

National Convention.

To the Secularists, Freethinkers and Lovers of Liberty in America:

The Annual Congress of the American Secular Union and Free-thought Federation will be held at Washington Hall, 70 E. Adams St., in the city of Chicago, Ill., November 18, 19 and 20. The object of this Congress is to transact the regular business of this association, to devise plans for better organization and for the prosecution of its work during the coming year, to advocate the complete secularization of our Government, to disseminate a knowledge of the principles of Free-thought, and to enable Liberals to become better acquainted with each other and to unite them in a closer fellowship. The purposes for which this Association was organized were never more pressing. Its work must be both defensive and aggressive. We must defend our institutions against the attacks that will undoubtedly be made upon them by the Theocratic National Reform Association and its allies. We must prosecute with increased energy our fight against the exemption of church property from taxation, the employment of chaplains, religious instruction and ceremonies in our public schools, Sunday laws, religious tests and religious proclamations, appropriations to sectarian institutions, donations of government land for Roman chapels and donations of government money to Methodist Book Concerns. As a result of our war with Spain it is probable, that Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines will become a part of, or under the protectorate of our Republic. If so, we must demand that in providing for their government the widest religious liberty be secured for their inhabitants, and that no partiality be shown to any church. To accomplish these purposes Liberals must unite and cooperate for their own protection and the extension of intelligence, free thought and liberty. We therefore urge Liberal thinkers everywhere to attend and to contribute to this Congress. We shall strive to make its sessions interesting and profitable to them. Able speakers will address them, inspiring music will be rendered, and fraternity and good cheer will abound.

Funds are needed to defray the expenses of the Congress and carry on the work of the society. Its usefulness has been impaired in the past by a lack of funds. This should not be allowed. Christians contribute annually an average of \$10 each for the support of their church. Is our cause less worthy of support than theirs? We have no right to be indifferent to its success and withhold from it our support. We owe a debt to the heroic men and women of the past who labored and suffered that we might have a greater freedom than

they enjoyed. They sowed, we reaped, and we in turn should sow that others may reap again. In no better way can we discharge our obligations to these dead pioneers! We owe a duty to our living workers — to sustain those who are opposing religious superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny. We should encourage them and aid them. If all would do their part the victory would soon be ours. The battle of Santiago, it is well known, was won because every soldier did his duty. Supposing that in the midst of the battle a portion of the army had withdrawn, or stacked their arms and left their comrades at the front to face alone that hell of shells and bullets. We owe a duty to posterity. We should strive to make the future better than the past has been.

We can leave our children no richer legacy than an enlarged domain of intellectual liberty, the only sure foundation of our liberty. We hope that every Liberal will respond to this appeal at once. Every dollar will be faithfully expended to advance the cause. Send your contributions to the treasurer, Otto Wettstein, Rochelle, Ill., or to our secretary, or to the editor of this paper.

J. E. REMSBURG, Pres.,
Atchison, Kas.
E. C. REICHWALD, Sec.,
141 S. Water St., Chicago, Ill.

Stephen Girard.

Stephen Girard, the founder of Girard University, was a lover of children and gave his wealth to his country. Very few men in history have united so many apparently contradictory qualities. He loved children passionately, and the sight of a crippled or miserable-looking urchin would bring tears to his eyes. His devotion to the United States never faltered, and at every reverse during the war of 1812-15 he ground his teeth and, it is said, swore in his native French. At length he offered to dedicate his entire fortune to the war, lent the government \$5,000,000 and asked no interest till the war closed. A rich man who loves children and is willing to give all his wealth to his country must have a great deal of good in him.

His bravery was of the morally sublime order. When the yellow fever scourged Philadelphia, and had driven away most of the nurses, he and Peter Helm worked two months in the hospitals at the most menial offices and shamed the faint-hearted into bravery. An affliction in early childhood destroyed his right eye and distorted that side of his face, so the boys nicknamed him by a french word that might be translated "wall eye". He lost his mother when he was quite young and his father was harsh. In short, he was a misera-

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