

Oregon State Secular Union.

The Torch of Reason is the official organ of the O. S. S. U., and this column will be devoted each week to items of interest concerning our state organization.

OBJECTS OF THE O. S. S. U.

1. The promotion of a higher state of society through the teaching of social purity, law abiding citizenship, temperance and mental liberty and by confining our work to things pertaining to this life only.
2. The eradication of superstition from the minds of men by teaching the natural sciences and the history of ancient religions, showing their origin, similarities and absurdities.
3. For all mankind freedom of thought and equal rights and privileges in all matters concerning religion, and to this end the repeal of all laws that exempt church property from taxation; that force the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath; that appropriate public funds for sectarian institutions; that tolerate any religious exercises, readings, display or prayer in any public school, body or institution maintained wholly or in part at public expense, and generally, to accomplish the total separation of church and state and effect the secularization of government—local, state and national.
4. To charter, organize and assist auxiliary Secular organizations and Secular Sunday schools for the teaching of science and morality throughout the state, and appoint and commission lecturers and teachers.
5. To prescribe, adopt, publish, sell and distribute books, pamphlets and papers advocating its objects and principles.
6. To protect, by every lawful means, any member whose equal religious or civil rights are infringed.
7. Generally, to do and encourage every act, proceeding and thing necessary or conducive to the attainment of its objects.

What a Gathering.

A song composed by F. S. Matteson, of Turner, Ore., and sung at the unveiling of Katie Kehm Smith's and Mrs. Maggie Carsner's monuments at Wagner, Ore., the first day of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Oregon State Secular Union, Sunday, July 3, E. M. 298.

On a pleasant July morning,
When the Freethought people come,
And the radiance in their faces we shall see;
Coming from their far-off places
To the Wagner people's homes,
What a gathering, what a gathering that will be!

CHORUS.

What a gathering, what a gathering,
What a gathering of the champions
Of the Freethought cause we'll see.
What a gathering, what a gathering,
What a gathering of the Secularists
That will be!

We gather round the precious ground
Which holds our Katie's form,
And tears of grief will mingle with our sighs;

We recall her splendid talents,
And her pleasant, kindly ways,
And the intellectual radiance in her eyes.

From the fruitage of her labors
Shall our inspiration come,
To the Secularists over every land and sea,

To aid them in redeeming
Generations yet unborn,
And from superstition's bondage set them free.

Tenth Annual Convention.

Sunday morning dawned bright and beautiful, and the people of Wagner were all astir. The time for the Tenth Annual Convention of the Oregon State Secular Union had arrived. The Executive Board had decided that the little settlement in Kahler Basin, Grant county, Oregon, known as Wagner, should be treated to a gathering of Secularists such as was never before known. For several days the neighbors had gathered together to prepare for the coming event. A large platform had been built in a grove near the store. A roof of green boughs protected it from the sun; a speaker's stand was at one end and a music stand at the side, from which music was to be dispensed for the dancers. People from neighboring towns and settlements had come prepared to camp, and officers and members of the Union were present from hundreds of miles away. From the flagpole

in front of the store waved a beautiful new American flag, purchased for the occasion.

Shortly after noon on Sunday, July 3d, people on horseback and in buggies and wagons were seen traveling toward the little cemetery in Haystack valley where were laid to rest, among other friends and loved ones, Katie Kehm Smith and Mrs. Maggie Carsner. This, the first day of the convention, was to be devoted to exercises at the graves of these noble heroes and the unveiling of the monuments erected to their memory. The graves had been decorated with flowers and vines and a shade erected for the speakers and the audience. The crowd soon assembled and the exercises were commenced by singing "What a Gathering", composed for the occasion by F. S. Matteson, of Turner, Oregon. During the singing the veils that covered the monuments were removed and disclosed to view the inscriptions, Secular mottoes and figures of the Wettstein Freethought badge engraved one on each monument. The one erected to the memory of Katie Kehm Smith bore the inscription:

.....
DEDICATED BY HER FRIENDS TO A
WOMAN WITHOUT SUPERSTITION.
.....

At the close of the song Mr. Mack Ramsby, a thorough Secularist and the oldest man in the community, made a few fitting remarks, welcoming the people to Wagner. The president responded, with thanks on behalf of the visitors, and, after the singing of another song, introduced the speaker of the day, Miss Kate DePeatt, who spoke at length along lines impressing the assembled audience with their duty to the memory of the noble ones who lay beneath the sod and dedicating the monument to Truth, Justice and Right. Another appropriate song was sung, after which Mr. Geer, in a few remarks, paid tributes of respect to the memory of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Carsner. Another song ended the exercises at the cemetery and the first day of the convention. The people returned to their respective homes with a feeling of satisfaction with the afternoon's exercises.

