



SECULARIZATION.

A Paper Read at the Convention of the Free Religious Association at Florence, Mass.

BY FREDERIC MAY HOLLAND.

[The Index.]

This does not mean secularism or atheism or abolition of the churches. It simply means elevating them to the high position earnestly desired by their most enlightened advocates...

murderer be taught to say, as he mounts the scaffold, that he is going straight to heaven, and that he wishes the spectators were sure to go there as he is? Are the prayers which usually open the legislative sessions anything but an empty form? Are not the clergymen who live in the neighborhood of the hospitals, porches, and prisons, able and willing to visit such of the inmates as desire it? And is it not better that each inmate should have the right to see a minister of his own faith than that a representative of one single sect should be sent by the State to men and women holding hostile views?

ority of sect to sect, were in general desirous that there should be a decided preference expressed for religion in some shape over irreligion. Thus, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, and Massachusetts plainly declare that it is the duty of every man to worship God. Most of the constitutions begin by acknowledging his existence; and there is not a single State which does not sanction the taking of oaths, and thus declare that religious hopes and fears have a higher claim on the conscience than the moral law, which bids us speak the truth always without regard to self-interest. Our laws should say with Shakespeare:—

secularization of the State. It can do more, however, than might be accomplished by the Free Religious Association. It is nearly twenty years since it began its great work of purifying religion and binding all who profess its various forms together in bonds of brotherhood. This has already been so far accomplished that the most zealous members have often asked, "Cannot the Free Religious Association do something more?"

always deprecate such narrations, one thing at least, to me, is evident; and it is this: the combined opposition of press and pulpit does not so hinder the progress of the spiritual movement; nay, is infinitely less harmful than the performances herein related.

These demands cover substantially the same ground as this essay. Why they were not presented by the Liberal League, and why that society has lost many of its best members, I need not say here. If the League will prosecute vigorously its legitimate work of secularization, and drop other issues, I shall gladly overlook the past. Neither that organization nor another, which has unfortunately done nothing but publish an admirable pamphlet, "The Provisional National Association for the Secularization of the State,"











