

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN
— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIII.—No. 33

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 1933

PRICE THREEPENCE

ROBERT GREEN INGERSOLL

1933 PROVIDES two Centenaries that are of great importance in the history of Free-thought. Robert Green Ingersoll unquestionably the greatest Freethinker, and probably the greatest orator that America has produced, was born six weeks before Charles Bradlaugh, one of the greatest of British Freethinkers of the nineteenth century. Both were big men, physically and mentally. Both brought to the propaganda of an unpopular and — financially — unprofitable cause a power of advocacy that placed them easily at the head of their contemporaries; both carried into their work the same passionate indignation against falsehood and wrong, whether it existed in the Church or in the State, and in their denunciations both displayed that sublime "scorn of consequence" which can exist only with lofty and incorruptible characters. Both also exhibited the simplicity of character that belongs to the naturally great. There was little in the life of either that would have puzzled or perplexed the skilled psychologist. Given the occasion there would be no need for the discerning onlooker to ask, How will this man react? It was plain that he would react with the directness of a great natural force, whatever the consequences might be. I do not mean by simplicity of character that there was nothing in the lives of these two men that would not "intrigue" a scientific biographer. That is present in every life that stands out above the ordinary. As a matter of fact a real life of both has yet to be written. All that has been provided up to

the present is a collection of interesting and important biographical data.

But while there were many resemblances between the life of Bradlaugh and that of Ingersoll, there were very important differences. Bradlaugh's life was one of storm and struggle from the outset. Compelled to leave home at an age when boys nowadays have not completed their ordinary school education, his life was a long fight against poverty and a mass of debt—incurred almost wholly on account of his legal fights—and which was diminished only to be again increased as the ferocity of his enemies drove him to renewed action. He had to fight against the massed force of strongly organized religious bodies, the unscrupulous activities of threatened vested interests, and a torrent of vilification from the general public such as Ingersoll never had to encounter.

Ingersoll's life, on the other hand, was passed in comparative comfort. His profession as a lawyer brought him, one may safely assume, a comfortable income, and that income would have



been very much larger but for his repeated refusal to take up "shady" cases, his readiness to plead unpaid ones, and even to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of some of his clients. The immense audiences he drew—paying audiences—also supplied a good income, although here again, he was at one with Bradlaugh, in his willingness to place the proceeds of his meetings at the service of causes with which he sympathized.

As a speaker and writer there was, again, a cou-

trast between the two men. For a reason to be noted, Ingersoll's writings have a wit and a sparkle, to which Bradlaugh's can make no sustained claim. Bradlaugh's writings are admirably clear, words are not wasted, and that bane of so many writers and speakers—long and out-of-the-way words—is carefully avoided. I heard neither of them speak, so that my impressions of them both as speakers—based on reading their speeches and upon the testimony of listeners, have at least the quality of impartiality. In Bradlaugh there was the speaker whose vivid words, born of the occasion and the intense earnestness of the man, became a living flame to those who listened. Bradlaugh's speeches bear the stamp of impromptu deliverances, whatever may have been the thought given to their substance before delivery. He was one of those born orators who could lift a multitude above itself and rouse frantic enthusiasm in those who listened.

On the other hand Ingersoll's orations are as obviously written ones. That is one reason why they read better than do many of Bradlaugh's speeches. Ingersoll's lectures were for the most part carefully written out and as carefully delivered. They produced their effect by a grace and a wit that were not Bradlaugh's. Ingersoll's oratory was no less forceful in its effect on an American audience. There is ample testimony here, as some testimonies we shall cite, prove; but I question whether it would have been quite so effective with an English one. He played on his hearers as a performer plays on an instrument, and could have them roaring with laughter one moment and almost in tears the next. Quite apart from his anti-religious lectures there is on record one case in which the judge debarred the jury from returning its verdict until the next day because of the effect his address to them had produced.

His lectures sparkled with wit, wisdom, and profound truths expressed in an epigram. I do not think that one can find many pages in the twelve volumes of Ingersoll's writings and speeches in which one fails to find at least one, and usually several, quotable passages that strike the man of real understanding with their force and completeness. He was so witty, and expressed profound truths so simply and so easily, that dullards, particularly of the educated and learned variety, have quite failed to detect the wide reading and the reliable generalizations they offered. To this class a truth must be expressed in involved and tortuous language if it is to carry weight, real learning can only be shown by laboured sentences, while a university degree carries with it the indisputable warranty of intellectual distinction. But the man who thinks clearly can express himself clearly; with the muddled thinker his language follows the nature of his thought. The man who is capable of genuinely deep thinking will express himself with the directness that is the prerogative of natural genius. The great writers, the great speakers, the great thinkers are almost invariably those who write and speak with simplicity. G. W. Foote, one of the most polished speakers and one of the best judges of literature that the Free-thought Party in this country has ever had, said of Ingersoll:—

Ingersoll's utterances were far more than oratory. They did not merely stimulate his auditors. They were compacts of wisdom, wit and fancy. They stand the test of reading, and the sterner test of re-reading. They were never burdened with what fools call learning. He was rather anxious to convey knowledge than to show how much he knew. He was quintessential. He grasped results instead of losing himself in the processes . . . His mental wealth was inexhaustible. The happy illustration was always ready, the smiling sarcasm and the

demure irony slipped in and out unexpectedly, the pathos was there to touch with delicate hand the fountain of tears, the poet's fancy was at hand to paint pictures and pageants, and over all was the wizardry of strong, beautiful and simple speech. It was not for nothing that Ingersoll was a life-long student and passionate lover of Shakespeare.

But if Shakespeare had written to-day I am quite sure that many of our "learned fools" would have brushed him on one side because his words were common ones and he did not decorate the bottoms of his pages with yards of references to ponderous works. I do not think that the world has ever been burdened with an absurdity that has not been ushered into the world by one learned fool and kept in being by a society of his fellows.

