

away as the waves of time broke over her.

"I was a wretch indeed,—a blinded, passionate fool,—the victim of my own insensate wisdom, of what I called my shrewdness. After leaving her, I was only worse, more bitter in my disbelief. They looked only upon the meanest side of humanity, upon all its foibles and failings. My life has been a mockery, in spite of my successes. Now, I am stripped bare. My pride and my selfishness are gone. I have been a contemptible blunderer. I have crushed the flower that I might have worn as the eternal jewel of my soul. O Madeline, thou canst not hear, and yet thou art, I know. Death cannot dissolve thee into nothingness. Yet, whatever or wherever thou art, I choose thee for my angel, for the constant ideal of my life; and through thee, I will understand the worth of every human being, and the glory that there is in the least. Burnham, can you give me your hand, can you forgive me?"

"I thought once I could not,—only strike you to the ground, if I met you; for I despised you with my whole heart. If I had known who you were at first, I should have scorned you. I have learned, however, to like you. While I see your fatal weakness, and the source of your cruel act I can see that you are not wholly to blame; that this deep distrust has been bred in you by the religion of your fathers. It is the dread reaction from that cursed superstition that curses blood and brain and heart. What is orthodoxy as it was taught to you, as it is taught to thousands, but a most damnable infidelity to all that is most true and beautiful? Is not its foundation stone built upon the most cruel infamy? Does it not make God a devil and man a beast? Does it not stamp us with corruption? Does it not deny every natural grace, and make nature herself charnel-house, and every voice a discord? Does it not make the skies the dreary home of a dreary monster? Orthodoxy is the most terrible scepticism: it is the scepticism of cowardice and the infidelity of fear. You are its victim: and I pity you, as I pity a man coming from a prison-house pazed and weak, and hardly knowing how he walks, and tumbling blindfold into the pit. You have suffered, and yet you acted I suppose in a sort of sad sincerity; and what was so harsh and unmanly seemed right. I only hope that your manhood will now vindicate itself. If it does not, then I cannot be your friend; and I do not care to see you any more."

"I trust that I shall vindicate my manhood. I have been the victim of a hellish superstition, a savage theology, a barbaric, almost criminal religion. Years ago, I freed my mind from it. I saw how

foolish it was. I did not dream that it had such a power over my heart, like the coils of a hidden serpent, that is so deeply poisoned and was poisoning my blood. I did not know that it colored my veins of humanity, and made me despise men. Never did I as now so realize its infinite curse. It has robbed me of the most precious thing in life. It has made me act like a fiend. I will rise above it, and wring it from my heart as I have thrust it from my brain. I will strive for the simple faith that nature gives,—a faith that springs from her beauty as well as her terror, and is the foundation of human brotherhood. I take your hand. Believe me, in the presence of the undying dead, I swear to honor our humanity and believe in it, even though there is a devil called God to slander and defraud it. O Madeline, I take thy lesson to my heart. In the white radiance of thy death, thou shalt be to me a glad impulse. I am weak, and yet I will be strong."

"I know you well, and my heart's blood is in this hand-grasp. We pluck this jewel, trust in one another, from the brow of death; and it shall never lose its brightness."

With no prayers, no formal ceremony, no voice of a priest, the dead was laid away in the calm bosom of the hills. Flowers were strewn over the grave, and honest tears were dropped upon them. The body was gone to mingle with the eternal dance of atoms, and flash to new forms again with the ceaseless throb of life, while the spirit took its marble and shining seat in memory.

There was no need of any clergyman with his mockery of lies to soften the blow and speak of a better land. The human heart, touched by affection, bent before the simple majesty of death. It acknowledged the terror, but realized also the ineffable sweetness of a shrouded life. That life was beautiful still, though viewless; and, somehow the heart of nature seemed not so cruel as when first the blow was struck. Somehow, death softens as we become accustomed to its awful form; and, in the midst of crushing grief, sublime and tender emotions spring, as from the gloomy ooze springs the shining lily.

"Fare thee well, my sister," said Will, as he stood by her covered grave. "These hands can never touch thee again, nor these eyes see. Thou art gone, thy sweet voice is silent. Dust unto dust,—this is the end. I know nothing more, I can hope for no more. Earth hath taken thee to swallow up thine individual being. I have wept, but my tears are now dry; for in my heart there is a presence that can never go, in my brain there is a thought that cannot die. Thou art still a part of my glowing life,—not the shadow, but the substance of my very soul. In my love, thou

art immortal. I have not lost thee. O nature, from whence I come, to whom I go, thou hast plucked the flower of my life; but I will not complain. I accept thy law. While I live, I will rejoice in thy myriad glories; and, when I die, I only ask that I may be as peaceful as this."

