

Whilst these noble martyrs to Free-thought, these emancipators of men with their telescopes, scanned the spacious realms of star land in search of truths, they discovered the wonderful system by which the various worlds known to us revolve around their centre magnet the sun. They also saw and proved that this planet, mother earth was a planet, and with the other planets pursued the even tenor of her way, revolving through space around the sun also. But one thing they never saw in all the thousands of years of searching, and that was a gleam or shadow of those pearly gates, which the church teaches are situated above, in the realms of space, and for this and because they told what they knew, the church wrote across their noble brows "Infidel." Poor old orthodoxy, she never changes, but still leans on the rotten crutch of superstition, and though it is unmanly and cruel to strike a fallen foe, we will gently remind her that her blunted weapon "slander" like a boomerang may return to the hand that cast it forth. Our dead heroes it cannot harm more; neither can they defend themselves against it, but the living can and will always be ready when ever the lying tirades of orthodoxy are directed against their fair names.

If the reader will hunt up his authorities and references and compare the dates of modern inventions with those mentioned herein, he will then see readily that during the time now known as the Dark Ages, when christianity had the whole power of Europe and all the wealth at her beck and call, the christian world stood comparatively still. It will thus be seen that the Age of Ignorance commenced with the introduction of the christian religion.

H. D. BURROWS.

**News and Notes.**

The disadvantages of unorganized society is no where more apparent than in the secular ranks. People who from childhood have lived almost isolated and alone so far as society is concerned, become so accustomed to this kind of a life that it is often impossible to awaken them to a realization that we are really social beings. They take such delight in delving into the unexplored realms of nature or solving some perplexing problem in philosophy that they wonder why it is our young people are so "giddy" as not to find pleasure in "staying at home Sundays and reading some good book." And this disposition frequently runs to the extreme of making the individual a stumbling-block in the way of all social society in the town or community.

But the individual is not to be blamed. Such a disposition is not without sufficient cause. It is the

inevitable consequence of an isolated social existence. For years liberal people have fallen into the serious error of discarding the social as well as the superstitious part of religion. Content that a future heaven and hell were fanciful visions of a distorted brain, they have ignored the fact that the real heaven and hell are upon earth at the present moment, and that to gain the one and avoid the other is a part of our every day duties. Consequently their children have either been kept at home, or if they would have society, have gone to the orthodox churches and Sunday schools, and it is not to be wondered at that the vivid contrast between the social life of the church and the cold, philosophical life of the parent, leads the children to believe that christianity is preferable, and so hundreds of liberal children join the churches. This evil can only be remedied when the mass of liberal people realize their error, and local Secular societies and Sunday schools are maintained for the pleasure and benefit of the young.

Wednesday evening February, 17, I speak at Talent. Universal Mental Liberty hall is fully one mile from the depot, but I am fortunate to have an earnest friend in Mr. W. J. Dean, who, despite the almost impassable roads, meets me at the train and conveys me to his home. I at once realize that he and his wife are among the few fearless leaders in the cause of Freethought. The home is very pleasant. As we drive along through this beautiful and somewhat romantic strip of country, I am wondering where my audience is coming from, unless it be that the "woods and hills are alive with people," very few houses being in sight. When we meet at the hall, I am convinced that this is the fact, for a splendid audience of men, women and children are awaiting us. Before and after the lecture we have singing by the young ladies and the meeting is a pleasant one. It is thought a Sunday school can be organized, and I promise to come again Sunday afternoon for that purpose. Among the stalwart supporters are Mr. James Purvis and family, Mr. H. Goddard, Mr. Sam Robison and family, Mr. H. Stock and Mr. W. Beeson. Thursday evening they give me a party at Mr. Dean's and I meet nearly two dozen of the good friends, all of whom I cannot now name. I appreciated this expression of earnest friendship very much, indeed, realizing the people had to walk, many of them several miles to get here. The young ladies are talented and the evening is passed in social conversation and music.