Just consider one or two out of hundreds of selections that could be made to illustrate the truth of what has been said. How many men are there who could keep their reading and study in the background and merely permit it to find expression in this summary of the kind of men that Voltaire met while in England:—

He met Pope, a most wonderful verbal mechanic, a maker of artificial flowers, very much like natural ones, except that they lack perfume and the seeds of suggestion. He made the acquaintance of Young, who wrote the *Night Thoughts*—Young, a fine old hypocrite, with a virtuous imagination, a gentleman who electioneered with the King's mistress that he might be made a bishop. He met and became acquainted with Chesterfield—all manners and no man; with Thomson, author of *The Seasons*, who loved to see the sun rise in bed and visit the country in the town; with Swift, whose poisoned arrows were then festering in the flesh of Mr. Bull—Swift, as wicked as he was witty, and as heartless as he was humorous—Swift, a Dean and a devil; with Congreve, whom Addison thought as great as Shakespeare, and who never wrote but one great line—"The cathedral-looking tranquillity."

How many could thus briefly sum up so many well known men? But how can one expect those critics who are all books and no brains to appreciate rapiers thrusts of this kind.

And who but a poet who had seen and understood could write this of the obscure processes of the human brain? :—

The dark continent of motive and desire has never been explored. In the brain—that wondrous world with one inhabitant—there are recesses dim and dark, treacherous sands and dangerous shores, where scintillating sirens tempt and fade; streams that rise in unknown lands from hidden springs; strange seas with ebb and flow of tides; resistless billows urged by storms of flame, profound and hidden depths hidden by mists of dreams. Jungles where passion's tigers crouch; and skies of cloud and blue, where fancies fly with painted wings that dazzle and mislead; and the poor sovereign of this pictured world is led by old desires and ancient hates, and stained by crimes of many vanished years, and pushed by hands that long ago were dust, until he feels like some bewildered slave that mockery has throned and crowned.

Or how better can one describe the conditions that make for compromise:—

A brazen falsehood and a timid truth are the parents of compromise.

Or one aspect of the philosophy of Determinism:—

To the extent that we have wants we are not free; to that we do not have wants we do not act.

Or this of blasphemy:—

Blasphemy is the word that the majority hisses into the ear of the few. After every argument of the Church has been answered, has been refuted, then the Church cries "blasphemy!" Blasphemy is what

an old mistake says of a newly-discovered truth. Blasphemy is what a withered last year's leaf says to this year's bud. "Blasphemy" is the bulwark of religious prejudice. Blasphemy is the breastplate of the heartless, the petrified, the orthodox.

Or note these aphorisms:—

For the most part, colleges are places where pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed.

Vice lives either before love is born, or after it is dead.

We rise by raising others—and he who stoops above the fallen stands erect.

The testimony of the (Christian) Fathers is without the slightest value. They believed everything—they examined nothing. They received as a waste-basket receives.

When the poor combine it is a "conspiracy." If they act in concert it is a "mob." If they defend themselves it is "treason."

All reformers are simply disturbers of the peace.

It was the Ass that saw the angel when the prophet's eye was dim.

I must stop, but not for want of material. It is all very unorthodox for a man to express himself in this way. No man is justified in saying so much in so few words. There is no wonder that at this marriage of wisdom to wit all the religious and many of the non-religious numbskulls rose in their massed anger to forbid the banns. Truth ought not to be permitted expression save in many jointed words, or guinea volumes. If truth can become as terse and as attractive as this, what may not happen?

EARLY YEARS.

I HAVE said that Ingersoll lived on the whole a comfortable life, and a comfortable life offers little spectacular material to a biographer. There are hosts of stories of his good nature, of his ready humanity, of his witty replies, of the affection he inspired among even those who differed from him in opinion, when they were not of the deeply religious kind to whom the very existence of an "Infidel" is a kind of an impeachment of the good sense of God Almighty. In the main the life of Ingersoll is an account of the causes and men he helped, and the ideas he attacked or defended.

Robert Green Ingersoll was born in the little village of Dresden in the State of New York, on August 11, 1833. Like so many prominent Freethinkers his family was extremely pious, and orthodox Christianity at close quarters does not always commend itself to warm-hearted and critical youth. The elder Ingersoll was, first a Congregationalist, then a hard-baked Presbyterian, naturally a good-hearted man but able under the influence of his creed to send myriads to hell, even while he was ready to shed tears on their departure. There is a comment upon him, made by an old servant who was obviously quite innocent of the real significance of her diagnosis, but which is none the less enlightening. And it would fit very many besides John Ingersoll. "He's too good a man," she said. "He's forever wasting God's time and his own with words and hullyballoos. Now what he needs, though don't be telling it to him, is a quarter of rum and a pipe and a fine big woman to hold his hand for him." There is far more insight into the springs of action shown here than is displayed in many a learned treatise.

But in spite of the natural kindness and sense of justice of John Ingersoll there were present the same repressive features that have robbed the lives of so many generations of children of the happiness that should be theirs by inalienable right. There is an echo of this in one of his son's lectures:—

In the olden days they thought some days were too good for a child to enjoy himself. When I was a

boy, Sunday was considered altogether too holy to be happy in. Sunday used to commence when the sun went down on Saturday night. We commenced at that time for the purpose of getting a good ready, and when the sun fell below the horizon on Saturday evening, there was a darkness fell upon the house ten thousand times deeper than that of night. Nobody said a pleasant word; nobody laughed; nobody smiled; the child that looked the sickest was regarded as the most pious. That night you could not crack even hickory nuts. If you were caught chewing gum, it was only another evidence of the depravity of the human heart. It was an exceedingly solemn night. Dyspepsia was in the very air you breathed. Everybody looked sad and mournful.

On Sunday morning the solemnity had simply increased. Then we went to Church. The minister was in a pulpit about twenty feet high, with a little sounding board above him, and he commenced at "firstly" and went on to "twenty thirdly." . . . After the sermon we had an intermission. Then came the catechism with the chief end of man. We went through with that. We sat in a row with our feet coming to within six inches of the floor. The minister asked us if we knew that we all deserved to go to hell, and we all answered "Yes." Then we were asked if we were willing to go to hell if it was God's will, and every little liar shouted, "Yes" . . . Sometimes they would take us out to the graveyard to cheer us up a little. It did cheer me. When I looked at the sunken tombs, and read the half effaced inscriptions through the moss and forgetfulness it was a great comfort. The reflection came to my mind that the observance of the Sabbath could not last always.

