

morning just as the sun was peeping over the hills at the eastern side of the valley. I faced the rising sun and rode more than an hour over the flat stretch of land comprising Harney valley, when I reached Harney City, fifteen miles from Burns, the former county seat of the county and at one time during the Indian war, the site of Fort Harney.

This was in the past. There is no longer need for soldiers in that quiet country, and the seat of government for the county is now at Burns.

Harney City has suffered by this, has lost many residents and several houses, but is still a good business point and has a rich country tributary to it. Harney Valley beats any place for house moving I ever saw. The last time I was in Harney City, the P. L. S. Co. had their office, a large, fine, two-story building, located there and it was a credit to any town. Now the same building adorns a beautiful site in Burns, where it followed the county seat. They moved it by simply raising it on two large timbers, and placing each end of these on wagons to which were hitched horses and mules. They then walked off across the valley.

I arrived in Harney in time for breakfast, and proceeded to the hotel, where I was surprised to find my friend Buchanan and his good wife as owners and proprietors. Mr. Buchanan subscribed for the Torch of Reason and I put in two hours visiting friends whom I had not seen for several years. There are many Secularists in Harney and I will not pass there again without giving a lecture. This time, I had not time. Mr. Drinkwater, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Turner and Mr. Withers all subscribed for the Torch. I could have secured others if I had not been in such a hurry.

Ten miles further through the valley we traveled and then turned toward the hills, where we did not find such easy traveling, but we arrived at Drewsey for dinner. Drewsey is a small town situated on the upper Malheur river, among the sage brush hills and mountains. From Drewsey, the road extends a few miles up Otis Creek and then over a mountain to another fork of the Malheur in what is known as the Agency valley. In this beautiful valley, the P. L. S. Co., owns 1,300 acres of fine land with immense fields of alfalfa. It was here I decided to stop over night after having pushed the bicycle over 65 miles of mixed road.

It was my first experience at a large Cattle ranch. My friend Joe Sturdevant is foreman and he made me welcome. Haying is about over and so many men are not employed as at some seasons of the year, but still there are fifteen there now,

which makes quite a family. Everything is run in a fine style and with perfect order. This is only one of the many ranches owned by this immense company in several of the Pacific coast states. I would like to visit some of the others. The one near Burns contains 16,000 acres of rich meadow land. Mr. Sturdevant says that the next time I visit him he will invite the neighbors and we will have a lecture. We will try and arrange this, and I am sure we will have good gathering.

PEARL W. GEER.

### Effects of Belief.

BY ADDISON R. TITUS.

It is amusing to witness the effect which orthodox religious teachings have upon the human mind. A Catholic priest and a Jewish rabbi were great friends and held many discussions about their respective beliefs. One day the rabbi was passing in front of the Catholic church, and saw the priest approaching. The rabbi stopped and gazed intently at the spire of the church. The priest asked what he was looking at. The rabbi replied, "Can't you see the angels flying around the spire of your church?" The priest looked, and, as any priest should, said he could. While they were looking, a crowd gathered around them, all gazing at the spire. Soon the priest and the rabbi left the crowd gazing and passed on, arm in arm. Presently the priest asked the rabbi if he really saw any angels around the spire of his church. The rabbi answered, "No, of course not; but our position among the people is such they will believe it, because, you know, they already believe we cannot tell a lie."

Now, in all sincerity, my dear orthodox friends, is not such as this the base of all your religious manias?—exceedingly human, unverified assertions and lies. Is there anything so ludicrous and absurd as the zealous orthodox?

I was standing near the postal mail box when a Catholic priest passed near me. A few feet beyond several men, German and Irish, sat on the steps. When the priest drew near them he held up his hand, when the men arose and greeted him very formally and gravely. A short distance further on he met a man who took off his hat and seemed deeply impressed at meeting him—so much so that he stood bare-headed in the sun, gazing in seeming holy admiration at the priest until he was some rods away. Having been brought up in a sawmill, and in the woods, and having good eyes, I could see no halo of glory around his head, no heavenly, celestial light, of which, from youth, I have heard so much, issuing from his sacred body. To all appear-

ances, he was no more nor less than any other man.

