

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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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, OCT. 21, E. M. 297

Away to The Hills!

After a very enjoyable session of the Sunday school last Sunday, a number of Secularists started crosslots for Mr. R. D. Allen's home in the Waldo Hills. As we went afoot we had ample time to enjoy the beautiful autumn weather. The oak trees have shed their leaves, and as the sun shone warm through the hazy atmosphere and the familiar odors of autumn reached our nostrils, we were forced to dream of our childhood days when we wandered in the woods of northern Wisconsin and gathered hazelnuts, or, a little latter, with gun in hand we wandered over hill and dale in search of squirrels and pheasants. But what a change has come over our lives since then. The old blight of orthodoxy that ruins so many, robbed us for awhile of our natural, childlike happiness. How we worried, and prayed, and tried to understand the old mystic theories; but at last we are free again, and how happy we are in the thought that even as the birds and squirrels, we are unfettered and can enjoy nature's holiday without fear of punishment from an avenging god. But it makes us sad to think that other young people are being bound down or annoyed by the monster, who wears as a neckless the skulls of thirty millions of the best people the earth has produced, and who today bathes in an ocean of blood mixed with the tears of the innocent. We tried to shake off the thoughts of sympathy and help that goes out to the poor victims of this monster, and enjoy with our jolly companions the pleasure of our visit to the Hills. After eating a picnic dinner by a little babbling brook,

we hastened forward to our Secular friends' home and met one of our most interested and interesting pupils, Miss Leona Allen. We soon became acquainted with the rest of the family, and then how we did enjoy ourselves eating grapes, wandering through the orchards and looking at the many things of interest that may be found on a typical farm of Oregon. Mr. Allen has about twenty varieties of grapes and fine, luscious varieties, indeed, they are. We sampled them to our heart's (mind's) content until we were compelled, on account of the capacity of our stomachs, to be satisfied with feasting our eyes on the great compact bunches of Niagaras, Concords, Black Hamburgs, Delawares, Ioans, Isabellas, Catawbas, etc., etc., and carrying a bunch of the choicest kind home to our mother-in-law.

On account of the early rain that came this year Mr. Allen lost considerable of his prune crop, but what he did save was very fine, and as he has a dryer of his own the expense of preparing the fruit for market was much reduced. He saved twenty thousand pounds which will net about three and one-half cents per pound. The grapes bring two and one-half cents per pound and as they are a sure crop, and easily harvested, grape culture is becoming quite an industry in this locality. We were pleased to see quite a number of bushels of corn. Mr. Allen claims that this product can be raised here as well as not, if it is put in early enough. He says that it should be planted about the middle of April and it will then ripen all right. The hogs here, however, have a perpetual picnic in the fall and winter without corn, for the oak trees furnish them bushels and bushels of acorns, and a fine lot of fat fellows on Mr. Allen's ranch that are fed nothing at all, shows that raising hogs is far more profitable here than in countries where they "eat their own heads off" before they are ready for market.

This is a lovely country, indeed, and as we look off into the distance and view the beautiful Willamette Valley, we think of Parbodie's poem, "Our Country:"

And, cradled 'mid her clustering hills,
Sweet vales in dream-like beauty hide,
Where love the air with music fills,
And calm content and peace abide;

And having marked another important passage in our Book of Life, we bid our kind Secular friends good night and hasten back to our work of trying to help free the fruit of humanity from the blight of ignorance and superstition.

Three Classes.

The effect of allowing the poor to have a chance to receive an education is beginning to show itself, and the first effect seems to be the peoples' critical examination of old established forms, political, social and religious. Civilized people today are divided into three distinct classes. There are the conservatives, or old mossbacks, who cling to every old idol as if the world had reached perfection, and that a change necessarily means a change for the worse. Then there are the extremists, whose whole desire is to "knock out" every established institution, and who in their wrath at the abuses, forget that all governments, social institutions, and religions, like individuals, have good in them as well as bad. The third class is the "golden mean," and as this class increases from both the others it is sure to accomplish its aims. These are they who understand well the dangers always attending a rapid change; they also understand well the awful abuses of the past and present, and how the people have suffered all along the ages, from political, social and religious corruption—from the ignorance of the people and the tyranny of their rulers. We hold that it is the duty of every Secularist to be progressive yet reasonable. Reason says: "Down with the old that is bad, but build up something in its place as fast as you tear down." We cannot afford to cling to the old theories that have hindered our progress; neither can we afford to destroy civilization itself by destroying the forts and citidels we have already established. We should hold ourselves ready to accept any new truths that may be satisfactorily demonstrated; yea, we should help to unearth them, but we should protect with all our strength the beautiful fruits of the ages, the public schools, libraries, the modern home, freedom of speech and of the press and all the good things which have been evolved and on which we feed and struggle for still greater victories. Real, true Secularism, the love of humanity, the desire to make the world better, is found with the class of the "golden mean," and although the rash, blundering destroyers of all good are continually frightening the weak, unprogressive into their shells of conservatism, yet the progressive workers are organizing, educating and working as man never has worked before, with the result that old erroneous ideas and practices are passing away, and behold all things are becoming new. Are you in the front ranks?

Chimneys of Hell.

A college professor teaching that volcanoes are the chimneys of hell is a rare curiosity in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is hard to believe that such a thing could be. Yet a Professor Bautz, who lectures at the Royal Prussian Academy of Philosophy and Theology at Munster, teaches exactly that doctrine. His most startling contributions to science thus far have been learned essays on the subject of purgatory, which Prof. Bautz apparently knows more about than Max Muller knows of oriental languages. In one of these essays Prof. Bautz tells us that spirits in purgatory are often coal black, and spend much of their time hurling firebrands about, much as upper world boys would play baseball. "Hell is not far away," continues this teacher of science, and the proof he brings is that volcanoes spouting fire and brimstone beneath our feet are the chimneys of hell. So the unrepentant sinner may begin to look out a little. The place of torment is nearer him than he imagines. Prof. Bautz also connects the lightnings of the sky with the volcanic fires of the earth, and they altogether are exhibited for the terrifying of sinners. It will be interesting to note how German students will receive such science.—Ex.

From Tree to Newspaper.

A scientific journal records an astonishing feat of rapid transformation of material by mechanical process. It states that in order to ascertain the shortest time required to convert the wood of a standing tree into paper, and the later into a journal ready for delivery, the experiment has been made at Ebenthal by Menzel & Co., paper and wood pulp manufacturers. For this purpose three trees were felled in a near-by forest at 7:35 a. m. and carried to the manufactory, where they were cut into pieces twelve inches in length, these being at once stripped of bark and split, and raised by an elevator to the defibrators of the works. The wood pulp produced by these machines was then put into a vat, where it was mixed with the necessary accompaniments, and, this process finished, the liquid pulp was sent to the paper machine. At 9:34 in the morning the first sheet of paper was finished, the entire manufacture having thus consumed two hours, lacking one minute. The owners of the establishment then took a few sheets to the presses of a printing office, and at 10 o'clock a copy of the printed journal was in the hands of the party—only two hours and twenty-five minutes having been consumed in converting the wood of a standing tree into a journal ready for delivery. To an earlier generation, it would have seemed incredible that in so short a time a living tree could have been converted into a bearer of news.—Selected.