

Torch of Reason

The Only Paper of Its Kind.

Published Weekly by the Liberal University Company, in the Interests of Constructive, Moral Secularism.

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Entered at the postoffice at Silverton, Oregon, as second-class mail matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

One year, in advance.....	\$1 00
Six months, in advance.....	50
Three months, in advance.....	25
In clubs of five or more, one year, in advance.....	75

Money should be sent by registered letter or money order.

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THURSDAY, NOV. 15, E. M. 300.

The Foundations Broken Up.

OUR REPUBLIC ON TRIAL.

The Great American Federal Republic has only existed one hundred years: Will it be in existence at the end of another century? The answer from the present outlook is very doubtful. The name may be continued, but where are the people who will or can sustain the reality? The question will press upon every one who reads the striking article on "The Passing of National Rights," on the first page of this issue. We called attention in the Torch of November 1st, to "God, The Basis of Government" as presented by Dr. Lyman Abbott, and its inevitable consequences against the Republic. The Sentinel of Liberty of the same date discovered the same dangerous drift; and the question is raised: what is the nature of the difficulty, and what is the remedy? The first and main difficulty is that the old religions, and the deistic basis upon which the Declaration of Independence and the Republic was based by Witherspoon, Jefferson and the Fathers, has, "in the course of events, become washed away. They must be replaced by a new foundation, or the polity based upon them cannot much longer resist the new and opposing conditions and forces. Many a College boy is now proud of showing, that every statement in the "Immortal Declaration's Preamble," is not only untrue, but is exactly the reverse of the truth: It is now scientifically proved that man was never "created" at all; and that a creator and creation is

a mere unthinkable myth: that man was never free nor equal; that he was never "endowed" by any nature or any creator with rights; that he had to fight for all the rights he has, which, instead of being inalienable, are always slipping away or being forced away from him. As to "government," the very idea of it is the very opposite of "consent," and that it has always originated, and has always been continued by force, etc., etc., to the end of that deistic dream.

The answer to all this apparent truth is that Statesmen, like beavers, often "build wiser than they know;" that the conscious motives and reasons assigned for the collective conduct of people, are generally very far from being their complete or even their real ones; and this was evidently the case with Jefferson and the Fathers. The metaphysical deism they assigned were but the drapery and rhetoric of their main grounds presented in the rest of the documents which sum up thus: "Is it not for the interest of the Americans and the world that they be a free and independent people? We show the facts which plainly say, yes! And with a "decent respect" for the opinions of mankind we so declare, and make our appeal for moral, material and military support!"

Their main motive was the duty of looking out for the whole of the American people and their successors, that duty made the moral right which the Declaration put it into a political form; and the result of the war made that moral right a fact, political and international.

Now what was true of the Americans of 1776 is true of all peoples: It is the duty and therefore the right of all members of a community, on the ground of common interest and humanity, to respect and to look out for the life, liberty, property and the chance for welfare and happiness of every other member of the community by laws equally applicable to all. This duty and right was not imposed nor given by any God or Creator, nor by a Goddess "Nature." It arises out of the FACT, the actual NECESSITY, which compels each to look out for others as the condition of his own safety and welfare. All rights result from the social duties which the common welfare of all imposes upon social animals. "Each, for All, All for Each" EQUALLY, is the necessary condition of the welfare of all; for all have common needs, requiring equal protection, and equal laws, and as far as possible, equal conditions. When we drop all Gods, Devils and Nature-Mythology Metaphysics, we land on the hard bottom where the Fathers of our Republic really stood. Human necessities make human duties, and they make human rights. The best government is one that best

answers to these necessities by the best performance of the duties which it is the common right of each to have secured by all. This is the common fact and law of human necessity and nature. Laws, for the "benefit of the greatest number," or for "the government," or for the "benefit of the governors" will not do at all. They are ruled out by the said fundamental fact, that the "All" has no actual, natural or social purposes or human right or reason for its existence except to protect and secure the liberty and welfare of EACH, and so of all. No person, however humble or unfortunate, can be excluded; for the all is not ALL unless it includes EVERY EACH. Thus in sociology human government stands upon its own bottom of social necessity. There is not the slightest reason in the world for us to go slopping about in the muddy and bloody pools of past Theologies and Religions or the fanciful nature.—Mythology abstractions or "principles" of metaphysics to find some origin, sanction or excuse for government which in the order of events cannot help but be. The volcano or thunderstorm, the polity of an Indian tribe or of the United States, exist as correlative results of their past, and the sanctioned law of Gods or Devils are equally superfluous.

Nor is Social existence, order and government a matter of contract or of voluntary agreement, nor were they ever so "instituted" among men. They are a matter of status—that is a matter of social origin and environment, the state of things surrounding every individual. "Man is not except in society." Out of that he lives but a short time in order to die as a very weak and decrepid animal. When he is born he is born as a human being, a child, a citizen and a socius at the same time. No will or compact can make or prevent these relations, and their inevitable duties, functions, obligations and consequently their RIGHTS, for rights are the conditions and privileges necessary to enable him to perform his duties. Rights and duties always go together, for they are counterparts which beget each other and are reciprocal.

The anarchist who argues that he is going to secede from these social conditions and facts with their duties and rights might just as well talk of seceding from the solar system, or veto the stellar motion of the sun.

Our wills are the "predetermined" complement and supplement of these social facts and laws of nature by which we are enabled, bound and compelled to use them for the benefit of each and all, because for the common benefit natural selection operates. The best government is the one in which they are worked out most effect-

ively. Our declaration and constitution therefore rightly says that the Republican-Democratic mode of government is the scientific, true and best one. The action of the all rests upon and is the action and support, and so the "consent," of those who are served by the government, which rightfully exists for no other purpose except their protection and service. Nor is there any great difficulty in aiding and applying this natural, human and necessary process of government. The first consideration of the all is to look for the liberty and highest development and welfare of every "each." This is done for the child, the young each, by the parents, town school, the state and general all. This is the governmental environment which naturally judges and provides in the order named, so that the citizen will be able to support each of the public functions of the serving government as they rise above each other from the hearth-stone to the mighty United States. That the laws by which each is protected in this growth of education and support should be equal follows as a matter of course. The best climate must be equal and regular to all kinds of trees or they could never know how to grow, so equal and regular legal climate and institutions is necessary in family, school and state, and is secured by natural selection for all kinds of people. The first necessity and grand function of government is to secure the liberty and conditions for full development of each; for this equal, impartial and slowly improving laws and conditions are so natural and necessary, that nothing more is to be said. The duty of the highest development of each is at the same time his liberty and fundamental right: and that right, as Spencer will say, is limited only to prevent an encroachment of the equal rights of another.

Nor is there any serious difficulty in applying this natural rule to holy days, as the Sentinel of Liberty seems to suppose. For all remnants of Despotisms, Theocracies and Oligarchies are to be abolished and swept out of the laws of course. Then public holidays or rest days, may be declared by the wish of the mass of the people, as nonbusiness days, like Christmas, New Years day and the glorious Fourth, and Sunday. Only those large forms of business may be restrained which compel a large employment of others, as wholesale merchants and manufacturers, or which cause noise or disturbance which may be a nuisance to others. These may need only to be subjected to some tax or fine. Every one else might work, so as not to interfere with others, on such holidays, if he so wished. Thus the Hebrews and Seventh day people might be happy in a real Secular Republic.