This experience was duplicated in millions of homes until that great liberator, Freethought, came to the rescue. The children of to-day with their games and laughter on Sunday little know how much they have to thank the brave Freethinking pioneers, who, if they had done nothing else, have helped to rob childhood of the terrible fears with which Christian theology had surrounded it. There is surely no crime in the calendar greater than that which robs a human being's childhood.

The following from a letter written to his brother in Vermont (1864) may be also taken here as an illustration of the effect on his mind of the religious doctrines of the New England, where his father's religious beliefs received their most characteristic expression. It is also an example of Ingersoll's power of word display:—

I am glad that you are enjoying yourself, that you are now having a fine opportunity to see the land of your forefathers, that you have a chance of getting bespattered with the good old Puritan mud. I have always had the idea that everything in that country looked prim, pious and prayerful, white tombstones, white fences, white houses, neat, parsimonious, particular, exact, egotistic, energetic, nervous, nasal, neuralgic, regular, reasoning, arguing, irrepressible, pertinacious, impertinent, smart, spry, cool, calculating, whittling, theological, fanatical, mathematical, problematical, decisive, industrious, frugal, slanderous, backbiting, fault-finding, stingy, generous, monomaniacal, literary, bookwise, practically foolish, oracular, owlsh, parrotty, everything good strangely mixed with mean and bad, a hotch-potch of Christ and Mammon, a Salmagundi of Heaven, Hell, and Plymouth Rock and a Ducking-Stool of deified John Browns and burned witches—of polyglot Bibles and illustrated Fanny Hills—but New England with all thy faults, as the mother of Education, the cradle of liberty, the Atlas of the Nineteenth Century, we love and honour thee still.

But apart from the dislike to his father's religious opinions, and apart from the father's pain at the lack of religious response evidenced by his son, there appears to have been no undue unpleasantness in the

home circle. Robert Ingersoll's religious enemies, with that disregard of the truth which has been so prominent and so permanent a feature of Christianity since its earliest years, attempted to put his religious heresy down to the harsh treatment of his father. That is a favourite explanation with Christians of the existence of prominent Freethinkers. Presumably it serves to hide the fact that it was not the harsh treatment of Christians that is responsible for the heresies of men like Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, but the discovery of what a false and vile thing Christianity is. And Christian advocacy has always a larger toleration for the bad Freethinker than for the good one. The former may serve, to the unthinking, to illustrate the lesson of how bad men become when they let go of the cross. But what the devil are they to do with the latter? Christian ingenuity has elaborately drawn up a chart of all the villainies the Freethinker ought to commit. If he does commit only a tithe of them, then Christianity is so far justified. But if the Freethinker is not merely as good as the Christian, but better, the Christian conscience has no place and no tolerance for him.

But against this story of his father's intolerance having driven him to unbelief, Ingersoll always protested in the most vigorous manner. In a letter to a friend, he said:—

The story that the unkindness of my father drove me into Infidelity is simply an orthodox lie. The bigots, unable to meet my arguments, are endeavouring to dig open the grave and calumniate the dead. This they are willing to do in defence of their infamous dogmas . . . My father was a kind and loving man. He loved his children tenderly and intensely. He had one misfortune and that was his religion. He believed the Bible, and in the shadow of that frightful book he passed his life. He believed in the truth of its horrors, and for years, thinking of the fate of the human race, his eyes were filled with tears . . . My father was infinitely better than the religion he preached. And these stories about his unkindness are maliciously untrue.

Ingersoll always referred to his father in terms of affection and respect. "He was," said the son, "grand enough to say to me that I had the same right to my opinion as he had to his. He was great enough to tell me to read the Bible for myself, and if after reading it I concluded it was not the Word of God, that it was my duty to say so."

Ingersoll was great enough to realize that the faults of his father belonged to his religion. His virtues were his own.

But whatever the cause it is certain that with the two brothers, between whom an unusually strong bond of affection seems to have existed, there was a very early revolt against the religious opinions of their parent, and by the time that Robert was fourteen this revolt had assumed a definite form. It was not yet the reasoned revolt of later years, but rather a protest of a healthy human nature against the vicious and inhuman character of Christian teaching, and, curiously enough, it received a more definite form, not through reading reasoned criticisms of Christian teaching, but through a chance discovery of the poems of Burns, and later of Shakespeare. These opened a new world to him, a world in which the hideous doctrines of Calvinism had no place whatever. He has himself described the burst of emotional salvation he experienced on reading the works of these and other poets. A whole new world alive with the worth and possibilities of mankind was opened to him. To the end of his days he was in the habit of recurring over and over again to the debt he owed Burns and Shakespeare with something of the passion that a Roman Catholic would refer to the favours of his patron saint.

For a time "Bob" wandered around, and, finally, thanks to a little friendly influence, was appointed teacher at a school—a small log cottage to which the surrounding farmers sent their children. But he seems to have been original in his methods of teaching. For one thing the children enjoyed being taught, and that was not a common feature in the schools of about eighty years ago. In the next place, on one memorable occasion when the parents came explaining that they could not afford the school fees, this unusual kind of teacher gave a written discharge for their payments, stipulating only that they were to send their children regularly. But his severance from the school came from another cause. In the "hotel" in which he lived there stayed a number of ministers and others who had come to the town to attend a religious conference. He listened in quietness to their discussions, and the followers of Jehovah, with the usual inquisitiveness of their kind, were anxious to discover if the young man's opinions on religion were sound. For a long time he refused to be drawn. Then came a question:—

What do you think of baptism, Mr. Ingersoll?

The reply came:—

Well, I'll tell you. With soap, baptism is a good thing.

That reply, duly reported to his superiors, finished his career as a teacher. The next day brought the members of the school-board to his school, and he was dismissed—without the payment of the money due to him.

