

News and Notes.

After forty-five days of hard labor at "nothing" the Oregon legislators return to their respective homes, but the Secular soldier marches on in shade or shine, and our proud banner rises higher and higher on the staff of victory.

At no point in my journey have I been more cordially greeted than at Jacksonville, the beautiful Southern Oregon town, with its little houses and big history. Jacksonville is the county seat of Jackson county and the oldest town in this portion of the state. It is more of a historical than a business town, although many enterprising business people hold forth here. I enjoy walking about the place. The uneven stone pavements and ancient dwellings remind one that such a place might have been the birthplace of some romance hero or heroine. There are, however, many new and handsome residences, and Jacksonville is not "out of date" by any means. On Tuesday evening February 23 I speak in the court house. The spacious room is filled. Six young ladies constitute the choir and add much of interest to the program. I am surprised and delighted to meet so many warm supporters of the glorious cause here. The present county officials, as a body, are very broad, liberal men. I have the honor to meet Judge Crowell, who is well known as an reformer, Sheriff Barnes, and his office deputy Mr. E. E. Smith, also Mrs. Smith and little son Ernest. Mr. and Mrs. Plymale, at whose home I spend a pleasant three hours, are acknowledged leaders in literary and educational work, both having been for several years, reporters for leading state papers, and holding responsible positions in state educational associations. I meet the "Times" editor; also Dr. Robinson, Dr. Hinde, formerly of Forest Grove, Mr. A. M. Ford, and many other earnest friends whose names I cannot now recall. Jacksonville is a good field for secular work and a local society can easily be maintained.

Wednesday evening I come back to Medford where I take the overland train for Roseburg. Many friends are at the depot pleading for my hasty return. I feel confident that the Medford S. S. S. will develop into a splendid organization. A local christian minister said he would not have cared about my speaking there, had I not left a local organization behind. Why should a christian minister fear a local Secular organization? Is he not fortified in the faith? Is he not certain that his religion is true? Can the truth be destroyed? Is Satan the master of God? Then why fear opposition, why shrink from investigation? I fear too many are like the dear old lady who said "I want to believe the

christian religion whether it is true or not." But error cannot thrive when truth is left to combat it.

I was disappointed at Central Point. The man to whom my posters were sent, replied that he had "neither time nor inclination to attend to the matter." So I gave it up. Word came too late that a friend had gone ahead with the matter and that a large crowd was sorely disappointed. A similar misunderstanding occurred at Grant's Pass. I was unable to get a reply to my letter, in which I gave dates, so this point also was passed. The necessary delay in my mail on account of constant traveling must be taken into consideration, and those wishing to make dates must answer immediately. I very much regret having to miss Central point and Grants Pass, and hope at some future date to visit both places.

Thursday evening I am in the pretty little town of Roseburg. Nothing has been done toward the lecture, so I have to paint my own posters and advertise the best I can. Every public hall is engaged, but the county judge kindly gives me the use of the court house. After my bills are out, word comes that the senators and "great men" are to return from the legislature, and a grand rally and mass meeting is to be held in honor of their glorious triumph, and so of course the court house must be given up. I call the meeting early, but find by later mail that I can remain over another day, so I give way after a short talk as to the purpose of the meeting, and the "wise heads" take possession. I enjoy the several speeches setting forth the several degrees of abuse heaped upon the honest Americans, and the various ways and means by which the "Benson house" was prohibited from doing their duty as representatives of the Oregon voters. In the midst of them sat Dr. I. D. Driver, who was the last of the representatives to speak. It was my first opportunity of hearing this notorious "Infidel smasher," as he calls himself. Of course his remarks were not directed against the Infidels, but the opposition members of the legislature received his customary allowances of abuse, all being, as he said, "worse than the devil."

