

TORCH OF REASON.



"TRUTH BEARS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*T. W. Higginson*

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Life, Truth and Fable.

BY S. W. WETMORE, M. D.

"**L**IFE is real, life is earnest,
Though the grave may be the
goal;
"Dust thou art, to dust returneth,"
Might be spoken of the whole.

Then, while life is at the zenith,
Earnest work should be our aim;
Work for Truth and Right that seemeth
Slow to conquer, hard to gain.

What is more divine than science,
Taught in Nature's regal lore?
Facts and truths need no reliance,
They have pictured worlds of yore.

What is more absurd than fable,
Given as a fact divine?
None but those with minds unstable,
Phantoms, myths and faith combine.

"Life is real, life is earnest,"
Life's too short to mourn and grieve,
Sadness fills the heart that yearneth
After phantoms that deceive.

Evolution's great conception
Ope the eyes of priest and pope,
While the clergy lack perception,
Science, Truth and Right will cope.
—[Freethought Magazine.

Universities of, for and by the People vs. Universities of the State and Church.

BY T. B. WAKEMAN.

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Oregon. L. U. O.

IN a very able and remarkable
Address made by Prof. Frank
Strong, the President of the
University of Oregon,* that learned
advocate of higher education gave
the following bit of history as the
key to its future in Oregon and
other states.

"FREE HIGHER EDUCATION CAME FIRST.

"I wish you to notice that the
first free schools in America, with
one exception, were a public high
school and a public college, and
that public higher education took a
stronger hold, and is of older
growth than free primary educa-
tion. I wish you to notice further
that Oregon is one of the 16 States
in which the people specifically tax
themselves for the support of a
state university."

Following this train of thought,
the speaker mentioned other his-
torical facts of early education in
America, concluding with the state-
ment that since that time, nearly
40 states and territories have been
added to the list which have uni-
versities founded or supported by
the state, and the total fixed prop-
erty of these universities is now
\$95,000,000.

This means that the higher edu-
cation of our State and country is
to fall into the hands of the politi-
cal parties, partizans and bosses
who are to determine our political
future. Our National and State
Constitutions are now only the

* Before the Charities Meeting at Port-
land, Jan. 14 last, reported in the Ore-
gonian of Jan. 15.—three columns.

means by which our parties ad-
minister THEIR governments. While
meditating upon the doubtful desir-
ability of this future for educa-
tion we met a contrast still more
questionable in a Republic; to wit:

Some friends who had been
picknicking upon the park and
grounds of the Cermalite Roman
Catholic University at Mount An-
gel, only five miles from Silverton,
seemed to be almost overwhelmed
by its present and promised future.
For it is to be not only the greatest
educational building on the Pacific
Coast, but in the United States, un-
less it is exceed by its counterpart,
the great Roman Catholic Universi-
ty at Washington, D. C., which
has taken the place of the great
National and Secular University
which Washington designed and for
which he left a large part of his for-
tune to have erected there.

But one wing of this colossal
building of the Willamette valley
has been erected, and that seems to
astonish every beholder. The
foundation walls (ten feet in thick-
ness), as they gradually advance,
show plainly that the twenty mil-
lions of dollars back of them al-
ready devoted to this institution, is
not simply a boast, but a realizing
fact. It is a fearful crystallization
and fortification of superstition.

The third fact for meditation is
that all of the greater universities
of the country are now under Pro-
testant church influences—really,
though not avowedly,—absorbing
millions of dollars every year, and
asserting a Protestant monopoly
and control of the higher education
of the country—as far as any it has.

The first thought that grows out
of these immense facts is that no
church or sectarian monopoly of
the business of providing a higher
education for our people can really
do it. They can, to begin with, ed-
ucate only a few of the well-to-do
people, and them only so far as to
make them good Catholics, or Pres-
byterians, or Episcopalians, or
Methodists, etc., etc. Such educa-
tion is not "higher" in any proper
sense of the term; it is dwarfed, sec-
tarian and partial; besides it is only
limited to a few for want of means
to give it a general extension. To
get over this limitation of means,
the State is invoked and even im-
portuned to go into the business of
the higher education by establish-
ing a State University of its own,
or patronizing the more or less sec-
tarian universities by special dona-
tions or indirect favors. We sug-
gest that neither of these plans can

place a true and free higher educa-
tion upon an independent, impar-
tial and effective basis. And yet it
seems to be admitted by all that
such a basis is one of the greatest
and most difficult questions of the
incoming century and of a rejuven-
ated Republic.

