

FREETHOUGHT WRITINGS:

# THE TRUTH SEEKER



Voltairine de Cleyre



## SECULAR EDUCATION

There are four instruments which, wielded by dominant minds, bend and mold the sentiments of the masses to meet the form and spirit of the times: The force of early influence, the school, the platform, and the press.

These are the four grand educators, and education is the strong right arm of progress, that arm which bares its mighty muscles and strikes upon the hewn rock of time the chisel-blows which carve the tablets of an advancing era, there to remain until the surges of the incoming ages shall have swept them away, leaving a smooth face whereon shall be inscribed the newer thought, the better hope, the fuller life of the millennium.

To underestimate the power of anyone of these four is to commit oneself to an error in judgment which betrays a lack of generalship, since a good general will never underrate the strength of either his own or his enemy's forces; and whether influence, school, press, and platform are ranged on the side of your battalions or against them, they exert a power which it will not do to overlook if you desire to win the conflict.

To the public school system the nation looks, and in a measure has a right to look, for the formation of the character of its youth. I say it has a right to look in a measure. But there is an education which begins before that, an education which is rooted deeper, which reaches farther, which endures longer than that, and might be called the education of early circumstances; the education of parental influence; the education which makes the child of Catholic parents get down upon its knees while yet scarcely able to lisp its mother's name, and make the sign of the cross while that mother repeats: *In nomine patris, et filius, et spiritus sanctus*; the education which makes the child of Calvinistic parents afraid to be happy on Sunday for fear of offending an all-loving father; the education which should make the child of Secular parents understand that it is better to study how to live than how to die; that it is better to have a religion of deeds rather than a religion of creeds; that it is better to work for humanity than for God.

Secularism owes this duty to itself—that it instruct its children in their earliest infancy to think—Think for themselves. One of our Secular papers has for its motto, "The agitation of thought is the beginning of wisdom." Once the people begin to understand that; once they begin to appreciate the fact that aroused thought creates questions, that questions provoke answers, and that unsatisfactory answers call forth a denial from reason; once they get waked up to the propriety of asking the clergy questions, you will see the frock-coated gentlemen

coming down mightily from their clerical stilts. They'll get down at about the rate the old Scottish minister did with the foxes' tails. I suppose you've all heard of that. A certain Scotch clergyman who, after the manner of ministers in general and particular, was very fond of hearing himself praised, said one day to the sexton, whom he met in the vestibule after service, "Well, Sandy, an' how did ye like the sermon the day?"

"A weel, meenister, it were vera guid."

This tickled the old gentleman immensely, and he wanted to hear it again, so pretty soon he recommenced,

"An' so, Sandy, ye likit the sermon, did ye?"

"Weel, meenister. Ye ken that sometimes ye are a wee bit gien to exaggeration an'-----"

"Exagger—what?"

"Weel, meenister, I didna mean fae pit it ower strang, but ye ken that—weel, ye sometimes stretch the truth a bit."

"What, Sandy? Me stretch the truth, an' me a meenister! Sandy, I'll tell ye. Ye ken that ye sit in the kirk afornent the pulpit. Weel, the next time ye hear me exaggeratin' wull ye look up and whustle?"

"I wull."

So the next Sunday our minister had a very carefully-prepared sermon, taking his text from that part of the scripture which tells about Samson catching the three hundred foxes and tying their tails together; and had he but stuck to his notes he would hav been all right. But no; he could not forbear to extemporize; and closing the big Bible he leaned forward upon it, remarking as he did so, "Noo, brethren, this is wi' mony a vera sair pint; how Samson could ha' caught the three hun'erd foxes, and having caught them, tied their tails thegither. For ye ken that, in this country, it taks a grat mony men an' a grat mony houn's to catch one fox, let alone three hun'erd foxes. But, brethren, if ye'll gie me yer attention for a few munits I'll make that a' perfectly plain to ye. We're tauld in the scriptures that Samson was the strongest mon that ever lived; noo, while we're *not* tauld that he was the greatest runner that ever lived, we're not tauld that he *wasn't*; and so I infer from that that Samson was the greatest runner that ever lived. But noo we come to a mair sair pint still. Having caught the three hun'erd foxes, how was it that he tied their tail thegither, for ye maun ken that it wad be a vera difficult matter for a mon to tie twa foxes' tails thegither, let alone three hun'erd foxes. But ha' patience wi' me, brethren, and I'll make that plain to ye. Noo, there ha' been mun who ha' na staid on thar farms and dairies like yersel's, who ha' na been to the universities like mysel', but h' been away an' traveled I' foreign countries, I' Palestine and the Holy Land. An' these travelers tell us that thar foxes there are a vera different

creetyer; that their tails are vera much longer than they are here; that, in fact, thae foxes there hae tails f-o-r-t-y feet long!”

(A prolonged whistle.)

“Wait a meenit, brethren. Some writers tell us that thae foxes ha’ tails forty feet long, but ither writers inform us that this is a grat exaggeration. That thae foxes’ tails are nae mair than t-w-e-n-t-y feet long!”

(Another whistle.)

“Wait, brethren! While some writers hae tauld us that thae foxes’ tails are forty feet long, and ither writers he tauld us that thae foxes’ tails are twenty feet long, I mysel’ hae studied the matter, and I hae come to the conclusion that this is a vera grat exaggeration. That, in fact, the foxes’ tails are nae mair than t-e-n feet long!”

(Another prolonged whistle.)

“Sandy McDonald, I’ll nae tak’ anither inch off thae foxes’ tails if ye whistle till ye whistle off the top o’ the kirk! Wad ye hae the foxes wi’ nae tails at a’?”

Well, if the people will only keep on whistling, they will get the preachers down to within five or ten feet of the truth.

Secularism owes this duty to itself, that it educate its children in the bottom facts of truth, and not leave them exposed to the deceitful allurements of well-masked falsehood.

Oh, it is a power, this early influence! And therein lies the secret strength of the church; therein lies the hidden source of might to that magnificent organization—the finest which this world has ever seen—that teacher of the dark and damnable doctrens of ignorance, the Roman Catholic church. Therein lies the power which enables it to stretch out a long arm under the Atlantic ocean, to reach a hand beneath the people of the United States, to press its fingers down upon our political parties and its thumb upon our political liberties, and when the opportune moment comes, will enable it to drag them all back, back under the iron heel of the Italian despot.

Do you think them unable to do it, simply because a few Freethinkers oppose a feeble remonstrance? You might as well hope to keep out the storm tides of the ocean with a few poor, rotten dykes. It is going to take the barrier of well-educated minds to stem that torrent; and education, to be most effectiv, must begin in childhood. Earliest impressions are most enduring, and earliest superstitions are hardest to be rid of.

Do not deceive yourselvs. If you do not educate your children, the church will do it for you, and with an object.

Think you, when their numbers are grown vast enough, that they will hesitate to roll their car of Juggernaut over the writing form of mental liberty? Think you that they will pause out of respect to your

sentiments; do you suppose they are afraid of hurting your feelings? Oh, no, “they ain’t built that way!” Think you that this vast array of falsely instructed minds, fortified with the barrier, “Thou shalt not think,” grounded upon ignorance just as firmly as the adamant rock is grounded upon its base—think you that it will hesitate to work out its nefarious schemes on account of any so poor a barrier as Secularists hav thus far interposed? Ah! you fail to comprehend the power of your enemy’s forces.

There are 225 000 000 Catholics in the world, and the United States has its full proportion of them. Do you realize the power of that army of dupes in the hands of pope and cardinal? Do you realize that they multiply like rats, and are daily and hourly making proselytes? Do you realize that they are constantly working in the ditches and sewers and underground cities of thought? Do you realize that the stratum of our liberties has a sub-stratum, and that that sub-stratum is being honeycombed, tunneled through and through by these never-ceasing, never-tiring forces of what Mr. Putnam so aptly styles “organized ignorance”? Do you realize that the sentiment of this overwhelming mass, only waiting to elect a majority in senate and house to establish this government upon a Christian basis, with that high-handed outlaw God upon the throne of the Constitution, with the Catholic church the power behind the throne—do you realize that this vast sentiment, held in check by the one article of the Constitutions which guarantees that there shall be no union of church and state, is the sword of Damocles suspended by a hair?

Ah! we hav need of secular education; we hav need of a Secular Union; we hav need to throw ourselvs in the breach; we are standing with our hand on the throttle of the avalanche. And what is true of the Catholic church is true of the Protestant in a less degree. It isn’t because they lack the will; it’s because they lack the power of organization. Nor does its activity end with the matter of influence. It has wedged itself into our public schools; it has been wrought into the scientific brains of their faculties (yes, and very poor faculties some of them hav, too), until our schools hav become, not institutions devoted to purely secular teaching, but actually Christian places of worship. Yes, indeed, Christian places of worship; where the Protestant God, and the Protestant Jesus, and the Protestant Bible are set up as little idols for Jew, Catholic, and Infidel alike to fall down and worship. The approved text-books of the common schools are in general such as are fraught with reverential nonsense concerning the bounty and goodness of a supreme being in fitting up the beautiful home for man’s abode; when everybody possessed with common sense knows that unless he has a lot of rich relations, God won’t help him a bit about getting a home. And some of the more advanced works on

zoology, chemistry, and geology hav spent much valuable space and printers' ink in the silly endeavor to reconcile Darwin, rock literature, and common sense with that snake-apple yarn. It's high time all this foolishness was abandoned. If scientists will continue to make books pandering to the follies of Christian prejudice, it is the duty of Secularists to demand and to earnestly support that demand that religious sentiment be kept entirely out of educational works. It is enough that our schools should teach concerning the here and the now; it is enough that they should deal with known quantities and assured facts. There are quite enough of them to keep any ordinary mind well employed for some time, without speculating concerning the pin-feathers on an angel's wing. It has more to do with the specific gravity of a comet's tail. It is out of the province of a public school system to decide whether the pavements of the New Jerusalem are 18k. fine or weighed by the table of 24 grs. make 1 pwt., 20 pwt. 1 oz., 12 oz. 1 lb.

It is an inconsistency to declare ourselves a nation of freemen so long as the precepts of truth are incumbered by religious falsehood, and the whole incorporated into the mental food which is ladled out to our youth by teachers who *believe* because their salary depends upon the precarious foothold of popular favor. And we, as Secularists, are inconsistent when a religious system is taught in our public schools in any form, and yet we raise no voice of protest. If the faithful want their children instructed in the "mysteries of religion" let them go to those who make that their business; but it were better for them to beware how they endeavor to foist this *ism* of that upon an institution which *must* and *shall* be committed to purely secular teaching.