On the advice of his brother, who was already studying law, Ingersoll determined on following his example, and in about a year presented himself for examination, and was duly passed. The examination does not appear to have been of a very trying character, and all that can be said about it is that Ingersoll passed all there was to pass. We shall return to his legal experiences later, but it is necessary to remark here that within a very few years after the Civil War had ended, he had resumed private life. No lawyer practising in the United States was more famous, or had won greater respect from his brother lawyers or from the general public than Ingersoll. His oratory was as compelling at the bar as it was on the platform, and his scrupulous fairness towards witnesses, his remarkable acumen in drawing out the real issues of a case made him one of the foremost advocates in the States.

Just a few months before his marriage he had been commissioned Colonel of the 11th Illinois Cavalry, and a few days after his marriage, on February 27, 1862, his regiment marched out to take part in the war between the North and South. It is necessary to touch upon his military experiences because of the lies that have been told about him in this country, but hardly so broadly in the United States. The religious liar is generally pretty careful of his own skin or pocket. It was said by Christian Evidence speakers and by Christian Evidence publications in this country that Ingersoll never was in the army, or that he was never in the fighting forces, or that he ran away in the only action in which he ever took part, or that he was taken prisoner after surrendering to a boy belonging to the Confederate army. Readers had their choice of which tale they cared to believe, and the Christian liar knows his audience so well that he does not hesitate to offer it half-a-dozen stories at once, any one of which contradicts the rest. Ingersoll knew this type of person well, and he has marked both the lie and the liar in the following:—

Millions of people are directly interested in the false. They live by lying. To deceive is the business of their lives. Truth is a cripple; lies have

wings. It is almost impossible to overtake and kill and bury a lie. If you do, someone will erect a monument over the grave, and the lie is born again in an epitaph.

The truth is that Ingersoll took part in some of the bloodiest battles of the war, and his surrender was to General Forrest, one of the veterans of the opposing forces. While a prisoner he was treated with the utmost respect, and having given his parole, mixed freely with his captors. It was this that provided a very striking instance of Ingersoll's power as a speaker, which I give at length because it is not, I believe, very generally known. A large company of officers and men under General Forrest's command had gathered in a large room one evening, and Major Rambeau, in whose charge he had been given after capture, asked him to make a speech to the company. Smilingly, Ingersoll consented:—

He talked as a friend talks to friends, though to Forrest's Tennessee Tigers the blood of his ilk was as sweet to draw as vintage wine. The men who stood about him had proved themselves in battle far more savage foemen than those slave-owning aristocrats who formed the Confederate armies in the East. For these men had never owned slaves nor thought to own them, so frugal and sparing of abundance were the soils of their farms . . . The uniform that Bob wore typified for them the tyranny iniquitously vested in Washington . . . They craved liberty and were fighting for liberty, and Bob, in a speech he was never to surpass, pictured to them a liberty which they were soiling and destroying, the personal liberty of men no less human than themselves. He indulged in no oratorical effects . . . he spoke simply but with consummate art, and the men before him found to their chagrin that tears were in their eyes and to their astonishment, cheers awakening in their throats. Weeping, they cursed slavery, and cheering, they seemed to renounce their allegiance to their cause. Forrest, beyond the ring of the audience, beheld his cured-in-gunpowder veterans hysterical as girls. With a bellow calculated to obscure the fact that his own eyes were wet, he burst suddenly through the ranks of listeners, "Here, Ingersoll, stop that speech and I'll exchange you for a government mule."

I wonder how many speeches have been delivered in such circumstances and with such results!

What his own brother-soldiers thought of him may be gathered from a few passages of a resolution passed by the members of his own regiment on hearing the news of his death:—

"Robert G. Ingersoll is dead. The brave soldier, the unswerving patriot, the true friend and the distinguished colonel of that old regiment of which we have the honour to be a remnant, sleeps his last sleep . . . The world honours him as the prince of orators in his generation; as its emancipator from manacles and dogmas; as a philosopher, for his aid in beating back the ghosts of superstition; and we, in addition to these, for our personal knowledge of him as a man, a soldier, and a friend.

We knew him as the general public did not. We knew him in military camp where he reigned an uncrowned king, ruling with that bright sceptre of human benevolence which death alone could wrest from his hand. We had the honour to obey, as we could, his calm but resolute commands at Shiloh, at Corinth, and at Lexington, knowing as we did, that he would never command a man to go where he would not dare to lead the way."

INGERSOLL THE LAWYER.

At the age of twenty-two Ingersoll qualified for practice at the bar. With his superb eloquence, his unrivalled power of winning the sympathy of even hostile audiences, his influence over both Judge and Jury was such that those to whom he was opposed dreaded

his presence, those for whom he pleaded depended upon him with a faith that was almost pathetic. Such power in the hands of an unscrupulous man would have been little short of a national danger. In Ingersoll's hands it was an instrument wholly for good. Shady cases he left alone, unless it happened that he was keenly interested in defending the weaker side. His practice was large, and could have been much larger. Some of the "roads" ("circuits," we should call them in this country) he virtually monopolised. He held a brief in many of the famous cases of his time and in most of them achieved a notable triumph. A description of many of these trials would be without interest to British readers; at any rate usefully to understand them would require a more detailed account of their nature than our space allows. But his power over a jury was well illustrated in the following. It was a case in which during a quarrel one farmer by an accidental blow had killed another. Ingersoll was convinced that the verdict of wilful murder was unjustifiable:—

Upon the day of the trial the jury, bronzed citizens, equipped each of them with that type of frozen countenance known as the poker face, seemed of the opinion that the case of the prosecution lacked a single flaw, but when Bob arose, that tide, in the drift of which was carried a man's life, began to turn. Almost leaning against the jury box, he painted to the men within it such a picture of the causes of the crime, of its justification and of the wife and children of the prisoner waiting, torn by agony, for his return, that the twelve men who composed the jury were without a single exception reduced to tears which, in an effort to conceal, they hurriedly but ineffectually assimilated with their tongues.

