

TORCH OF REASON.



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

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Robert G. Ingersoll.

AN ODE.

By M. C. O'BYRNE.

SWORD and buckler, shining spear,
Mail and helmet, lay them there
At the warrior's head!
Borne unflinchingly in strife,
Let the plume he loved in life
Grace the warrior dead!

Earth to earth, and dust to dust!
Lo! he needs nor urn nor bust
Nor gilded hatchment; see!
The round world is his monumet,
The mind's free temple, where he rent
The veil of slavery.

He lies in peace, the Theseus of the
West;

He lies there silent, in eternal rest,
Who rested not in time,
While grim Chimæra, with its putrid tail
And fetid breath, polluted every gale,
And fouled the earth with slime.

Thou didst but laugh, Knight of the
Kindly Smile,
And hell rolled back its portals, quenched
ed its fires;

Satan himself enfranchised stood, the
while
The lightened universe itself conspires,
To hail the disburdened day
When superstition's sway
Shall cease, and in the earth and heav-
ens above

Hate and her harpies yield to Peace and
Love.

Thy spear-point touched the idol's brow,
and lo!

The clay-concreted image fell apart;
And all who would might see the frauds
which go

To make a deity, when priestly art
Working on human fears,
Watered by human tears,
Places on high Apollyon, whom the awed
And servile multitude adore as God.

And Liberty, blue-eyed and radiant
came,

Truth's torch-bearer, to light the som-
bre den
Where rack and fagot and the bones
of men

Bore silent witness to the zealot's flame:
She came at thy behest,
For evermore the guest

And guide of man, and linking hands
with thee

Vowed to remain on earth till thought
was free.

And lissom Love, her snowy bosom bared
Revealing founts of gracious nourish-
ment,

With spacious brow, where gentleness
was blent

With warm compassion — she who often
dared

To brave the tyrant and his wrath
defy

When Might and Malice haled the
wretch to die;

She who had stood beside
The cross where Jesus died,

And poured a mother's tears on bleeding
feet;

She who had filled the jeering Roman
street

With sobs of pity when proud Bruno
strode

Toward the Field of Flowers as on the
road

Whose goal was endless fame,
Achieved through scorching flame,

She came, wide-eyed and lissom Love, to
share

With thee and Liberty the fragrant air.

Thus stood the sisters twain
Beside the prison door,
Where bolt and bar and crimson stain
Survived, mute evidence of pain,

By Bigotry brought o'er the main
To curse Columbia's shore.

Now o'er the Western Sea
The sparkling billows hurled
Their silver crests in tuneful glee,
And in their giant minstrelsy
Was heard the chorus of a free,
A liberated world.

Thou art a victor, thou hast conquered
Death

By robbing him of terror; henceforth
Earth

Shall see its children yield their parting
breath

Free from the fears that whilom mar-
red their mirth.

Quenched is the fiery lake
Wherein the undying snake,

Ruthless remorse, was wont to rear his
head;

Gone are the gnashing tooth
And tongue blaspheming: Truth

Hath freed us living, brought us rest
when dead.

And so we hail thee, valorous, gentle
knight!

'Sit tibi terra levis!' Thro' the years
Exulting man shall greet the welcome
light

And smile at Superstition's idle fears.
Living, we loved thee, dead, thy name
shall be

Our watchword in the strife for liberty.
—[Secular Thought.

Tributes to Ingersoll.

INGERSOLL was a big, warm-
hearted poet. In so much
he was common to the world
and to all time. But he was pec-
uliarly the product of his own
country and his own day in the
possession of a certain rugged
independence of mind, coupled
with a strong, ready sense of hu-
mor—a combination that is, we
think, a characteristic growth from
the conditions of American life.
Most quickly felt in him was his
quality of humaneness, his quick
sympathy with the wronged,
whether by men or by conditions.
It was this that fired him, that
would not let him rest while there
was error to be pulled down, or
what seemed like error to his full-
blooded, generous instincts.

There has been so marked a
change in religious belief since he
began his work, that it is hard now
to realize the courage his task first
required. Of late years the novelty
had gone out of much that he said,
for the reason that ministers with-
in the church have come to say
very much the same things; the
difference being that they say them
as the result of scholarly research,
while he said them from an intense-
ly passionate intuition, the fruit of
a kind heart that could not accept
an alleged god's inhumanity to
man. But it should be remember-
ed to his everlasting credit that he
said these things when it required
courage of the highest order to say
them, when religious authority had
but a comparatively little while
ceased to provide for disbelievers in
hell fire a very colorable imitation
of it right here on earth. What part
he really did in the work of hu-
manizing the Christian religion no
one, of course, may say. Yet it must
have been very great. It was often

said in criticism of him that he tore
down and did not build up; and
while this was true in bare fact, it
was not true in effect. For the man
who can tear down one error quite
justifies himself. No one ever lost
a superstition without thereby gain-
ing a truth. He left work to be
done; nevertheless, he should be
reckoned as much a builder as any
foundation layer. The country is
in a good way when it can grow
such men.—[Puck.