There seems to be a fear among these divines that the idea of their sacredness might become dim, consequently they wear an unusually long coat when on the street, the cape representing, as I have been told, the sacred heart of Mary, and when they promulgate the sacred word they put on a long white gown, with a big cross on the back and a smaller one on each sleeve. The object being, apparently, to make the sacredness penetrate into the body. Well, orthodox ruses have become too thin for rational minds. Their familiarity not only breeds contempt, but utter disgust.

Imagination engenders belief. Imagination and belief become facts to the human mind, so much so that at least they will not be rejected as facts, having once existed. That condition of mind is insanity expressed in various orthodox forms. It appears to me that creeds, dogmas, orthodox religions, beliefs and customs are outrageously human. The idea of the orthodox, personal god, possessing only the attributes of man, is revolting to independent, sound minds.

Slodiers' Home, Dayton, O.

### Reform.

BY FELIX L. OSWALD.

Not all slaves can be freed by breaking their shackles; the habit of servitude may become a hereditary vice, too inveterate for immediate remedies. The pupils of Freedom's school may be required to unlearn, as well as to learn, many lessons; temples of the future will have to remove several aphoristic tablets to make room for such mottoes as "Self-Reliance," "Liberty," "Independence." Victor Jacquemont tells a memorable story of a Hindoo village, almost depopulated by a famine caused by the depredations of sacred monkeys, that made constant raids on the fields and gardens of the superstitious peasants, who would see their children starve to death rather than lift a hand against the longtailed saints. At last the British stadtholder saw a way to relieve their distress. He called a meeting of their sirdars and offered them free transportation to a monkeyless island of the Malay archipelago. Learning that the land of the proposed colony was fertile and thinly settled, the survivors accepted the proposal with tears of gratitude; but when the band of gaunt refugees embarked at the mouth of the Hooglyn, the stadtholder's agent was grieved to learn that their cargo of household goods included a large cageful of sacred monkeys. "They are beyond human help," says the official memorandum, "and their children can be redeemed only by curing them of the superstition that has

ruined their monkey-ridden ancestors."

At the end of the fifteenth century, when southern Europe was in danger of a similar fate from the rapacity of esurient priests and monks, Providence, by means of an agent called Christoval Columbus, offered the victims the chance of a free land of refuge; but when the host of emigrants embarked at Palos, philosophers must have been grieved to perceive that their cargo of household pets comprised a large assortment of ecclesiastics. "They are beyond human help," Experience might sigh in the words of the British commissioner, "and their children can be redeemed only by curing them of the superstition that has proved the ruin of their priest-ridden ancestors."

In regions of our continent where colonists might live as independent as the birds in their primeval forests, bondage has been imported in the form of an intriguing hierarchy, working its restless bellows to forge the chains of their pupils—of the rising generation, who as yet seem to hesitate at the way-fork of Feudalism and Reform. A timely word may decide their choice, and, by all the remaining hopes of Earth and Mankind! that word shall not remain unspoken.—The Bible of Nature.

### Christians, Do You, Can You, Believe:

1. That the world was made in a week?
2. That the first man was made of dirt, which, in its turn, had been made out of nothing, by God?
3. That the first woman was made from a bone, that was made from dirt, that was made from nothing, by God?
4. That God is a spirit, and yet he became tired and was obliged to take a lay-off and rest up after his week's work?
5. That a good god would tempt the first couple, who had no education beyond what he had given them, when he knew from the beginning that they could not stand the trial?
6. That a just god would punish them for yielding to the temptation he had sent them when he knew that they would fall?
7. That a loving, merciful father would extend this punishment to all mankind?
8. That this same just, merciful, loving god will punish the children of his creation if they refuse to believe all the unreasonable stories told of him—yes, not only in this world, but forever and ever, without any letting up?
9. That you are going to be happy in the hereafter, learn to fly, play on a harp with a thousand strings, and yet know that your dearest and best loved ones are suffering the tortures of everlasting fire?
10. In short, can you, if you use any sense or reason at all, believe in the Christian God and his guide book?

M. V. H.