

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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J. E. Hosmer, Editor
P. W. Geer, Manager

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Notice!

A hand pointing to this notice denotes that your subscription has expired. You are earnestly requested to renew so that you may receive the paper without interruption. We have decided that it is best for all concerned that we do not send papers longer than the time paid for unless so ordered. This will prevent any loss and we will know just where we stand.

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

THURSDAY, JAN. 19, E. M. 209

Science Has Conquered.

A common soldier in the Great Rebellion might not have understood just how the Union forces were pushing the Confederates to the ragged edge of defeat. Even in the last battles the common soldiers on either side did not realize the critical condition of the Southern cause. So it is with the forlorn hope of Christianity. The common Freethought soldier as well as the salvationist can not realize what has been done in the last few years. The readers of the Torch are not (or should not be) common soldiers. At least the Torch family understand the conditions much better than those who have not received the commission that comes from interested thought, reading and active service; but it may inspire all with renewed energy in our future work to review some of our victories and examine the condition of the enemy's forces.

In the first place, we must remember that the war between Superstition and Secularism has been one of ages instead of years. In the past, scientific knowledge, the helmet, shield and sword of Secularism, has been held in the dungeons of Ignorance and in the last few years only has there been anything like a fair fight. But behold the results! Their strongholds have been captured one by one. They have rallied only to be driven farther and farther from their original fortifications until, in the words of the Oregon senator, it is hard to tell "where they are at". Not long ago their strongest fort was persecution, but the thumb-

screw, rack and faggot are no more. Disfranchisement has been given up. Ineligibility to office is nearly gone, and those who were fortified in ridicule are crying "enough".

Through all ages Christian soldiers have backed up against the wall of Ignorance and cried, "You can't tell all about this wall, therefore Christianity is right." When Darwin made known to the world the results of his wonderful studies of the life forms and their origin and manner of evolution, a great howl went up from the God camp. "The missing link" was hurled at his noble head and all who dared think he was right. This kept their feeble ranks from total disbandment and an orderly retreat was begun at once. But even the "missing link" has fallen to the ground! From its high estate, from its proud position between man and the man-like apes, it has fallen down, down to the humble position between the lowest rhizopod and the simple crystal.

What strides has infidel science made in the last few hours of the struggle for Truth! Shall we conquer? We have conquered! All we need now is to erect our ramparts of Science that we be not again overcome by the forces of superstition and that future generations may reap the benefits of our glorious victories.

Work Now; Rest in the Sweet Bye and Bye.

The following extract from a personal letter speaks for itself. If all Freethinkers would help our cause as much as the one who wrote it has, we could build several Liberal Universities.

"I am very sorry to see that help for the University building is so slow in coming in. Your "An Appeal" in the last Torch makes me wish that I had the means to respond in a way that would place the University beyond the necessity of such appeals. I think, not only the object, but your patient and untiring efforts, are worthy of better results."

We are somewhat sorry ourselves and yet we take it very philosophically, and will "fight it out on this line if it takes all" our lives. We have engaged another worker, Miss Jennie Cline, a well known Secular teacher, who will be a very valuable addition to our corps of workers. This will give us more time to devote to raising funds to pay for the necessary material and for completing our building. Miss Cline will begin work next Monday, and next Monday we will begin to study how to raise two thousand dollars. This is absolutely necessary to straighten up our accounts and finish the University. You see if we wait till spring to raise this money, it may take all summer to do it, and when the fall term begins we will be in the same condition we were last fall. We can not teach again under the same disadvan-

tages we have this year, and so we must bend every effort to raise the money now, and then, as soon as spring opens, begin work on the building.

Now, if we had the money we would ask no help, but we haven't, and so we must tell you about it. We dislike very much to leave the school, even for a short time, but it may be best for us to enter the lecture field.

If anyone knows of a better plan, write to us at once. We must have the two thousand dollars and we are willing to make any honorable sacrifice to get it.

The school will be left in good hands. The students have already learned to love and respect the work of building a real "free" school and they are fast learning the great lesson of self control.

What a great work it is, and how we hate to be absent even for a few days, but, for the sake of better conditions for next year, we must do something at once. There is no more important work in the world, and we must remember that life is short. Now is the time to work; there will be time to rest "in the sweet bye and bye."

We must not be, and are not, weary in well doing; and, although, as our friend says, our patient and untiring efforts, and we wish to add, the patient and untiring efforts of a few who understand the far reaching influence that our work is bound to exert, may be worthy of better results, yet viewed from another standpoint, what better results could we expect in so short a time? The results are really wonderful. Think of it! A Freethought school has been successfully conducted for nearly three years. And the best of it is that we are in better condition today than ever before. We started with no buildings, no press, no books, no grounds and no experience in running a Freethought journal or a Freethought University.

What have we done in less than three years? We have a beautiful piece of ground for our school. We have given instruction that will do good long after we have ceased to think. We have a good dining hall, with kitchen, wood shed and sleeping apartments for students. We have the stone basement of our main building up and the lower story partly raised. We have built sidewalks. We have nearly five hundred excellent books in our library. We have advertised our school through the Torch and through our many pleased patrons so that, as soon as our building is completed, we will have a large attendance. And we are now building large gymnasium, with gallery and bathroom.

We are going to make a splendid success of the greatest of Freethought undertakings, because we know it takes patience and hard work, and because some of our friends have stood by us and helped us, for which we trust they will never be sorry nor ashamed. Now, this raising of the two thousand

dollars is a very important thing. We must all "take hold" or our work will take a backset. It would be an awful blow to have no school next year, and now is the time to prevent it. THIS TWO THOUSAND DOLLAR FUND will take the place of the Five Thousand Dollar Fund, which we will now drop. Those who signed fifty dollars on that fund may pay it on the Two Thousand Dollar Fund, if they wish.

We believe, if we all do our very best, we will have the two thousand dollars in a few weeks, and what a load will be lifted from our work.

We can finish paying for our lumber; pay up a few other obligations which need immediate attention, and commence work on the building as soon as fair weather comes, which is very early in the Willamette valley. No one but religious fanatics should be expected to try to prevent the establishment of a Freethought University, and every real Freethinker should do something to help it along.

The Cause.

The cause of Secularism in the United States is not what it should be nor what it might be, and, we hope, not what it will be.

The Freethought papers and magazines are doing something, but what can a few, say six or eight heterogeneous weeklies and monthlies, do toward building "something better" on the ruins of old orthodoxy?

To be sure the Freethought Federation and American Secular Union meet, collect a few dollars, spend it for stamps, etc., but what it does is so "mighty small" compared with what should be done, it seems like nothing, or the next thing to it, and, if reports are true in regard to the class of people who largely control it, it is altogether a minus quantity.

The Oregon State Secular Union has been in the same fix. No real permanent work has ever been done. We have met once a year, but what real good has it ever done excepting for a few to show their colors and their weakness?

We hope that there is now to be a change for the better, but there will not be unless we wake up.

We have, as you will see by the printed constitution in this issue and the fact that the O. S. S. U. has been re-incorporated, placed ourselves in a position where we can do something if we know enough.

The Torch of Reason is the official organ of the Oregon State Secular Union, and we should discuss freely through its columns ways and means of doing constructive work and we should begin at once. The constitution now provides for a test of membership, and when we get a person to join our ranks, it means something of some account to our cause.

We think we should have an