It is much to be regretted that so-called Liberals and Freethinkers do not seem to appreciate the necessity of colleges which shall be established upon an entirely secular basis, to the exclusion of all chimerical and—yes, parasitical theology. There are certain moneyed Freethinkers in these United States who hav given more or less to the support of various churches which might much better have been used to found a college of this kind. But no; these gentlemen prefer to see their names in print as the "generous Mr. So-and-so," patron of the Methodist God, or the Presbyterian God, or the Congregationalist God, or some other poor little god who needs patronizing, rather than as founders of secular colleges. Too much laxity in this matter has led to serious backsliding. (I know that is a Methodist term, but, however, it applies.) We hav not only failed to advance, but hav actually lost ground. Girard College, once the stronghold of secular training, has become a religious institution—a soft snap for priests; and though the design of its founder is thwarted, and the original bequest forfeited

thereby, yet those who pretend to venerate that great and noble man stand idly by, witnessing the defeat of his life object, watching this rank and sickly growth of superstition springing green over the ashes of Truth's fallen empire. Where are your Secular principles? Where is your enthusiasm for the liberation of mankind from mental slavery, that you do not at least reclaim the gift of Stephen Girard? I know of but on college in this supposed realm of thought-liberty which is wholly free from superstitious fetters—that is at Liberal, Mo.

Ah! if only our Liberal friends were but half as anxious to propagate truth as our orthodox opponents are to promulgate falsehood. If only they were half as willing to work with mind and heart and pocketbook for the elevation of humanity as to listen to pretty speeches about it. When I see the money that is spent in dotting our cities, towns, villages, and farm lands with church spires, and church colleges, and church institutions of all kinds, even to church gambling houses, and then compare the spectacle with the few, the very, very few, Freethought institutions, I am forced to believe that a little hell-fire doctrine is a pretty good thing to burn holes through pockets. Why, you people who talk so much about elevating humanity are not half as anxious to do something practical in the line as your opponents are about sending us to hell. What is the reason we can't hav secular colleges?

The churches hav theirs, and they've a great big stumbling-block to get over, too, which isn't in our way, because there's nothing about Secularims to provoke theological disputes, simply because there is no theology to dispute about; while a Baptist must draw back from a Presbyterian institution with a shake of his head at the idea of foreordination, and a Presbyterian will look at a Baptist college with a contemptuous, "Take no stock in you, it's too well watered." But pray, what is there to keep anyone out of an exclusively Secular institution? I fear again that the power of such education is not fully appreciated, and remember it is in the hands of the church to use for the advancement of their objects. And they use it. Here again comes in the power of Rome. They hav sprinkled our country with monastic and conventual institutions which exert a secret, deadly influence which makes itself felt to an extent you are little aware of. I know of what I speak. I spent four years in a convent, and I hav seen the watch-works of their machinations. I hav seen bright intellects, intellects which might hav been brilliant start in the galaxies of genius, loaded down with chains, made abject, prostrate nonentities. I hav seen frank, generous dispositions made morose, sullen, and deceitful; and I hav seen rose-lead cheeks turn to a sickly pallor, and glad eyes lose their brightness, and elastic youth lose its vitality and go down to an early grave, murdered—murdered by the church. Can



you hesitate to work for secular schools when you recognize the power of this instrument in the hands of the enemy?

Once the minds of the people have been educated in the principles of truth by a thorough system of early training, they will be enabled to judge better of those matters of interest which are brought before the people by the two other great instruments—platform and press. These work together, and surely the power of eloquence, that subtle, transcendent power, which appeals to both mind and heart, which locks sentiment and reason in each other's arms, should use its every fiber, its every nerve, its every sinew, to draw the rapt and listening soul toward the gate of liberty. And the free press! Ah! that is the grandest of them all! That is the power which penetrates the darkest hovels, the deepest dungeons, the lowest cesspool of humanity. That is the sublime educator of the masses; that is the hand which is stretched out to each and every one. That is the guerdon of our liberties.

And inasmuch as it is the noblest and highest instrument when right used, so when perverted and turned from its course does it come the most baneful. A few months since an influential, wide-awake Michigan newspaper made the statement that religion was even more essential than education to the welfare of the state, and if not otherwise provided it would be a necessity for the state to furnish it. That paper had a very poor opinion of itself as an educator; it had a *very* poor opinion of the press of this country. Unfortunately there seemed to be a little policy in the matter, as the said paper has a large Christian support; but I'm thinking if the worthy editor who wrote the article were asked which the world could do without best, religion of the Detroit *Evening News*, he would have reconsidered his decision.

He would have said as I say, "That is false!" The press and the platform are the *vox populi*, the call of humanity; the cry for liberty; the cry which goes up from all the weary, struggling, surging sea of life; the cry which catches the ear when we wake and listen and hear the mourning of the desolate homes, laid waste by that rich, grinding, hated, accursed monopoly, the church.

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## Pennsylvania Conventions and Ohio Workers

After a long, tiresome jolt over that paragon of bad roads, the L. S. & M. S., your correspondent arrived at Girard station on the forenoon of the 24th of January. The day was cold, the station-house was cold, the baggage-master was cold, very cold, as I asked him, in my most persuasiv accents, when the Erie and Pittsburgh train left for Louisville. "Five hours, miss," and he wiped the young and budding icicles from his mustache. Five hours! and only one weary, forlorn passenger with which to while away the time. It looked dubious, but, in sheer desperation, I determined to "face the music," and, marching boldly up to the lady—thanking my stars she was a lady, as I could discuss draperies and plaitings, on a pinch, rather better than the latest Prince Albert style or toothpick-toed pumps—and disclosing my destination, inquired if I was to hav the pleasure of her company during "the wait." She lifted a pair of glorious brown eyes to mine and said, with a smile, that she was going down to report the Linesville Paine celebration. "Aha!" said I to myself, "I'm in luck; I'll get on the right side of the reporter." A few moment's conversation brought out the fact that my new friend was as radical a Liberalist as the country afforded, and as there is always much pleasure in the commerce of kindred ideas, the five hours were passed away most agreeably. At Linesville we were met by our good Liberal friend, Mr. E. B. Brooks, who escorted us to the Arnold House, and bade me be ready to greet the audience as soon as possible, since neither of the other speakers had yet arrived.

The evening's address was "Secular Education;" as it has already been printed in *THE TRUTH SEEKER*, I need not outline its argument. The audience was as fine an assemblage of intelligent men and women as one often meets, and, perhaps I might add, as sympathetic. Many of them came and shook hands with me, as evidence, I presume, that they held no ill-will against me for punishing them so ruthlessly in the infliction of the address.

The following morning our gifted and merry logician, Charles Watts, arrived, at it was a fine address which the Linesville Liberals heard that morning—finely delivered, and finely received.

The afternoon train brought the delinquent Mr. Darrow, together with Dewitt T. Root, the wide-awake president of the Farmdale Secular Union. Our company had now its full complement, and many were the bright flashes of wit, the scorings of repartee, the quaint stories, the real, earnest thoughts and sentiments exchanged during the remainder of our stay.

Mr. Darrow's lection on "The Industrial Problem" was unique, and as pleasing as it was unexpected. As an orator Mr. Darrow is at

first disappointing; he appears strange, diffident, and slightly awkward, but as he warms to his subject, as ideas begin to glow, and daring thoughts gleam across the dome of the mental firmament like meteors, his strangeness becomes almost grandeur, his diffidence melts into a masterful ease, and as the inexorable logic of facts, the mournful eloquence of pitiful lives, grows up and out of the dark statistics of the crimes and sufferings of poverty, his former lack of grace is lost, his very personality seems sunk into the immeasurable profundity, the limitless height, of the idea of economic liberty he advocates; he ceases to be a man; he becomes a principle.

The lecture met with the unqualified approval of a large audience. Mr. Watts supplemented the discourse by a few well-timed remarks, calling the attention of his listeners to that higher question upon which the settlement of the industrial problem hinges—namely, the necessity of ridding the world of a divine monopolist before the competitiv system on earth can give place to a better state.

The following morning the same speakers entertained an attentive audience by a clear and comprehensive review of the “Evidences of Christianity.”

A short intermission was followed by some witty remarks from Mr. Root, which put the audience in good humor with themselves, and in a mood to listen to the Paine oration, delivered by your humble servant. Its reception proved that there are many true and noble men and women in the Linesville League who revere and honor that generous man who said, “The world is my country, to do good my religion.”

The evening lecture, on “Materialism and Spiritualism,” given by Mr. Watts, was marked, as usual, by a strong logic, elegant periods, and powerful elocution. The festivities were concluded with a ball, much enjoyed by the young people of Linesville; and the general opinion was that this was one of the pleasantest reunions ever held by the League. Five dollars and fifty cents was donated to the Campaign Fund of the national Union, and the subscription list to *Secular Thought* added several names from Linesville and vicinity.

The following morning we bade our generous friends good-bye and separated, on various missions bent. Mine was to clamber aboard the Erie and Pittsburgh train and for more than five weary hours want fleeting skies and clouds and rock and mining villages, and streams glassed over with Winter’s congealing breath, and winding railroads along which a fiery snake now and then dragged its hissing length. Notwithstanding all this jumbled in upon the sight, and a corresponding jumble of ideas in my brain, there was on very well-determined wonderment, withal, which stood out sharply defined against the horizon of my mental vision. This wonderment assumed

gigantic proportions as I approached the city of iron and steel and beheld the grimed and sooted chimneys of monster furnaces standing out like swarthy Vulcans before a giant forge. This wonderment was not poetical, nor profoundly logical, nor was it in regard to anything I hav heretofore mentioned very relevant; but, considering the fact that I had eaten nothing since the evening previous, and God never sheds manna upon the unbeliever, it was nevertheless important. I was hungry, and I wondered whether Pittsburgh people ate dinner in the middle of the afternoon. This thought was in my mind as I stepped upon the platform at the Union depot, and looked anxiously about for a tall gentleman with a plug hat and long whiskers whom I had last seen at the Chicago Congress. Alas! there were plenty of tall gentlemen, but either the hat or the whiskers, or both, were missing, and the tide of humanity continued to surge around and past me as the swirl of waters on our lakes breaks, and parts, and rushes past a sand-bar on an island.

I consulted a hackman, and, having made my bargain with him before starting, settled down among my valises with an unswerving resolution to storm the fates if need be, but that I would find the fort of liberty garrisoned by the Pittsburgh Secular Union.

Regarding the Paine celebration I need say nothing, as Mr. Barker has already described it better than I am able to do; but of the Pittsburgh Secular Union let me say that I never met a nobler or more generous band of earnest men and women, devoting themselves with the high enthusiasm of a glorious purpose to that end for which we all are struggling: the complete emancipation of mankind from mental slavery. Persecuted by the remorseless bigotry of Presbyterianism from its very birth, maligned by a subsidized press, misrepresented, misconstrued, misunderstood, it has, with a dauntless courage born of its very sense of right, born of the indomitable desire to overthrow the tyranny of church and state union, born of its glowing, daring, irresistible principle of liberty that will not down, fought the hard battle with a faithfulness that should put to blush those pusillanimous Liberals, of which "the woods are full," who for the fawning flatteries of society eschew their principles, and kiss the popish toe of Solomon's amour! Not one coward in their ranks! Every gunner stands to his piece, every bayonet flashes back the burnished glory of the sun of Freethought, every soldier stands ready to defend his fort, and high over all floats the fair banner of the free—the flag of truth—not one spot upon its folds, that stream out on the breeze so purely. And there may they gleam forever, kissed by the stars and bathed in the sunshine!