To be Continued.

News and Notes.

The persistency and faithfulness with which christian people carry on their work is a good object lesson for Secularists. It is the "keeping constantly at it" that wins, and the friends of Secularism need not be discouraged that no seeming permanent good has been accomplished by traveling lecturers who visit our towns, on an average, about once in four or five years. We gratefully acknowledge, however, that traveling lectures have done much good, but if we desire to reap the greatest benefit from time and means expended, we must encourage the new plan of constructive local organizations with Secular Sunday schools. One needs but to understand it to realize the merits of it, and our people everywhere are ready and anxious for an organization in their own town or city. In a few years, by the aid of the Liberal University, we hope to supply each place with a competent Secular teacher.

On the evening of the 9th and 10th I delivered lectures at Coburg, Ore. There is a strong Liberal element here, Free Hall being crowded both evenings. Coburg is not far distant from Silverton, and friends there are very anxious that we visit them often and establish a local society. I promised we would do our best to send them a speaker at least once a month. With such splendid and able supporters of the cause as Mr. John Diamond and Enoch Coleman, there would be no trouble in maintaining a good Sunday school. I have not had the good fortune to meet before such a big-hearted, open-handed brother as "Uncle John," as Mr. Diamond is familiarly called. He is noted far and near for his many deeds of generous kindness, and though well along in the eighties, he is still hale and hearty and is constantly doing good. His jovial nature makes him a welcome guest everywhere, and it's a good sharp wit that gets the better of "Uncle John." To him is due much of the pleasure and profit of my visit. Mr. and Mrs. March at whose home I was "at home," are dear old family friends, and nothing was spared to make my stay a happy one. I am greatly indebted to them. We dined with Mr. and Mrs. Coleman and pleasant family and appreciated their hospitality. I cannot mention all the names of friends I had the honor to meet, but special mention is due Miss Goodale who

sang so beautifully, Mr. Eckenberger, who rendered a violin solo and Mr. Powers who kindly gave the service of himself and team to convey me from Eugene to Coburg and return. I would like to have spent a week with these good people.

Thursday I call on Prof. Chapman of the Eugene University, and am heartily greeted. I meet Dr. McKinney and our German friend Mr. E. Schivartzschild, and arrangements are made for a lecture on my return. I leave Eugene on the 1:49 a. m. train and have a long tiresome ride to Medford, where I speak Friday evening to a large audience at the opera house, despite the fact that a special excursion train takes most of the young people to Jacksonville to a social, the Masons have installation and two orthodox churches hold revivals. I meet a number of enthusiastic friends who exact the promise of another lecture as I return.

Saturday I go on to Ashland where a warm greeting awaits me. The splendid dinner, however has long since cooled the train being about 3 hours late. Mrs. DePeatt's home is opened to me and I enjoy the hearty welcome and brilliant conversation of this inveterate worker in our cause of liberty. Saturday evening the splendid opera hall is comfortably filled, nearly 300 people being present, and I have another good audience Sunday at 2:30 p. m. I secure twelve subscribers to the TORCH OF REASON and Little Candle which shows there are progressive people in this southern clime. Friends organize a choir and our meeting Sunday is delightful. Miss Mollie High recites "The Johnstown Flood" with credit to herself and Miss Lottie Pracht does good service at the piano. I am pleased to meet so many earnest Liberals. Ashland can be made one of the banner towns of Secularism in the state, and it will be. Let our friends rally and do all they can for the Liberal University which will in a few years be able to more than doubly repay them by supplying the long felt demand for local lecturers. The future is radiant with hope and joy and the tramp of liberty's legions is borne upon each passing breeze. Courage! faltering comrades. **NETTIE A. OLDS.**

Ashland, Feb. 15.

Nettie A. Olds' Lecture Dates.

Medford.....	Feb	19
Jacksonville.....	"	20-21
Central Point.....	"	22
Grants Pass.....	"	23-24
Roseburg.....	"	25
Cottage Grove.....	"	26
Eugene.....	"	27-28
Harrisburg.....	Mar	2
Albany.....	"	3-4