



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

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What Makes a Nobleman?

I DEEM the man a nobleman who acts a noble part,
Who shows alike by word and deed he hath a true man's heart;
Who lives not for himself alone, nor joins the selfish few.
But prizes more than all things else the good that he can do.

I deem the man a nobleman who stands up for the right,
And in the work of charity finds pleasure and delight;
Who bears the stamp of manliness upon his open brow,
And never yet was known to do an action mean and low.

I deem the man a nobleman who strives to aid the weak,
And sooner than revenge a wrong would kind forgiveness speak;
Who sees a brother in all men, from peasant unto king,
Yet would not crush the meanest worm, nor harm the weakest thing.

I deem that man a nobleman—yea, noblest of his kind,
Who shows by moral excellence his purity of mind;
Who lives alike through good and ill, the firm, unflinching man,
Who loves the cause of brotherhood, and aids it all he can.

—Selected.

Origin of Secularism.

BY G. J. HOLYOAKE.

NOT seeing in my youth what better I could do in a world where no one seemed infallible than to think for myself, led to my acquiring opinions different from other people. For a time it distressed me very much to find that I differed from the world, until it occurred to me that the world differed from me; then I had no more anxiety. Those who believe because others believe the same, are without claim to authority; while those who hold opinions because they have thought them out for themselves have used the same liberty I had taken, and I was guilty neither of presumption nor singularity. If the world differed from me, it was doubtless in self-defence, and if I differed from the world, it was in self-protection. And, as the world did not make any arrangement to answer for my opinions, it was but common sense that I should myself select the principles for which I was to be responsible.

My mind being given to open thought, I came to consider whether a simple theory of ethical duty was possible, which would save from indifference the increasing class of thinkers who regarded the theology then in vogue as vague, uncertain, irrelevant or untrue. It seemed to me that doing good was being good—that it was good to do good, and that if a God of Goodness existed,

he would count goodness as a merit; and if no such God did exist, goodness was the best thing men could do in this world. It was best for ourselves for its satisfaction and its example, and it was best for others, as they would profit by it. It was not less plain that there was no mode of doing good open to us so certain as by material means. What were called spiritual means could not be depended on; the preacher who put his trust in aid from above still found it necessary to take up a collection. Looking to Providence for protection against epidemics or famine still left a good deal for Physicians and Poor Law Guardians to do. Those who, like Mr. Spurgeon, could fill their meal barrels by prayer, had no un-failing formula they could patent of which the public could purchase the royalty. Clearly, Science is the only Providence which can be depended upon. Therefore, the morality of duty and material effort were the practical precepts of life, yielding preservation in this world and furnishing the best credentials to present in any other.

These principles being few, practical and demonstrable to any capable of observation and reflection, they constituted an independent code of conduct which, owing nothing to ancient revelations, adherents of such views were under no obligation to waste time in reconciling the truth of today with error of the past. Distinct from received opinion, the form here described is at least equal to it, for, in the words of the Oriental motto, "There is no religion higher than Truth." Secularism, it was hoped, would aid the "coming of the kingdom of man," to which Professor Clifford looked forward.

That this Secular form of opinion implies Atheism, is an error into which many fall. Secularism, like mathematics, is independent of theistical or other doctrine. Euclid did not ignore the gods of his day; he did not recognize them in geometry. They were not included in it. But if pagan theology undertook to contradict mathematical principle, Euclid might have joined issue thereupon. But his province was geometry. My argument is that a man can judge a house as to its suitability of situation, structure, surroundings and general desirableness without ever knowing who was the architect or landlord, and if as occupant he received no application for rent, he ought in gratitude to keep the place in good repair. So it is with this world.

It is our dwelling place. We know the laws of sanitation, economy and equity, upon which health, wealth and security depend. All these things are quite independent of any knowledge of the origin of the universe or the owner of it. And as no demands are made upon us in consideration of our tenancy, the least we can do is to improve the estate as our acknowledgment of the advantage we enjoy. This is Secularism.

Some societies, simply anti-theological, have taken the Secular name, which leads many unobservant persons to consider the term Secularism as synonymous with atheism and general church-fighting; whereas Secularism is a new name implying a new principle and a new policy. It would be an imposture term were it merely a new name intended to disguise an old thing.—[Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life.

For the Torch of Reason.

Things of the External World Not Facts of Consciousness.

BY CHARLES CLARK MILLARD.

IN a former article I asserted that Science included all the facts acquired by humanity and preserved to the present time. Although many of these facts may be unclassified, it is because of the incompleteness of Science, and there is a place for every fact which that fact only can fill. And it follows that all the real facts of philosophy belong to Science. By philosophy, I mean what has been known as "Metaphysics," or "Mental Philosophy," and is now called Psychology, and not the new Psychology, which is the branch of Physiology that treats of the function of the brain and nervous system.

Philosophy is a theory based on the assumption that "Phenomena are facts of consciousness," and the inference that they are, or may be, nothing more; and what may be a "necessity of philosophic thought" may be of little importance to humanity, for the assumption and inference may lack proof and the theory may be false. Before modern science had a beginning, great schemes of philosophy had been thought out and brought to maturity; and as exact science has steadily, and in this century more rapidly, grown, so in the same ratio has philosophy declined.

Its end is in view. It is not probable that another system of

philosophy will be written, not because that of Herbert Spencer is perfect, but because all philosophy is discredited. What is to be the fate of philosophy? Prof. Jordan says: "All of Philosophy that is true will become a part of Science; the remainder must perish."

At the present time, Science leaves no vacant place for Philosophy to fill. The objective vibrates, or reflects vibrations; the surrounding media continue and extend the vibrations, and these vibrations cause "nerve vibrations" within the living organism—the subject. Then we feel the vibration when it reaches the brain, and can reproduce, or remember, it; and thus we get the facts of consciousness. There is resemblance all the way along this telegraph line. For instance, a bell is ringing, vibrating; the air vibrates like the bell, the auditory nerve vibrates like the air, and the "gray matter" receives the vibrations, and I feel them and call the feeling sound. And I know by the sound and previous experience that the line is in order and working, and at the further end an object exists, having a certain size, shape and quality, and that it is being rung.

Now, the sound—the fact of consciousness—is not an entity, not a substance, and certainly not a thing in itself. It is a property of the subject, which has arisen from the general property of irritability, and its function is to present the object to the subject. That it may be pleasant or painful, is a provision of nature for the preservation of the organ and the species. The facts of consciousness are the numerous dispatches which come to us from the external world, and when our end of the line is in good working order and the receiving operator is sane, they are really and practically true.

These conclusions are neither antiquated nor speculative; they are among the facts of science, and are confirmed by the latest discoveries in Physiology. M. Charles Richet says, in the *Revue Scientifique* (see *Lit. Digest*, Feb. 17, p. 212): "Now it is very likely, and I shall try to prove this, that the vibrations in the external world act on our sense-organs by producing in us another form of vibration necessary for the existence of perception and sensation. The living creature, by the fact of his own vibrations, is the receptacle, the microcosm, on which at each moment the

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