

and cannot have, actual knowledge. In the line, "we have no god to serve or fear," the word "have" should be *know* to make it logical.

Again, in another stanza the Agnostic bard says :—

"We have no master on the land,  
No king in air ;  
Without a manacle we stand,  
Without a prayer ;  
Without a fear of coming night,  
We seek the truth, we love the light."

There may be "a king in the air," for all we know, and it is quite beyond the neutrality of Agnosticism to say there is not. Again the word "have" should be *know*.

In another stanza—

"When cyclones rend, when lightning blights  
'Tis naught but fate ;  
There is no god of wrath who strikes  
In heartless hate.  
Behind the things that injure man  
There is no purpose, thought or plan."

The tumult of the skies may be "naught but fate." That is more than we know. Though it is reasonable to suppose that no God of mercy sets cyclones going or directs the lightning to blight, it is not within the province of an Agnostic to be certain about it. Instead of saying, "'Tis naught but fate," it would be consistent to say, "It *seems* naught but fate." Let us hope that there is no "God of wrath." Reason and morality justify us in thinking so, but not in saying so. The great difference between the philosopher and the theologian is that the lover of truth is not confident unless he has evidence to go upon ; whereas the disciple of theology is confident without it. Such lines as the following go beyond the limitations of certainty within which the Agnostic professes to keep :—

"Behind the things that injure man  
There is no purpose, thought or plan."

It would be enough to say, "There *seems* no purpose." To say there is none is to assume the same infinite knowledge which is the affliction of the priest.

In the two concluding stanzas of this noble poem, as in others, the whole philosophy of Agnosticism—its moderation, its questioning, its candor—is perfectly and gracefully expressed :—

"We do not pray, or weep, or wail ;  
We have no dread,  
No fear to pass beyond the veil  
That hides the dead.  
And yet we question, dream, and guess,  
But knowledge we do not possess.

"Is there beyond the silent night  
An endless day ?  
Is death a door that leads to light ?—  
We cannot say.  
The tongueless secret locked in fate  
We do not know—we hope and wait."

All Ingersoll's genius is seen in these lines—his penetration, his pathos, his matchless simplicity and force.—*Literary Guide*.