

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, NOV. 24, E. M. 298

Silverton Public Schools.

Silverton probably has as good public schools as can be found in the state of Oregon, and people coming here who are too poor to send students to the University, or who have religious scruples against sending their children where no religion is taught, will by no means be robbed of the chance of educating their children. Of course we want every good student we can get, not only in the higher courses, but in the public school branches, and we believe it a duty, a privilege and a great help to our growing cause for all Freethinking parents to send their children to our school now at the beginning, when we need support and encouragement most. But we have not a word to say against public schools, and although some have tried hard to stir up a controversy in order to prejudice some who might be thus influenced against us, we will do all in our power to help the public schools and make Silverton a real educational center. Of course we can't help seeing the antics of some who have, all of a sudden, become very patriotic in respect to public schools and the little tacts and schemes of some of the members of the board who are touched with Christianity, or something worse, are quite comical. They forced another grade onto the already overworked teachers so as to take a few students from the University. They have organized a young people's society and call it P. S. S. E. C., in imitation of our Y. P. S. S. C. They have lately put in electric lights so as to have socials and parties on the same evenings we have

our entertainments. They have arranged for an assembly room in imitation of the University, and other little things that never would have been thought of excepting for the evil purpose of doing us an injury. But all this only pleases us. It helps the children of the public schools, hurts us very little if any, and shows the nature of those who are opposing the greatest movement of our times. There are three things we wish our friends to remember in regard to the public schools. First, we do not oppose them in any way, and we would like to prevent those who are using them to further their own interests, religious and political, from making them anything and everything excepting free schools; second, those who try to use the public schools to injure us are not the true friends of education, but are using everything in sight to down those who are working for the real interest of the young people; and third, that although we have this foolish, selfish element to deal with, yet we are prospering very well. The seats in the Liberal University are all taken. Our shelves are full of books. The space we have for our little museum is crowded. Our recitation rooms are all used and we need more room very much. Our teachers are very busy, and our Y. P. S. S. C. meetings are a great success and well attended.

At one time the only Universities were Catholic, but later the Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., became strong enough to support schools, and now it is our turn, and "by the eternal" nothing short of the general breaking up of the universe will stop us. Come with us!

Monkey Work.

Our ancestors, according to the very best scientific authorities, were monkey like men living in the woods, naked, savage, brutal. But if we come on to the scene at a late enough period, we find that these wild men of the woods knew more monkey tricks than the real monkeys of our day. Mimicry is highly developed in all monkeys, and our monkey forefathers must have had much of it or how could their progeny have developed in such a wonderful manner? All the lower or uncivilized traits of our ancestors seem to show themselves in the individuals of our race today, and there is no monkey trait so ludicrous as the Christian layman's attempt to mimic his priest, preacher or medicine-man.

It is actually painful to see monkey men and women aping the old, worn out, anti-civilized thoughts and actions of their self-appointed spiritual monk(ey)s.

They hear the preacher pray and see him roll his eyes, and now watch them ape him when they get

home! And then their children, unless they "take back" to some old ape who aped only those things which he thought would be of some use, will ape their wonderful papas, and thus the monkey work of rolling the eyes, groaning out meaningless monkey grunts, holding up their front paws and snuffing at things as if they were the blood and flesh of a lamb, goes on and will go on until they learn that there is something more elevating for civilized men to monkey with.

President McKinley's Thanksgiving Proclamation.

"By the president of the United States.

"A PROCLAMATION.

"The approaching November brings to mind the custom of our ancestors hallowed by time and rooted in our most sacred traditions, of giving thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings he has vouchsafed to us during the last year.

"Few years in our history have afforded such cause for thanksgiving. We have been blessed by abundant harvests, our trade and commerce have wonderfully increased, our public credit has been improved and strengthened, all sections of our common country have been brought together and knitted into closer bonds of national purpose and unity.

"The skies have been for a time darkened by the cloud of war; but as we were compelled to take up the sword in the cause of humanity, we are permitted to rejoice that the conflict has been of brief duration, and the losses we have had to mourn, though grievous and important, have been so few, considering the great results accomplished, as to inspire us with gratitude and praise to the Lord of Hosts. We may magnify and laud his holy name that the cessation of hostilities came so soon as to spare both sides the countless sorrows and disasters that attend protracted war.

"I do therefore invite all my fellow citizens, as well those at home as those who may be at sea, or sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe Thursday, the 24th day of November, as a day of national thanksgiving, to come together in their several places of worship for a service of praise and thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings of the year, for the mildness of the seasons and the fruitfulness of the soil, for the continued prosperity of the people, for the devotion and valor of our countrymen, for the glory of our victory and the hope of a righteous peace, and to pray that the divine guidance which has heretofore brought us to safety and honor may be graciously continued in the days to come.

"In witness whereof, I have here-

unto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

"Done at the city of Washington, this 28th day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and twenty-third.

"WILLIAM MCKINLEY.

"By the president:

"JOHN HAY,
"Secretary of State."

The Devil Hater's Reviling Proclamation.

The approach of November brings to mind the foolish traditions of our heathen ancestors. One tradition that has caused much ignorance and a long train of evils is that of thanking an imaginary god for blessings, while many of our brothers and sisters are suffering untold miseries. Many years like the present have afforded great cause for fighting against the devil of superstition, and in order to show the absurdity and great injury of blindly thanking a being for blessings, whose reputation for sending evils upon us is so great, let us change the thanksgivings to faultfindings, not because we believe there is a being who hears our murmurings, but in order to guide our minds into right channels — in order to find out something more worthy of civilized people than either thanks to imaginations or murmurings to nothing.

MURMURINGS TO GOD.

Few years in our history have afforded such cause for complaint. Many localities have had a total failure of crops. There is still much distrust among the people in regard to the controlling forces of our government, and the different sections of the world seem to be drifting farther and farther apart. The skies have been darkened by the great curse of a bloody war which has made countless numbers mourn, and what has been gained is so small it would naturally fill a normal mind with hatred for an unholy being who could permit such awful work among his children. We might curse and belittle his unholy name that wars have not ceased before this and that countless sorrows and disasters of a bloody war is again upon us. Let us all set apart and observe Thursday, the twenty-fourth day of November, as a day of cursing and damning the weak gods of our heathen ancestors and do all we can to magnify wisdom and knowledge from which comes Science, the true Savior of the world.

Done at the City of Silverton, Oregon, in the Era of Man, Two Hundred and Ninety-eight, and the Independence of the United States, the One Hundred and Twenty-third.

SECULAR JOHN,
THE DEVIL HATER.