

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, APRIL 12, E. M. 300.

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

In a former issue of the Torch we mentioned an attempt to remove our name from the program of the Silverton Teachers' Association which was held here last Saturday. We were asked by the chairman of the committee to give a short address. We had given him our subject. It was placed on the program, which was submitted to the members of the committee present and publicly read by Prof. Lewis, the chairman of the meeting. It was our duty to speak, and if we refused to do so our Life State Diploma could be revoked by the state authorities. But we had about concluded that it would be much better to stay away from the meeting and thus avoid all unpleasantness, and we mentioned our intention to some of our friends, but they urged us very emphatically to go. They said, and we think truthfully, that our liberties were at stake and that staying away under such circumstances would have the effect of a defeat that would hurt the cause of freedom of speech, and through it the cause of Humanity. Therefore we went, ready to make a short educational speech; and on being assured that our name had really been taken off the program, we urged the chairman, Prof. Lewis, principal of the public school, not to thus publicly insult us. We thought that after having been asked to speak and the program having been publicly read, nobody, especially a person outside of our association, had a right to demand

that our name be taken off, and that Prof. Lewis had no more right to do so than we had to declare that some other member should not speak, or that he should not act as chairman of the meeting. It was not necessarily the chairman's duty to even read the program.

But our pleadings for justice were in vain. The exercises began, and when we took the opportunity to ask why our name was omitted we were completely ignored. Now we are not anxious to speak to those who do not wish to hear us, but the teachers had nothing whatever to do with this boycotting performance, and to show to what extent religious fanaticism and personal spite will go to down freedom of thought and expression, let the facts be submitted to our friends at home and abroad.

The agent of the Southern Pacific railroad at this place is considered an Infidel, but not just agreeing with us as to the methods and principles of conducting our school, he has foolishly become a bitter personal enemy. We have no enmity toward him nor his family, and have never crossed his path except in self-defense. But because he has injured us he feels bitter toward our work, and at every opportunity tries to tear it down. We have been called to deliver funeral addresses more than once and found to our chagrin that, after preparing, some one had telegraphed or written that we were "too busy to attend", or interfered so as to damage and humiliate us. Our friends have been notified, untruthfully, that we are an Anarchist and an enemy to the public schools; and now, through this agent, who is supposed to be working for the interests of the Southern Pacific System, we are personally insulted and professionally damaged by being declared unfit to speak in the public school building, and even refused an explanation.

No one knows what this means to a teacher excepting those who have labored for years in the profession and felt a pride and satisfaction in seeing much good come from his honest efforts.

But what can one expect when personal spite, political prejudice and religious fanaticism are allowed to control our public schools, as they often are? The agent, who is a member of the school board and the main god to whom Mr. Lewis, the principal of the public school, is obliged to pray for his position, easily found a second in said Lewis, and of course it is an easy matter when so much is at stake, for some men to persuade themselves that they ought to act as another's guardian. These men, however, are both known as Infidels and could not alone accomplish their scheme. But "where there's a will there's a way", and a Christian member of

the school board was soon convinced that Hosmer is not a fit man to talk to those who are teaching the young immortal minds how to shoot. Prof. Lewis was heard to say that he had "no use for this man [Hosmer] politically"; has otherwise discourteously endeavored to prejudice our friends against us, and encouraged the Methodist member to decide against us. But we think that "a guilty conscience needs no accuser", and that probably, knowing as he does that we are much opposed, especially in teachers, to indulging in certain habits which we call filthy and unscientific, he has naturally a dislike to us which is based on better grounds than politics; and so he was willing to become guilty of such unprofessional conduct as to help prevent a fellow teacher, who dares to advocate his honest thought, from speaking at a teachers meeting.

Must citizens of Silverton submit to this domineering process much longer? Is the Southern Pacific Railroad going to lose thousands of dollars, by their agent working against a University which will eventually bring more passengers from neighboring and Eastern states than any other institution in Oregon, without even an investigation? Is the little Methodist church, through its cunning manipulation of public affairs, to prevent free speech in our city and say whose names shall remain and whose shall be stricken from educational programs after they are made?

The president of the Methodist University at Salem was innocently made a party to this diabolical scheme also, and although not placed on the program by the committee, occupied more time in a war-like, political, historical lecture than all the other teachers put together; and we think that, although his talk was an excellent example of a good memory, a few years ago it would have been pronounced high treason, and in our humble estimation was better fitted for a stump speech on the side of the monied aristocracy of this country than for a teachers' association. But of course tastes differ, and "to the victors belong the spoils"

We see now why Freethought is so tardy. It has the combined forces of personal interests, political prejudice and religious fanaticism to overcome. Friends of Justice and Truth, we must wake up or the cause we love will be crushed to earth never to rise again until men are more worthy to be called the sons of our peerless Goddess of Liberty.

THE COSMOPOLITAN MIND.

The following is what we would have said at the Silverton Teachers' Association, of which we are a charter member, if our name had not been fraudulently taken from the program through personal spite and religious fanaticism:

FELLOW TEACHERS AND FRIENDS:—

In order to build a palace, an architect must understand what he is trying to do; he must understand the material with which he is to build, and he must know how to

use the tools necessary for working out the different parts. So it is with the work of a teacher. One who wishes to educate a boy or girl must understand what he is trying to do; he must understand what an education is, the material out of which the character is to be built, and the use of the instrumentalities with which he must work.

What then is it to be educated? What is the mind, and how should we use books, papers, lectures, school houses and apparatus—the tools of education?

Education is the training of the powers of body and mind, and he is educated who has reached the highest point of perfection in the development of his complete self. The mind, being the motive power, the thinking or knowing power and the feeling power, which secures this development, teachers have to deal largely with the mind; therefore let us examine closely the nature of the mind. What is it? We say that one has a good mind, another a weak mind. What is a good mind? Is it a good thing, like a good watch, or is it a healthy action or process, like the action of the heart? We say the heart has a good beat when it performs its functions properly. Then is it not evident that when the process through which the brain goes when it knows, feels and wills is properly performed, that this process is what we call mind? The emotions, the intellect and the will are simply the processes of the brain, then, and the mind is only a good, healthy one when the BRAIN is in good WORKING order. Now the condition of the brain depends on two things: first, the kind of matter of which it is originally composed, i. e., the kind from which it came, or in other words its inherited character, and, second, what has been its moulding, shaping surroundings since its independent growth. As teachers we have nothing to say in regard to how the children should be born. They are already here, and our work is to so make the environment that the best may be made of the material on hand. We are environment makers, then. But we alone do not make the child's environment. The home, the other students, the churches, the saloons, the loafers on the streets, all these have an influence for good or bad on the child's character. The teacher, then, has a mighty task in educating those placed in his charge. Those ghostly weaknesses of ignorant ancestors must be overcome, and this, too, when they are so out of our reach. We can only see and know them by and through the child's actions, and they are so complicated, the good mixed with the bad, that in order to be a perfect teacher it is necessary to be omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

Added to this work of overcoming