

Morton acknowledged it. It seemed as if he was the only one who really cared whether the boy was saved or not, who really felt that a great and terrible injustice was about to be done. He begged leave to speak for a few moments, for his heart was so full that he could not keep still.

Permission was granted. He began in a slow deliberate manner. He seemed to be pleading in a hopeless way. He told the facts, and showed that in spite of them, there was a possibility of the innocence of the prisoner. He then went on to point out, if the boy were innocent, what a terrible crime they would commit, if they took his life. He asked them to pity the youth, and let him go. He could hurt no one. Let him have a chance. "We cannot judge," said Morton, with burning eyes, "how dare we, when there is no danger! We need not do this for self-defense,—we a hundred against one poor little child. It is a shame for us to do this. Who saw him commit the deed? Oh, life is too sacred! We must not take it, unless we are compelled! We can be merciful, we can spare; and to be merciful is to be just! We need not put this boy's blood upon our hands! Better, better a thousand times let him escape, even if guilty, than to kill him, if he is innocent!"

In this strain, Morton went on. Gradually, he became vehement. His tones became stirring and magnetic. Every part of his body seemed to sway with the thought that he was uttering. His very soul was speaking in every word that he uttered. His language was a living spirit. Said one, speaking of it afterwards: He seemed to be transformed. He possessed us. His elocution was irresistible. I never heard anything like it, and never expect to again. It cannot be reported. It was like the rush of a torrent. It was like the touch of an electric force. He made us for the time being, feel as he felt; and it was impossible to convict the child."

Nothing indeed could be said or done after Morton closed. It was a wild dash of eloquence that swept everything before it, so entirely unexpected and unmediated, and yet so masterly. Prince Hal rejoined with only a few feeble words, and, without leaving their seats, the jury acquitted the prisoner.

"How can I repay you?" said Pete, as he clung to Morton.

"By coming to my tent at once, and preparing to leave this place at the shortest notice. There's danger yet. We've only got out of the jaws of the lion, and have a chance to run; and run we must."

"Well, I don't think I'll ever make another speech," said Jimmy. "What's the use, what does so much talk amount to? It's only so much gabble. When a man's in earnest,

then his talk amounts to something. Morton never claimed to be a talker, and yet, when it comes to the gist, he beats us all."

"I don't understand your faith in that boy," said Paddie. "You defend him as if he were your own child."

"Of course I do. Why shouldn't I? I believe him innocent; and I'd fight for a dog if I thought he was abused. I do hate injustice, and the world is full of it. I felt, when I was talking, that, if I didn't save that boy, the whole universe would tumble to pieces, and the devil would have us all. I saw in him all the innocence of the world, and against him all the injustice. If I had not saved him, I believe I should have died."

"You didn't convert Big Dick, though. He's beginning to growl already, and says the trial is a farce."

"I didn't expect to convert him, only to keep him still for a while. He sticks to lynching. That's the old style to him, and he don't like the new style of a trial by jury. I know he's fretting, and I know he's dangerous. Pete must leave camp this very night."

"You're right there," said Paddie, "and, even then I fear it will be too late. Where can we go? If they chase us, they'll catch us, a hundred to a half-dozen."

"We must play the fox as well as the lion. We must get Pete to a railroad station and send him to San Francisco."

"The nearest station is a hundred miles away. Can you strike that?"

"We might or might not, and having only an hour or two the start, the chances are that we'll be caught. Hullo, I hear Dick shouting now. A few more glasses, and they'll be ready to upset the trial by jury and take up the good old fashion of lynching."

"Well, then, the sooner we take French leave the better. I'm ready."

"We'll start at once then, and take the boy. Make for the Eldorado station; but, mind you, a mile or so out of town you must let Pete go."

"I don't understand that dodge."

"It's a good one though."

"Pete you are not afraid to do as I tell you?" said Morton.

"Oh no! I'll do anything," answered Pete.

"Well, then, when these gentlemen put you down out by Goose Creek, can you make your way all alone by the Buried Castle to Conscience Pass?"

"I will try to, and I won't be afraid."

"Well, take this revolver, if anything should happen. This is my plan? I want Bill and Paddie and Jimmy to take the trail to El Dorado; and, when they drop you, keep right on with speed, and if possible get there ahead of the pursuing party."

(To Be Continued.)

COMMUNICATIONS.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON: For the enclosed 25 cents, please send the TORCH OF REASON to the enclosed address. I hope in the near future to be able to add more names to your subscription list. I shall certainly try, for I believe it to be the duty of every earnest Secularist to use all honorable means for the good of the cause. We can not expect to accomplish the task we have undertaken unless we work. On looking around we find that our christian friends are organized; they are formed into a body; they are marching towards us with a solid front. We can not expect to oppose this force single handed; we MUST ORGANIZE.

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Yours for harmony,  
MORGAN P. GIFFORD.  
Council Valley, Idaho.

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I intend to come down to the University as soon as I am able. In the meantime I shall do all I can for the cause here by getting subscribers for the TORCH. I shall try and get some students for the University also. Yours for Free-thought vs Superstition.

R. O. WICKLUND.

Vale, Or.

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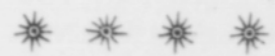
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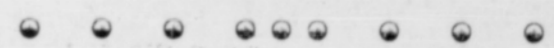
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