

Torch of Reason

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We request you to send us the names of Secularists who might become subscribers and we will mail sample copies.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 30, E. M. 297

Ho! For the Pacific.

Thinking that a trip to the seashore would do us good, and having some business matters to attend to at Tillamook City, we started out with a team to drive across the Coast Range last Thursday. The distance by the North Yamhill route, the one which we took, is about seventy miles and a very pleasant route it is, although in many places after reaching the mountain, the grades are rather steep which compels a conscientious person to walk, on account of the poor beasts of burden.

After leaving Silverton we travel through thirty-five miles of beautiful valley country to McMinnville, crossing the celebrated Willamette river at Wheatland, where there is a store and postoffice. Other small villages are passed on the way, but what strikes one most favorably is the great fields of golden grain, hops, and beautiful fruit which is so abundant this year as to break down many of the young trees unless they are propped up.

After passing through the thriving city of McMinnville we camped at a farm house and as it was a beautiful moon-light night we arose at 2 a. m. and journeyed on, getting to the mountains about 6 o'clock where we camped again, had a good rest, and ate our breakfast. Then came the climbing, up, up the mountains. The fresh mountain air, the exercise and the inspiring scenery all conspired to work one of nature's miracles and we feel that after all there would be some advantage in being a barbarian if we could be rid of civilization's duties and roam about like the Gypsies.

While toiling up one of the steep

grades our breath seemed to be getting short and everything turned black. A peculiar feeling came over us. We seemed to be shrinking, degenerating and time seemed to be rushing backwards and carrying us with it at a tremendous rate and on looking at our bodies we found that like "She" in H. Rider Haggard's novel we had withered, and while we were wondering what it all meant we heard little voices all around us, and strange to say although at first we could not understand what was said, we soon found that we had degenerated into little black bugs and the other bugs were trying to make us understand that we were welcomed back to the former condition from which we sprung. One fine, gentlemanly-looking bug reached out his antenna, and shaking ours most heartily, said that he would be glad to furnish us any information that would assist us in getting back into our old ways after being "away from the fold" so long, as he called it. We all had to confess that we could remember nothing at all in regard to their customs, and couldn't even remember of ever being bugs ourselves although we have believed in the theory of evolution for a long time, and true to our infidel nature we began to ask this goodnatured bug questions in regard to the things that naturally interest a Secular pilgrim: "What is the prevailing religion of your realm," said we, our minds going back to the last subject of our thoughts before we began to degenerate. "Well," said our companion, "the tribes of bugs that live all around us on this mountain are heathens and their gods are all humbugs, but our holy religion is founded upon the word of the great wonderful Bug that made this beautiful mountain and everything that grows. He even made us." This little speech so pleased us that we proceeded to draw out his bugship by a few questions that astonished him, for what seemed hard for us to understand was very easy for him because he had been brought up to it you see. So in answer to our questions he went on to explain that his tribe of bugs was trying to beetleize the other tribes that live on the mountain, and as their methods for many generations had been to kill all other bugs who disagreed with them, as fast as they could catch them, quite a large number had been converted; "but," said he, "our holy men made one great mistake. When they captured a heathen tribe they kept alive the young female bugs and their offspring having grown up, and, being very numerous, are causing trouble right in our own camp, and although we have put many of them to death for teaching that this mountain wasn't made in six minutes as our holy beetleism teaches, and that there are other

mountains besides this one, and many other things contrary to our holy religion; they are getting bolder and bolder and have forced our holy priest bugs into some very ridiculous positions. Here comes one of the heathen, infidel heretics now and I'll not stay to hear his blasphemous talk one second," and off he marched with his queer little eyes turned up to the space above the fern and salal brush where he supposed the big bug, who made the mountain lives. This conduct on the part of our first acquaintance amused us, but we were well repaid for the loss of his conversation by at once receiving a hearty antenna shake from the new comer. We were just becoming much interested in an account of how the bugs of science were finally overcoming the humbugs of theology, when we felt a stinging sensation in our lower extremities and awakened, found that we had gone to sleep in the bottom of the hack, and that one of those pesky bugs, a flea, had bitten us.

It was now getting late, and finding a convenient place to sleep in a rancher's barn, we camped for the night; but in our dreams and when continuing our journey the next day to the great ocean we often thought that we would like to live with the bugs on the mountain awhile, for we believe that their experiences would furnish our people who think they are so highly civilized many a useful lesson, and if anyone, be he bug, humbug or human thinks this account is not interesting or that it is not true, we will only ask him to remember that many great religions are founded on dreams that are considered by some people fully as absurd as our attempted descent to bugdom.

Having arrived in Tillamook, we found that our friends there had been suffering from the epidemic known as a religious revival, and the Secularists being anxious to give the people our antidote, we have consented to speak in the opera house next Sunday evening "nothing in providence preventing."

Liberal University.

At a special meeting of the Silverton Secular church last Sunday the Liberal hall was leased to the Liberal University Co. for the purpose of holding school this winter. The hall will be put in the best possible repair and school will be held there until the University building is ready for occupancy. School will open Wednesday, November 3rd, and we already have the assurance of a much larger attendance than last year, quite a number of students coming from a distance. Much has been added to the facilities for teaching, and everything points to a very successful year in the school's history.

Mental Poison.

There are various sorts of poison—some physical, some mental; some are retailed from dispensaries and drug stores, and some from pamphlet and magazine, folio and periodical. The former species of poison is the more deadly, the latter the more injurious. The former commonly puts his victim out of pain in a few hours; while the latter, even though administered in the strongest doses, frequently tortures for twenty, forty, sixty years before death ensues. Judging actions by their effects, it is more criminal to poison the mind than it is to poison the body, inasmuch as the evil inflicted is vastly greater.

Perhaps the worst species of mental poison is that which causes panic qualms, superstitious forebodings, and supernatural imaginings of the various forms and symptoms. This terrible drug at once destroys a man's usefulness and his comfort. It renders him at the same moment slave and oppressor, the victim and the propagator of a debasing disease, which saps the very life-springs of truth and of freedom and entails on the sufferer days of restlessness and nights of terror. If we can judge our own character aright, it is not one which is easily roused to anger or violent displeasure; yet we would not choose to have it tried by hearing a ghost story related to a child of ours, if we had one. We know of several instances in which youthful minds, otherwise of power and talent, were weakened forever by one superstitious fright.

It is very rare to find a boy or girl who has not been frightened more or less by foolish "ghost stories;" and it is also a fact, that such is the strength of early impressions, that they are hardly ever destroyed. Hence almost every man and woman is to some extent infected with this superstitious virus. Who is responsible for it, or with whom did it originate? Not with Infidels, for they do not believe in such trash; and if all children were educated (as they ought to be, in order to make them what they should be) in Infidel principles, they would never believe in the miserable nonsense of ghosts, by which their minds are stultified in youth and tormented in after life. We repeat, this mental poison does not come from Infidelity. It is the legitimate offspring of religion, the prolific source of mental debasement. In the old testament we find it pervading the entire book; and in the new we meet with it in the very introduction to Christianity. (See the first chapter of Matt.) The preaching, the education, the literature of the day, all acknowledge the monstrous idea of ghosts. What wonder is it, then, while the Christian teaching has everything its own way, that young and old, generally speaking, should believe in ghosts?