

Torch of Reason

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THURSDAY, JAN., 10, E. M. 301.

President Hosmer's Resignation.

At the first meeting of the Board of Directors this year President Hosmer again presented his resignation as president of our university, and it was accepted. He had resigned as editor of the Torch in October last. Prof. and Mrs. Hosmer will carry with them the sincere regrets of the Trustees, Faculty, Students and Friends of L. U. O., that they concluded at last that this course must be taken. The University will continue the course, which had their initiative, labors and approval. Their sacrifices and services in its behalf will remain as firm as its foundations, which they and a few others laid, and made the beginning of a great enterprise, with which we hope their name and fame will ever be gratefully associated.

The Board at once elected Prof. T. B. Wakeman as president in his place. This was said by all to be the only practical thing to do. The University in all of its departments will steadily move on to realize effectively the purposes it was organized to accomplish.

Public Schools and Text-Books.

All Oregonians are interested in their school text-books, and seem to be generally pleased with the commission of five gentlemen who

have been appointed by Governor Geer to make the selection, and who are as follows: H. W. Scott of Portland, P. L. Campbell, of McMinnville, Stephen A. Lowell, of Pendleton, W. M. Ladd, of Portland and W. M. Colvig, of Jacksonville. We venture these suggestions.

1. The best school books are only approximations to the better which are to follow, and the scholars should never be dwarfed by nor made a slave to them. That can be avoided if the teacher makes explanations and talks on the subjects treated with references to other books of the same character say of a higher grade which should be in the School Library. The text-book is properly a printed note-book for the learner, and should be supplemented by his own note-book of the teacher's explanations and illustrations if possible.

2. The text book when once placed in the pupils' hands should never be taken from them. They should always remain a part of his intellectual life, for reference and realization, whenever occasion may require. He should be impressively instructed as to the careful preservation and use of these books in his family or whatever home he may have. If a student is deprived of his books, all that he is likely to carry in his head from them is very little, and he soon ceases to be a scholar. Even if he seldom opens them, their presence breathes out and recalls their contents unconsciously, and compels the old student to remain to some extent an educated person.

3. It is essential that these books should be furnished FREELY by the state, as a part of the outfit of every school. Some parents have not the means to buy the books, and some may not like the selections made, but if the state makes a donation of the best it can, these objections are obviated as far as possible. If the parents wish, they can obtain other books for reference to supply the deficiencies of those thus freely supplied.

By this provision the Scholars would have good clean books, which they are likely to become attached to and so desire to keep, which they should give their honor pledge to do. But if they did sell them, it would not be as now the means of supplying schools with dirty books, but the means of circulating some intelligence to those not in the schools, which would be good educational work, that the state should never regret. What New York has successfully done in these regards cannot Oregon do?

Public Schools and Universities.

While the questions of supplying free text books to our Public Schools and praying and reading

the Bible in them, are being considered, it is a good time to recall the difference between the public and common schools of the state, and our multifarious universities for the "higher education."

The common schools are for the common branches which are the necessary instruments every one must have in order to meet the duties of a citizen's life, or to enter upon any higher education. The scholar should be made triumphant over "Readin', 'Ritin', and 'Rithmetic," Geography and History, especially that of the United States. The higher branches, especially the Mathematics, languages (linguistics) he should be enlightened about so as to know well what they are. And the "religion" which should accompany all this should be secular, only that of the Republic and and of Humanity.

Now when the State has done this by free schools, teachers and books, ought it to do more? Does it not run upon dangerous snags as soon as it tries:

1.—The higher education must be a diversity and general extension of learning for various purposes in which the religious and sectarian influences must often prevail. The variant courses and tendencies of our colleges and universities as they now exist illustrate this point too fully to write of it further. They all lie beyond the jurisdiction of the secular state—properly limited to the purposes of republican-democratic government, and the education of the people so as to be fit therefor.

2.—The expenses of such variety of universities, even if the people of the state could ever agree about them, (which they could not) would make any state university scheme impracticable.

The Universities should therefore be free and independent of the state, supported by their own patrons and pupils, and be perfectly free to teach, and lecture on all subjects in every direction, and for all purposes it may be desirous to accomplish. In them, for instance, the evolutionary ethnology of the races of the peoples of the world could be unfolded to any extent desired, and all the Bibles of the races, from the "Book of the Dead" of the Egyptians down to the "Book of Mormon," could be made as intelligible as possible, whereas in the common schools they would be simply disjointed, unintelligible, fetishistic jargon.

To put any one of those Bibles into our public schools, is therefore an "impardonable sin," for it is AN ANACHRONISM, and that is a sin which, under the law of time and evolution, it is impossible to forgive, for neither of these can ever be reversed—any more than Niagara, nor as easily.

Haeckel on Immortality, and the Choir Invisible.

In the last Torch we gave our first two pages to Haeckel's exposition of correlation or the "Law of Substance," preparatory to his views on Immortality, which take still more space in this paper. Why is this done? Because Haeckel is the foremost scientist of the world in all of the departments of knowledge which touch this subject, than which nothing more nearly concerns every individual of the human race: For what we ought to be and do now is determined by our future? The interest is increased when we think that this verdict of Science is directly the reverse of that of the vast mass of the human race. We say "verdict of Science," for this scientist by no means gives his personal opinion as authority, but presents the facts attested by himself and fellow scientists over and again under the unfailing methods of correlation. The result is that the notion of the spirit-soul existence and continuance after death is an utter impossibility. All supposed facts and feelings which seem to point to any such conclusion, are simply frauds, illusions, coincidences, or natural facts capable of explanation scientifically like those of trance, or hypnotism. The Spirit obsession is no longer even a rational hypothesis, for in that sense Spirits simply are not.

We shall have our race cooperation science, and altruistic immortality for consolation, if such is needed. As Winwood Reade says at the close of his Martyrdom of Man;—"A season of mental anguish [to many] is at hand, and through this we must pass, in order that our posterity may rise. The "soul" must be sacrificed; the hope of immortality must die. A sweet and charming illusion must be taken from the human race, as youth and beauty vanish never to return."

But will they never return? Yes, the youth and beauty of a real world and a real immortality. We are simply the lost child bewildered and in despair in the dark and stormy night: Before him seemed to rise a horrid ogre that made his last pulse of hope cease in terror. Then came an unexpected flash of lightning, and that ogre was found to be a guide post pointing to his sure way homeward. The lightning flash of Science reveals to us the awful hand of death but it points us to the Earthly Paradise, and soothes and sustains us by voices of the Choir Invisible preceding us as we journey hitherward.

The next Torch will declare this altruistic immortality, for which no better preparation could be than to memorize the "Choir Invisible" on our first page.