

TORCH OF REASON.

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

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Transmutations.

TIME flies and brings its transmutations. We Advance from age to age, and centuries Recurring bring us face to face with hopes. With duties, and with rights unknown to men Who lived their day before us, and who fought Their fight of faith. It is for us to tread The path that they have opened, to embrace Their goal, become impressed with all the spirit That urged them on to hate the bad and cleave Unto the good. As modern circumstance Impels, let Liberals walk worthy, too, Of their grand cause, the cause of all mankind.

—[Courtland Palmer.]

Honesty.

FREETHOUGHT MAGAZINE OF '83.

WHAT the world needs just now more than anything else is a revival of honesty, or more properly speaking, an advancement in that direction, especially in the religious world. It is very difficult for the Christian clergy to be strictly honest in their public utterances. Some time since I was riding in the cars in company with Col. Ingersoll, and I introduced a Methodist minister to him. About the first thing the preacher said to the Colonel was, "Mr. Ingersoll, do you believe in a future life? I have heard some say you do, and some say you do not."

Col. Ingersoll replied in his pleasant style, "I don't know whether there is a future life or not. Do you?" The minister hesitated a moment and then said, "I think there is a future life." Ingersoll then said, "I do not ask you what you think, but what you know about it." The clergyman again hesitated, and Col. Ingersoll went on to say: "I will not embarrass you, my friend. I see the difference between you and me is this: I do not know whether there is a future life or not, and I always say so. I see that you do not know, and you do not appear to be honest enough to say so. When the clergy become perfectly honest, they and I will not differ very much."

When I was last in Chicago I went to hear Rev. Dr. Swing preach. In referring to Agnosticism he said in substance: "There is a new party or sect, known as Agnostics—people who affirm they do not know whether there is a God or a future life or not; but that class of persons will never be very numerous, for but few people will ever give up the belief in God and a future existence. As for myself," said the

speaker, emphatically, "I almost know there is a God and a future existence." Thus Prof. Swing, while declaiming against Agnosticism, virtually admitted that he was one. For to "almost know" is not to know. The truth is, as Frederick A. Hinckley says in a late address of his: "What we want at this hour, and we want it not less in the pulpit than in the counting room, the office and the hall of legislation, is a square, upright and downright manhood and womanhood, which will say precisely what it thinks, regardless of consequences, in language which will convey one and the same meaning to all men."

And we want people so honest that when they don't know a thing they will bravely say, "I don't know;" and that is Agnosticism.

No Creation.

BY PROF. LUDWIG BUCHNER, M. D.

"The universe, containing all that exists, has been created neither by a God nor by a man, but has always existed and will ever remain a vivifying fire, being kindled and extinguished according to definite laws."—[Heraclitus of Ephesus.]

FORCE is not an impelling God, not an essence separate from the material substratum of things. A force not united to matter, but floating freely above it, is an idle conception. Nitrogen, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, sulphur and phosphorus possess their inherent qualities from eternity."—Moleschott.

"Matter is not like a carriage, to which the forces, like horses, can be put or again removed from. A particle of iron is, and remains, the same, whether it crosses the horizon in the meteoric stone, rushes along in the wheel of the steam engine, or circulates in the blood through the temples of the poet. These qualities are eternal, inalienable and untransferable."—Dubois-Reymond.

"No force can arise from nothing."—Liebig.

"Nothing in the world justifies us in assuming the existence per se of forces, independent of the bodies from which they proceed, and upon which they act."—Cotta.

No force without matter—no matter without force! Neither can be thought of per se; separated, they become empty abstractions. Imagine matter without force, and the minute particles of which a body consists, without that system

of mutual attraction and repulsion which holds them together and gives form and shape to the body; imagine the molecular forces of cohesion and affinity removed, what, then, would be the consequence? The matter must instantly break up into a shapeless nothing. We know in the physical world of no instance of any particle of matter which is not endowed with forces, by means of which it plays its appointed part in some form or another, sometimes in connection with similar or with dissimilar particles. Nor are we in imagination capable of forming a conception of matter without force. In whatever way we may think of an original substance, there must always exist in it a system of mutual repulsion and attraction between its minutest parts, without which they would dissolve and tracelessly disappear in universal space. "A thing without properties is a non-entity, neither rationally cogitable nor empirically existing in nature" (Drossbach). Force without matter is equally an idle notion. It being a law admitting of no exception that force can only be manifested in matter, it follows that force can as little possess a separate existence as matter without force.

Nothing but the changes which we perceive in matter by means of our senses could ever give us any notion as to the existence of power which we qualify by the name of force. Any knowledge of them by other means is impossible.

What are the philosophical consequences of this simple and natural truth?

That those who talk of a creative power, which is said to have produced the world out of itself, or out of nothing, are ignorant of the first and most simple principle, founded upon experience and the contemplation of nature. How could a power have existed not manifested in material substance, but governing it arbitrarily according to individual views? Neither could separately existing forces be transferred to chaotic matter and produce the world in this manner, for we have seen that a separate existence of either is an impossibility. The world could not have originated out of nothing. A nothing is not merely a logical, but also an empirical, non-entity. The world, or matter with its properties, which we term forces, must have existed from eternity, and must last forever—in one word, the world cannot have been created.

Attention!

The Important Matter.

BY TH. RIBOT, REV. HENRY FRANK, T. B. WAKEMAN.

Psychology of Attention.

BY TH. RIBOT.

THERE are two well-defined forms of attention: The one spontaneous, natural; the other voluntary, artificial. The former—neglected by most psychologists—is the true, primitive and fundamental form of attention. The second—the only investigated by most psychologists—is but an imitation, a result of education, of training and of impulsion. Precarious and vacillating in nature, it derives its whole being from spontaneous attention, and finds only in the latter a point of support. It is merely an apparatus formed by cultivation, and a product of civilization.

Attention is a state that is fixed. If it is prolonged beyond a reasonable time, particularly under unfavorable conditions, everybody knows from individual experience that there results a constantly increasing cloudiness of the mind, finally a kind of intellectual vacuity, frequently accompanied by vertigo. These light, transient perturbations denote the radical antagonism of attention and the normal psychical life. The progress toward unity of consciousness, which is the very basis of attention, manifests itself still better in clearly morbid cases, which we shall study later under their chronic form, namely, the "fixed idea," and in their acute form, which is ecstasy.

The normal condition is plurality of states of consciousness, or—according to the expression employed by certain authors—polyideism. Attention is the momentary inhibition, to the exclusive benefit of a single state, of this perpetual progression; it is a monoideism. But it is necessary clearly to determine in what sense we use this term. Is attention a reduction to a sole and single state of consciousness? No; for inward observation teaches us that it is only a relative monoideism; that is, it supposes the existence of a master-idea, drawing to itself all that relates to it, and nothing else, allowing associations to produce themselves only within very nar-