

Torch of Reason

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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, MAY 18, E. M. 299.

BICYCLES VS. SPIRITS.

A farmer boy who has been to the neighboring city but a few times in his life now goes there very often. He attended school in the city during the fall term. Life is different to him now; he has a bicycle. And what do you think, his sister has learned to ride, and pa says if she's good next fall, after he sells his hops, he'll get her a wheel also.

The city boy now takes long trips in the country. He has long been sick of the dirty streets and sickening scenes of the saloons, and although he was learning to imbibe spirits of one kind and "almost persuaded" that the only remedy was the holy spirit that the city preacher talked about, now his own spirits (the mind) is reviving, for he has a bicycle.

Man is a different animal than he was a few years ago. Whatever helps people to widen their circle of acquaintance; whatever gives them the power to secure a change of scene; whatever breaks up the monotony of the life of the poor; whatever furnishes a means of healthful, pleasurable exercise is a great blessing to the human family.

The bicycle is revolutionizing the world. No longer on the unholy Sabbath, during fair weather, does he or she who is sick unto death with nausea at the preacher's talk about spirits, have to submit or stay at home. The rapid movement through the air is more exhilarating than the story of the angels that sailed about in the olden times. The music of the birds is far superior to the imagin-

ary songs of the heavenly hosts or their imitators, the church choir, with its gossiping and sparking sandwiched between the meaningless anthems. Whatever makes people happy; whatever rids the world of spooks and hobgoblins and fills it with pictures of beautiful scenes of green fields and the music of the birds and running brooks is a blessing. Liberty is a great civilizer, and the bicycle is adding many degrees of liberty to those who need it most. Every one who "has sinned and fallen short of the glory of go(o)d" is tired of their miserable blunders, and the only reason they continue in the filth of their evil way is because they can't get away from it. Many a young man who would be lying around the saloons and gambling hells of the cities can now get away from them with pleasure. He can take a bottle with him, to be sure, but if he drink till his head is dizzy he cannot ride, and he knows it; and, then, there is but little use for alcoholic spirits when the sluggish blood is started rapidly through the veins by the delightful exercise of wheeling.

The bicycle is cultivating the higher faculties of judgment and reason; it is getting people interested in the civilizing study of mechanics; it is hastening dress reform; it is exercising muscles which were becoming rudimentary; it is passing fresh air, that destroyer of disease germs, rapidly through the lungs and nasal passages of thousands, making the blood of our race much purer; and it is bringing about better roads and better systems of building roads. The spirits of holy(?) churches and un(?)holy saloons, like disease germs, must have a foul medium in which to live. Health of mind and body will destroy the mediums in which these evil parasites are now hiding, sapping our lives and preventing our development to higher things. We hail with delight this great gift of our Savior Science, the bicycl.

SOBER UP!

Many people never think of the fact that our government, our social life, our churches, our schools, everything touching our lives, even the lives themselves, might be wonderfully improved. We hope we have a proper appreciation for the improvements that have been made since man was like a gaping ape in the woods, but we are certainly not satisfied with what man is at present. Our government may be the best that was ever instituted, and yet every honest mind knows that it could, should and would be much improved if we only knew enough. All know that it is possible for ten families to live in a community,

and every one of them be comfortable and happy; then why not the seventy million people of the United States? Yet, look at the misery! Our dwellings, which some consider inhabitable, are but pigpens compared with what they might be. Our roads are a disgrace. They could, with less labor than what has already been put upon them, be better than the streets of gold. This Christian land needs help that a Christ cannot give. What is the matter? Ignorance. We don't know anything about this world yet, and we never will until the fool preachers stop talking about the home in the sky and how to keep out of the fires of hell. We want less of "Jesus and him crucified," less of humanity mystified, but more of Freethought and that purified. Thousands and thousands of our best minds are intoxicated on the spirits of old myths. What can we do? Sober up and help break the old bottles of rotgut (the churches) and put the new wine of science into new bottles.

A DEPLORABLE CONDITION.

We have in our possession a long confession-like article, written by a Presbyterian minister who is now preaching in a popular church in the East at a good salary, but he dare not tell the people what he thinks. The article is a long one, but we will endeavor to publish it in the near future.

Think of the condition in which the hired servants of fraud are placed. We pity them with all the pity of which we are capable. This man would lose his salary and be cast into the outer darkness of poverty's hell if he dared to express what he knows to be the honest truth, and so the poor hypocrite preaches "Jesus and him crucified" Sunday after Sunday, and the good brothers pay liberally into the church, and the good sisters work and beg and purr around each other with "what a perfectly lovely sermon Brother — preached this morning." Oh, ye gods! How long will these poor dupes force men to starve or play the hypocrite?

When our reason rallied and forced superstition from its earthworks, our minister told us that we ought to stay in the church any way, whether we believed the creed or not. "Why," said he, in an excited tone, "many members of our church do not believe the creed, and do you know that the Presbyterian ministers have not believed the creed of their church for years?" "Why don't they tell the people, then?" we enquired. "Because it would break up their church," said our spiritual instructor. They must wait until the people are educated up to it, or, as Rev.(?) Morse expressed it, "until the time is ripe."

Friends of truth, the time is now

ripe to change these deplorable conditions. The men of ability who are now masquerading as servants of a humbug god must be brought into the service of Science and the Religion of Humanity. How can it be done? We must build up a strong Secular society that can afford to pay men of ability to work for it. Men will be honest and think themselves incapable of hypocrisy under proper conditions. We must change conditions, and the Liberal University is one of the first rounds which is being placed in the ladder that is leading to the Secular heaven of right conditions. Help us make it and place it aright.

Holy Donkeys.

Once upon a time there was a great Sheikh Ali, a holy man, who kept the holy tomb of an ancient prophet. The tomb was on a hill under a big oak tree, and the white dome could be seen for miles around. Lamps were kept burning day and night in the tomb, and if any one extinguished them they were miraculously lighted again. Men with sore eyes came to visit it and were cured. The earth around the tomb was carried off to be used as a medicine. Women came and tied old rags on the limbs of the trees, as vows to the wonderful prophet. Nobody knew the name of the prophet, but the tomb was called "Kobwen Nebi," or "Tomb of the Prophet." A green cloth was spread over the tomb under the dome, and incense was sold by the Sheikh to those who wished to heal their sick or drive out evil spirits from their houses. Pilgrims came from afar to visit the holy place, and its fame extended over all the land.

Sheikh Ali was becoming a rich man, and all the pilgrims kissed his hand and begged his blessing. Now Sheikh Ali had a faithful servant named Mohammed, who had served him long and well. But Mohammed was weary of living in one place, and asked permission to go and seek his fortune in distant parts. So Sheikh Ali gave him his blessing and presented him with a donkey, which he had for many years, that he might ride when tired of walking.

Then Mohammed, thus provided, set out on his journey. He went through cities and towns and villages, and at last came out in the mountains east of the Jordan in a desert place. No village nor house was in sight, and night came on. Tired, hungry and discouraged, poor Mohammed lay down beside his donkey on a great pile of stones and soon fell asleep. In the morning he awoke, and alas! his donkey was dead. He was in despair, but his kindly nature would not let the poor brute lie there to be devoured by jackals and vultures, so he piled