



TORCH OF



REASON.

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

SILVERTON, OREGON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, P. M. 1901

Goethe's Lodge Symbol.

Carlyle's Introduction to the Poem.

My ingenuous readers, we will march out of this Third Book with a rhythmic word of Goethe's on our lips; a word which perhaps has already sung itself, in dark hours and in bright, through many a heart. To me, finding it devout yet wholly credible and veritable, full of piety yet free of cant; to me, joyfully finding much in it, and joyfully missing so much in it, this little snatch of music, by the greatest German Man, sounds like a stanza in the grand Road Song and Marching Song of our great Teutonic Kindred, wending, wending, valiant and victorious, through the undiscovered Deeps of Time! He calls it Mason-Lodge—not Psalm or Hymn:—

SYMBOLUM.

Des Maurers Wandeln,
Es gleicht dem Leben,
Und sein Bestreben,
Es gleicht dem Handeln
Der Menchen auf Erden.

Die Zukunft decket
Schmerzen und Glücke.
Schrittweis dem Blicke;
Doch ungeschreckt
Dringen wir vorwärtz,

Und schwer und ferne
Hängt eine Hülle
Mit Ehrfurcht. Stille
Ruhn oben die Sterne
Und unten die Gräber.

Betracht' siegenauer,
Und siehe, so melden
Im Busen der Helden
Sich wandelnde Schauer
Und erste Gefühle,

Doch rufen von drüben
Die Stimmen der Geister,
Die Stimmen der Meister:
"Versäumt nicht, zu üben
Die Kräfte des Guten!"

"Hier winden sich Kronen
In ewiger Stille,
Die sollen mit Fülle
Die Thätigen lohnen!
Wir heissen euch hoffen!"

THE SYMBOL.

The Mason's ways
Are types of life:
And all his strife
Symbols the days
Of man on earth.

The future must hide
Its joy and sorrow:
Stepwise the Morrow
Undaunted to bide,
We press ever on.

Heavy and afar
Hangs the veil, fraught
With reverence: naught
Saith above the star,
Naught beneath the grave.

Consider it near—
See! thence ever starts
Within hero's hearts
Ever changing fear,
And earnest feelings.

Yet from yonder call
The spirit's voices—
The Master's voices:
Use mindful of all
The powers of the good.

"Here crowns are aweaving
In eternal stillness,
Always with fullness
The active rewarding:
We bid you: Work and Hope!"

"Immortality" Hear the Other Side.

BY JOHN FISKE.

[The Torch has presented in late numbers, the chapters in Prof. Ernst Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe," against the notion of a post-mortem personal immortality. In the last number it presented the Human, Social and Altruistic immortality of Goethe, Comte and the Constructive Liberals of the world. Now we are asked, "Is there another side?" Yes. The other side is the old "Revelation" and modern "Spiritualism." On them The Torch has frequently thrown its light. "But is there nothing that pretends to be scientific?" Yes. Here is an extract from Prof. John Fiske, author of "The Cosmic Philosophy," and many works on Science, Philosophy and American History, including a School History of the United States which omitted the illustrious name of Thomas Paine. Ought not that omission to secure the author "immortality," in every possible way, old and new?

The following Extract is considered by many to be the very best remedy for the "Religious Nostalgia" which often attends the change from the old Religion of Faith to the new Religion of Science and Humanity. In this view, doubtless, the "Oregonian" recently re-published it, as we do now, and bits of it are often quoted. It will not stand the wear and wash of Haeckel's Science, as is pointed out on another page. It is the last wail and brave cry of the old Gods and spooks as they vanish in the twilight of the rising Science.]