Mr. Ingersoll of Peoria continued as though quite oblivious of the lamentable spectacle he was making of these respectable, leather-tough prairie men. "Will you send this man home to his wife, to his children, waiting for him, waiting at the door with hearts torn with . . ."

The foreman of the jury, digging into his jeans for a red cotton handkerchief the size of a small table cloth, could bear no more. "Yes, Rob, we will," he said and straightway disappeared beneath the bandana.

Ingersoll sat down. His case was won. The prosecuting lawyer said afterwards, privately, that it was a crime to be able to treat twelve big babies in the way Ingersoll had treated the jury, but as he himself is said to have cried with the rest, his comment carried but little conviction. It is small wonder that in the State of Illinois he won 99 per cent of his cases, and American writers assert that in his day he was the most famous lawyer in the United States.

In 1866 Ingersoll was appointed Attorney-General for Illinois, and later it was proposed that he should stand for the post of Governor of the State. But it was said that "Bob" was an Atheist, so a deputation waited upon him to settle the matter. The interview is interesting enough to be described at some length:—

Since his return from the war he had made speeches in various sections of the State and had mobilized against him the entire clergy and a number of that class of orthodox laymen who pant ever for a crusade. So widely had he become known as a Rationalist that those members of the convention engaged in advocating his nomination had sent a committee to make sure that his beliefs were not of an order calculated to dismay the voting population of Illinois. Bob was sitting in his office when his friends found him, with a large cigar and the second act of *Henry the Fifth*.

"Good morning, boys."

"Good morning, Bob."

"Bob, here's the whole story. We've been sent here as a committee while the whole damn convention

adjourns to find out how much of a heretic you are . . . If Palmer does what he says you'll be nominated hands down, but can you be elected if all the hard-shells in the State know you're an Atheist? Now we know you, and what you believe or don't believe don't make a damn bit of difference to us, but if you make a public claim to being a heretic that's the ace card for the Democratic nominee. You know Jack Eden as well as we do, and if he thought it would make him Governor he'd go to Church once a day and all day Sunday. But he couldn't win any way at all unless you elect to run on a to-hell-with-God ticket . . . Now what do you say? . . .

Bob took up a pen, and drew a sheet of paper toward him. "Just a minute." He wrote busily . . .

The Republican State Convention, sweating and in shirt sleeves, hearkened attentively as the spokesman of the Committee sent to sound out the Honourable Robert G. Ingersoll, read his report. Having, in shaking accents, announced that he would read aloud the Attorney General's reply to the questions asked him, he secured with his right thumb a firm hold on his braces and commenced . . .

"Gentlemen, I am not asking to be Governor of Illinois . . . I have in my composition that which I have declared to the world as my views upon religion. My position I would not, under any circumstances, not even for my life, seem to renounce. I would rather refuse to be President of the United States than to do so. My religious belief is my own. It belongs to me, not to the State of Illinois. I would not smother one sentiment of my heart to be the emperor of the round globe."

Ingersoll was not nominated. There is no doubt that if he had "trimmed" he could have held any office in the United States. Moncure Conway said that but for his heresy nothing could have prevented his becoming President.

One cannot forbear contrasting this example of Ingersoll's with that of our own politicians who for the sake of election or office, or for fear of offending the public, remain silent as to their real views, ape the language of the religious believer, hunt about for some non-committal name for themselves, or even attend Church. Ingersoll preferred to retain his own self-respect rather than to sacrifice it on the altar of social popularity or political or professional appointment.

This expression of personal independence was a frequent note in Ingersoll's speech. Take, for example, this from the lecture on *The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child* :—

I have made up my mind to say my say. I shall do it kindly, distinctly; but I am going to do it. I know there are thousands of men who substantially agree with me, but who are not in a condition to express their thoughts. They are poor, they are in business; and they know that should they tell their honest thought, persons will refuse to patronize them—to trade with them; they wish to get bread for their little children; they wish to have homes and the comforts of life. Every such person is a certificate of the meanness of the community in which he resides. And yet I do not blame these people for not expressing their thought. I say to them: "Keep your ideas to yourself; feed and clothe the ones you love, I will do the talking for you. The Church cannot touch, cannot crush, cannot starve, cannot stop or stay me; I will express your thoughts."

The trial of most importance to Freethinkers, in which Ingersoll engaged, is that of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy.

C. B. Reynolds was an ex-clergyman, who for some years acted as an accredited Freethought missionary. In the course of his wanderings he visited the towns of Boonton and Morristown, both within about thirty

miles of New York, and both within the State of New Jersey. During the visit to Boonton a tent which he used for lecturing purposes was wrecked and Mr. Reynolds narrowly escaped with his life. An action against the town for damages was entered, which was replied to by a charge of Blasphemy in the two towns named. The trial hung fire for about six months, with the usual result that the substance of the charges received a far greater publicity than it could have got by ordinary propaganda. But bigotry, above all things, never learns from experience. It may be impossible for religious bigotry to act, but never in the world's history has it remained quiet when the opportunity for action presented itself. At the actual trial the Morristown charge was withdrawn by the prosecution, leaving that of Boonton to stand. The indicted passages were contained in a pamphlet entitled *Blasphemy and the Bible*, and the passages selected from the pamphlet were taken from an article which appeared in the Christmas number of the *Freethinker*, immediately after its editor, G. W. Foote, had been released from twelve months imprisonment.

Colonel Ingersoll not merely undertook the defence, but he paid all the expenses, and at the end of the trial paid the fine that was inflicted.

Ingersoll's speech took three hours in its delivery. The sensation created by the trial and by Ingersoll's defence was great. The speech was reported throughout the United States, for to do the American press justice, there is not practised with it the cowardly policy of silence that is so well understood in this country. In England the evil of suppressing newspapers is realized. But the papers themselves do the work of suppressing any news that constitutes a direct attack on established religious beliefs.