During the week following the Paine celebration I visited the Alleghany penitentiary, where 690 men were wearing prison stripes

and working at prison tasks. We were shown through the various departments, the clock-work regularity and oppressiv stillness of the place reminding me strongly of the long, tedious years I myself once spent in worse than prison walls. Many of the inmates were engaged in picking oakum, cleaning it, and weaving it into mats; others in tending to the culinary department, and others still watching the huge engins. On visiting the library I glanced through the catalog of books, and though the list was in some departments excellent, I failed to find any of the advanced works upon new lines of thought. No Darwins, Spencers, or Ingersolls, but plenty of Christs, Gods, and Bibles. The institution is well provided with church accommodations, as there are two chapels, one Presbyterian, the other Catholic. On inquiring if attendance was compulsory, the keeper informed me that it was not, and added nonchalantly, "This chapel [Catholic] is always crowded; you know those who fill these institutions are mostly Catholics"—a remark which I did not fail to utilize in my Sunday lecture on "Convent Life Unveiled." A packed house greeted me, it being the largest meeting the Secular Society has had in three years. Numbers of "good Catholics" were sitting in the best seats, and, with a sovereign contempt for good manners, would hav allowed our Secular ladies to stand, had not the real gentlemen of the society practiced a virtue of courtesy—one on which Christianity was supposed to hav a patent-right, but which evidently ran out some time ago. These minions of the pope were not overly pleased, I fancy, with the discourse; in fact, it was not delivered with that intention, and, to be honest, if it really hurt their pious beliefs in the virtues of mummeries, if it really shocked them to see the veil of Catholic hypocrisy torn asunder, I am heartily glad of it, and the more they curse me the better I shall be pleased.

After the lecture a donation of \$35 was collected for the benefit of the American Secular Union fund—a substantial indorsement of the present administration and plan of campaign.

There are many interesting features about Pittsburgh, and the lover of mechanics, the dreamer in machineries, whose thoughts revolve like wheels, whose ideas crystallize in iron, will find his ideal world here among its magnificent mills, where a thousand furnaces lick up the gleaming ore with white, hot mouths. Here on may see the glowing stream of gold-red metal dripping over the furnace lips, as if from off its panting lungs has risen a scalding hemorrhage. There one ma watch a hissing, glittering ball, which burns upon the retina like rolled-up sheets of imprisoned lightning, borne on a little truck, spitting and fuming as it goes, toward a huge, revolving coffee-mill; once within its jaws there is a rushing, crunching sound, a crash, a slight explosion which sends up a whirl of molten stars, and then a

huge red bar come out and is borne away by a band of men who move with the precision of the very machinery itself. Magnificent men they are to look at—magnificent giants! There stands the master of the furnace, peering with keen eyes down the flaming throat, where the seething metal writhes and quivers in its pain. The glare of its glowing glory strikes up and over him; no tableau fire was ever half so brilliant, and the figure, clad in its rough work-clothes, seems vested with the majesty of self-conscious power at rest, force in repose. Ossian, painting the battle of Fingal and the ghost, might so have imagined the genius of the storm. A study for Michael Angelo is the master furnace-man!

There are saws with teeth that go singing through the hot metal slabs, and saws without teeth which, whirling at the rate of three hundred and twenty revolution per minute, close down upon the cold, rolled iron, and by the terrific friction raise the spot beneath the saw to such a degree of heat that it withers and curls like a piece of tissue-paper on the grate; a fine, gleaming iron worm creeps down across the path of the toothless saw, while iron sparks shoot out in all directions. It is an iron place; a village of iron giants, with iron muscles and iron nerves. Each workman is as much a machine as far as precision and unvarying routine go as the machines themselves; each man is an iron man; and over all, and above all, and through all rings the grand, deep iron music, like waves of a molten sea striking on an iron-bound shore.

The glass-works also form an attraction to the curious sightseer. The "aristocracy of muscle," of which Mr. Van Buren Denslow recently wrote in language as sparkling and scintillating as the great glass bubbles themselves (and, I may say in an aside, presenting arguments about as fragile), is indeed well represented, but the thing which struck me most forcibly was the immense number of little children, boys under ten years of age, working as hard and faithfully as the blowers themselves. So deeply was I impressed with the appearance of these white-faced, dirt-begrimed mites that I was moved to inquire where the education law of the state of Pennsylvania was keeping itself. They informed me that it was on the state-books at Harrisburg. A good, safe place, by the way, where it is not liable to be disturbed.

I must not, in this description, omit our visit to old Fort Du Quesne. I was quite anxious to see the spot which had so tried my memory and patience, when, several years ago, I was, with the ardent fervor born of fear of the ferule, committing to memory the exploits of the late lamented George. As my friend Mr. Barker (to whose kind escort I comment all curiosity-eaten sojourners in the smokeless city) was casting about to find which specially muddy alleyway would be most likely to reach the desired locality, a wee, small voice out of a

wee, small lad at his feet piped out. "Did you want to see the old fort, mister?" Special providence, you see—"and a little child shall lead them." But, oh, by what dark and devious ways did he conduct us to that monument of a century gone! And what a strange monument it is, half buried in Monongahela mud and smoke, its eight stone faces almost hidden by surrounding buildings, its solid oaken beams pierced here and there by long, narrow portholes, suggesting the eye-sockets in a skull! *En effet*, it is at once a monument and a corpse; a monument to the heroes who defended it, a corpse of an old idea. Talk about evolution, even in deadly things; and if those old doors were lips that could speak, and those sightless windows eyes that could see, oh, how many a solemn thing could the old fort tell of the progress of destruction since first it stood there in the lonely Alleghany forests, and listened to the low lapping of the waters as they met, and kissed, and swept down past the Ohio banks!

Having explored to our satisfaction, we were about to resume our pilgrimage, when the guileless infant with the powerful voice again made himself heard: "Giv me a cent, mister, for showing you?" This youngster is doing well; his charges are not exorbitant at present, but when he has added a few more years' experience to his somewhat limited stock, and read the popular guide-books, etc., I am sure he will develop into a full-fledged "Ferguson." Everything in this part of the city is Du Quesne something. There is Du Quesne Way and Du Quesne Works—I am not sure but there is Du Quesne whisky—and, finally, Du Quesne Heights, up which you are whirled by the Du Quesne Incline Company's cars, six cents per whirl. From this point, it is said, we may on a clear day count thirteen bridges spanning the Alleghany and Monongahela; and talking about bridges reminds me that this magnificent suspension affair, almost beneath your very feet, not content with taking two cents toll from every man, woman, and child who passes over it six days in a week, also exacts the same on Sunday; yet a poor woman in the city, having been prevailed upon to sell a glass of soda-water or some other similar drink to a representativ of Presbyterian piety bent on enforcing the Sunday laws, who worked upon her sympathies by representing himself to be ill and in need of it, was arrested, tried, and heavily fined. The bridge is a rich corporation; the woman was trying to get her living. I hope you perceive the eternal fitness of Christian justice! Yet it is said Christ stole ears of corn on the Sabbath day!

From this point of observation one may also glance down the Ohio, and see there, resting in its arms, Bruno's island, so called in honor of Felix R. Bruno, author of the God-in-the-Constitution scheme. It may be an honor to Bruno, but the compliment to the island is very doubtful. It were better to be named after that other

Bruno, martyred by the church because he advocated the use of school-books. Farther away up the distant heights one may catch a glimpse of the Alleghany observatory, half hidden by intervening buildings. The two cities lie spread out like a map before you, and but for the black vomit of the river traffic rolling over and obscuring the nearer view, every object stands out sharply defined against the sunlight and the blue wall of the sky—a wonderful cyclorama, built up by the western glory. After all, one cannot wonder at the enthusiasm of these Pittsburgh Secularists; they see so much man-made slavery before their eyes, but nature molded all so gloriously free!

A large house was in attendance at the lecture on the “Rights of Labor,” and an animated discussion on the merits of the ballot followed the discourse.

During the following week I spent several days with the Farmdale Liberalists, giving three lectures on “Secular Education,” “Convent Life,” and one on a subject chosen by the audience. Happily, they selected one which I delight to handle—“Woman’s Suffrages.” I think the Christian people of that village, if there were any present must have had their reverence for Paul and Solomon terribly shocked. I only wish my Teutonian friend, J. G. Hertwig, might have been there to lead the reply; as it was, that task devolved on Mr. Peter Bethune, who took issue with the speaker on the statement that women were people. Peter assumed that people, being a collective noun, could not properly be applied to either men or women distinctively. It reminded me of a certain occasion when I gravely remarked to my mother that “young Speckle wasn’t a chicken; he was a rooster.”

The Farmdale League is brisk and means business; no room for laziness in their ranks, and President Root is making it a decidedly aggressive movement. Two dollars and fifty cents was donated to the American Secular Union fund.

From Farmdale I returned to Pittsburgh, to participate in the social given by the society on Sunday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. Music, recitations, and short speeches were the order of the day, and a very pleasant shake-hands all around at the conclusion of the exercises.

On Wednesday afternoon I bade adieu to my good friends, Messrs. Staley, Pierce, Barker, Hoover, D’Jones, ex-president of the League, now of Cleveland, Ohio, and all the other brave, tried hearts whose names are indelibly engraved on memory’s tablets, and “spreading out my white wings,” set sail for Alliance.

In this lively little place of some six thousand inhabitants there is a very large Liberal element, but owing to diverse causes it has heretofore remained unorganized. The morning lecture on “Orthodoxy and Freethought” was devoted chiefly to rousing a sentiment in that direction, and, from the disposition manifested, the



writer has reason to hope that her efforts were not in vain; and that through the energy of the three Messrs. Smith, G. W. Thornburg, Messrs. Rockhill, Haynes and other Liberal Spiritualists and Agnostics, an auxiliary local Union will soon be fairly in working order.

Notwithstanding the fearful weather a very large audience came out in the evening to hear how we lived in convents, and my thanks are especially due them for the respectful attention given to the entire discourse; but the prettiest compliment of all was paid by Miss Flossie Smith, the six-year-old daughter of D. W. Smith, who said to her mamma, "I liked it because she said more words that I knew."

"Here endeth the lesson." Five pleasant weeks! made pleasant by the companionship of genial minds, and broad Liberal hearts, and brave, true, many and womanly hand—hands the memory of whose touch sends a thrill of gratitude through my being, and calls up the echo of voices which breathed strong, courageous, inspiring words into each fiber of my inner self. It is all past now. I am returned to "Michigan, my Michigan." No more blue, dim hights down which the cloud tears tremble and rip and fall in hard, gleaming crystals; where the sobbings of the rocks are hushed in frozen music; where hill rises over hill in its mad, steep staircase to the stars, and the sun flashes down its cohorts of golden lancers through the jutting teeth, the cavernous hollows, the darting ravines, of the wild Alleghenies. Here, in our broad, fair, level fields of southern Michigan, hemmed in by the sweet-toned thunder of our deep lakes alone, we lose the grandeur of the mountains. But one sublimer peak which caps them all stands out as clear and bright to us and as fair—the hight of science, over whose majestic brow is bursting the glory of the new day, when all shall be truth seekers, when none shall walk blindfold, and knowledge be the savior of mankind. Adieu!

