

## 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.

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### Classes vs. the Masses.

"Right wrongs no man," but the many thousands of laws passed for the benefit of certain classes and the salaries and fees of the necessary officers to carry out their provisions, have wronged countless millions of people and are still on the increase. Of course these laws are not confined to religious legislation. Bills are introduced into the United States and state legislatures, and if one of these embryonic laws is for the benefit of the people and it does not come in contact with some individual or class enterprise, it may live, and the people reap the benefit; but such laws are very scarce compared with another class. This class is introduced by individuals or their secret representatives who try to wield influence enough with others having similar bills to get their votes. Those who fail in thus influencing enough votes, are lost, but those whose influence is great enough are passed. We honestly believe that the majority of the laws now passed are of this class. We can not estimate the far-reaching injury this has done to humanity; and we would not be true to the religion of Secularism which we profess if we did not cry out against it.

In a former editorial we spoke of the dental law which exists in most of our states, and as a change in the Oregon dental law has just been made, we wish to refer to it again. We can speak of this law more intelligently than of some others, on account of having worked at the business a number of

years ago, and for this reason we use it as an illustration.

This law is now such as to make it almost impossible for one who has not a license but who has knowledge of the craft and a desire to relieve suffering, to remain a law-abiding citizen. In Eastern Oregon a man has a very bad toothache; his neighbor is not a licensed dentist, but he can extract teeth, and although his own work is pressing, he takes his team from the plow and drives three or four miles, extracts the bad tooth, accepts twenty-five cents to pay for his time and thus saves his friend a long journey of perhaps twenty-five miles in addition to a protected dentist's charge. Now is a law just that provides for the arrest and fine or imprisonment of one or both of these men? Yet this disgraceful dentist's law, like many others, stands today on our statute books, a record of the folly and lost statesmanship of our age. Fine and imprisonment are given to men who relieve pain, on the flimsy pretext that society must be protected from quacks. It is only a set of quacks who wish to protect themselves who are crowding these abominable laws upon our people. To prove this, let us examine another law passed by our legislative assembly.

It seems that the people are terribly suffering from the bad practice of incompetent barbers, and so a few h-o-n-o-r-a-b-l-e men conceive the idea of having a barber law. The result is that a man cannot now hire whom he chooses to cut his hair, unless he chooses to choose one of the chosen ones or pay a fine or go to jail. It seems to us that our legislators are getting down rather fine. They are certainly splitting hairs, and if God has numbered every hair of our heads he will certainly hold some one responsible for the hairs thus destroyed. Really it is a shame that a boy cannot cut his neighbor boy's hair without passing an examination and paying five dollars down and one dollar per year to a lot of men who are getting fat at the expense of honest people.

But of all the foolish, injurious laws that are passed, there are none so numerous and damaging as those favoring religious sects. The sectarian school laws of this and many other states are so common as to be almost overlooked and taken as a matter of course. People do not seem astonished that twenty-eight thousand dollars are appropriated to one sectarian school of this state while others get sums nearly as large. Sunday laws, which are such a good financial scheme for the preachers, are backed up by others who are exempt from closing their places of business, and thus some suffer financial loss and others are even worked in the chain gang or oblig-

ed to violate their conscience or lose two days each week instead of one, that a class of men may the better fleece them of their hard-earned pennies.

The religious lawmaker has one advantage over all others. He can work on the superstition of the legislators, and this "for Christ's sake" plan coupled with the "scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" idea will ruin our republic unless we infidel puppies get our eyes open before the sack is tied and we, with the rock of ages about our necks, are sunk into the dark waters of ruined empires.

In the ancient eastern nations, when the favorite ones' laws became so oppressive that the common herd could not exist there, they either escaped to the more western countries or died in the attempt. Like the story of the children of Israel, little bands of the human family have fled from their oppressors. How many, oh, how many times history repeated itself before the little bands whose names we bear came to the shores of this broad land of the free! Their ancestors had been oppressed and had wandered to the western shores of Europe, but not having yet learned the lessons of reciprocity and Secularism, they oppressed the poor Celts and pushed them to the very water's edge. Kingcraft (class legislation) and priestcraft (religious legislation) in time oppressed the masses, and when America was discovered many turned to these inviting shores. But the lessons of truth and right are not yet learned and our poor people are in the throes of pain caused by the violation of the eternal principles of liberty and justice. We have reached the western boundary of the world. There is no land now free from the craft of king and priest to which we can flee. We the people of the United States must learn that what is good for all is best for the individual, and that no nation can long exist whose god is not the good of the people.

### The Torch of Reason.

Our paper has many friends and we cannot express the joy we feel that the very best thinkers among our ranks recognize it as a "clean, well gotten up little paper". The Freethought Magazine, one of the oldest and best of Freethought workers, compliments us highly this month. B. F. Underwood, whose work is too well known to need any explanation, writes for us and encourages us with many kind words through private letters. Many others of the foremost Freethought thinkers send us words of cheer and literary and financial assistance. But it is not alone from those actively engaged in our great work, but others who are known as successful men in other

lines begin to recognize us. The Oregonian, that great northwestern newspaper, writes a most excellent private letter in which we are much praised for the manner and matter of the Torch.

But we are not satisfied with the Torch, and we could make it VERY MUCH better under a LITTLE better conditions. Our press is not yet paid for. We paid off the original debt a long time ago, but we had to borrow money to do it. We owe a paper bill of one hundred dollars, which ought to be paid at once. If we were not thus cramped, we might feel that we could afford a good half-tone cut in our paper once in a while that would add very much to the appearance and interest of the Torch. We would like very much to be the means of showing our readers the faces of some of the best workers and writers for modern Freethought, and also give them better ideas of what we are doing by printing pictures of our buildings and grounds and scenes in and around this and other Freethought centers.

It takes but little money to do this, but that little cannot be applied until our debts are paid. If each of our readers will send us one or two new subscriptions to the Torch of Reason they will be rewarded by knowing that they have lifted from our shoulders what is to us a heavy burden, and they will receive a brighter Torch each week than they do at present. If we all pull together we will accomplish much.

### False Patriotism.

Of all foolish things on humanity's green earth, the most foolish is what some people call patriotism. It makes even the sanguine person almost blue when he sees how people are led around with this little cord fastened in their mental noses. "The world is my country" is too large an idea to enter the little bone boxes of many who wave the stars and stripes and shout "old glory" on every public occasion, but who never think that to talk of revenging the wrongs of an individual or a nation is inhuman and unpatriotic. "Remember the Maine," if put forth with the idea of arousing the savage revenge of our fellow men is unpatriotic; for, that which lowers the ideals of love and forgiveness taught us by the best minds of the past and present is an injury to our country. "Revenge dwells in little minds," and the perpetuation of ideas of revenge will hold back civilization, make bigots and widen the gulf between our time and the time when all men will be brothers and wars will have ceased.

How easy a thing it is to play on a child's rattle—to please the baby—but it is another thing to educate a child in the ways of truth and