Ingersoll's speech is too closely knit to lend itself to quotation. In the main it took the line of demonstrating the inherent absurdity of "blasphemy," and an earnest and impassioned plea for liberty of thought. It was without the formal legal arguments that would have played so large a part in an English trial and which serve so largely to give to absurdity a pseudo-dignity. I have already given his description of Blasphemy—taken from the speech at this trial. Here is a companion passage, the only criticism of which can be made is the use of the word "blasphemy":—

What is real blasphemy? I will give you a definition.

To live on the unpaid labour of other men; that is blasphemy.

To enslave your fellow-man, to put chains upon his body; that is blasphemy.

To enslave the minds of men, to put manacles on the mind; that is blasphemy.

To deny what you believe to be true, to admit to be true what you believe to be a lie; that is blasphemy.

To strike the weak and unprotected, in order that you may gain the applause of the ignorant and superstitious mob; that is blasphemy.

To persecute the intelligent few at the command of the ignorant many; that is blasphemy.

To forge chains, to build dungeons, for your honest fellow-men; that is blasphemy.

To pollute the souls of children with the dogma of eternal pain; that is blasphemy.

To violate your conscience, that is blasphemy.

The jury that gives an unjust verdict, and the judge who pronounces an unjust sentence, are blasphemers.

The man who bows to public opinion against his better judgment and against his honest conviction is a blasphemers.

I have, I think, read almost every trial for blasphemy that has taken place in this country, and many of those that have occurred elsewhere. Ingersoll's speech is the most human of them all, and admirably calculated to achieve its end. Here are one or two passages, weakened somewhat by their separation from the whole:—

I deny the right of any man, of any number of men, of any Church, of any State, to put a padlock on the lips—to make the tongue a convict. I passionately deny the right of the Herod of authority to kill the children of the brain. . . .

For thousands of years people have been trying to force other people to think their way. Did they succeed? No. Will they succeed? No. Why? Because brute force is no argument. You can stand with the lash over a man, or you can stand by the prison door, or beneath the gallows, or by the stake, and say to this man; "Recant or the lash descends, the prison door is locked upon you, the rope is put about your neck, or the torch is given to the faggot." And so the man recants. Is he convinced? Not at all. Have you produced a new argument? Not the slightest. And yet the ignorant bigots of this world have been trying for thousands of years to rule the minds of men by brute force. They have endeavoured to improve the mind by torturing the flesh, to spread religion with the sword and torch. They have tried to convince their brothers by putting their feet in iron boots; by putting fathers, mothers, patriots, philosophers, and philanthropists in dungeons. And what was the result? Are we any nearer thinking alike than we were then? . . .

Suppose that we put Mr. Reynolds in gaol. The argument has not been sent to gaol. That is still going the rounds, free as the winds. Suppose you keep him at hard labour for a year; all the time that he is there hundreds and thousands of people will be reading some account, or some fragment of this trial. There is the trouble. If you could only imprison an argument, then intellectual tyranny might succeed. If you could only take an argument, and put a striped suit of clothes on it; if you could only take a good, splendid, shining fact, and lock it up in some dungeon of ignorance, so that its light would never again enter the mind of man, then you might succeed in stopping human progress. . . .

If another man has not a right to think, you have not even the right to think that he thinks wrong. If every man has not the right to think, the people of New Jersey had no right to make a statute or to adopt a Constitution, no Jury has the right to render a verdict, and no Court to pass a sentence.

During the adjournment, after Ingersoll's speech had concluded, he received warm congratulations on his effort, one man remarking, "Colonel Ingersoll, I am a Presbyterian parson, but I must say that was the noblest speech in defence of liberty I ever heard." And during the interval Ingersoll told the Judges, "You had better discharge Reynolds, or I will appeal and try the case again and convert the whole town." One would not have been surprised had he gone a long way towards fulfilling his threat.

In spite of Ingersoll's eloquence a verdict of guilty was returned, but it says much for his efforts that the punishment was a fine of twenty-five dollars, with fifty dollars costs, which Ingersoll paid at once, out of his own pocket.

Just about three years before G. W. Foote received in this country a sentence of twelve months imprisonment. Twelve months in England to vindicate the character of God Almighty; in America, only twenty-five dollars (£5). It looks as though what Ingersoll might have called the god-stock had fallen in value in the interval. Or perhaps it is just a question of geography. Many a man has been fined more for insulting a policeman.

THE WIZARD OF WORDS.

I HAVE said that in all probability Ingersoll was the greatest orator that America has produced. One example has been cited in the effect produced on the soldiers who had captured him, and scores of other examples might be given. More than once a political convention was adjourned in order that delegates might have time to recover from the influence of his speech. Judges have adjourned the court in order that juries might have time to recover from the spell Ingersoll had cast over them and to consider their verdict with cool heads. The eloquence of his writings on religion is well known to English readers, but his speeches on other subjects, political, literary, social, artistic, commemorative, are not so well known, although happily, these are preserved in the twelve volumes of the handsome Dresden edition. No matter what the occasion there was the same blend of profound thought clothed in graceful, melodious speech. A great many of his speeches are compacts of prose poems, and competent judges have actually rendered them as such. Here are two specimens which are, so far as the language is concerned, absolutely unaltered. They are merely cut up into the appropriate form. The first is from the lecture on Shakespeare:—

He walked the ways of mighty Rome,
And saw great Cæsar with his legions in the field.
He stood with vast and motley throngs
And watched the triumphs given to victorious men,
Followed by uncrowned kings, the captured hosts, and all the
spoils of ruthless war.
He heard the shout that shook the Coliseum's roofless walls,
When from the reeling gladiator's hand the short sword fell,
While from his bosom gushed the stream of wasted life.

And this, again from the same lecture:—

He knew the thrills and ecstasies of love,
The savage joys of hatred and revenge.
He heard the hiss of envy's snakes
And watched the eagles of ambition soar.
There was no hope that did not put its star above his head—
No fear he had not felt—
No joy that had not shed its sunshine on his face.

Scores of similar examples may be found in almost any part of his writings.