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## The Quaker City

It was nearing the close of that May-time which is the morning of summer, when one fair, bright day I was borne away to the southward, through long, shining levels of grassy sea, shot over with yellow dandelion gleams like little baby sunshines playing in the sink and swell of the emerald waves. Up from that silent, dreaming, hazy, green ocean came floating the songs of its toilers; and the light-bathed airs which rested above it grew redolent with perfume, purple and silver with the sheen of the wings floating through it. and night came down like the gathered brooding of those wings, softly, slowly, darkly—only where a lost moonbeam wandered through the channel of Silence and paused for a moment to rest beneath the hovering shadow.

What a strange contrast was this day which had closed to that which dawned in the morrow's east! Scarcely less wind than the Pennsylvania mountains themselves, scarcely less changing than those winding streams, those hills in the distance where the purple twilights always lie, those jagged piles of nature's giant masonry, those scarred summits with their eternal frown like that which rests above the sightless eyeballs of the blind, seeking, always seeking for the light that never comes, those wonderful gleams of uplifted color, those flashes of rays and dashes of starlessness; scarcely less changing than this wondrous panorama which is fairly hurled against the sight with the rapidity of lightning-darts, are those massy ranges of cloudy peaks, those lakes of blue, those wealths of troubled tears, those dips of golden sun, those quiverings upon the face of nature such as dwell upon the mouth ere it breaks into sobs or laughter, those shadowy embodiments of shifting human passion which greet the eye when it is lifted to the changing skies. Now the hills climb to kiss the clouds, now the clouds sink to hug the hills, and come curling down off the mountain side as if some king among them had blown a whiff of smoke from his gray lips; now we seem pressed and gathered into the very bosom of gloom, we shoot into a tunnel—the darkness becomes almost palpable, it is like a living thing stealing around and clutching your throat; you vaguely wonder if—if—“some horrid male creature is”—*presto*, we dart into the light! There is a sweep of glittering sunshine that fairly stuns the eye; the mournful little streams of rain on your window which have been patiently running in crooked lines down the glass are a bedazzlement of smiling glory; the stern gray rocks drip light. “Ah,” says the pious individual across the aisle, “how typical of the resurrection!” and he proceeds with some pretty nonsense about a worm and a butterfly. Behold how habitual trains of thought lead people in far-sundered channels. Said I to myself,

conscious that my audience if slim was at least appreciative, "How typical of the glory of freedom! And won't it be fine if we can ever get tunneled through the mountains of ignorance, and people find out that this isn't a vale of tears after all!"

The heels of Time were treading upon twilight when I set my feet on *terra firma*, and, after methodical examination, discovered that I was not running around myself, and the platform stationary. On passing through the—what shall I call it, it looks like a cattle-guard?—I began looking earnestly for a little gentleman with a Wettstein badge, who was to be the hard-working secretary of Friendship Liberal League. Presently I heard a gentle voice speak my name, and turning about I met the leveled glance of three pair of dark eyes, set respectively in *three* little gentlemen's heads. I suppose one's ideas would be naturally confused under such circumstance; but while engaged in the remarkable task of adjusting names to these three individuals in a way which mixed them up so their own mothers wouldn't hav known them, one very definit idea took possession of my brain, and I hugged it with infinit delight. This was, that there is an advantage to being born in the backwoods of Michigan—one has a chance to grow—these three little gentlemen were so very little.

Yet as it is said that valuable articles are often done up in small parcels, I shortly discovered that this trinity of big eyes and small bodies contained about as valuable material as can be found anywhere in the Liberal ranks. Secretary Longford has the best qualities which should characterize the incumbent of that arduous office—faithfulness, impartiality, sacrificial devotion to the cause, and a quiet persistency that simply smiles at obstacles. The merry little Bishop who kept amusing us with his quaint speeches is a model for all secular bishops; and Mr. Elliott is a whole entertainment committee in himself.

The following afternoon, before the lectures, I had the pleasure of meeting President Shaw, whose magnificent bearing reminded me of one of our stately Northern pines, and whose broad, generous, noble conception of life and its aims is more like the natural product of the West rather than the law-cursed city of Philadelphia.

A gentleman whose name I did not catch, but which appeared to variate from Brotherhood, Botherhead, Blubberhead, Bubblehead, Buddinghead, to Blunderhead, took occasion to allude to my balancing the starvation of millions against the mandates of Jehovah as an argument for this abolishment as a "wish-wash argument" from a "woman of *your sex*, madam." I never before so thoroughly appreciated Mr. Watts's remarks concerning "old women of both sexes." As the gentleman afterward scolded the audience for not applauding his remarks, saying it was evident they preferred the ice-

cream and confectionaries of public speaking to good solid "beefsteak," I conclude that to cure him of his mistaken impression concerning the wishy-washiness of starvation, it would be a good plan to cut down his daily allowance of beefsteak. Will our Philadelphia friends please see to his case?

In response to the appeal for funds to sustain the national Union, Mr. J. W. Black, one of its vice-presidents, headed the list with a "V;" several others gave smaller sums, \$9 in all being contributed. The names of President Putnam and Secretary Stevens were greeted with applause—a genuin tribute to the administration, and a sign that the self-sacrificing efforts of those gentlemen are appreciated. And I am glad to pay my tribute, faint as it is, to those noble Liberals who, in the city where the iron tongue of American liberty first spoke, yet hear the chains of bygone eras clank; who feel the curse of "church and state" like a hot, close mantle round them, yet dare to stand in the midst of all and say, boldly and fearlessly, "I despise your shackles; I ignore your priestly bondage; I defy your authority to chain my mind; I laugh at your superstition; I stand for truth, liberty, and justice." I bow to those men and those women; and I thank them for their strength, which givs me strength.

Remaining in the city for some time, I visited various of its institutions, among which was that bone of contention, Girard College. And as Providence provided a very interesting treat to your wicked subscriber (which was a mistake of diplomacy on the part of P.), I will relate some details to the readers of *The Truth Seeker* in my next.

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## In a Marble Tomb

A bequest to the poor children of Philadelphia. That, they tell me, is the royal gift of Stephen Girard; and, by the way, friends, did it ever occur to you that while God is occupying himself in multiplying the families of the poor to the end that his mighty name be praised and glorified, he generally makes just some Quixotic choice of an Infidel of the Girard stamp for the purpose of doing what in all conscience he himself ought to have done—or, as the Rev. Mr. Field would probably regard it, for the purpose of setting his own plan of “developing character” by poverty at naught?

These profound “thinks” absorbed my thinker as I gazed with a deep “reverential calm” at the high stone wall which, as per order of the late lamented Stephen, entirely closes from sight the beautiful acres of Girard College. Armed with the necessary document—I believe they call it a permit—we presented ourselves to the “sentinel on the watch-tower,” “guard of the round-house,” or whatever that august personage may be called who inspects you with his eagle eye (it occurred to me he might be looking to see if our clothes were clean), majestically waves you to the visitor’s register, and after you have executed a hair-line flourish with a pen which refuses to make anything less than an eighth-of-an-inch mark, allows you to enter the grounds with an air of paternal indulgence that makes you feel “very young.” Like Jemima Jenkins,” we did so;” and oh, what a jewel of beauty lay encircled in the gray stone setting!

The warmth of the June light ran like an overflowed river and tipped every tint with its molten glory—every tree, every blossom, every blade of grass shone in the amber air, quivering with life as if it love to live. Along the broad white aisles that intersect these living floors of velvet softness, ranged artistic flower-beds. Strange figures grow up from the dark, unthinking earth, and at the left, clear as if carved by a sculptor upon marble, red foliage plants spell upon a surge of green the letters: “Girard College.”

The main building of those beautiful marble edifices is a solid white structure girt all about by magnificent columns, so that it closely resembles the old church of La Madeleine at Paris, only in its extreme plainness. As we entered the broad doorway, we were greeted by—a statue! Standing upon the tomb where sleeps the dust that was once Stephen Girard, there is a man of marble—and its features are those of the sleeper. And oh, if ever a solemn voice spoke out of the silence of stone, if ever the approach of death shone from the blind eyeballs of a sculpture, if ever the deep anger of the helplessly outraged lay quivering in the paralysis of a statue, that voice, that look, that anger are locked in that still figure with its chill white face,

its powerless white hands. For there, across the broad white graveled aisle, in a stone's throw from the spot where Girard's bones lie rotting, upon that ground which he bequeathed "to the poor of Philadelphia," with the money which should have fed the children of the poor, is erected the most magnificent marble church to the honor of that rich God who needs it not, of whom the dead man knew nothing. There—there, so close that could the statue turn but three steps from its pedestal it must behold this huge monument of injustice, Superstition has reared her temple, and the black finder of infamy points to the sky.

And I, a Freethinker, had to stand so near the dead dust of Stephen Girard, powerless as the corpse, powerless as the statue, and see it all. Had to crush down the indignation I felt rise up within me, boiling like a flood, and say the helpless words of John Wilkes Booth, "Useless, useless!" They tell me that there is a law in this country—and certainly Philadelphia is trouble with the law disease about as bad as any place I have ever seen; but I have learned that law is not at all times justice; that law, like the Bible, can have any tune played upon it to suit the whims of the ruling authorities; that law, to borrow a friend's expression, "Law is queer!" "Lex, Rex, Fex," wrote Victor Hugo in "The Man Who Laughs." The law is made to suit the king, and the king of this country appears to be Christ. Not the Christ of Judah either, but—the other fellow.

In this solemn hall of marble a footstep is many times repeated, a whisper echoes far up the silence; the mellow light from the upper air falls very quietly from the sky-lit dome along the wall; one draws one's breath and treads softly. Upon the second floor we see doors, but the doors say, "No entrance"—I suppose that means no entrance for visitors. We were speculating upon the probable translation of the laconic negative, when a voice from above called, "Coming up?" We signified our intention of so doing, and shortly after we were ushered by the "come-upping" individual into a large room containing bugs and birds and beasts and snakes enough to have set an ark up in business or started a young bonery. To a naturalist, an ornithologist, a minerologist, or an anatomist, these dead things with the flashing of far-off seas in their shadowy eyeholes, seas that broke on the shores of a fathomless past, these birds of strange and magnificent plumage, these curious rocks from Bible-confounding strata, these skeletons with the fleshless fingers and toothless jaws, might have been an interesting population, but to me, as I settled my unscientific gaze on shark's jaws and dugong skeletons and sword-fish and saw-fish and fish that I didn't know the names of, and dead birds sitting on dead limbs, with an astonishing amount of "reverential calm" upon their Glastonian countenances, and glittering pieces of ore like petrified

spray from a metal sea that rolled nobody knew where; and finally took the clammy wire-worked fingers of some "poor Yorick" in my own, I murmured to myself, "Golgotha!" and thought of the time when I heard my old friend M. Babcock exclaim, "Oh, what a set of bones!" This, our guide informed us, was a study-room; a long course of lessons in natural history. I couldn't help wondering if the boys used to dream about it nights.

