

TORCH OF REASON.

"TRUTH HOLDS THE TORCH IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH."—*Lucretius.*

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Declaration of the Free.

BY ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

WE have no falsehoods to defend—
We want the facts;
Our force, our thought we do not
spend
In vain attacks,
And we will never meanly try
To save some fair and pleasing lie.

The simple truth is what we ask,
Not the ideal;
We've set ourselves the noble task
To find the real.
If all there is is naught but dross,
We want to know and bear our loss.

We will not willingly be fooled
By fables nursed;
Our hearts by earnest tho't are schooled
To bear the worst;
And we can stand erect and dare
All things, all facts that really are.

We have no god to serve or fear,
No hell to shun,
No devil with malicious leer.
When life is done
And endless sleep may close our eyes,
A sleep with neither tears nor sighs.

We have no master on the land—
No king in air—
Without a manacle we stand,
Without a prayer,
Without a fear of coming night,
We seek the truth, we love the light.

We do not bow before a guess,
A vague unknown;
A senseless force we do not bless
In solemn tone.
When evil comes we do not curse,
Or thank because it is no worse.

When cyclones rend—when lightning
blights,
'Tis naught but fate;
There is no god of wrath who strikes
In heartless hate.
Behind the things that injure man
There is no purpose, thought, or plan.

We waste no time in useless dread,
In trembling fear;
The present lives, the past is dead,
And we are here.
All welcome guests at life's great feast—
We need no help from ghost or priest.

Our life is joyous, jocund, free—
Not one a slave
Who bends the trembling knee,
And seeks to save
A coward soul from future pain;
Not one will cringe or crawl for gain.

The jeweled cup of love we drain,
And friendship's wine
Now swiftly flows in every vein
With warmth divine.
And so we love, and hope, and dream
That in death's sky there is a gleam.

We walk according to our light,
Pursue the path
That leads to honor's stainless height,
Careless of wrath
Or curse of God, or priestly spite,
Longing to know and do the right.

We love our fellow man, our kind,
Wife, child, and friend,
To phantoms we are deaf and blind,
But we extend
The helping hand to the distressed;
By lifting others we are blessed.

Love's sacred flame within the heart
And friendship's glow:
While all the miracles of art
Their wealth bestow
Upon the thrilled and joyous brain,
And present raptures banish pain.

We love no phantom of the skies,
But living flesh,
With passion's soft and soulful eyes,
Lips warm and fresh,
And cheeks with health's red flag
unfurled,
The breathing angels of the world.

The hands that help are better far
Than lips that pray.

Love is the ever gleaming star
That leads the way,
That shines, not on vague worlds of bliss,
But on a paradise in this.

We do not pray, or weep, or wail;
We have no dread,
No fear to pass beyond the veil
That hides the dead.
And yet we question, dream and guess,
But knowledge we do not possess.

Is there beyond the silent night
An endless day?
Is death a door that leads to light?
We cannot say.
The tongueless secret locked in fate
We do not know. We hope and wait.

An Agnostic's Tribute to Ingersoll.

BY J. B. WILSON, M. D.

BRIGHT shone the noonday sun,
Serene were all the ele-
ments, and peaceful the expir-
ing scene. There was no recan-
tation such as has been so frequent-
ly predicted; no despairing cry of a
lost soul; no groans of repentance;
no gnashing of teeth; no remorseful
appeals for mercy; no quaking fear;
no agonizing prayer.

In full realization that death
might come at any moment, with a
high brow and tranquil mind he
awaited the inevitable hour.

As silently as the snow falls in
the deep hush of a still winter
night, as gently as a cradle-lullaby
soothes to quick rest a tired child,
as softly as the dying day blends
with the twilight, death came and
touched his fluttering pulse, and he
was "Better!"

There are those who have de-
clared that his power died with him.
In the light of history, this cannot
be. From the day that Socrates
drank the hemlock on down to the
present age, the best test of a man's
greatness, his most positive assur-
ance of deathless fame, may be
measured by the hate, contumely,
misrepresentation and persecution
with which religion assails him in
life, and traduces his memory in
death.

The truth, the hope of any time
must be sought in the minorities.
In their own day the friends of the
great liberators of the brains of
men were few. They are ornament-
al now, because such men are the
conscience of the world.

