

TORCH OF REASON.



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

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The Atheist's Grave.

I WANDERED among the churchyards' dead
On a sunny Sabbath day,
And I marked a grave where the sexton
said
An Atheist's ashes lay.
A headstone pointed the lowly spot.
Inscribed with his age and name,
But other memorial there was not
To draw either praise or blame.
Yet the daisy there was as fresh in its
hue,
The elm did as lightly wave,
And the springtide grass as greenly grew
As over the Christian's grave.
And I marked that the sunbeams through
the trees
Fell as lightly on the sod
As if its inmate had been of these
Who had lived in the faith of a God.
And over my mind the reflection came
Of a new and startling kind,
'Twas whispered within me that man
may blame
Where nature no fault can find.
The bigot's curse from the Gothic pile
On the skeptical few may fall,
But Nature extends, with a mother's
smile,
Her pity and love to all.
—[Truth Seeker.]

Man.

BY PROF. LUDWIG BUCHNER, M. D.

There are many marvels—but there is
no greater marvel than Man.—Sophokles.

God was my first, Reason my second,
Man my third and last thought. Man
alons is and shall be our God. Outside
man is no salvation.—L. Feuerbach.

THE same laws which in the
macrocosm, or universe,
rule also in the microcosm,
or the world of man, in whose
existence, being and thinking the
universe is, as it were, reflected and
contemplated. That man with all
his eminent qualities and faculties
is not a work of God but a product
of Nature, like all his fellow-
creatures, and has proceeded from
a natural and gradual evolution and
self-education—this momentous
and notorious truth can only be
doubted at this day by the ignorant
or deliberately obstinate. During
the short space of scarcely more
than forty years the researches on
the early history of the human
race on earth have grown into a
comprehensive science and have
shown that mankind has behind it
a past in comparison with which
the historical period is but very
brief. As regards the biblical
myths and fairy-tales about the
world and man having been created
some 5000 or 6000 years ago by a
creative fiat, they are really too
radically at variance with the most
notorious facts and results of the
whole geological, archæological and
archæogeological science, to be
made the subject of a serious con-

troversy. Not only has it been
shown by the results of countless
excavations, as well as by the
investigations of Egyptologists,
based on the reading of hieroglyphic
scrolls, that in the venerable land
of the Nile an admirable and high-
ly developed culture and civiliza-
tion existed at a period to which
the Bible only traces the creation
of the first man; but the researches
of archæogeology as the union of
geological and archæological science
is called, have proved beyond doubt
that man was a contemporary of
the huge mammals of the Diluvian
age, which are now either extinct
or have emigrated from Europe;
that he existed in one of the earlier
periods of the formation of our
earth, during which part the
surface of the globe had a very
different geographical configuration
and was subject to different climatic
conditions from those that exist at
the present time. Nay, there are
a number of theoretical arguments,
the full exposition of which would
take up too much space, and which,
taken in conjunction with the
results of many archæogeological
researches—though there may yet
be some controversy on the in-
ferences to be drawn from these—
make it appear in the highest
degree probable that the existence
of man, or rather of his earliest
beginnings on earth, goes back to
a time that must be computed by
geological, and neither by historic
nor prehistoric standards of
measurement. By all appearances
it will not be long before the
existence of the so-called tertiary
man—that is to say, of a human
or anthropoid creature, existing in
a later or earlier division of the
last great period of formation of
earth—will be looked upon with as
much certainty as is now the
existence of the prehistoric or
diluvial man which had been
doubted for such a length of time.
Of course this would not affect the
ancient belief in the principle of
perfection, according to which man
is the last and as yet highest out-
come of the organic process of
evolution or graduated progression
on the stage of existence; for al-
though, as scholars are now forced
to admit, the antiquity of man on
earth must be measured by
hundreds of thousands of years,
this period is yet but exceedingly
brief when compared with the
many millions of years which the
earth, with her organized in-
habitants, has lived through, in her
gradual progress of development;

so that the existence of man on
earth must upon all hands be con-
sidered as comparatively very
short. Then again, modern science
ranges among exploded fables that
idea that used to be entertained on
the strength of religious myths,
and according to which man came
out of the creator's hand as a ready-
made product, endowed with all
the qualities of the race. The un-
changeable principle of the order
of the world, based upon natural
and mechanical causality, acts and
works in the same way in the
gradual genesis and formation of
the highest of all organized beings
as it does in the formation of the
least and lowliest.—[Force and
Matter.]

Motives.

BY HORACE SEAVER.

IT IS the motive, more than
anything else, that renders an
action good or bad. However
fair the appearance of an action
may be, if the right motive be
wanting, the action is hollow; if
the motive be a bad one, the action
is rotten to the core. Who cares
for an outward seeing, or show of
affection unless the heart be also
on the same terms? Who does not
prize a rough outside, when it covers
an honest inside, more than the most
fawning fondness from a heart that
is cold and false? Thus it is right
to insist on the principles for their
own sake, because the principles
give their value to the action, not
the action to the principles, for
they are but dross. The principles
are the gold on which is to be
placed the stamp, and if the gold
is not good, the stamp, though it
often deceives the people, gives it
no real worth; as he who gives the
queen's image on base metal is
punished for his forgery.

An Imagined, Invisible King.

BY JEAN MESLIER.

THERE is a vast empire
governed by a monarch,
whose conduct does but
confound the minds of his subjects.
He desires to be known, loved,
respected, and obeyed, but he never
shows himself; everything tends to
make uncertain the notions which
we are able to form about him.
The people subjected to his power
have only such ideas of the
character and the laws of their
invisible sovereign as his ministers
give them; these suit, however, be-

cause they themselves have no idea
of their master, for his ways are
impenetrable, and his views and
his qualities are totally incom-
prehensible; moreover, his ministers
disagree among themselves in
regard to the orders which they
pretend emanated from the
sovereign whose organs they claim
to be; they announce them diverse-
ly in each province of the empire;
they discredit and treat each other
as impostors and liars; the
decrees and ordinances which they
promulgate are obscure; they are
enigmas, made not to be under-
stood or divined by the subjects
for whose instructions they were
intended. The laws of the invisible
monarch need interpreters, but
those who explain them are always
quarreling among themselves about
the true way of understanding
them; more than this, they do not
agree among themselves; all which
they relate of their hidden prince
is but a tissue of contradictions,
scarcely a single word that is not
contradicted at once. He is called
supremely good, nevertheless not a
person but complains of his decrees.
He is supposed to be infinitely
wise, and in his administration
everything seems contrary to reason
and good sense. They boast of his
justice, and the best of his subjects
are the least favored. We are
assured that he sees everything,
yet his presence remedies nothing.
It is said that he is the friend of
order, and everything in his
universe is in a state of confusion
and disorder; all is created by him,
yet events rarely happen according
to his projects. He foresees every-
thing, but his foresight prevents
nothing. He is impatient if any
offend him; at the same time he
puts every one in the way of offend-
ing him. His knowledge is admired
in the perfection of his works, but
his works are full of imperfections,
and of little permanence. He is
continually occupied in creating
and destroying, then repairing
what he has done, never appearing
to be satisfied with his work. In
all his enterprises he seeks but his
own glory, but he does not succeed
in being glorified. He works but
for the good of his subjects, and
most of them lack the necessities
of life. Those whom he seems to
favor, are generally those who are
the least satisfied with their fate;
we see them all continually revolt-
ing against a master whose great-
ness they admire, whose wisdom
they extol, whose goodness they
worship, and whose justice they
fear, revering orders which they
never follow. This empire is the
world; its monarch is God; His
ministers are the priests; their
subjects are men.—[Common
Sense.]