We were next allowed to gaze upon the immortal Stephen's immortal straight-backed chairs and his old buggy and his strong-boxes, some of which were chalk-marked, "The Rousseau," with a date on them; the rest had some other such reverential name. I don't remember seeing any chalked, "The Paul," or, "The God." Stephen's taste in pictures was not particularly good, his housekeeper's portrait being the only one I recall distinctly. One thing, however, attracted my attention, as it bore witness to Girard's astronomical studies: an orrery, which in those days must have been a rare and expensive thing; and as I looked upon the dusty sun and planets with their dusty satellites, I almost fancied I could trace the touch of the dusty fingers in the quiet tomb downstairs upon these ancient spheres.

"That's all," said the guide, as he turned the key, and went bounding down the winding hillway of steps, leaving us to follow at our leisure. Outside once more, we entered one after another of the many adjoining edifices, finding order, cleanness, and silence everywhere. We climbed many stairs, and saw some people, but no one spoke; it was like a veritable tomb. At last, I waylaid a youngster coming from the playground, and sought information, but very little was forthcoming. The boy said he had been there six years, and liked it; if he told the truth (and I presume he did), he ought to have known by that time. We directed our steps toward the ball-grounds, where the children were running with bats and balls like ants with eggs when you pour kerosene on the hill. Unlike most collegiates, these little ants (possibly I should say uncles) wear no uniforms, it being the will of Girard that the children's dress be in no way distinguished from that of outsiders. The only thing which is uniform is the small blue cap with forepiece, worn by all; but there is no particular mark upon it. As we stood "considering the ways" of the ants, in accordance with the advice of H. W. (holy writ, not Henry Ward), a teacher began to gather together a certain elect, whose names he called from a written list. To Mr. Elliott's inquiry concerning this proceeding, a lad hesitatingly replied, "Going down-town." I think several more questions were on the wing, when they suddenly lit. Their flight was cut short by the teacher, who brusquely remarked, "Against our rules, sir, visitors talk to pupils" I have not yet learned that this part of the program is in Girard's will. It seems to me that when an institution

puts such a gag as that upon the lips of its pupils, there is “something rotten in Denmark.”

But providence favored us at last. “Verily patience hath its reward.” In the parlor of one of these marble sepulchers we caught a glimpse of a sweet face. I decided to interview. Happy thought! In a few minutes I learned that there were thirteen hundred pupils and some thirty-five teachers; that morning attendance at church was compulsory; that Jews and Catholics were in no way exempt from the daily sermon of a lay preacher, “which,” said the teacher, “is in accordance with the will of Mr. Girard, when he prescribed moral training, but not religious training.” The preacher takes his text from that book of morals, the Bible—“our Bible,” the teacher said. It was news to me that Girard College had a patent-right on any species of theology.

Later the lady, who was a pronounced Protestant, graciously entertained us in her own class-room, throwing open her class library for our inspection. To top shelf was all Bibles—“our Bibles.” Each child is obliged to have one, so we were informed. We then reviewed the hymn-books, which tell us about the “lamb of God” and the—calf of Christ, I suppose. This also was a part of the “moral training” prescribed by Mr. Girard. At least our gracious informant appeared to think so, and felt quite indignant at the assertion of “that man,” as she spitefully termed R. B. Westbrook, who should have insinuated that there was anything of a sectarian nature in the book. It was the regular service of the Episcopal church. This, it appears, had superseded the Moody and Sankey effusions, “because they”—*they* had no definite antecedent—“made such a fuss about it.”

By this time it was evident which way the land lay, and perceiving that it was the only method of gaining information, I resolved to follow the example of the preacher who “preached to the Jews because they weren’t there,” and strike all the heavy blows at Catholic encroachment, reserving my heresy toward Protestantism till the interview was concluded. In the course of the very pleasant conversation, which lasted more than an hour, I should judge, we learned that the one Catholic member of the board of trustees (they are all religionists) exerted more influence than all the rest—that of late the Sisters of Charity have been permitted to enter the grounds; which was contrary to the intention of Mr. Girard, though he had not specified it in his will. You see, he did not think about the nuns, but it was this very thing he was providing against when he commanded “moral but not religious training.” I trust truth seekers will notice the fine discrimination and profound regard for the intention of Mr. Girard’s will, that these sisters are ostensibly on begging errands among the hired help, who are all Catholics.



At this point our informant grew very animated in her expressions of fear concerning the possible outcome of these insidious maneuvers. "Step by step," said she, "they are gaining control of the college. I can look over and see point after point they have already accomplished, and they will stop nothing short of their purpose. Under the former matron's *régime* the sisters were not allowed. Now they come freely, and I can see by the conduct of the help that they are being secretly influenced by Catholic authority." Of course we expressed regret, inwardly consoling ourselves with the hope that "when rogues fall out honest men will get their dues."

This lady was not entirely orthodox. She had not much use for "Paulianity," and in reply to my quotation concerning the propriety of learning in silence from one's husband, exclaimed: "Yes, a young man preached from that odious text a few morning ago, and I felt like getting up and leaving the church. We're not obliged to believe that, anyhow—it isn't inspired. What did Paul know about women? He was an old bachelor." "So was Christ," retorted Mr. Elliott, in his smooth, cool voice. In spite of herself, a heretical smile broke like a ripple of runaway sunshine over the expressiv lips, but she gravely "feared we were not very good." I fear she was right.

A visit to the dormitories and the immense dining-room, where the children sat on rows of uncomfortable little backless stools, that simply made one's spine ache to look at, completed our survey of the institution. We went away sadder and wiser, having learned some curious things regarding "Mr. Girard's intentions." We learn that when Girard said "moral" he meant "Protestant;" that when he forbade the entrance of priests and ministers he meant only priests, nuns, and union label preachers; that moral instructors were scab preachers, so to speak; that the Bible, "our Bible," was Girard's idea of a rule of moral guidance; that the Episcopalian service was non-sectarian; that Moody and Sankey was non-sectarian, and was exchanged for the service only on account of the bothersome "they," with no antecedent; that all this, in Stephen Girard's idea, was morality and not religion. We learned that the control of the college is no longer a question between Freethought and religious usurpation—it has passed beyond that, and has become a bone of contention between Protestant assumption and Catholic cunning. Between these two there can be no question of the final result: Rome always triumphs. Across the tomb and its sleeping dust, across the statue with its wide eyeballs of stone, its helpless hand, its powerless limbs, across the soft light and the amber air, across the wide, green stretch of earth bequeathed to the children of the poor, across the broad walks and high up over the guarding wall, a shadow is falling—a shadow stolen from over the sea; creeping, creeping to the dead man's

feet, slowly as the tide creeps up and over the rocks. Girard's bones lie covered by the pall of the Vatican. And the statue hears the laughter of his thirteen hundred children, while the shadow grows, and in the darkness the holy conclave weaves its foothold of mystery. The pope has set his foot upon a grave, and when the vicar of Christ moves forward on a staircase of tombs, beware! He never steps back.

What are you Freethinkers doing? Where is your spirit, your honor? Will you see a dead man robbed—nay, will you yourselves be robbed and make no protest? Long ago, I am sure, the energetic secretary of our National Union would have brought this outrage to a crucial test, had he but received the necessary support. Wake up! Above the tomb of Girard the church will plant her foot upon another—the tomb of liberty. What are you going to do?

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## STATE, NATURE, AND ART.

God ought to be a Protestant. I couldn't help thinking so the day I visited the Philadelphia House of Correction; and if anyone has the patience to hear me out, I think he will agree with me before I conclude this narrativ.

There is a perfect anomaly at the gate of this institution—a civil policeman (though that is not the reason God ought to be a Protestant. Civility is ordinarily incompatible with a blue coat trimmed with brass buttons). This gentleman—I am glad to give him the title—displayed no unnecessary pomp or patronizing air, as he showed us the way toward the queer-shaped brick building with its radiating corridors, where eleven hundred of the “best citizens of Philadelphia” are being “corrected.”

Are you surprised? Well, that is what the keeper told us, when I inquired whether the inmates learned trades or not. “No,” said he, in a pious accent (the old gentleman was very pious), “this isn't a penal institution; this is a reformatory institution. Some of the best citizens of Philadelphia come here.”

For all I could see, the “best citizens” looked very much like any other citizens. As Piety took us around and showed us their various employments, I discerned no very distinguishing characteristics of good or of evil on the man faces which seemed to look up with a slight sigh of relief at a break in the monotony, as one sometimes looks at a clock when it strikes. The nature of people appears much the same, whether in the prisons of the law, of the church, or of toil, or of disease. It is a terrible monotony, that is all. It is a pity that people should build places like this to put other people in, and then go look at them as if the human beings imprisoned there were a menagerie of wild beasts. Yet no worse than the prison-houses of thought, nor the gaunt cells of want, nor the torture-bed of suffering. A convict, a house of correction inmate, is only the outward abscess of an inward sore rotting the vitals of society; and a prison appears to me like a very weak piece of salve put on by those quack doctors called lawmakers, with the silly expectation that it will purge the blood of poison.

However, I started out to tell why God should be a Protestant, and this is a long way from the mark.

Piety showed us through the clammy corridors of cells, pointing out all the ingenious contrivances for locking in all these “best of citizens,” whose only crime, he told us, was drunkenness; permitting us to examine the cells (which were as narrow as a hungry stomach), and make all the uncivil remarks we had a mind to. I attended to that part of the program. I was open in my unqualified disapproval of the

“dark cell” to which some of these “best citizens” are treated when they refuse to work or are otherwise unruly. That hideous, tantalizing, bound-in-blackness imposed by the state upon the helpless individual, seems to me a good deal worse crime than anything ascribed to these men and women by the pious keeper. Upon the small washstand with which each cell is furnished there lie three books—a hymn-book, a Bible, and a smaller edition of the New Testament. Verily religion penetrates the marrow of the coldest stones! What a soft snap that institution must be for religious book-agents and pious publishing houses!

Our attention was called to the shoemaker’s department and the tailor’s department and the laundry department, in which latter the wage-labor outside is brought into competition with one-third rates—collars one cent, cuffs two cents, and other articles in proportion. A diabolic system of robbery, nothing less. By means of this, the quarry, and various other schemes, the “institution not only supports itself, but yields quite a revenue to the city,” Piety complacently informed us.

