

TORCH OF REASON.



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Common Sense vs. Holy Things.

Will learned men one day in seven
Worship myths like ignorant heathen?
Does nature have a god and heaven?
Pray, which is nature's holy season?

Come, learn of nature; O, so true!
Sublimest grandeur of her ways!
Search the lands and oceans blue—
And where and what of holy days?

Holy days, gods, heavens, saviours holy;
Devils, hells—all holy and hellish
kinds—
Are imagined and existant solely
In undeveloped, puerile minds.

The talk of holy days and lents
And holy men in holy vestments,
Is looked upon by common sense
As theology's holy "chestnuts."

While those of holy faith do cower
In ignorant imbecilic prayer,
Thinking minds dethrone their power,
Setting the truth forth everywhere.

Then heed not faith and superstition,
On Sundays sing your psalms and
pray;

But strive to better your condition,
By thought and reason every day.

—G. R.

History of Secularism in Oregon.

Ten years ago, Secularism in Oregon amounted to but very little. Of course it was not entirely unknown, for there were thousands of Liberal people in the state who held the cause of Mental Freedom very dear. They were widely scattered over different parts of the state and did not know each other—did not know their numbers or their strength. Freethought lecturers had passed through the state as early as the 60's, doing a great amount of good and sowing the seeds of progressive thought, but no concerted effort had been made in the way of Secular organization.

In the year 1887, a Secular organization was started in Silverton with a good membership and the many enthusiastic members labored hard to make some showing in the name of a cause they so dearly love—not through hope of reward but through love of humanity and freedom here in this the only life they know. This little organization did a great amount of good in a local way and in a short time a splendid brick hall was built and dedicated to the cause. It is situated on one of the principal business blocks in the city and its motto "Universal Mental Liberty" shines forth today conspicuously, proclaiming to all that there are people in Silverton who dare to think and express their thoughts.

In 1889 the Oregon State Secular Union was organized at Silverton by delegates from all parts of the state. After this organization had

been in existence two years it was incorporated under the laws of the state of Oregon and as soon as that was completed, Katie Kehm Smith began a system of Secular Sunday schools and churches.

On account of the lack of workers and the work being an experiment, the Sunday-schools did not spread rapidly but wherever it was tried it proved a success. It is no longer a theory or an experiment, for it has been demonstrated to be practical. The establishment of Secular Sunday-schools marked a new era in Secular organization. All that remains now is for workers to push it forward to all parts of the world.

With the success of constructive

Liberal Hall, Silverton, Oregon on January 6th, 1897 and is progressing nicely with thirtyseven students and six instructors. The faculty has received information that many students will attend next year and it will be absolutely necessary to have another building ready in time for the fall term. The plans for the building have been drawn and on this page of the Torch is presented a picture of the promised Liberal University building that will be erected this summer on a tract of land that has been donated for the purpose by one of the citizens and business men of the city of Silverton. The opening of the school last January was a new era in Secular work and the

Danger Ahead!

What Secularist can read the following from our Washington letter and not think it is time for us to wake up:

"Mr. Justice Harlan of the United States supreme court presided over the eighth annual meeting of the American Society of Religious Education, held in the First Congregational church, and said that he was glad of the opportunity to testify to his sympathy with the society and its objects; that every one who believed in religion, whether a member of a church or not, must be in sympathy with the objects of the society, and that all lovers of the country must also be in sympathy, for the country rested on the foundation of the Christian religion. The objects of this society are, in brief, to render the Bible valuable in building character during the formative period of childhood and youth, and to introduce improved methods of Bible study in families, colleges, and Sunday-schools. The annual report, submitted by J. E. Gilbert, secretary, shows that the Sunday-school Teachers' Normal College, the first department organized, closed its eighth year with an enrollment of 10,186 students, who are distributed all over the United States, and that the Bible Readers' Union closed its third year with 1491 members. The International Sunday-school lessons, which have been before the public since October, 1894, were reported to be increasing in popularity. The plans for a Bible training school in Washington have been perfected, but lack of money has prevented the opening of the school. The report closed with an appeal for the money needed to open and maintain this school, and a special collection was taken for that purpose. The society is out of debt and is self-supporting. Rev. Dr. T. S. Hamlin, who was among the speakers, put himself on record as being in favor of the teaching of religion in the day-schools as well as in the Sunday-schools."

With religious fanatics as the chief officers of these United States we will soon have what the people do not want, and this will bring on a revolution equal, if not worse, than the French Revolution. Secularists, it is our duty to do all we can to prevent such a catastrophe. Secular education is necessary, and we must have Secular schools.



Building for the Liberal University

To be erected this Summer at Silverton, Ore.

Secularism demonstrated, the next movement was to advance the educational interests. With this end in view, it was deemed a wise plan to establish a Liberal University where all who desired a liberal education could obtain it without being hampered with the superstitions of the age. At the annual convention of the O. S. S. U. in 1895, a committee was appointed to solicit funds for the establishment of the university. This committee went steadily to work and after raising some funds and looking the matter over carefully decided that it was a wise plan to locate the university at once and demonstrate its need and thus induce Liberals to supply the necessary funds to erect a suitable and convenient building.

The school was started in the

completion of a Liberal University this year will make an epoch in the world's history of Liberalism.

The building will be built. The people of Silverton are in earnest and so is every liberal minded person in the state. The people of Silverton gave evidence of their intentions when they subscribe as liberally as they have. They have pledged over one thousand dollars already and work will begin in a short time and be pushed as fast as possible. It now remains the duty of every Secularist in the United States to help the cause all that is possible that no delay will be necessary. Remember all that is needed is for each to do the very best he can, but be sure you do that. Now is the time for all to do the very best we can, so do not delay.

P. W. G.