How many have expressed in as beautiful language the thoughts he uttered at the grave of Horace Seaver?—

He has lived his life. We should shed no tears except the tears of gratitude. We should rejoice that he lived so long. In nature's course his time had come. The measure of his life was full. When the day is done, when the work of a life is finished, the tired labourer should fall asleep. To outlive usefulness is to die a double death. "Let me not live after my flame lacks oil, to be the snuff of younger spirits." When the old oak is visited by Spring, when light and rain no longer thrill—it is not well to stand leafless, desolate, and alone. It is better far to fall where Nature softly covers all with woven moss and creeping vine. We stand upon this verge of crumbling time. We love, we hope, we disappear. Again we mingle with the dust and the "knot intricate" forever falls apart. But this we know. A noble life enriches all the world. Horace Seaver lived for others. He accepted toil and hope deferred. Poverty was his portion. Like Socrates he did not seek to adorn his body, but rather his soul, with the jewels of charity, modesty, courage, and above all, with a love of liberty.

Or this on Wagner, delivered at a New York Music Club:—

When I listen to the music of Wagner, I see pictures, forms, glimpses of the perfect, the wave of a breast, the glance of an eye. I am in the midst of great galleries. Before me are passing endless panoramas. I see vast landscapes with valleys of verdure and vine, with soaring crags, snow-crowned. I am on the wide seas, where countless billows burst into the white caps of joy. I am in the depths of caverns roofed with mighty crags, while through some rent I see the eternal stars. In a moment the music becomes a river of melody, flowing through some wondrous land; suddenly it falls into strange chasms, and the mighty cataract is changed to seven-hued foam. With Wagner's music all the instruments are transfigured. They seem to utter the sounds that they have been longing to utter. The horns run riot; the drums and cymbals join in the general joy; the old bass-violos are alive with passion; the 'cellos throb with love; the violins are filled with a divine fury, and the notes rush out as eager for the air as pardoned prisoners for the roads and fields. Wagner was a sculptor, a painter, in sound. When he died, the greatest fountain of melody that has ever enchanted the world, ceased.

Or, on an entirely different theme, from an address to the Thirteen Club:—

I suppose that the superstition most prevalent with public men is the idea that they are of great importance to the public. As a matter of fact, public men—that is to say, men in office—reflect the average intelligence of the people, and no more. A public man to be successful need not assert anything unless it is exceedingly popular. And he need not deny anything unless everyone is against it. Usually he has to be like the centre of the earth—drawing all things his way, without weighing anything himself.

Finally, this on a visit to Napoleon's tomb:—

A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—a magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a deity dead—and gazed upon the sarcophagus of rare and nameless marble, where rest at last the ashes of that restless man. I leaned over the balustrade and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. I saw him walking upon the banks of the Seine, contemplating suicide. I saw him at Toulon—I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris—I saw him at the head of the army of Italy—I saw him crossing the bridge of Lodi with the tricolor in his hand—I saw him in Egypt in the shadows of the pyramids—I saw him conquer the Alps and mingle the eagles of France with the eagles of the crags. I saw him at Marengo, at Ulm and Austerlitz. I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow

and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legions like winter's withered leaves. I saw him at Leipsic in defeat and disaster—driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris—clutched like a wild beast—banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where Chance and Fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea.

I thought of the orphans and widows he had made—of the tears that had been shed for his glory, and of the only woman who ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said, I would rather have been a French peasant

and worn wooden shoes. I would rather have lived in a hut with a vine growing over the door, and the grapes growing purple in the amorous kisses of the autumn sun. I would rather have been that poor peasant, with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky—with my children upon my knees and their arms about me—I would rather have been that man, and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that Imperial impersonation of force and murder known as Napoleon the Great.



In 1862

becoming President of the United States; and Moncure Conway is emphatic that, great as the ability of many of the Presidents has been, none had the supreme ability of Ingersoll. Even as it was, had he adopted the policy of many of our own well-placed heretics and devoted his energy to denouncing those aspects of religion that few educated men now champion, and paid lip homage to the things he inwardly despised, he might still have grasped the highest spoils of office and received the questionable homage of learned societies. Ingersoll lived and died—himself.

One thing is certain. If the suffrage had been vested in the leading men of America, there was no office in the State to which they would not have elected him, and no honour would have been too great for them to have paid him. For Ingersoll led no cloistered life; he was not set apart from his peers. There exists a well known story of Ingersoll's rejoinder to a man who said that his copy of Paine's *Age of Reason* cost him a dollar—"Mine cost me the Governorship of Illinois"; but that was because the

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret that we are unable to publish several letters that have been received on the subject of Esperanto *versus* Ido. Quite a number of our readers appear to be interested in this question of a universal language, and the controversy looks like being unending, without anyone getting much "forrader." One of our correspondents, Mr. S. W. Benn, of Downing College, Cambridge, offers to send information concerning "Occidental" to anyone interested in the subject.

R. B. KERR.—Sorry we have no room for letters in this issue of the *Freethinker*. But your letter is rather wide of our query. There is no question of the *natural* origin of all qualities, or of the survival value of many. The sociological question is one of behaviour, that is, the expression of a fundamentally identical human nature is dependent upon sociological and cultural conditions. It is this that advocates of "Race" overlook.

R. E. D. CLARK.—Sorry we have no space for a controversy on the flat earth theory.

Sugar Plums.

This issue of the *Freethinker* is almost entirely an Ingersoll number, but we hope at least the majority of our readers will find nothing in this to regret. It is not likely that many of our newspapers will pay much, if any, attention to the great American Freethinker. If it were some famous parson the matter would be different, and many Freethinkers who write regularly for the press would be found penning more or less laudatory articles about him. But there is neither money nor notoriety to be gained by "writing up" Ingersoll. For this reason we hope to have the assistance of all our friends in getting this issue well before the public. It will be doing something to honour the great American liberator, and at the same time helping to advance the general cause in which we are all interested.

But there will be another Centenary Number soon. The Bradlaugh Centenary date is September 26, and our issue for September 24, will contain a full-length sketch of Charles Bradlaugh. The two issues should go well together.