Patience, my friends. I am coming to God’s case now. Take notice that all tradespeople committed to the tender mercies of the house work at their trades and get their board therefor. We are now shown into the chapel. Attendance is compulsory! In reply to our questions regarding the quality of the religion, we are informed it is Methodist at present. “Any Catholic inmates?” “Oh, yes; a large number.” “Compelled to attend?” “Yes. But our minister always tells them to obey the priest.” “Do you think it just to ask a Catholic to outrage his conscience?” “Well, compulsory attendance is our rule?” “You hav a piano?” “Yes, one of the inmates plays.” At this point the “committee of entertainment” put in a wedge with a sharp point. “Is the minister a salaried official?” “Yes, sir; oh, yes, sir!” “Ah!” murmurs the unholy committee in an undertone, “couldn’t you utilize one of the inmates?”

Now I hope you see why God should be a Protestant. To my mind it is the basest of all base action for a religionist to steal from God. And since the preachers—especially the Methodist preachers—continually assert that without the spirit of God they are powerless to work good, I say it is a sin and a shame for them to take God’s salary. And if I were he I should be a very rigorous *protestant*. Furthermore I, as a member of the American public, object very strongly to paying the wrong individual, and I move that Congress appoint a committee to take charge of the funds raised for the promotion of God’s work. And if he does not call for them in sixty days from the date of deposit then they will be returned to their donors. I am tired of paying high rent that some one else may pay high taxes, that some one else may build high steeples that some one else may preach high-sounding

jargon in and get a high salary for, only to find out in the end that the money was obtained under false pretenses. Will the member from Grand Rapids please take notice?

From the house of correction to the far-famed zoological gardens is a sudden jump, yet altogether a refreshing one. There is no piety here. There are no Catholic monkeys, no Presbyterian kangaroos, no Baptist otters—no, no. I was about to say no Mormon eagles, but I am afraid I had better say elders. I am afraid the eagles were no monogamic. However, they were not setting themselves up as guides for their fellow-eagles. Wondrously beautiful were those gardens as they lay all embalmed in the sweet June sunshine! Fairmount park is altogether lovely, and this particular portion is more lovely than all the rest. There is such a wealth of beauty; no suggestion of narrowed boundaries. From the hedges the rose-leaves come showering down like a rain of kisses, lying red on the earth's upturned lips; the ground vibrates with poetry; the air quivers with song. Our pre-Adamite ancestors—some of them looked very wise, with their venerable beards; their hands on their knees, man-fashion; their philosophic craniums, no doubt as well filled with profound reflections on the inferiority of the female brain as those of some other philosophers who have been airing their musty ideas of late—our ancestors, as I was saying, have a delightful Eden. And it would be a beautiful resting-place on the "holy Sabbath;" a sweet escape from the tormenting preacher; a glorious lesson to point the inquirer up the long ascent of progress, but I understand the Sunday law decrees otherwise. I do not wonder at the use of the phrase, "Smart as a Philadelphia lawyer." It must indeed require a very large brain, and one deserving Dickens's title, the Artful Dodger, to retain and defend all the absurd, unnatural, and abominable laws with which the Quaker City is cursed. Not more cramped the aristocratic Chinese foot than Philadelphia nature by this accursed iron shoe of bigot law. It requires a vigorous local agitation, a continual "fuss," an energetic upheaval of independent thought, to make manifest the odiousness of this tyranny; and I hope our Philadelphia friends will go about rooting up facts in the ins and outs of the city, and open the fall campaign by a determined attack on this ecclesiastical insult. Let the voices from the alleys and the cellars and the attics, from factory and furnace and all the treadmills of toil, cry up against this outrage, which chains their liberty to rotting corpses on the only day when the stern struggle for existence relaxes its throttling grasp, and, pointing to the closed places of amusement and instruction, says, with grim satire, "Rest."

For a consideration of \$200,000 the art gallery was opened to the public on Sunday—a remarkable concession. There are some magnificent paintings and sculptures there, and I was pleased to

notice that, notwithstanding the fact that modest Anthony lectured in the city, Sunday, May 27th, the statues had not donned clothes; and, judging from the throng of people that surged through this painted city of the beautiful, the carved thoughts of the masters and the *spirituel* canvas of the color-dreamers had rather the larger audience. Thus the good, the beautiful, the true, thought pleading they reach out their pure white hands through the dark prison bars of hate; thought their voices are hushed by the gags of force, and the tyranny of base souls has sought to steep them in the hated rust of its own chains, still, still they triumph. And wherever nature has spoken humanity has listened; where love's dews have fallen the flowers have bloomed; wings unopinioned must upward float; back of the clouds the starshine smiles.

And with the certainty that as the ideal of freedom rises over the world, like dawn upon the mountaintops, the shackles of this fair Eastern city will sink soundless into the past's deep sea, I bid good-bye to my pleasant friends, and once more am borne away into the purple of the evening and the hills.

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## A POETIC SWING AROUND THE CIRCLE

Now, all ye truth seekers, attend my tale.  
I am not writing "no such word as dale"  
(Which, Truth Seeker observes, is common sense  
Beyond the average poem's just pretense),  
But scribbling out a simple little story.  
For any fibs you'll please give God glory,  
For any merit please give me the credit,  
And render all due thanks when you have read it.

There is a place that's called the Smoky City;  
It has that reputation, more's the pity  
That nicknames cling when we have long outgrown them;  
In cases like this people shouldn't own them;  
For 'tis most undeserved—a clearer air,  
A purer sky, you'll not find anywhere.  
And when the "heathen" pilgrim's feet here roam  
A faithful chorus bids him welcome home.

And so it was that when the glowing mist,  
Hiding the rose-blush, where the sunrise kissed  
The tender east, unveiled the morning light  
Laughing the dewdrops into jewels bright;  
When the long journey o'er the purple hills  
Became a past, whose benison distils  
The peace of Liberty, that dwells on heights  
Lifted toward stars—heeding no lower lights;  
When all that I have written heretofore became  
A part of yesterday's eternal claim,  
I met again those veterans of wars  
Whose peaceful battles left no hideous scars:  
But yet upon each forehead sealed the seal  
Of purpose highly wrought, of earnest zeal,  
Of long endeavor in the cause that burns  
Within their hearts, and gloriously turns  
Even dim-eyed Age into a lustrous glow,  
Like glancing north-light on the Arctic snow.

And, a propos, our secretary's call  
Bids all the faithful gather here next fall,  
When the soft haze of Indian Summer reigns,  
About the hill-tops, like Love's tender chains.  
Now, brethren—"sisters" too—from far and near

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear:  
 Don't fail to come! Miss it and you'll be sorry.  
 My word—I've been there! There's the stanch "Old Harry,"  
 The "noble Roman," and our Mr. Grundy,  
 His wife too, God bless her—no outlandish Sunday  
 Of Pennsylvania Blue laws chains her nature;  
 No church can bind that democratic creature.  
 Then there's the jeweler with his Russian name—  
 'Twould take too long for me to write the same,  
 And even if I did, 'twere sad to tell  
 Whether 'twere harder to pronounce or spell.  
 However, this is all a moonshine matter—  
 A name's a name—no more; of course rose-attar  
 Would smell as sweet if 'twere written sk—  
 Oh, now I've done it! Pardon—didn't "thunk!")  
 Well, when you feel a trifle too important,  
 As if you owned a few world more or less,  
 Had solved all problems in and out of court, and  
 Had some knowledge to throw in, address  
 This modest, unpretentious little Russian,  
 And get yourself into a good discussion.  
 Just lay your theories out coolly, slowly  
 (Be careful not to put in any "holy,"  
 For by the gods you find you've holes enough in  
 Before you finish with your mental scufflin");  
 Elaborate, with all due ostentation,  
 On every detail giv full explanation,  
 And when you've finished to your satisfaction,  
 Giv him his cue. O Lord! A double, back-action,  
 Two-edged, three-ply play of forked lightning  
 Were slow beside his cuts! To put in writing  
 The nice and gentle way he asks a question  
 That sets you spinning, like a last year's nest on  
 Fall winds borne, is more than I can hit off;  
 It must be heard—it can't be read or writ off.  
 But Marc-us, mark *me*, though I cannot catch you,  
 You're growing up some children that'll fetch you.

Yet do you know the last day of the season  
 (I lectured on replacing God with reason)  
 This modern socrates like the discourse  
 So well he moved a vote of thanks; of course,  
 The Union seconded and said Amen,  
 "Old Harry" handed me the vote, and then—



I hate to own it, I'm not sentimental—  
But somehow that did touch me—it unbent all  
My small dignity, and a big wink dropped!  
Do you suppose they thanked because I stopped?  
Maybe 'twas so—the day was awful hot;  
'Twas heath most unrighteous, freshly brought  
By some Calvinian crank from Old Nick's kitchen,  
With broiling smells, such as God's word is rich in.  
Yet that conclusion makes my vain heart grieve; it  
Isn't flattering, and I shan't believe it.  
I've very little faith in myth or fable;  
But I believe those people wear the label  
Of clear, deep candor in their honest eyes;  
They can't be roasted into telling lies.  
They won't be scared—more than one preacher's tried it.  
Each owns his mind; no other can decide it.  
And so, by putting this and that together,  
I don't believe it was the sweaty weather:  
I don't believe that vote misrepresented.  
They what you like, but I believe they meant it.  
For I believe the long-contested battle  
With God's hot-short, and hell's infernal rattle  
Dinned in their ears by Presbyterian preachers,  
Has made them honest toward their fellow-creatures,  
Hating the fraud, the shallow, base pretension,  
Of those who offer prayerful intervention  
To save the soul from Christ's paternal yearning  
To show his love by an eternal burning;  
Whose panacea for desire is "Pray for it,"  
Then pass the hat that you may meekly pay for it  
The prayer, I mean); who tell of gold-paved streets,  
And feather-legged angels, piteous bleats  
Of *Agnus Dei's*, till John's "towers of jasper"  
Turn into hitch-post in a big sheep-pasture—  
Hating the things, I say, the Pittsburgh Union  
Has, by sheer opposition, earned a boon, one  
Can but envy them—a disposition  
To uphold truth. It is an acquisition  
All Liberals are proud of! It will pierce  
Like Voltaire's dagger, polished, steel-like, fierce,  
In the marrow of the church's bones.  
En parenthese, it's run by Pierce and Jones,  
Not Davy, but the other.

Ah, dear Truth!

Bright as the glance of star beams, strong like youth,  
Flashing thy splendor though the heavy night,  
Heraldic emblem of the coming light!  
How many, struggling for thy glorious prize,  
Hav breathed their lives out like a sacrifice!  
How willingly hav laid at they fair feet  
Their little all that it might be complete;  
And had no hope, no thought of petty gain,  
No care that all the world mocked it as vain.  
'Twas not in vain! Nay, while the rolling world  
Sweeps down the cycles—while the shadows curl'd  
And gray and shrunken, like a rim of smoke,  
Volcanic whisper from the rock-lips broke,  
Are torn and shredded by thy lightning-stroke!  
Long as the east shall womb her suns unborn  
And night's trailed splendors rush to meet the morn,  
So long their deeds will liv in heart and brain,  
Pointing the higher way! No truth is vain.