On Friday evening I am again at Medford, and have a larger audience than before. The local or-

chestra and choir furnish the musical program which is much appreciated. Great interest is manifested in a local organization and I remain over Sunday for the purpose of organizing a Secular Sunday school. We meet at 10 a. m. The following officers are elected: Mr. Perry Stewart, Supt.; Miss Ella Rawlings, assistant Supt.; Miss Florence Toft, secretary; Mrs. Perry Stewart, treasurer.

There is much warmth and earnestness and no doubt but the Medford organization will lead in point of numbers in southern Oregon. I am sure much good will result. The officers are able and determined and many trustworthy citizens will support them. Let us build up a social and moral society in this beautiful and thriving town that will rank second to none in the state. I get subscribers to the TORCH and Candle and a couple of students for the University.

The train leaves Medford at 1:40, so I am able to reach Talent in time to organize there in the afternoon. We have a good attendance here and Medford will have to guard her laurels. Mr. W. J. Dean is elected Supt.; Mrs. A. Purves, assistant Supt.; H. H. Goddard, secretary; and H. Stock, treasurer. Mr. Dean is an able and experienced advocate of liberal principles and with the earnest support he is certain to receive the Talent Secular Sunday school is an assured success. Mr. Dean has the best private library I have seen.

With such progress as this, our friends everywhere ought to feel encouraged. There is an old adage: "We never know what we can do till we try," and a trial is all that is necessary to convince the progressive people of any community that the local Secular organizations are the pride and hope of the state. Let Oregon demonstrate the beauties of the system so thoroughly that every state in the Union will follow directly in her footsteps. We are pioneers in a glorious cause persecution and abuse will be heaped upon us, but those who stand it now will receive the love and gratitude of every liberty loving man and woman. Let us remember that we are building for the future, that we are sowing the seed for the harvest of coming generations. Nothing should daunt us. To the sturdy friends and helpers everywhere I send "good speed." NETTIE A. OLDS.

Talent, Ore.

**Chicago.**

ED. TORCH:—The secular union of this city is making splendid progress. Under the management of president Gammage and secretary Reichwald this organization will become a power against those who are endeavoring to make innocent amusement a crime one day in each week, to compel the read-

ing of the bible in the public schools, an infliction that our children are not compelled to endure now, and all other attempts of religious bodies to compel the individual to conform to their ideas of morality against his will and who do not see that the crime lies in the enforcing such laws and not in violating them. Honest people only need to see these things as they are. Blind prejudice, unreasoning faith and crafty self-interest are the great obstacles to be met and overcome.

Of the last three meetings, each was better than the one before. We had the splendid Paine Memorial followed a week later by a lecture on "Religion as a Social force," and at this meeting was introduced that great principle, the most powerful weapon in the hands of truth and the deadly foe of the church, free and open discussion for all who wish to speak. The last meeting was held in a splendid hall on the 18th floor of the Masonic Temple. Clarence S. Darrow was the speaker of the evening. The announcement that Mr. Darrow would speak brought out the largest crowd we have had so far and I don't suppose any thinking person would consider an hour wasted in listening to the splendid essay, "The Rubayyat" suggested by an old Persian poem, by an ancient Agnostic.

The union will meet in the Masonic Temple hereafter every Sunday at 8 p. m. J. B. B.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON: Enclosed you will find \$1.00 to pay for the TORCH. The first copy that I saw was handed me by your friend, J. E. Johnson, of Vale, Ore., with whom I had the pleasure of stopping over night. I met Michael Johnson, one of the oldest Freethinkers in Oregon. I also found that the little band of Freethinkers had been having a Sunday school and social gatherings every week during the winter that was very interesting so much so that its influence was felt for quite a ways around. Every family (except one who were Catholics) for ten miles, took part and the day school was pronounced the best in Malheur county, by the superintendent. The teacher who had just left for her home in the east although a member of the disciple's church when she came was so overcome by the freethought influence that she agreed to come back and teach their school the next time.

ALVA A. BRANTHOVER.  
Payette Idaho.

**Nettie A. Olds' Lecture Dates**

Roseburg.....	Feb.	25
Cottage Grove.....	"	26
Eugene.....	"	27-28
Harrisburg.....	Mar	2
Albany.....	"	3-4