

# TORCH OF REASON.

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

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for the Torch of Reason.

## Life's Journey.

BY MINNIE PAGE HOSMER.

Up the mountain's craggy crest,  
Two children travelled hand in hand;  
On they trudged, nor stopped to rest,  
Thro' brush and brier, o'er rock and sand.

Upward, toward the topmost heights  
They ever kept their longing eyes;  
Thinking only of the sights  
Their fancy painted in the skies.

All unknown the other side—  
A wonder-land it must be there!  
Naught but the brightest could abide  
In that sweet realm of beauty fair.

Thus they dreamed, and pictures drew,  
Until the topmost point was gained;  
There they paused to meet the view  
From that grand height they had attained.

Far and wide, on either hand,  
One longing, lingering glance they threw,  
But they found no wonder-land;  
Their dreams—not one of them was true.

Thus they realized at last  
That they had lost the things they sought.  
REAL joys they'd hurried past  
While searching for—they knew not what!

Travelers on life's rugged way,  
If you would journey not in vain,  
Treasure well each hour, each day,  
This path you ne'er can tread again.

## Free Schools.

BY R. G. INGERSOLL.

It is also my desire to free the schools. When a professor in a college finds a fact, he should make it known, even if it is inconsistent with something Moses said. Public opinion must not compel the professor to hide a fact, and, "like the base Indian throw the pearl away." With the single exception of Cornell [It too is now in the hands of the enemy.—ED.], there is not a college in the United States where truth has ever been a welcome guest. The moment one of the teachers denies the inspiration of the Bible, he is discharged. If he discovers a fact inconsistent with that book, so much the worse for the fact, and especially for the discoverer of the fact. He must not corrupt the minds of his pupils with demonstrations. He must beware of every truth that cannot in some way be made to harmonize with the superstitions of the Jews. Science has nothing in common with religion. Facts and miracles never did, and never will agree. They are not in the least related. They are deadly foes. What has

religion to do with facts? Nothing. Can there be Methodist mathematics, Catholic astronomy, Presbyterian geology, Baptist biology, or Episcopalian botany? Why, then, should a sectarian college exist? Only that which somebody knows should be taught in our schools. We should not collect taxes to pay people for guessing. The common school is the bread of life for the people, and it should not be touched by the withering hand of superstition.

Our country will never be filled with great institutions of learning until there is an absolute divorce between Church and School. As long as the mutilated records of a barbarous people are placed by priest and professor above the reason of mankind, we shall reap but little benefit from church or school.

Instead of dismissing professors for finding something out, let us rather discharge those who do not. Let each teacher understand that investigation is not dangerous for him; that his bread is safe, no matter how much truth he may discover, and that his salary will not be reduced simply because he finds that the ancient Jews did not know the entire history of the world.

Besides, it is not fair to make the Catholic support a Protestant school, nor is it just to collect taxes from Infidels and Atheists to support schools in which any system of religion is taught.

*The sciences are not sectarian. People do not persecute each other on account of disagreements in mathematics. Families are not divided about botany, and astronomy does not even tend to make a man hate his father and mother. It is what people do not know, that they persecute each other about. Science will bring, not a sword, but peace.*

Just as long as religion has control of the schools, science will be an outcast. Let us free our institutions of learning. Let us dedicate them to the science of eternal truth. Let us tell every teacher to ascertain all the facts he can—to give us light, to follow Nature, no matter where she leads; to be infinitely true to himself and us; to feel that he is without a chain, except the obligation to be honest; that he is bound by no books, by no creed, neither by the sayings of the dead nor of the living; that he is asked to look with his own eyes, to reason for himself without fear, to investigate in every possible direction, and to bring us the fruit of all his work.

At present, a good many men engaged in scientific pursuits, and who have signally failed in gaining recognition among their fellows, are endeavoring to make reputations among the churches by delivering weak and vapid lectures upon the "harmony of Genesis and Geology." Like all hypocrites, these men overstate the case to such a degree, and so turn and pervert facts and words that they succeed only in gaining the applause of other hypocrites like themselves. Among the great scientists they are regarded as generals regard sutlers who trade with both armies.

Surely the time must come when the wealth of the world will not be wasted in the propagation of ignorant creeds and miraculous mistakes. The time must come when churches and cathedrals will be dedicated to the use of man; when minister and priest will deem the discoveries of the living of more importance than the errors of the dead; when the truths of Nature will outrank the "sacred" falsehoods of the past, and when a single fact will outweigh all the miracles of Holy Writ.

Who can over estimate the progress of the world if all the money wasted in superstition could be used to enlighten, elevate and civilize mankind?

When every church becomes a school, every cathedral a university, every clergyman a teacher, and all their hearers brave and honest thinkers, then, and not until then, will the dream of poet, patriot, philanthropist and philosopher, become a real and blessed truth.—[Some Mistakes of Moses.

## Bigotry.

BY JOHN LORD PECK.

LOOK at the Christian world, or that part of it which has most life, divided up into numberless little sects, all alike spending their energies in defending or propagating their peculiar doctrine, and all incapable till lately of uniting any good work, and now only partially, because of the estrangement resulting from bigotry in regard to these doctrines—doctrines as utterly empty and worthless for all practical purposes as chestnut burrs of last year's growth. Even the heretical and socialistic sects and parties, that have been produced by the Protestant tendency, continue to despise and hate each other, with

the same old bitterness of their progenitors.

So how even in almost every little dispute or debate each of the contestants comes out with a firmer adherence to his own opinion than he had before; while both parties have more or less ill-feeling, wounded pride, or positive hatred, instead of a closer approach to the actual truth that possibly lies somewhere between them.

Think still further of the thousand and one petty difficulties arising every day between husbands and wives, parents and children, relatives, friends, playmates, workmates, neighbors—associates of every kind, because everybody has this disgusting conceit and unwillingness to learn of another—a contemptible pride that is nothing but pretension, claiming knowledge it does not possess, and an ability to form correct opinions when it has no such ability. Why should not every person who desires to be decently honest despise such a fraud, and cast it utterly out of the mind?

Narrowness, illiberality, and prejudice are simply other forms and names of the same selfish pride and ignorant conceit which is the essence of bigotry. One special manifestation of it requires a few words. It is that which takes the form of inhospitality to new thoughts, discoveries, or inventions. To be inhospitable to a friend, or one in need of physical comfort, is acknowledged to be mean and reprehensible. But refusal to entertain thought or discovery, that may be of immense good to humanity, is not considered any offence; it is stupid, of course, a long time afterward, when the new thing has gained a recognition, but nothing worse; nobody condemns the immorality of it; though the effect is the same as if every one knowing of the newcomer in the world of thought had deliberately conspired to destroy it, intending to prevent the world's receiving its benefits. The devilish character of such a design, and the devilishness of a blind, stupid, bigoted rejection of new truth are in effect precisely the same. The crime and the blunder are one, and it is the same mean spirit of perverse selfishness which permits one as much as the other. In that same spirit some of you who read may say that this is new doctrine and you have a right to reject it. New, or at least unfamiliar, it may be; but such a reason for rejecting it is to an honest thinker no excuse at all.—[The Kingdom of the Unselfish.