But here am I up in a peroration!  
i'll clip my wings and get back to narration.  
The long and short is this—these, *in truth*, rich ones,  
Hav had so many tussles with the Christians,  
And worsted them so oft, that, though their hell  
Has lost all flavor save an oldish smell.  
They've aped so well their God—pray hav no doubt of 'em—  
With little hells they've cooked the lies all out of 'em.

And yet to hint that 'tis their sole attraction,  
This creed of truthfulness, were base detraction.  
They've all the romance of the blue-bent skies  
Lanced, like a Moorish veil, by starry eyes;  
And all the music of swift-running waters,  
Like laughter rippling from Joy's bright-lipped daughters;  
And all the majesty of solemn hills  
Whose rocky echo like a deep song thrills,  
Kingly, sublime, yet all uncrowned of men,  
Wearing the sun-gold for a diadem.  
And all the gifts that breathe poetic passion  
Fall free from Nature's hand, as rain-drops plash on  
The fair green earth, which brightens into bloom  
Even as hope which blossoms on a tomb  
Where tears hav fallen.

'Tis a pretty sight  
To stand upon Mount Washington at night.  
And look away over the glowing stage  
Whereon these thousands play their parts. Fierce Rage,  
Pride and Ambition, Anger, Hate, and Lust  
Are stalking there. Want gnaws his meager crust,  
Red Murder lurks in hollow, caverned eyes,  
Grief, Sorrow, and Despair breathe unheard sighs.  
And still the stage is lit! Love drops her smiles,  
And Gaiety whirls down the brilliant aisles:  
Joy treads with happy feet and laughs at tears,  
Hope points her hand and bids good-bye to fear,  
What need hav they, these happy ones, to know  
The pain that rends the suffering hears below?  
Why should they see the gaunt and shadowy things  
Cowering and cursing in the darkened wings?  
Trip “down the front”—your act, O Joy, is brief,  
And all too soon you’ll play the part of Grief!  
And all too soon you’ll feel the dagger-dart  
Driven by woe into your very heart!  
The wave is light, but down beneath the wave  
Lies the dark ocean-bed, a giant grave!  
Life’s wine waves laugh, but down beneath the laugh  
Lies the dark misery no throat can quaff!  
And well for him who dwells upon the highs  
Untouched by joy or grief. The red stage lights  
Show to his clearer gaze the coming time  
When the “drop” bell will peal a deadly chime  
To ring the curtain down upon an awful crime.

But here again my wings are growing out;  
It is remarkable how fast they sprout!  
I’ve serious thoughts of making application  
To God, or Beelzebub, for a situation  
To hunt up comets, or waylay the preachers  
And scare ‘em on dark nights. The holy teachers  
Might think about that song the faithful sing:  
“Take me beneath the shadow of thy wing;”  
And then, again, they might, which is more likely,  
Run like a sinner, hollering, “God almighty!”

I hope my nonsense doesn’t “make you tired;”  
This poem’s what John Byers calls inspired,  
Though not to spoil it by anticipation

i'll tell that further on in the narration.  
 You see, Friend Byers, a long time ago,  
 Pulled himself out of superstition's slough,  
 And feeling, as God did, that "it was good,"  
 Wanted to help his neighbors all he could,  
 And so, last June-time, he secured a hall,  
 Engaged your scribe, made the thing free to all,  
 And one bright evening in the perfumed weather  
 A crowd of solemn Christians go together.  
 (Of course, there was a sprinkling of the heathen,  
 Doubtful of soul—waiting for God to breathe one.)  
 Well, the good people put on nice, long faces,  
 Like they were going to twang off David's praises,  
 Puckered their foreheads, scanned me with their eyes,  
 Folded their arms, and looked, oh, very wise!  
 I thought: "Dear Christians, if looks don't disguise us,  
 You're fairly stupid and most awfully righteous."  
 And do you know, I talked for one straight hour  
 Before they felt their livers turning sour?  
 For fact, they would have swallowed the whole dose,  
 Had I not shocked them just about the close,  
 And never known but what 'twas good, sound preaching,  
 Until their stomachs gave a mighty retching.  
 I spoke about that lie, "In God we trust,"  
 Hoping the time was coming, as it must,  
 When money'll be on such a solid basis  
 No *trust's* required in God. Oh my, the faces!  
 The livers all at once began to frolic,  
 And out they went as if they'd all the colic!  
 Of course, the Liberals were all amused,  
 Myself among them. May I be excused,  
 Dear Christians—I don't like the game of trust;  
 But clearly in your case it's "trust or bust."

This lecture was delivered in the country  
 Six miles from Greensburg; 'tis a pretty place,  
 But when the Ghost-killer is on the hunt, he  
 Can't do better than to run a chase  
 Around these hills and kill a few old ghosts,  
 Such as the churches hoard here, by the hosts.  
 I met my pleasant friend old Mr. Null  
 (Though *void's* no name for what's inside his skull)  
 And had a chatty time on various topics,  
 Including crops and gods, frigid and tropics;

On politics we struck a different note—  
He votes for Ingersoll, and I—don't vote.  
A good, tried thinker, though; been through the fires  
Of fierce church hatred; so has Mr. Byers.  
About that theory of inspiration,  
The best I ever heard. "Moses's creation,  
And Josh and Jim and Peter, all inspired!"  
"Yes," says our friend, "and here's the thought he's sired.  
One day while talking with a Christian neighbor,  
Trying to get his thinking powers to labor,  
Which, by the way, was rather a newish field,  
The Christian said: "Our law has been revealed  
By inspired writers."

"Well, what's to inspire?"

"Oh, to be filled up with God's holy fire."

"Not so, my friend; 'tis to draw in one's breath,  
A thing we'll do, till we're choked by Death.  
An *inspired* man, then, is a man that's living;  
An *expired* man is dead. The thing is plain,  
Of course you're right—don't hav the least misgiving,  
No dead man wrote it," comment would be vain.

I passed some pleasant days at Frankfort Springs,  
Days when the sunlight spread his golden wings  
And rested softly on the rose-wreathed earth,  
Kissing the buds until the bloom came forth.  
And when the night queen's silver shining bark  
Sailed slowly up the long blue bays of dark,  
Gliding serenely o'er the heavenly laks,  
The star-foam rushing in her whitening wake;  
When every blade of grass a shining tear  
Dropped, like sad lashes, on the dead Day's bier;  
When the warm breezes nestled in each tree,  
As children nestle 'gainst their mother's knee,  
As sleepy children, weary with their play,  
Close their sweet eyes, while Slumber steals away  
Into the silence of a dewey sleep;  
Only the lit leaves' gentle flutterings seem  
The quivering smile of childhood's happy dream;  
When all the soothing sounds that fold and press  
And fill the soul full of life's blessedness,  
Stole o'er the landscape like a tide of peace,  
Hushing all harshness with a gentle "Cease,"  
The better life, the higher hopings, came

Like speaking things, and gently called my name,  
And bade me look forever toward the best,  
So a wide love might ever be my guest:  
Might steal from hatred all its keenest sting,  
And take from life its every bitter thing.  
For who can know each joyless circumstance,  
Each fair deceit, that served but to enhance  
The struggles for the Right, misunderstood,  
Mismimed, misplaced, the bad accounted good?  
And who can know the years of lonely strife,  
Or by a single act, dare judge a life?  
Hatred is garish—'neath its yellow ray  
Acts gleam like points; the rest is torn away.  
But Love's white radiance throws a mystic veil  
That puts all action from our judgment's pale.

Long, long I shall remember those clear springs  
Under the rock shades, where the water sings.  
Nor less recall the gentle poet guide  
Who showed the wonders of that country-side.  
A man whom nature gifted with a pen  
Which might hav stirred all that is best in men;  
But, yet, so simple, modest are his words,  
They fall unconscious as the song of birds;  
And like the bird whose sweetest music rings  
Where solitude its freest echo flings,  
The soul which breathes these thoughts where genius thrills,  
Livs all unnoticed, 'mong these green-crowned hills:  
Loving the lowly, toiling with the poor,  
Asking the right to lift and help—no more.

And then, oh, then, that blessed Christian lady  
Who used to tell me when my meals were ready!  
Look at this picture of religious folly!  
A visage sallow, lean, and melancholy,  
The most lugubrious eyes, a prayerful pose,  
Mouth like a trap, a hatchet for a nose,  
As pleasant to converse with us as a dummy,  
The *tout ensemble* like an Egyptian mummy!  
Heavens! what a lot of God she did hav in her!  
I know she must; no ordinary sinner  
Could hav withstood my long attempts to win her.  
But when one day the milk was sour at dinner,  
I gave it up—I knew it was no use;

Defeat is odious, but I couldn't choose.  
It is so strange that, to be good, the people  
Hav to make faces long as a Christian steeple,  
And hate themselvs and everybody else,  
Turning their homes to ably patterned hells.

One Sunday, 'twas the twenty-fourth of June,  
The broad Ohio's waters were in tune,  
As down their bosom swept a picnic boat;  
The Sabbath breaking wicked were afloat!  
Our pious friends will please note this deduction:  
Christians on board—that saved us from destruction.  
The skurrying ripples laughed and danced and sung,  
The naiads' arms about our craft were flung,  
The people got the fever in their feet  
And danced and laughed too. Down the watery street  
We swept swift past the famed McKeesport rocks;  
Presto! they had us shut within the locks.

Ah, what rare music's in a waterfall!  
Down, down it shivers like a silver wall,  
Above, the foam curls like a snowy smoke,  
Below, the chimes ring like a clear bell's stroke;  
Down, down we float between the shimmering banks,  
Where Nature's Antony marshals his shining ranks,  
Assaults the shadows, puts them all to rout,  
Then finds his Cleopatra in a cloud.

Ah, many another conqueror finds it sweet  
To yield his triumph for love's dear defeat!  
We talked, played cards, and ate, and ate, and ate  
And ate again; and got home very late.  
Moral: Successful picnics ground in this short sum-up,  
A lot of viands and a hungry stomach.

The Tuesday after, having packed my grip,  
(And got the train-time right), prepared to Skip;"  
Said *Au revoir* until the coming fall,  
When, once again, I hope to meet you all.  
Be sure and come, now—you will be delighted;  
Besides, refusal's rude when one's invited.  
Hotels are good—the bedsteads hav nice springs—  
Not too many of the "get there's" "without wings."  
To set a stylish, neat and tempting table

There's no one better than our Pittsburgh Abel;  
Always obliging, ready to meet your wishes  
With widest choice—foreign and nativ dishes,  
With pretty titles that are most delicious.  
And then, if opposition's what you crave,  
There's lots of that—churches enough to save,  
If that would do it, the whole population  
The earth has witnessed since her first formation.  
You'll find Christ's braves with all their bright war-paint on,  
Plotting to slay a thing that doesn't exist,  
Praying you'll put God's armor of restraint on,  
And swearing you're possessed if you resist:  
Fools, frauds, fanatics cutting up their capers,  
And any saints' amount of lying papers.

