

EVOLUTION.

"Should you ask me why I ponder  
On the life of man primeval?  
Why I linger in past ages,  
Ages slowly bringing changes,  
Making man a trifle wiser  
As the cycles of time go by?  
From the records I would answer,  
That the freedom of the present,  
Freedom from the priest and prophet,  
All the knowledge, art and science,  
Tell the story of the races,  
Tell the gains of generations,  
Tell the sum of Evolution.  
Remember our progenitors,  
How they struggled with the demons,  
With the demons, the hobgoblins,  
In the boundless past so full of myths;  
How they peopled mount and wood-  
land,  
Vale and woodland with wierd phan-  
toms;  
Saw in lightning's lurid flashes  
An angry God hurling vengeance,  
Heard its voice in thunders frightful,  
Felt its power in plague and tempest,  
Held in thrall of superstition;  
How followed blind the priest and seer,  
Loyal to him who threatened them  
Kissing the hand that plundered them,  
Believing him who sat enthroned  
A power divine to be obeyed.  
How gods and priests commanded them  
To be as slaves or suffer death.  
Oh, prize the good evolved in time—  
The progress made by humankind;  
God with two o's! Give it the praise!  
Not priestly prayers wrought it for  
us,  
Nor victim's blood bought it for us,  
Nor gods nor heavens sent it hither!  
It comes with marks of toil upon it,  
With marks of toil and strife upon it,  
The outcome of all ages in it,  
EVOLUTION written on it."

CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS.

At the opening of the public schools in New York City it was found that the school buildings were inadequate to the demand and for awhile many children were turned away for want of room. In the emergency thus occasioned, Mayor Strong appealed to the Christians for the privilege of using their churches until additional school-houses could be provided. This, however, was refused, and the New York Journal has had the courage to rebuke them in the following style:

"And now abideth faith, hope and charity; but the greatest of these is charity." That is a distinctly Christian sentiment culled from the book to which the churches look for their creeds and their inspiration. 'Charity begins at home.' That is distinctly a pagan sentiment, born of hard common sense and experience. The reconciliation of these two sentiments, Christian and Pagan, in practice is easy, and its results are always beneficent. Nevertheless many thoughtful men find grave difficulty in accounting for the frequency with which the churches fail to effect that reconciliation. Yet church congregations are largely composed of men who display practical sense in the conduct of temporal affairs, and who seem to be led into illogical or sentimental ways of thinking only when they are asked to handle church matters in a business way. "Mayor Strong appealed to the

churches very recently to remember that charity begins at home by helping the city in the solution of its public school problem. All that was asked was that the churches give the city the use of their temples of worship for a brief period. The churches have refused. Now it does seem that there is a large inconsistency in this refusal. The church is itself only a higher school house. There can be no desecration of the shrines of the Father of mankind in permitting children therein to learn to read and write. "Suffer little children to come unto me" would have been an admirable salutation to a company the wide opening of the temple doors.

"To have given the city the use of church buildings as temporary schools would have been a big and beautiful charity. Ignorance and idleness are two of the most potent factors in the development of crime, yet the churches, confronted with an opportunity to take tens of thousands of unschooled and unemployed children off the streets and set before them the benefits of school discipline, have refused. To be sure, there would have been a considerable amount of wear and tear, but even if the city could not have paid for it, these churches not already burdened with debt might easily have made their own repairs, and counted the outlay as given to the poor and, therefore, lent to the Lord.

"It is very difficult sometimes to comprehend the process of reasoning which guide religious bodies. The converted heathen in India, however, will not outshine the saved children of New York in that next world, where there is neither race nor creed."

HER WORK STILL LIVES.

The following letter was written by the late Katie Kehm Smith in answer to our inquiry when we first talked of enlisting in the ranks of the O. S. S. U.:

CASTLE KEHM, OREGON CITY, OR., May 30, E. M. 295.—M. P. and J. E. Hosmer, Tillamook, Or., Dear friends: I am very glad you wrote to me, and glad that we have such material as I feel sure you are, in Tillamook, to help our valued friend and Secular champion, Mr. C. E. Reynolds, in the cause.

It is my judgment, also, that your conclusions as to who should be admitted to affiliate with us as stated in the latter part of your letter, are right.

People are what they are, and they have to grow to be different: So if we want them different, we must help them to grow and not shun them. If a person gets angry, and you become angry too, that does not grow the anger out of him; rather it grows it in him. If you do not get angry when he does, but remain gentle that helps to grow it out of him. It is so in principle,

with all failings of humanity. Force is not the best teacher. Kindness, and conditions to grow different in, is what people want.