Shall we build up and overtop
the Roman Catholic Institution by
a monster "University of Oregon,"
with unlimited funds and appli-
ances? The Republic has need of
a Common School, but as much or
more need of a public and secular
higher education.

The trouble is that a State can
not run a higher education because
such education must be FREE, as
Prof. Ernst Haeckel well pointed
in his "Freedom of Thinking and
Teaching." Our Republic is most
unfortunately but another name for
Government by Parties, who use it
and all of its institutions, as a means
for their and their followers' sup-
port and aggrandisement. No State
University within their reach can
be politically free. Nor can it be so
mentally or religiously. For the
Party who runs the State and
country must run its higher educa-
tion so as to offend no important
sect of Philosophy, Politics or Reli-
gion; or so as to directly support
the Party and Religion in power.
In a word it must be indifferent
and good for nothing, or PARTISAN.
Instances of this are too frequent
already. The nearest to a Free
Scientific Institution, at Washing-
ton, D. C., partly under U. S. con-
trol, nearly lost one of its ablest
professors upon Catholic complaints
that he was too free with "evolu-
tion". Even in Kansas the State
Colleges are cleared at every politi-
cal reverse, and we have direct in-
formation that the outed professors
were not paid. The "higher" edu-
cation conducted on such systems
would evidently become distin-
guished for want of altitude, moral-
ly, intellectually and in every other
way.

The difficulty is in the very na-
ture of the education that is to be
"higher", because to be such at all,
it must be absolutely free and in
constant co-operation and yet emu-
lation, with other institutions, and
indeed with all of the thought and
progress of the world. Public
schools are limited to special rudi-
mentary and instrumental knowl-
edge necessary to all; and so prop-
erly are under state, or rather dis-
trict, management, and thus close
to the people. But even here some
difficulties creep in—especially

about those limited and pesky "text
books". But under one monster
State University these abuses would
soon become monstrous limitations
of monopoly. Instead of the social-
ization of culture, there would arise
an educational monopoly, of which
China furnishes the great model—
not at all desirable, tolerable or
possible in a Republic.

Certainly, then, we must find
some other way for our popular ed-
ucation to flower out at the top. As
in every matter in a Republic, the
people must find or make their own
remedy, so in this case they must
find and make their own Univer-
sity, or rather Universities.

There seems no great difficulty
in realizing this popular plan. The
Legislature would pass a general
University and Library Law, un-
der which such institutions could
be organized and conducted upon
means to be furnished by the pro-
moters. For such of these Uni-
versities as were purely secular in
organization and conduct, appro-
priations might be made or allowed
to be made, IMPARTIALLY, by the
state, county or city in which it
might be situated.

In this way every important cen-
ter of population in the State, and
every other State in time, would
have its own free and independent
Secular Universities under the con-
trol only of general laws and the
wishes of its patrons, students and
parties interested. Instead of one
monster monopoly of higher educa-
tion, we might see such Universities
dotting the land as centers of learn-
ing and culture, and reaching the
people with libraries and public
lectures, the good effects of which
would be inevitable. Just as the
private schools are giving way to
the public schools, the sectarian
universities would gradually be
rivalled or perhaps superceded by
these universities "of the people, for
the people and by the people", be-
cause beyond the immediate reach
sects, politicians and monopolies of
any kind.

Can not we send to our Legisla-
ture those who will give the people
at least an opportunity by general
law for a Republic of Letters, by
their own free and secular universi-
ties of higher education and culture?

When Luther left the Roman
Catholic church and adopted the
motto, "Liberty to investigate", he
sounded the death-knell of every
orthodox church that should after-
wards spring up outside the juris-
diction of the pope.—[Graves.