I met some Liberals at Ashtabula,  
Had a discussion on the Greek in school, a  
Series of nice naps, and altogether  
A pleasant time, in spite of rainy weather.  
At Cleveland, on the Fourth, we celebrated  
By visiting the graves—to get elated.  
So quiet it is in that solemn city,  
Where the pale headstones gleam like white-armed Pity,  
Seems the great silence of the sacred dead  
An altar dear, where Hope and Sorrow wed.  
From that tall monument, whose sad gray stone  
Marks where a nation's friend finds his last home,  
We look upon the peaceful streets below,  
Where, soft as flakes, Time's footfalls come and go,  
Leaving no touch upon the reflex face,  
Whose lineaments our memories still must trace  
As we hav known them, when the light showered round,  
Ere we consigned them to the underground.  
The grasses sleep, and gently o'er their sleep  
The breezes pause and sigh, "O Grave, thou't deep!"  
Far off the waters roll; in their dim blue  
The eye sees, till it sees no more; they strew  
On the near shore, vague fragments, torn and tossed,  
Like half-remembered deeds in distance lost;  
And then they go out on the endless surge  
That rolls and breaks on the horizon's verge:  
Little we know the near, and less can tell  
What things are floating on the far-off swell:  
Little we know of Life; still less can say



Whether Death laps the shores of Night or Day.

. . . . .  
Out upon Erie's waves—the gliding Dark  
Puts out her lamps; the east shoots up a spark  
That kindles to a flame—the dawn is lit!  
Anon dark clouds roll sullen over it.  
The Storm is on the water—its great feet  
Pass with wide trampling, like an army's beat;  
The white caps rise, the foam is whirled like snow.  
Sudden athwart the gray, a brilliant glow  
Streams like a meteor, dazzles, disappears,  
Gleams out again; the sunlight's fiery spear  
Hav pierced the Storm-heart! A wide-gushing flood  
Pours as he dies, and tints the sky with blood.  
The red light pales into an amber hue,  
Morn opes her eyes, and lifts their glorious blue!

And with the trust that still through every cloud  
May shine the radiance no gloom can shroud,  
That each of us may still behold “the true,  
The good, the beautiful,” I bid adieu.

V. de C.

## Kent and Cleveland

In the beautiful blush of the first autumn days our friends in Kent gave a course of lectures for the enlightenment of the believers of Kent and all the country "which compasseth it round about." That noble exponent of the philosophy of Freethought, Rev. J. H. Burnham, with your scribe, were the speakers of the occasion; and, what with the favoring influence of golden weather, attentiv audiences, a splendidly organized working force, due mainly to the untiring exertions of the energetic secretary, Marius Heighton, the venerable president, Mr. Joseph Heighton, and such earnest workers as L. G. Reed, A. D. Swan, and others, the lectures were a pronounced success. Nor must I forget to speak of the kindness of the Hon. Marvin Kent, a model for all rich Infidels, to whose kindness we were indebted for the free use of hall and grove. I wish that in every place the Liberal cause might find such help.

The effects of that great platform educator, Chas. Watts's, teachings, are to be found in the Liberal mind of Kent. Mr. Watts has often treated the Secular Union with his wonderfully powerful logic, and on repeated occasions put the belligerent Father Leeming to rout. Whether we considered discretion the better part of valor after his drubbing of last March and so concluded not to attack us upon this occasion I am unable to determin, but certain it is that the exponent of Roman Catholicism "failed to materialize."

The Campaign Fund of the American Secular Union received a \$5.20 contribution, the donators being L. G. Reed, B. F. Conaway, Joseph York, Joseph Heighton, and several others whose names were not given. The city of Kent itself is a pretty little place of between four and five thousand inhabitants. The country all around is a wonderful rolling of law, green hills, with bright roads winding in and out like yellow ribbons, with bending trees in this rich fall time all laden with blooming, downy fruit, and shining fields all mellow with the hazy light. Pippin Lake Farm, the residence of the pleasant-voiced, smiling-eyed secretary, who can manage to do more effectiv work in a day than some can do in ten, is a lovely home of quietness and content; and the dwelling of that stanch old Abolitionist, Joseph Heighton, is fairly a garden of sunshine. It was not without regret that I bade them all adieu, but yet with a lively hope that some time in the future I may once more hav the pleasure of meeting them all in this world. The Kent Secular Union is certainly a noble monument to Freethought, and all I can wish is that they may continue as they hav begun, and "be not weary in well-doing."

Betaking myself to Cleveland, I was met at the depot by that earnest worker so well known to Liberals, especially about Pittsburgh,

Mr. S. F. De Jones. Mr. De Jones is one of the quiet kind, armed with a faultless appearance and no less faultless sarcasm, which he administers in concentrated doses whenever the orthodox savages air their barbarous doctrines too "freshly." That evening I had the additional pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with Mr. G. R. Griffith, also an ex-Pittsburgher. These two black-eyed individuals are anxious to see the work once more well on foot in Cleveland, and, judging from the developments of the past few days, their wishes are likely to be realized.

After consulting with T. F. Lucas, the social little secretary of the old society, and further with Thos. Lees, the man whose energy has built up the spiritualistic society of Cleveland, with reference to obtaining a hall, a lecture was arranged for; and on Sunday evening, Sept. 9, the cases of Justice and Jehovah were reviewed before a fair-sized audience—indeed, considering the short notice, one might say an excellent audience. After the lecture, a number of the wicked remained to decide upon the appointment of a place of business meeting; Mr. L. B. Silver kindly offered the use of his elegant office on Euclid avenue for that purpose, and on Sunday, Sept. 16th, the members of the Cleveland Secular Union, together with quite a number of new-comers—among whom are Mr. See, formerly secretary of an English society and a very able and enthusiastic gentleman, two Canadian friends who have recently settled in Cleveland, Mr. F. S. Merrill, who has enthusiasm enough for half a dozen and energy to economize it too, Mr. De Jones and Mr. Griffith—will meet for the election of officers and the discussion of the best methods of work.

I am pleased to be able to say that the most radical person in Cleveland is a woman, and those John Geo. Hartwigs who are afraid of the subversion of mental liberty as a result of the extension of the franchise to women, want to call on Mrs. Mary Smith, and then forever after hold their tongues.

To speak of Cleveland Secularism without mentioning Mr. and Mrs. Gillson, that venerable old couple over whose grand white heads the snows of seventy years have fallen, yet in whose hearts burns the young fire of a bright hope—a hope that livens and warms and throws up a clear, pure flame, as sometimes you have seen shooting from a red, warm core of coals a playing flame that leaps about over the rifted and fallen ashes of whiteness—to speak of Cleveland Secularism without mentioning them, I say, would be like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. They are as anxious as the youngest to see the work go on, and will render all practical assistance in their power to keep it moving.

Anyone who visits this most beautiful city can see at once the appropriateness of Liberal ideas in a place like this. Everything is

broad and wide and free. The streets are straight and level, with a generous disregard of economy in space, which would paralyze an Easterner who is accustomed to economize even in air. No need of that here. The great fresh breeze comes blowing up from the blue lake, and a grand rush of freedom seems to sink into the lungs when one inhales that invigorating breath. The houses do not wear the cooped-up look of the larger cities, and wide, velvety lawns make a sheening border to the beautiful drives and walks which invite one to try his horsemanship or pedestrian endurance. It is a beautiful child of the lake, set smiling here by the broad, fair waves; and as it is liberal in air, and earth, and sea, it should be Liberal in thought.

I cannot close without extending my thanks to Messrs. Lucas and Copeland for that kindness on my behalf, and perhaps, too, to that anomaly of a reporter who gave the most correct, impartial, and gentlemanly report in the Cleveland Plain Dealer I have ever received at the hands of the daily press.

With gratitude for the past and hope for the future,

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

## “JUSTICE AND JEHOVAH.”

The Address of Miss Voltairine De Cleyre Before the Cleveland  
Secular Union

Miss Voltairine De Cleyre of Grand Rapids addressed the Secular union in the Memorial hall last evening on the subject of “Justice and Jehovah.” The central idea in her address is expressed in the quotation from Tennyson’s Locksley Hall: “Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth.”

The lecturer essayed to show by a series of word pictures—told metaphorically as visions—conditions of society which cannot be properly vindicated by the idea of a just or good God. Her first description was of a little child, homeless, hungry, poorly clad, barefooted and weary, orphaned and alone, whose father had lost the house he had built, his only property, by reason of the title to the land being in the name of a railway. Here she quoted, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” and, also, “He doeth all things well.” The religious explanation was announced as justifying such a condition of affairs on the principle that God owns everything and therefore owes his creatures nothing.

Next the instance of a mother arraigned at a bar of justice for stealing meat from a butcher’s stall was given. The mother steals for her children. She is a seamstress where labor has been underbitten. The judge—more merciful than God—takes pity on her condition and considering her temptation suspends sentence. The little child asks the judge if he is God. The mother gets work again, earns a little money with which she buys poison and kills her three children, thus inflicting a criminal on society and saving it three. To what end are such laws made, especially such laws as make woman subject to man. Theologians say God relegates power to man. The child was not far wrong after all when he asked the judge if he were God.

The lecturer then turned her attention to the existing state of things in society when the incautious girl is an outcast and her seducer goes uncensured. Pity frowns, the mother says she will stand everything but disgrace, the father casts his daughter off, the street life or shame and the death of both mother and child follows. The churches are as pure and cold as the unforgiving sisters. Mothers should not make their daughters lives mock modest lies but should teach physical and historical facts to put the girls on their guard. Religion goes as far back as Adam and Eve to justify this. “The woman that thou gavest me”—the woman was the first to break the law. From the salons of the gilded brothels to the slums of the dirtiest streets the cry goes up from fallen woman for peace through death, and the many churches preach “peace on earth, good will to men,” but never to

women.

Men go to battle carrying banners inscribed with the name of the most high. Poverty through alleged overproduction may be described in the quotation "To him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not it shall be taken away even that which he seems the to have." The iniquities of trusts and a surplus which should be in the people's hands out at usurious interest are complemented with "well done thou good and faithful servant."

Miss De Cleyre summed up by saying that when Napoleon went a step too far justice put all his cruelty and ambition and oppression on the one side, and himself on the other and that he was weighed in the balance and found wanting. The earth bears a burden too great for the God idea to bear. The day is at hand when all the evils dwelt upon by the speaker will be pitted against Jehovah by a thinking world and he will be weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Miss De Cleyre in girlhood received her education in a Catholic convent and was at one time quite religious. Fear of the Roman Catholic hell alone deterred her from entering the fold, and while looking about her for a more cheerful religion she became agnostic.

"'Justice and Jehovah.' The Address of Miss Voltairine De Cleyre Before the Cleveland Secular Union," *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* (September 10, 1888): 4.