

Tributes to Ingersoll.

Colonel Ingersoll was a strong, independent character, an unique and picturesque personality who by his presence and speech made a marked and widespread impression upon the popular mind. His influence was direct and immediate. His thought did not have to percolate down through several intellectual strata before it reached the masses; for it was plain simple thought, easily grasped and presented in the most attractive manner. Ingersoll was a master of simple, forceful impressive oratory. In thought he dealt with the concrete, not with the abstract, and his talk was full of imagery as well as of emotion. He never tired an audience with abstruse arguments, with labored processes of reaching a conclusion. Indeed he stated what he believed, and then often brought an illustration or told a story to make the opposite appear false and absurd.

Ingersoll was a wonderful word-painter. He was, too, bubbling over with humor, and saw the ludicrous side of every subject first. His wit was as keen as a razor's edge, and he could make his satire stingingly severe. He was full of emotion and sentiment, of poetry and pathos, and he could arouse sympathy and melt his hearers to tears as well as excite them to uncontrollable laughter by amusing anecdotes and funny illustrations.

Ingersoll's strength as an orator was in his wit, his simple, epigrammatic language, his pathos and power of sarcasm, and in keeping easily within the comprehension and on the average intellectual level of his audience. Ingersoll did not have originality of thought which estranges a teacher from the multitude, at first; but originality of expression which attracts, gains an immediate hearing and commands attention.

Ingersoll took common place thought and put it in a dress of his own, which made it appear new. The creation of his mind was always the phraseology. For centuries men had repeated the expression, "From nothing, nothing comes." It was reserved for Ingersoll to say, "Nothing considered in the light of a raw material is a decided failure."

Ingersoll's effectiveness as a popular orator was helped by what, for the philosophic thinker, is a defect—lack of consecutiveness, of continuity, of completeness in the treatment of his subject. Moving rapidly from one subject, or from one part of a subject to another he left no chance for monotony or decline of interest.

Ingersoll, although the son of a Congregational clergyman, was a skeptic and a Freethinker from boyhood. When he was a small lad he shocked his playmates by ex-

pressions of disbelief in regard to orthodox dogmas.

Ingersoll came before the general public as an eloquent and powerful opponent of Christianity as a divine system, and of the Bible as a superhuman production, about twenty-five years ago. He was familiar with the anti-Christian writers, like Voltaire and Paine, and he presented their arguments and objections to the divinity of the Bible with an eloquence which, in its way, perhaps had never been equalled.—[B. F. Underwood.

Ingersoll's brilliant mind never crawled in the dust. Knowing the goddess of doubt to be the herald of truth, he followed her with implicit faith, and made the desert of skepticism blossom as the garden of truth. He drank from every fountain of learning, and died the uncrowned king of orators. He worshipped liberty and revered right. He broadened every church in the land, and did the God of love a service the world can never forget. The God he despised was a god of the dark ages.—[C.A. Wendle.

Passion and prejudice may tend to tarnish the luster of Robert Ingersoll's fame, but in the widening years, when man shall be more sacred than a book, those themes which his genius clothed in an abiding beauty will continue to live and be bright. He was the ideal "plumed knight," the friend of liberty. He wanted to have the slave know that he was also a man, and that the price of his liberty could not be too high. It was he who took Frederick Douglass to his own home in Peoria, when all other doors were turned against him.—[Rev. Reverdy Ransom.

As an earnest believer in the divinity of our Lord, I come to pay my tribute to one who was an inspired believer in the universal brotherhood of man. We are not here to judge of his conscience and creed; we only know of his kindness and his sympathy. As man, citizen, and patriot he dwells in the memory of every man of these times. Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Logan, and Ingersoll are the mighty group of our great dead. All had a friend in Robert G. Ingersoll. He measured manhood by its true worth to its fellows or its country. If he found fault with the existing order of things it was because he loved man more than creed. He was as honest as any man in his sincerity and belief, and for all his many talents his name is written upon the imperishable scroll of time.—[C. P. Johnson.

He was the greatest poet since Shakespeare, and the most powerful champion of the people we have ever had. He had a warm heart where warm hearts are seldom found—beneath popularity and fame.—[John McGovern.

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