

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

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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, JUNE 22, E. M. 299.

ALL ABOARD!

At Mitchell we had a good audience. The seats were all full and some were obliged to stand, and from the applause we concluded that we are doing good work for our great cause. Before we reached the city we met a Methodist minister, with whom we had a little debate. The tables are turned and we Secular preachers now endeavor to convert these poor, misguided creatures to the true religion of Humanity. Our debate was free from all unkindness, excepting the last idea expressed by this servant of Christ. He expressed the hope that we would break down in our lecture at Mitchell. This, it seems to us, is not the spirit of love and shows that Christianity, although it claims to be a religion of charity, is really a religion of hate. We did not break down, however, which is another proof of the uselessness of the prayers of preachers.

The night of our lecture some poor, deluded mortal endeavored to burn up the town. He turned all the water out of the irrigating ditch, climbed to the roof of the hotel, the Puett House, and with oil, pitch and kindling set a fire. In a few minutes more the whole town would have been doomed, but the landlord discovered the blaze, aroused the people and managed to prevent the fiendish work just in time. Whether our Freethought work had anything to do with this ruthless attempt to destroy property and life or not, we do not know. This we do know, however, that when the old creeds of hate are forever gone and the truth has

made us free, such devilish work will forever disappear.

Mr. Boardman, who needs no introduction to Oregon Freethinkers, paid our expenses at the hotel, and on the morning of June 1st we fed our wheel-horses a little fresh air and oil and cantered away over the hills to Caleb, where lives another wicked Infidel known as Jake Barrhouse. Mr. Barrhouse gave us a hearty welcome, and his son Dick and Aubray Wolford, with whom all Liberal University people are well acquainted, helped to make our welcome complete. Mrs. Barrhouse proved to be an excellent hostess and entertained us with dulcimer music, a very laughable account of a drunken man who had recently fallen from his horse into the creek and lively conversation, which helps so much to get people acquainted. So here we are among friends, only about thirty miles from Dayville, where the convention is to be held, and it is nine days before that important event will take place. Mr. and Mrs. Barrhouse have very much work on hand at this time of the year, it being sheep-shearing time, and Mrs. Hosmer is already at work in the kitchen and the editor talks of being initiated into the secrets of sheepcraft.

We were never better treated than at Mr. Barrhouse's, and we find that these kind-hearted people are in perfect sympathy with our constructive, moral ideas of Secularism. They not only gave us the best food and beds their comfortable home affords, and it affords the most excellent, but they gave fifty dollars more to help on our work, and assured us that their son Dick will attend the University again next year.

Saturday morning Mr. Rauch and the editor started to visit friends on Waterman Flat, which is twelve miles from Caleb. The roads were somewhat rough and hilly, but we reached Mr. and Mrs. McKay's large possessions of about 3000 acres at noon with no accident excepting a punctured tire, and although they were not at home, we were made welcome by their Secular workmen, among them Mr. Sharp, with whom we became acquainted at the convention last year. Mr. and Mrs. McKay came home in the afternoon and made us doubly welcome. Mrs. McKay, formerly Mrs. Smith, will be remembered as one who has liberally donated to our cause for several years. Some thought that when she married last year that would end her Freethought work, but we found Mr. McKay also very much interested, and before we went away, without solicitation, he sat down and wrote us a check for \$25. Such friends as these are friends indeed, and we will never forget them. It is hard work for us to ask for help, and if we were

to consult our own pleasure and our own financial interests, we would never ask any one to donate to anything, and at once let the constructive work lapse into the do-nothing state in which it has been for years. But no; we must go on, let the scoffers scoff, and, with the help of our noble, generous friends, build this living monument to mental liberty.

Sunday morning finds us on our way to Straube Brothers' ranch, where we enjoy a good dinner and a good visit, and then start back to the Barrhouse ranch, where we finally arrive, after getting lost on the way and wandering over the hills for some time, hardly recognizing the house or the barn until we saw some of the Barrhouse family.

Leaving Mrs. Hosmer and her brother Charles to work out their salvation by the sweat of their brows, we come in on the "home stretch" to Dayville and pass under the wire at the happy home of Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Snyder, who were expecting us and welcomed us as life-long members of the Freethought fraternity know how to welcome one who dares to wear an Otto Wettstein badge. And here we are, answering the letters which we find awaiting us and getting ready for the convention which may mean so much to Freethought and to the evolution of our race.

AFTER THE CONVENTION.

There was not a very large attendance at the convention, and there were a number of things which conspired to hinder our having that success which we anticipated. Dr. York, for some unknown cause, failed to be with us. Some of our singers had such colds that they could only croak a little, and through a little personal spite work the business was not entirely harmonious; but there were some very pleasant and profitable features of this eleventh annual convention of the Oregon State Secular Union. The Secularists of Dayville entertained us with such a degree of hospitality and friendship that we will never forget them. Their conduct gives us another lesson in the true and only elevating religion—the religion of truth and love, the religion of this world, the religion of humanity. The lectures and other exercises were well received, and the dance on the last evening was well patronized and enjoyed very much.

Mr. C. E. Glaze, to whom we are all very much indebted for his untiring efforts in decorating the hall and in attending to all those little(?) things which go to make up the success of such gatherings, collected from the brethren many shekels of silver for the lecturers. This, with many compliments and hearty handshakes, made us all feel well paid for our endeavors,

and we will be easily induced to come again.

Early Tuesday morning nearly all the conventioners started for their homes, which lie in so many different directions. The editor and his better half concluded to stay one more day with their most excellent friends, the Snyders, and get ready for the bicycle-steam-boat-railroad ride to the land of Webfoot, where the work of erecting the great Freethought University awaits their supervision. We cannot fully express our thanks for the kind treatment we received at Dayville, and we will never forget to pray (wish) for the noble Secular souls (minds) on the John Day river.

DRINK AND SUPERSTITION.

Give him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief and care.
There let him bouse, an' deep carouse,
With bumbers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' mind his griefs no more.
(Prov. 31:6-7.) —Burns.

Christian people who claim that every word of the Bible is the word of God, and who, at the same time, believe that it is a sin to drink or sell intoxicating liquors, should read their bibles more carefully. The above short poem was written by a man of great intelligence, and he undoubtedly believed that the Bible sanctioned the use of strong drink; and there are many who have gone to drunkards' graves who had their god's word that it is a wise thing to drown their troubles with that which God knows, at least his word(?) says so, "at last biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."

As there are many Liberals who use intoxicating liquors, it might be "policy" for us to keep our opinions to ourselves, but that would be the act of a coward. We hate "policy" and believe that a large portion of the misery of the world is caused by hypocrisy, deceit, fraud and policy.

Let it be understood that we blame no man for his weaknesses. We are what we must be. Free moral agency is a humbug. Our inherited traits, coupled with our environments, make us just what we are. We must not condemn, but we must listen and then judge for ourselves what is the truth and on what side of every question our influence is to be cast. We believe that the habit of drinking poisonous drinks is a relic of our past ignorance and that, like superstition, it will have no place in the grand civilization of the future. Men make good livings selling these false stimulants and, like the ministers of Jesus, they usually protect their business as best they can; and to be honest with our readers, we must say that we have come to respect the saloon-keeper and those who drink "open and above board"