

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, JUNE 1, E. M. 299.

ALL ABOARD!

"Down the river of time we glide," which is much like our gliding up the great Columbia, where our readers left us last week. In this youthful part of our journey the scenery is most beautiful—too beautiful to mar by a feeble attempt at description, but although we are much occupied in admiring the rocks, the rills and that wonderful product of science, the Cascade locks, we find time to get a few fellow passengers interested in our work. To some we give sample copies of the Torch; with some we have interesting debates. We get a number of subscribers and sell one "Right Living."

One old gentleman whom we approached became very much excited, and when he found that we could successfully overthrow what he supposed to be unanswerable arguments, he fairly danced up and down and shouted, much to our amusement. "Do you suppose for a minute," said he, "that I will go back on the religion of Jesus Christ. I belonged to a family of six boys, and they have all gone to their reward excepting myself; they all died happy and shouting glory to Jesus. Do you suppose I could be such a wretch as to go back on their religion and not meet them in heaven?" We quickly explained to him where such blind following of the ideas of others would lead us. If we had not advanced and improved on the ideas of others, the world would now be supposed to be flat. We explained that our mother is a Christian and that we love her;

that it would be going back on her more to blindly follow her ideas than it would to try to improve on them; that we were Christians once, but had studied some since we were converted and COULD NOT longer believe the old, old story. "Yes," sneeringly and excitedly shouted this disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, "I have seen lots of boys backslide and forsake the teachings of their mothers." "But, my friend," said we, "we've not backslid; we have slid forward." He could stand it no longer, and with "I won't talk with you any longer," he ran away as from some horrible monster that he could not conquer.

Meanwhile, the great iron servant of science, the steamer's engine, has not been idle, and we soon reach The Dalles, where, failing to find our friends at home, we go to the hotel to rest for the night. The Dalles has many Infidels but very few active Secularists, and not being able to arouse much interest or to obtain a hall without paying a big price, we mount our "fancy horses" and roll away toward Dufer. We found the road to be very hilly, so much so that we were obliged to walk much of the way. But what matters it? Who cares if black Infidels suffer? What if Mrs. Hosmer does become nearly exhausted, overcome with the heat nearly to the point of fainting? What if we should all be overcome and die in great agony? Just think of Jesus and how he suffered and never mind! That fixes it all right! But Infidels ought to suffer, so damn them here and God will damn them in the sour "by and by."

We reach Dufer after a hard, hilly, helly journey, but we took some subscriptions to the Torch, had dinner with some fine people who, although somewhat orthodox, listened and became interested in our University; and thus our work grows, even if

"It comes with marks of toil upon it,
With marks of toil and strife upon it,
The outcome of all ages in it,
Evolution written on it."

At the present writing we are at Dufer, where we have found many liberal-minded people. We have taken some subscriptions, have engaged a large hall and billed the town and surrounding country for a lecture and entertainment tonight. Now for it! Help and sympathy or rotten eggs, it matters not; we'll good-naturedly take what comes and "bob up serenely" somewhere else "after the ball is over."

Our friend and fellow-worker in the Religion of Humanity, Mr. C. Elton Blanchard, late editor and publisher of "Current Thought," of Cleveand, Ohio, has become business manager of "The Arena," the leading progressive magazine of today, published in Boston, Massa-

chusetts. While we regret the loss of "Current Thought," we congratulate the Arena Company upon its good fortune in securing so able and energetic a man in its work. We also congratulate Mr. Blanchard upon his enlarged opportunities for pushing ahead the cause in which we are mutually interested.

More Trouble in the Theological Schools.

Prof. Oscar W. Morgan, who has occupied the chair of Biblical Language in Drake University (Campbellite) at Des Moines, Ia., for several years, has announced that he no longer believes in the inspiration of the scriptures, and so he has been transferred from the theological department to the chair of Hebrew and Greek. The action of the trustees to this effect grew out of the protest of about thirty of the more orthodox theological students, who asked that Professor Morgan be dismissed from the faculty on account of his heretical teachings. He was called before the trustees and questioned. He did not deny his reported views that "the acceptance of every word as the expression of inspiration is impossible in view of the development of the higher criticism of the scriptures." Investigation showed that a large majority of the divinity students were in sympathy with him, and that William Baird Craig, the chancellor of the university, held about the same views, so the trustees concluded it would not be prudent to go further than to take the liberal thinker out of the Divinity School. The students are divided and bitter feeling has cropped out in the form of an anonymous circular, assailing the students who complained of Prof. Morgan. It closes by saying: "They are shallow enough to believe that the removal of one man would dispose of the doctrine which he so ably advocates. Poor, deluded fools. They have not sense enough to observe that every thinking man is tainted with the same doctrine."

The action at Louisville last week of the board of trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in accepting the resignation of President Whitsett of that institution recalls a long-continued church controversy. The dissatisfaction against Dr. Whitsett arose chiefly, if not wholly, over an article contributed by him to the Independent some two or three years ago, and another article contributed to a cyclopedia. In these he made statements with regard to the history of baptismal customs that, from the point of view of many of his fellow denominationalists, were damaging to the position of the Baptist church. The one chiefly objected to seems to have

been that baptism by immersion was not practiced prior to 1641. Many Baptists, especially in the North, have protested against the prosecution on the ground that as a teacher of church history Prof. Whitsett ought to be allowed full liberty of investigation. Another church disagreement, this time in the Presbyterian fold, comes again to light with the news that the Rev. Dr. A. C. McGiffert will be called to account before the General Assembly for the alleged unorthodox views expressed in his book, "A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age," that attracted so much attention when published last year. Dr. McGiffert's critics consider his book rationalism of the worst kind.

Capital Punishment.

I think the refusal of Governor Roosevelt to commute the sentence of Mrs. Place is a disgrace to the state. What a spectacle, of man killing a woman—taking a poor, pallid, frightened woman and strapping her to a chair, and then arranging the apparatus so she can be shocked to death! Many call this a Christian country. A good many people who believe in hell would naturally feel it their duty to kill a wretched, insane woman.

Society has a right to protect itself, but this can be done by imprisonment, and it is more humane to put a criminal in a cell than in a grave. Capital punishment degrades and hardens a community, and it is a work of savagery. It is savagery.

Capital punishment does not prevent murder, but sets an example by the state that is followed by its citizens. The state murders its enemies, and the citizen murders his. Any punishment that degrades the one punished must necessarily degrade the one inflicting the punishment. No punishment should be inflicted by a human that could not be inflicted by a gentleman.

For instance, take the whipping post. Some people are in favor of flogging because they say some offenses are of such a frightful nature that flogging is the only punishment. They forget that punishment must be inflicted by somebody, and that somebody is a low, contemptible cur. I understand that John G. Shortall, president of the Humane Society of Illinois, has had a bill introduced into the legislature of the state for the establishment of a whipping post.

The shadow of that post would disgrace and darken the whole state. Nothing could be more infamous, and yet this man is president of the humane society. Now the question arises, What is humane about this society? Certainly not its president. Undoubtedly he is sincere. Certainly no man