

## 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.

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### FOURTH OF JULY

To those who believe in "the flag above the cross," it is sickening to see the cross raised to such an exalted position above the flag, above our republic, above the ideas of the brave infidels who were the instruments in the hands of Liberty to write our "godless" constitution, and above everything that is worth having. And yet we cannot celebrate our Declaration of Independence from one tyrant, without some advocate of spookish nonsense being allowed to declare our loyalty to a tyrant in the sky, which has hindered our progress more, and enslaved us with a far more cruel slavery than a hundred King Georges could have dreamed.

We have become so accustomed to the sight, that most people do not see the ridiculous side of the prayer on such occasions; but look at it a moment. Amid the shouts of joyful youth, amid the tumult caused by shouts of "lemon, lemonade," the music of the band, the squeaking of the merry-go-round, and the shooting of fire crackers, a man, who knows how, is allowed to shoot off his mouth at his God, telling him things that any god ought to know, and making believe that the people believe such heathenish nonsense. We should think that after such good lessons of politeness we sometimes hear from the Christian pulpit, that those who believe in such absurdities would have respect enough for those who do not, to wait and pray in their closets, as their god book teaches.

On the platform, at Silverton, during the 4th of July celebration, were but very few who believe in prayer. Young men who make all manner of sport of the preacher's antics, and old grey-headed veterans in the cause of Freethought, and who know that human reason is insulted by such mummeries, are forced to listen or drop out of line. We who are loyal to our flag, as long as that flag represents Liberty, despise the simpering, slavish prayer to any tyrant, be it a king, or a priest, or a god.

We do not wish to be misunderstood. Every one should have the privilege of worshipping a god or a devil if he so desires, but it is impolite, impolitic and downright mean to force any form of worship upon a people who ought to be free in fact as well as in name. The Christian religion is no more our religion than is spiritualism, theosophy, Braminism, or Judaism.

Nearly all of these ideas were represented in the Silverton audience, the majority being what are termed Infidels. Then why must one sect domineer over the people?

Must we forever have a few wily priests and their enthusiastic followers force their obnoxious doctrine upon people who do not want it? Must those who have modern ideas in regard to the causes and the results of life, take a back seat while these aggressive fanatics spout of their gods and devils, their heaven and hell? We have no desire on such occasions to talk about our particular views on the religious subject. It would be out of place in such a mixed audience, assembled for a common patriotic purpose, to present that which is obnoxious to many, but no more out of place than the prayers that are forced upon those who are, and by right ought to be, as free to think for themselves, and as free to express those thoughts as the Christian.

The celebration in Silverton was a success. The day was perfect. The races were good, and the drama in the evening gave good satisfaction. But if the elements which are at work to rob our citizens of the power to think for themselves were eliminated, how much closer the people could be united. How much more energy could be expended for the general welfare? How much more good could be accomplished?

If we want to level down the classes, and be a united happy people—if we wish to elevate the masses and annihilate human misery—if we wish to save the world from its ignorance and corruption, one of the first things we must do is to cast out the evil spirits which are still tearing to pieces the minds and bodies of many of the best citizens of this greatest of nations.

### OUR CATHOLIC NEIGHBORS.

Near to the city of Silverton is the Roman Catholic town of Mt. Angel. Above the town is a high hill known as The Butte, and it is on this hill that the new monastery is being built.

Last week, in the company of our ex-Catholic Secularist, Mr. H. E. Klein, and his excellent wife, we made the ascent of the hill, and viewed the works of the oldest and most powerful Christian church. This institution is being built by an order of Catholics known as the Benedictines. The brothers as well as the sisters of this order wear long black dresses; and as we visited the shrines and little prayer houses, we met with several of these men, robed in black, going from one station to another praying.

The new monastery now in the process of construction, is to be a massive stone structure, two hundred and forty feet wide, and four hundred feet long. The walls are three, four, and five feet thick, and will represent labor and material costing millions of dollars, and it is said that one priest, traveling through the United States and parts of Europe last year, raised two million dollars to help this work along.

After examining the massive walls, and wondering if they would ever be used to conceal the awful crimes that are said to take place in these haunts of the dark-robed saints, we visited the school and prayer stations, which are fourteen in number, corresponding with supposed scenes in the life of Christ. These little houses are about six feet by ten feet in size, and are located on a winding path that leads up the hill toward the monastery. On the wall in the back and upper part of each is a representation in relief of the last scenes in Christ's life.

Station No. 1 represents him as being condemned, and his judge washing his hands, illustrative of the familiar Bible story. The workmanship is very good, and, as a work of art, it is quite interesting. On the side are written the following words: "O, all ye that pass by this way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow."

Of course, to a Freethinker, the idea of a god having sorrow is simply ridiculous; and when we thought of his long white dress dragging on the ground, as shown in the representation, the whole thing took on one of those serio-comic aspects that it is impossible to explain. To think of full-grown men being so perfectly silly as to kneel down to these pictures, and mumble over old worn out prayers to ease their minds of their burden of sin, is so sad and yet so perfectly ludicrous, that one doesn't know

whether to laugh, cry or get mad.

The ideas represented by the other thirteen stations are as follows:

2. Jesus is made to bear his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus is met by his blessed mother.
5. The cross is laid on Simon of Cyrene.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

As we stopped at the different stations, we not only admired the workmanship of the relief representations, but, not being at all awed by superstitious belief, we found some pleasure in criticising their defects. We noticed that the color of the garments of the different characters changed, which one of our party pronounced as a serious defect. Then the virgin Mary, who according to the story, must have been about fifty years of age at the death of her thirty-three year old son, looked as fresh and blooming as a girl of twenty summers. And again, the features of both Jesus and his mother are more like those of modern Europeans than of the ancient Jews. But perhaps the most pleasing mistake of the artist was the placing of the spear hole in Jesus' side. At Station 13 the hole is on the left side, while at Station 14 behold it on the right side! Take this with the fact that one of his big toes is somewhat cracked, and it furnished us merry thoughts that for a time drove out the sad ones caused by our pity for the enslaved millions who worship at these shrines. At one station we met a brother in robes and a young man, evidently a new student. The brother stopped and said a few words, but on our making it known that we believe not in the Christian dogmas, he passed on, with the remark that if we are not Christians it is our own look out.

Our ex-Catholic friend said that it made him sick to look at these pictures, and he generally sat off at one side while the more curious ones examined them. And when we think of the valuable time, the physical and mental force, and the money that he, in common with millions of others who were born Catholics, has spent at such places, we do not wonder at the nauseating feelings of our freedom-loving friend. But never mind, Freethought friends, the movement now on foot will make a different world of this old planet. The Protestants who choose to remain superstitious will be driven into the Catholic church, and the great body of progressive people will then have a fair chance to pit the powers of Science against the powers of superstition. Never fear; Science will win! Money and massive stone structures cannot be compared with the principles of Liberty and Truth.