By the same measure we may
calculate the fame and immortality
of Robert Ingersoll. There has
been no man of this century that
has dealt the Christian superstition
such deadly blows; no man who
has stood for the known as against
the unknown; for reason as against
blind faith; for fact as against fable
and myth, as he.

And no man of this country has

been more traduced by the clergy,
or will be more traduced than he.
His power therefore will not die
with him. He will live in the love
and veneration of mankind, when
those who now revile him will have
passed to oblivion's peaceful shore.

The contumely and censure which
the clergy bestow upon skeptics,
are invariably equivalent to certifi-
cates of good character. Their op-
position and calumny have ever
proven the brightest tribute that
superstition and ignorance can pay
to virtue and wisdom. Quietly does
the clear light, shining day after
day, refute the ignorant surmise
and malicious tale which has thrown
dirt on a pure character.

Instead of his power dying with
him, he uttered thoughts which
have become the battle-cry of an
epoch. His was the masterful will
which compressed life-thoughts into
pregnant words and phrases, and
sent them ringing through the cen-
turies. Unswerving and heroic, he
took his stand by the altar of truth,
and from that altar neither sophis-
try, fear, calumny, nor hypoc-
risy could expel him. He honored
truth and duty by an allegiance
based on principle. He spoke the
truth with love, that it might fall
upon the hearts of men and subdue
them by its winsome beauty. By
this he awoke religious prejudice,
and gave offense, but if an offense
came out of truth, better is it that
the offense come than that the truth
be concealed.

Every truth is the denial of ac-
cepted error, and its first utterance
is ever met by clamorous opposi-
tion. While truth is the plainest
and sincerest of all things, too often
is it forced to gain recognition in
disguise, and court the world in
masquerade.

But "Truth," in the words of Mil-
ton, "in some age or other will find
her witness, and shall be justified
at last by her own children."

Col. Ingersoll was the age's great-
est witness of truth. I mean its
greatest public proclaimer. The
shafts of malice of the whole theo-
logical world have been hurled
against him, and he withstood
them all. From now on his great-
ness will continue to be measured
by the religious calumny heaped
upon his memory.

Averaged up, and taken from
every point of view, he was the
greatest man of his time. Other
men have been greater in one spe-
cial line of thought, but deficient in
the many qualifications which
round up the fame of Ingersoll.

Edison is great as an inventor,
Reed as a parliamentarian, Clemens
as a wit, Longfellow as a poet,
Grant as a general, and Sherman
as a financier; but their spheres
have been circumscribed by one
faculty.

Blaine and Conkling were great
politicians. They died hated and
admired. Ingersoll, like them,
died equally hated and admired—
but loved. Unlike them, he was
not lifted to fame by the applause
of listening senates, by the praise
which magnifies the importance of
political ascendancy and power,
but by the might of his own intel-
lectuality, by the truth that was in
him, and by the loveableness of his
nature. He was not great like
Bismarck, through employment of
those sly schemes of state by which
the people are tricked, deceived,
robbed, and rendered passive and
submissive to their yokes. Fame
is easy that springs from political
leadership, whether honestly or dis-
honestly acquired. Extravagant is
praise for the statesman, or party
boss, even when merit and justice
are wanting. Magnified beyond
all reason is the greatness and
goodness of the founders of relig-
ions and creeds.

But never magnified is the fame
that springs from civil life; which
springs from the lowly of earth;
which develops with the minority;
which proceeds from the ranks of
despised Freethought; which rests
upon the defense of justice as
against the established order of
things; against hereditary tyranny
and religious degradation. But,
after all, it is the fame that en-
dures. Its very disadvantages
make it the test of true greatness.
It is the fame of the great philoso-
phers and scientists of the earth.

Ingersoll was greater than Bis-
marck—the greatest of statesmen.
Many times more are his followers,
and a million times more will his
memory be cherished and loved.
The one championed freedom of
thought and speech, the other exer-
cised tyrannical authority over the
minds of the people; the one pro-
claimed liberty to all the people of
all the world, the other trampled
upon every human right that king-
craft should be established and re-
cognized as a call from God; the
one was a humanitarian, the other
a despot; the fame of the one rests
upon justice and love, that of the
other upon brutal might.

Greatness lies not alone in being
strong, but in the right use of

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