The greatest man of the century
is dead. In the death of Robert G.
Ingersoll, America loses her great-
est orator, her greatest poet and
her most profound thinker. He
was a lover of all the arts, a stu-
dent of all the sciences and always
had the courage to express his con-
victions on every subject. Most
men are political or theological
trimmers. Their sails are forever
set to catch the favoring gales of
public opinion. But Mr. Ingersoll
was always true to himself. Every
line written by him, and every sen-
tence spoken, was always permeat-
ed with logic. He was also the
most sympathetic, kindly and lov-
ing of men. His one work entitled
Prose Poems contains more genu-
ine sentiment than all the other
poetry of America combined. Ev-
ery oration of his is a literary gem.
Any of his political speeches is a
text book for an entire campaign.

I had the pleasure of a long ac-
quaintance with Mr. Ingersoll, and
while he was the most democratic
of men, entirely void of ostentation,
I never shook hands with him with-
out feeling that I was in the pres-
ence of an intellectual giant. It
took the world two hundred years
to recognize the wisdom, sentiment
and inspiration of William Shake-
speare. Voltaire is just beginning
to be appreciated by thoughtful
people, and in one hundred years
from now it will be universally ad-
mitted that Robert G. Ingersoll was
the greatest mad of modern times.
Lincoln freed four million human
chattels from physical slavery; In-
gersoll has freed hundreds of mil-
lions from intellectual servitude.—
U. S. Marshal W. H. Grimshaw.

Wonderful as was the great ora-
tor's charm of personality, he will
live in literature independent of
any association with his personal
views or the magnetism of his voice
and oratorical method. His writ-
ings have in them a quality which
will outlive all that is perishable.
It is not too much to say that he is
the Shakespeare of the platform.

It is only a century since Vol-
taire, but long ago his writings were
accorded the place in the world of
letters to which their genius gave
them title, and their controversial
character has ceased to excite either
apprehension or resentment. He is
freely accorded his proper rank in
literature. The genius of Ingersoll
may be slow or swift in finding its
proper and abiding position. The
polemical character of his platform
addresses may delay the recogni-
tion, but it is inevitable that he
should be recognized as the great-
est of prose poets. England was
slow to realize that Shakespeare be-
longed to literature and not merely
to the stage. Even Milton, with all
his appreciation of Shakespeare's
genius, associated him only with
the theatre, having no thought, ap-
parently, of the delight and inspira-
tion to be found in the quiet read-
ing of his dramas. So now the re-
mark is common that to be appre-
ciated Ingersoll must have been
seen and heard. But in point of
fact he is the supreme prose poet of
letters. His flights of imagination
were untrammelled by the rules of
verse. The eagle soared upward
on free wing or swooped downward,
according to the requirements of
the ideas themselves for their most
vivid and effective expression. His
genius had no tether of feet or
meter. Many passages, it is true,
need hardly the changing of a word
to be presentable in faultless blank
verse, but no tricking out of lines
would add to their poetic splendor.
For the most part the sentences are
short and the words simple. If one
would know the range and beauty,
the strength and exquisite delicacy,
of the Anglo-Saxon language one
has only to study the addresses of
Ingersoll. Long after their politi-
cal or controversial purpose has
ceased to interest they will be trea-
sured as classics.—[Inter-Ocean.

Robert G. Ingersoll was one of
the great men of this earth, yet we
have no right to bow down to him
simply because he was great. We
meet to reverence, not the great
orator nor the great lawyer, but the
man, because he used his marvel-
ous power for the good of man.
When all is cleared men are judged
for the purposes which governed
their lives and for the love which
they bore to their fellow-men. In-
gersoll is such a sign of moral great-
ness that all the world should bow
down before him. He gave his life
to the cause of humanity. In the
field and on the rostrum, from be-
ginning to end, he was the friend of
human liberty. Most of the prizes
which men desire passed by him be-
cause of this. Had he been willing
to follow the mob and prostitute his
gifts for hire, as other men have
done, no prize within the gift of the
American people would have been
too high for him.—[C. S. Darrow.