversations of devils, and their transference into pigs. They not only failed to respect plain, ordinary facts, but they were not even discriminating as compilers of myths.

It is because of this characteristic of piety that testimony in the interest of religion becomes absolutely worthless. As a preface to the Book of Mormon we have what is called the testimony of the three

witnesses and the testimony of the eight witnesses. These witnesses testify before a notary to having seen the gold tablets upon which the divine Book of Mormon was written. That is very much more than we have in authentication of any other sacred fables. And yet the whole thing is a "dead giveaway". The witnesses solemnly affirm that they "were permitted by the Lord Jesus Christ" to see these golden plates. That is proof, to the person of sense, that no golden plates were in sight. We do not have to be "permitted" to see what is before our eyes. And yet there is not as much proof that Joshua of Nazareth ever lived as there is of the existence of the gold tablets which contained the original of the Presbyterian preachers' novel, which was stolen by Sidney Rigdon and worked over into the Book of Mormon.

The Waning of Faith.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

I write you this to express my delight at the founding of the Liberal University of Oregon, and my earnest wish that it may grow into an extensive and permanent institution for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the promotion of rational morality. Rules of right doing, based on reason and science, must soon be formulated or the people will be left without a compass with which to steer their course of action. The old "Thus saith the Lord" precepts are fast losing their power over men; and in the future better reasons must be given for enjoining certain commandments than the bare statement of some old book that they were long ago promulgated by a supernatural "God."

Even the actual good that the "Bible" contains is more or less discredited now-a-days because of the popular disbelief in the claims of the church as to the source of the book. The claims that an infinite, personal God has said this or that, is at least triply improvable. In the first place, nobody knows that any such being has an existence. Then, second: If it is granted that such a God exists, no one knows, and in the nature of things can not know, that he ever said anything to man. Third: If it is conceded that there is such a being, and that he once talked to men, no person can now know just what he said. This is common sense, and it is just the line of thought that runs, however unconsciously, in the minds of millions of people at this time.

But few intelligent persons now will say, in good earnest, that they believe the doctrines of the Christian church. And most persons who prefer to believe the creeds, really look upon the statement that they must act in a certain manner be-