The next day was July 4th, and was to be devoted to the celebration of our nation's independence and the cause of Liberty. A crowd of enthusiastic Secularists, with now and then a Christian, gathered in the little grove under the arbor erected for the purpose near the creek. The day was beautiful and the assembled crowd was light hearted and gay, but far from being noisy. The little boys were shooting firecrackers, old men and women were talking over old times

and speculating on the prospects of having a glorious fourth, while the young ladies and gentlemen wore their brightest smiles and chatted merrily.

At the appointed hour the crowd was called together by singing "Land of Liberty", after which Minnie P. Hosmer read selections from the Declaration of Independence. Miss Jane DePeatt followed with a vocal solo, which was well received, and Miss Kate DePeatt recited "Ingersoll and Jehovah", which brought rounds of applause. The song "My Sweetheart Went Down with the Maine", by Mrs. Hosmer, was appreciated by all. J. E. Hosmer, orator of the day, was then introduced and presented his subject, "The New Declaration of Independence", in a manner befitting the occasion. The subject of religion was not forgotten, and orthodoxy and priestcraft were handled with ungloved hands, which was well received by the audience composed largely of Secularists. The address lasted over an hour, but not a word was lost by the attentive audience. The choir sang a song, and with an announcement of the afternoon program the meeting was dismissed for dinner. And such a dinner! It could not be described; but it was relished, and that is enough. It takes Secularists to prepare good things to eat, and the Wagner Secularists beat all the rest. There was enough to feed an army after the assembled guests had been satisfied, but it came in good play for supper. A jolly crowd had been brought together and there was nothing to mar the occasion. Everyone was in the best of spirits and good will and good order prevailed. Stomachs were filled, appetites were satisfied and more than twelve baskets full of fragments remained to be laid away. An hour or so was spent in visiting, when the seats were arranged for another program.

A chorus, "Guard the Right", called the assembly together. The orchestra then discoursed some music, and Mr. and Mrs. Hosmer rendered a character song, which met with great applause and laughter. Miss Kate DePeatt was then introduced and addressed the meeting on "Adulterated Government". She spoke forcibly, with intense interest in her subject, and received great applause from her hearers. Many of the crimes of society she laid at the door of religion, while the crimes of politics were charged to priestcraft and kingcraft. Miss DePeatt's address was followed by a short talk by "Uncle Mack" Ramsby, who made some fitting remarks for the occasion. Mr. Ramsby, who is nearing his four score years, ended his talk by challenging any woman of his age to run a foot race. He was promptly informed by Dr. Griffin, a few years his sen-

ior, that it was a foolish challenge, as no woman would acknowledge herself to be that old. Vice-president Carsner, of Wagner, then suggested a collection to assist in defraying the expenses of the convention. Twenty dollars and fifty cents was raised in a few moments, and the meeting was dismissed by the singing of the chorus, "Help It On".

The sun was still high, but the dancers were anxious to begin their part of the program, so the seats were removed from the center of the platform, the music was started and the fun was again commenced, only to cease a short time for the supper hour, then to be resumed again with extra vigor. Excellent order prevailed and not a single person failed to enjoy the dance. At midnight oysters were served, and again the dance was renewed, not to be interrupted until day began to dawn and the stars to vanish, when to home and to bed went the dancers, light hearted and gay, though with sleepy eyes and weary feet. All were satisfied with the celebration of our nation's independence and the second day of the convention.

The next day was to be devoted to the business sessions of the Union, and the members and friends assembled to exercise their rights as voters and advisers. It is needless to say that advice came thicker than votes, but both were needed in order to transact the business in a manner right and just to all. The meeting was called to order by President Geer, who impressed the members with the grave duty resting upon them and placed the business in the hands of the convention. The minutes of the ninth annual convention were read and approved, and the president appointed the following committees: Order of Business, C. E. Glaze of Dayville, G. C. Gillespie of Wagner, and G. R. Wagner of Monument; Credentials, C. N. Wagner of Wagner, M. P. Hosmer of Silverton, and D. C. Andrews of Lone Rock; Constitution and By-Laws, J. E. Hosmer of Silverton, W. H. Gates of Wagner, and Kate DePeatt of Ashland; Ways and Means, A. J. Shrum of Grade, Kate DePeatt and J. E. Hosmer; Resolutions, D. C. Andrews, A. Officer of Dayville, and M. P. Hosmer.

Vice-president Carsner caused quite a heated discussion by a point of order and an appeal. The best of order and good will prevailed, and after some excitement Mr. Carsner good-naturedly withdrew his appeal and the convention adjourned for dinner.

At 2 o'clock the convention reassembled and adopted the reports of the committees on order of business and credentials without debate. The report of the committee on constitution and by-laws was then read, suggesting some amendments