IT is not likely that we shall ever succeed in making the immortality of the soul a matter of scientific demonstration, for we lack the requisite data. It must ever remain an affair of religion rather than of science. In other words, it must remain one of that class of questions upon which I may not expect to convince my neighbor, while at the same time I may entertain a reasonable conviction of my own upon the subject. In the domain of cerebral physiology the question might be debated forever without a result. The only thing which cerebral physiology tells us, when studied with the aid of molecular physics, is against the materialist, so far as it goes. It tells us that, during the present life, although thought and feeling are always manifested in connection with a peculiar form of matter, yet by no possibility can thought and feeling be in any sense the products of matter. Nothing could be more grossly unscientific than the famous remark of Cabanis, that the

brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. It is not even correct to say that thought goes on in the brain. What goes on in the brain is an amazingly complex series of molecular movements, with which thought and feeling are in some unknown way correlated, not as effects or as causes, but as concomitants. So much is clear, but cerebral physiology says nothing about another life. Indeed, why should it? The last place in the world to which I should go for information about a state of things in which thought and feeling can exist in the absence of a cerebrum would be cerebral physiology!

The materialistic assumption that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body, is perhaps the most colossal instance of baseless assumption that is known to the history of philosophy. No evidence for it can be alleged beyond the familiar fact that during the present life we know Soul only in its association with Body, and therefore cannot discover disembodied soul without dying ourselves. This fact must always prevent us from obtaining direct evidence for the belief in the soul's survival. But a negative presumption is not created by the absence of proof in cases where, in the nature of things, proof is inaccessible. With his illegitimate hypothesis of annihilation, the materialistic transgresses the bounds of experience quite as widely as the poet who sings of the New Jerusalem with its rivers of life and its streets of gold. Scientifically speaking, there is not a particle of evidence for either view.

But when we desist from the futile attempt to introduce scientific demonstration into a region which confessedly transcends human experience, and when we consider the question upon broad grounds of moral probability, I have no doubt that men will continue, in the future, as in the past, to cherish the faith in a life beyond the grave. In past times the disbelief in the soul's immortality has always accompanied that kind of philosophy which, under whatever name, has regarded Humanity as merely a local incident in an endless and aimless series of cosmical changes. As a general rule, people who have come to take such a view of the position of Man in the universe have ceased to believe in a future life. On the other hand, he who regards Man as the consummate fruition of creative energy, and the chief object of Divine care, is al-

most irresistably driven to the belief that the soul's career is not completed with the present life upon the earth. The Darwinian theory, properly understood, replaces as much theology as it destroys. From the first dawning of life we see all things working together toward one mighty goal, the evolution of the most exalted spiritual qualities which characterize Humanity. The body is cast aside and returns to the dust of which it was made. The earth, so marvelously wrought to man's uses, will also be cast aside. The day is to come, no doubt, when the heavens shall vanish as a scroll, and the elements be melted with fervent heat. So small is the value which Nature sets upon the perishable forms of matter! The question, then, is reduced to this: are Man's highest spiritual qualities, into the production of which all this creative energy has gone, to disappear with the rest? Has all this work been done for nothing? Is it all ephemeral, all a bubble that bursts, a vision that fades? Are we to regard the Creator's work as like that of a child, who builds houses out of blocks, just for the pleasure of knocking them down? For aught that science can tell us, it may be so, but I can see no good reason for believing any such thing. On such a view the riddle of the universe becomes a riddle without a meaning. Why, then, are we any more called upon to throw away our belief in the permanence of the spiritual element in Man than we are called upon to throw away our belief in the constancy of Nature?

For my own part, therefore, I believe in the immortality of the soul, not in the sense in which I accept the demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work. Such a belief, relating to regions quite inaccessible to experience, cannot of course be clothed in terms of definite and tangible meaning. For the experience which alone can give us such terms we must await that solemn day which is to overtake us all. The belief can be most quickly defined by its negation, as the refusal to believe that this world is all. The materialist holds that when you have described the whole universe of phenomena of which we can become cognizant under the conditions of the present life, then the whole story is told. It seems to me, on the contrary, that the whole story is not thus told. I feel the omnipresence of mystery in such