

TORCH OF REASON.



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

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Humanity.

BY J. JOHNS.

HUSH the loud cannon's roar,
The frantic warrior's call!
Why should the earth be drenched with
gore,
Are we not brothers all?

Want, from the wretch depart!
Chains from the captive fall!
Sweet Mercy, melt the oppressor's heart;
Sufferers are brothers all.

Churches and sects, strike down
Each mean partition wall!
Let love each harsher feeling drown;
For men are brothers all.

Let Love and Truth alone
Hold human hearts in thrall,
That we our work at length may own,
And men be brothers all.
—[Secular Songs.]

The Difference.

BY GEORGE CHAINEY.

MANY have bent the knee this day to gods, creations of the imagination in the skies, hungering and thirsting to become more like those to whom they ascribe every excellence. The fears of ignorance and the craft of priests have mingled so much that is utterly unworthy with what is worthy in these ideals that the worshipper is degraded and cursed instead of elevated and blessed. While we abhor the object of worship, pity and respect the worshipper, still we can not but reverence that inward hunger of the heart that leads them to look above them, seeking goodness, as the flowers turn hungering and thirsting toward the light and dew of heaven. But for us the skies are depopulated. We no longer strain our eyes to see gods, any more than we think of looking for fairies when we take a walk in the woods. But that does not keep us from looking for the sweet wild-flowers that fill the air with fragrance, or for some new vista of beauty through the leafy avenues. Yea, the absence of all belief in these mystical beings has only prepared us the better to discern the worth of Nature and to drink deeper draughts of inspiration from her perennial springs of beauty and truth.

So, though we bend not the knee of craven fear in our temple of liberty, utter no fulsome eulogy to unseen and supernatural beings, yet our hearts and minds turn, hungering and thirsting, like the flowers to the sun, toward all worth, truth, justice, or beauty in man or nature. Though denying all religions, yet we are more than religious. Though scorning every form of prayer, yet we are more than prayerful. Though

chanting no psalms, yet the sentiments that here exhale their fragrance should lift us on their wings into the spirit and harmony of the blending music of wisdom and love. Though blinded not with the dazzling glory of gods nor of supernatural saviors, yet every strong and true man and woman is for us a savior, and every principle that underlies the rights and joys of the race worthy of the supreme loyalty of our hearts and minds.

To reverence, to love, and to understand the worth of another, whether living or dead, is not to flatter. No one can truly understand the worth of man but the Liberal. Every church is founded on the degradation of man. Every one who enters a church to join in the worship must leave his manhood at the door. Though he have walked uprightly among men, been a loving husband, a faithful father, a kind friend, divided his bread with the hungry, and comforted the afflicted, yet all that must be renounced, that he may give a jealous god all the glory, and say, "We beseech thee, good Lord, have mercy upon us, most miserable sinners." We honor and respect ourselves. With the true patriot and reformer, whose country was the world, and to do good his religion, we can unite to honor every other patriot and reformer whose life has been consecrated to the great and divine service of humanity. In the words of Carl Heinzen, we can say:

"'Twas Freedom that my spirit fired and strengthened,
'Twas Truth that my heart's springtime kept and lengthened,
And Nature fed me silently my fill.
Not by base arts and flattery sought I favor,
My speech ne'er of hypocrisy did savor,
Nor open truth held I as contraband.
The torch of thought I have kept brightly flaming;
Toward high endeavor have kept boldly aiming.
And never thought it shame to be a man."

—[The Infidel's Pulpit.]

The French evangelical missionaries on the Zambesi river, Egypt, report the baptism of the heir to the throne of the country—Litia, son of Lewanika. He has been a professed Christian, "except for one or two lapses". After these lapses they put him on probation. If he keeps all right henceforth, he will be safe for the kingdom of heaven. But there is not the least evidence that Litia, son of Lewanika, knows anything about the faith he is accepting. It is English, and that is all he knows.—[Ex.]

The Old and The New Magic.

BY DR. PAUL CARUS.

THE very word magic has an alluring sound, and its practice as an art will probably never lose its attractiveness for people's minds. But we must remember that there is a difference between the old magic and the new, and that both are separated by a deep chasm, which is a kind of color line, for though the latter develops from the former in a gradual and natural course of evolution, they are radically different in principle and the new magic is irredeemably opposed to the assumptions upon which the old magic rests.

The old magic is sorcery, or, considering the impossibility of genuine sorcery, the attempt to practice sorcery. It is based upon the pre-scientific world-conception, which in its primitive stage is called animism, imputing to nature a spiritual life analogous to our own spirits, ghosts, goblins, gods, devils, ogres, gnomes, and fairies. The old magic stands in contrast to science; it endeavors to transcend human knowledge by supernatural methods and is based upon the hope of working miracles by the assistance of invisible presences or intelligences, who, according to this belief, could be forced or coaxed by magic into an alliance. The savage believes that the evil influence of the powers of nature can be averted by charms or talismans and their aid procured by proper incantations, conjurations and prayers.

The world-conception of the savage is long-living, and its influence does not subside instantaneously with the first appearance of science. The Middle Ages are still full of magic, and the belief in it has not died out to this day.

Goethe introduces the belief in magic into the very plot of Faust. In his despair at never finding the key to the world-problem in science, which, as he thinks, does not offer what we need, but useless truisms only, Faust hopes to find the royal road to knowledge by supernatural methods. He says:

"Therefore from Magic I seek assistance,
That many a secret perchance I reach
Through spirit-power and spirit-speech,
And thus the bitter task forego
Of saying the things I do not know—
That I may detect the inmost force
Which binds the world, and guides its
course;
Its germs, productive powers explore,
And rummage in empty words no more!"

The old magic found a rival in science and has in all its aspects,

in religion as well as in occultism, in mysticism and obscurantism, treated science as its hereditary enemy. It is now succumbing in the fight, although its last vestiges which prove toughest in their survival, viz., the notions of an animistic God-conception and an animistic soul-conception, are still haunting the minds of ultra-conservative people. In the meantime a new magic has originated and taken the place of the old magic, performing miracles as wonderful as those of these best conjurers of former days, nay, more wonderful; yet these miracles are accomplished with the help of science and without the least pretense of supernatural power.

The new magic originated from the old magic when the belief in sorcery began to break down, viz., in the eighteenth century, which is the dawn of rationalism and marks the epoch since which mankind has been systematically working out a scientific world-conception.

Magic originally means priest-craft, being that which characterizes the Magi, the Iranian priests. It is probable that the word is very old, being handed down to us from the Greeks and Romans, who had received it from the Persians. But they in their turn owe it to the Babylonians, and the Babylonians to the Assyrians, and the Assyrians to the Sumero-Akkadians.

"Imga" in Akkad meant priest, and the Assyrians changed the word to "maga," calling their high priest "Rab-mag;" and considering the fact that the main business of priests in ancient times consisted in exorcising, fortune-telling, miracle-working, and giving out oracles, it seems justifiable to believe that the Persian term, which in its Latin version is "magus," is derived from the Chaldean and is practically the same; for the connotation of a wise man endowed with supernatural powers has always been connected with the word "magus," and even today magician means wizard, sorcerer, or miracle-worker.

In primitive society religion is magic and priests are magicians. The savage would think that if the medicine-man could not work miracles, there would be no use for religion. Religion, however, does not disappear with the faith in the medicine man's power. When magic becomes discredited by science, religion is purified. We must know, though, that religious reforms of this kind are not accomplished at once but come on gradually in slow process of evolu-