Friday evening the court room is again well filled, friends organize a choir, an organ is placed in the room, and the program is enjoyable. There is a strong liberal element at Roseburg and many came forward to express sympathy for the cause and wishes that a local organization might be established. Among the many friends I remember Mr. C. Y. Benjamin and Mr. Eddie, editors Plaindealer, a lively local paper; W. F. Benjamin and wife, venerable pioneers in the freethought ranks; Mr. and Mrs. T

Cannon, who did so much to make my visit pleasant; Mr. and Mrs. Toby, Mr. and Mrs. Frater, Mr. and Mrs. Talbott and charming daughter Annie, who kindly assisted in the music; Mr. L. D. Carle and a host of others who will unite their efforts to the end that a local S. S. may be maintained. I get several subscribers to the papers and the promise of two students.

Roseburg is especially noteworthy it being the location of the Soldier's home. I spend three hours in the home among those crippled old veterans. The Supt. Mr. W. H. Byars and splendid wife are very kind. I was shown through every department of the building and hospital. There are at present 75 in the main building and 10 in the hospital. Everything is exceptionally neat and clean, and without exception the soldiers speak only words of praise for the management of the institution. All are certainly well cared for. There is a library, a game room, and everything to minister as far as possible to the comfort of the soldiers. It made me sad and yet my heart was happy when we gathered about the organ after dinner and the voices of those old veterans blended in the thrilling and harmonious strains of the old war songs. We even gave three rousing cheers after singing "The Red, White and Blue." I recited a patriotic recitation and the tears streamed from many an eye. It was an hour never to be forgotten. I love those dear old soldiers;—love them because by the sacrifice of their youth and strength I am permitted to breathe the air of liberty. While our nation was young and weak they protected and guarded it with their own precious lives; now that they are old it is befitting that our nation in turn should protect and comfort them. I am proud and glad that Oregon has a Soldier's home. I leave Roseburg with many dear and happy memories. NETTIE A. OLDS.

Roseburg, Feb. 26, '97.

University Notes.

Examination again this week. Who will have the highest grades this time?

Over a dozen new books for the library so far this week.

The students were well pleased with the new specimen of rodentia brought to the University the 2nd inst.

Our students are beginning to learn that harmony*is heaven and are all working in unison to make our school what it ought to be.

Those who think that the time is not ripe to do constructive work are twenty five years behind the times. Our University proves that we are right in saying that now is the time.

The plans for our new University

building are now completed and are on exhibition in the window of Guiss' drug store. We expect to print a perspective view of the proposed building in the TORCH in the near future. Let us all do our best and have the building ready for occupancy by the beginning of the Fall term of school.

We have succeeded in securing the services of Miss Sophie Wolf as teacher of music and elocution in the Liberal University. Miss Wolf is well known here and her ability as instructor is beyond question. All desiring to take either of the above mentioned branches, please report at the University building Monday morning at 9 o'clock. Instruction will be given either in class or by private lessons.

Secular News.

The executive committee of the O. S. S. U. meets at Liberal Hall, Silverton, Ore., Sunday afternoon, March 7. Secularists interested in the work are invited to be present.

The Liberals of the Pacific Coast should patronize W. E. Jones, 291 Alder St., Portland, Ore. when in need of books. His line is complete. See his ad in this issue of the TORCH.

News reaches us of the death of Benjamin Forstner of Salem, Ore. Mr. Forstner has been a staunch outspoken Secularist for many years, and respected by all who knew him. It is with deep sorrow that we learn of his death. His many friends will miss him, and his good, kind, wife will mourn the loss of her dear companion. He lived a long, useful and well-spent life. The cause of Secularism, which he so highly prized will greatly miss him, but one by one our Mother Nature calls us to rest and all that are born must some day die.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON: Please find enclosed fifty cents for your paper six months. I wish to see the TORCH OF REASON prosper; I have read a few copies and like it very much. I find it necessary for teachers to be very conservative here in the South. Although our state law demands that the public schools be secular, our county examiner is requested to ask all applicants if he or she believes in a Supreme Being. When I answered that all-important (?) question, he took the liberty to explain to me that it meant God. A young lady who attended our Summer Normal last year, (one of the brightest pupils in school) applied for a school in Texarkana and was refused the position because she does not believe in the "divinity of Christ;" her friends secured the school for her later on.

Yours for truth,
EMMA B. LEE.

Fouke, Ark.