With this basic principle to start with, which no doubt you have already thought about, you will understand our position relative to the vices of humanity.

Our objects you will read in the enclosed membership blanks. Now, conditions make ignorance and ignorance is the cause of all wrong. Therefore, to attain our Objects we must improve conditions and dispel ignorance.

Whatever is wrong, therefore comes properly within the scope of our work. By "Temperance, I presume you refer in your letter to intoxicants. We do not make a specialty of fighting intemperance more than we do of other ignorances of the people. But when we talk about it, it is always against it of course. We however teach the intemperate to cultivate self and rely on self and not upon a mythical Jesus or God, nor for the sake of either of them, but for his own and his family's sake.

We try to realize that we were not made in a minute but are the product of unknown ages of evolution, and that we will continue to evolve to better or worse conditions, as we make those conditions favorable or unfavorable. The Christian idea that man was made perfect and has degenerated, has done and is doing a great deal of mischief.

It is the idea that gave rise to the use of force to correct bad conduct, when in reality bad conduct, is due largely to heredity, rather than willful desire. The faculty in every individual that is strongest, always predominates. If at the moment, it is the desire to drink, the person will drink. The thing, therefore to do, is to find the best means to cultivate that desire out in the shortest time and cultivate the opposite desire in. If in reality, we have evolved from an ancestry which in ages gone, was far below us, perhaps we should be satisfied that we are as far ahead as we are and encouraged over it, not despondent, and go whipping those who are only a little behind us. Give them time and opportunity and they will catch up. That is the idea of Secularism with reference to all reforms. Help the people to grow more perfect.

No doubt you can be of great assistance to us. We want to bend the twigs in Tillamook, that is, the children, and we want a Secular Church and S. S. S. there. Can you not take hold of it? We are sure Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, and several others whom we had the pleasure of meeting while in Tillamook, will take hold with you. Would be pleased to hear from you again.

Sincerely,  
KATIE KEHM SMITH.  
Sec'y O. S. S. U.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

The following appears in the Secular Sunday school quarterly for the lesson of Nov. 15:

It seems altogether unnecessary to us freethinkers to thank a god, even if there is one, for doing what must be right if he is a righteous god and therefore doing what is clearly his duty. But the height of absurdity is reached when we ask such a being as some imagine him (why not her) to be, to change his plans, or to do as he wishes.

Some seem to think that there is great benefit in thus thanking and praying, but we are sure that it is a very unhealthy state of the mind and thus a physical injury. This same attitude of thanks and prayer, if carried to extremes, gives the victim what the old revivalists called "the power" and the writer has seen such a victim suffering all the agonies of a mad man, and finally becoming so faint and weak as to lose consciousness altogether.

If we have thanks to offer, let us offer them to our friends for their many kindnesses and if we wish to pray, let us pray to the people, by the use of our tongues and pens, to arise in their strength, shake off the nightmare of priestly rule and save the world from poverty, misery and crime.

When we see so much of the people's labor wasted in erecting costly buildings and supporting such a large army of priests (preachers), when nearly all their force is expended in trying to make us believe something that is of no earthly use to us, and at the best but the imaginations of men, we feel like crying out in despair; but when we remember our Secular Sunday Schools and that many are shaking off their chains of superstition and others awaking from their selfish sleep of indifference, we take courage and cry, "On! On! to a sure and glorious victory over the hosts of ignorance and fraud." O, Secular friends, while others are gorging themselves with rich food, giving puerile thanks, or offering vain prayers for relief in these, the hardest times that our beloved country has ever known, let us think as we have never thought before. Let us resolve to do all we can, be it little or much, to bring about a condition when, instead of their being a premium placed on hypocrisy, there will be the highest incentives for the honest expression of thought, a condition that will lessen the necessity for poor miserable humanity to long for a heaven in the sky; for peace and harmony will reign here on earth, and this is heaven.

Champions of truth, look the great question of reform squarely in the face today, and resolve to cast aside self-interest and go forth to battle for the true salvation of our race.

Gem of Thought:

"The beams smile on, and heaven serene  
Still bends, as though no prayers had been;  
And the breezes moan, as still they wave,  
When man is powerless, heaven cannot save." —Stevenson.

In a recent letter from Warren Carsner, of Wagner, the place where Katie Kehm Smith died, he asks what we are going to do in regard to buying a monument for this brave little woman. The people there have raised fifty dollars and are waiting for her other friends to do what they can. Those wishing to help in this matter should write to Mr. Carsner at once.