With regard to the Bradlaugh Centenary, we would again advise all who intend being at the demonstration at the Friends' House, on September 23, or at the dinner at the Trocadero, on September 26, to apply soon, or they may find themselves too late. The price of the tickets for the meeting is 6d. and 1s. For the dinner the tickets are 10s. 6d. each. These may be obtained from the *Freethinker* Office, or from the Secretary of the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4.

In a recent article in the *Daily Express* on "Voltaire," the writer, George Edinger, has fallen into some sad blunders on the question of Voltaire's "death-bed repentance." This comes through relying too much on Christian writers who are still—at least, on the subject of "infidel-death-beds"—in the Christian Evidence state of mind. The facts are very simple. The first time (in 1768) was a joke he played on the Bishop of Anneci, who expressly forbade any curate, priest or monk to give Holy Communion to Voltaire. Feigning a deadly sickness, a priest was sent for but was too frightened to give the sacrament until Voltaire threatened him with legal proceedings. The priest then consented, and even added

that "M. de Voltaire had never ceased to respect and practise the Christian religion." The comedy reached its climax when after signing the profession of faith written by the Bishop, Voltaire swallowed the wafer and then leaped briskly out of bed, having been confessed and communed in spite of the Bishop.

This proved that he treated this solemn sacrament as a joke, and therefore was prepared to do the same (in 1778) to secure for his corpse a decent burial—denied, of course, to Freethinkers. He therefore, with the connivance of his nephew, the Abbé Mignot, tricked the church again to give him a decent burial by "confessing to the Abbé Gautier," according to Condorcet, though Gautier says he found Voltaire "unfit to be confessed." Later, according to Wagnière, who was an eye-witness, Voltaire pushed the Curé of St. Sulpice away and said, "Let me die in peace." The Curé went out in disgust with the Abbé Gautier. He died "with the utmost tranquillity," saying to his valet, "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone." They were his last words, and it was only many years later that the priests invented the death-bed stories about his repentance and dying raving mad.

Finally, there is the testimony of the doctor in attendance, published by Sir Charles Morgan. Dr. Burard was constantly about Voltaire in his last moments, and emphatically declares that Voltaire was forbidden to speak the whole time, though he retained possession of all his faculties. Dr. Burard says, "The fooleries which have been attributed to him are deserving of the greatest contempt." No one was allowed admission into the sick chamber, and it was therefore impossible for any priest to administer the Sacrament or testify to his dying raving mad. Voltaire, in fact, remained a sceptic to the end, and Mr. Edinger ought to have investigated the story he repeats of the "death-bed" repentance. He does admit, however, that "Voltaire wrote of Christianity as full of villainy and nonsense." And he admits that the famous aphorism "crush the infamy" means not the "Church," but the Christian infamy. It is good that even in small doses the real truth about a giant like Voltaire should be given for popular consumption.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE IMPRISONED FREETHINKERS.

THE memorial that we printed last week, and subjoin in our present issue has been drawn up by a Liberal Christian. Some of its phrases are, unnaturally, such as we cannot endorse personally. But the memorial might be submitted for signature to those who, as Christians, yet think that a great iniquity has been perpetrated. Freethinkers should still sign and forward the petition to the Home Secretary. Our friends have been in prison twenty-five weeks.

TO THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

"Your memorialists submit that on grounds both of justice and of policy, it is desirable to put an end to the imprisonment of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey.

"On grounds of justice, inasmuch as where all religions are tolerated, and where freedom of speech is held to be of the greatest value, it is manifestly unjust to visit the offence of these men with punishment which, in its severity, goes far beyond anything required to vindicate the law and to prevent repetition of the offence.

"On grounds of policy, because the infliction of such punishment is obviously calculated to defeat its own object, to enlist sympathy with the offender where none would otherwise be felt, to create hatred against a religion requiring such severity, and to discredit the Liberal Government.

"Your memorialists therefore submit that they and the large number who think with them in this matter, have a clear right not only to appeal to you, but to expect either redress at your hands, or a distinct intimation that you consider justifiable, action which they cannot but regard as cruel and tyrannical."

(Continued from page 520.)

voting power rested mainly in the hands of men who were still held fast in the bonds of a theology that good men and women were beginning to despise. His circle of intimate friends and admirers included many of the foremost men of his day. Presidents and Ex-Presidents, scientists, artists, men of letters, men and women who have carved their names deeply in America's—and some of them in the world's—history, delighted to pay him homage. To gain the votes of the mass required a subservience to popular prejudice, a luke-warm attachment to what he believed to be true, of which Ingersoll was absolutely incapable. He made no claim to be a martyr, nor did he feel that he was such. He felt the world could offer him nothing better than his own freedom of expression, his right to denounce falsehood and injustice, he laid no claim to self-sacrifice, he claimed and enjoyed the right to self-expression. No price the world could offer was high enough to buy that.

The testimony to Ingersoll's greatness as a speaker came not merely from the huge crowds that thronged to hear him. It came from the keenest of critics and best of judges. Men who were themselves renowned for their oratory, or for their critical power confessed to the incomparable quality of Ingersoll's oratory. "Quintessential" said that fine judge, G. W. Foote, was Ingersoll's outstanding quality, and no other man could have done so well with a single word. Moncure Conway, a man who never paid empty compliments, and the last man in the world to be led away by mere rhetoric, said:—

Every variety of power was in this Orator—logic and poetry, humour and imagination, simplicity and dramatic art, moral earnestness and boundless sympathy. The wonderful power ascribed to Thomas Paine of insinuating his ideas equally into the learned and unlearned, had passed from Paine's pen to Ingersoll's tongue. The effect on the people was indescribable.

Walt Whitman, between whom and Ingersoll there existed a deep bond of personal affection, said he was

One of the most magnetically spontaneous men on the planet. He is far, far deeper than he is supposed to be, even by radicals. America don't know how proud she ought to be of Ingersoll.

T. H. Huxley wrote of him in terms of the greatest admiration; Gladstone, who learned to his complete humiliation what it meant to cross swords with Ingersoll, confessed that he wrote with "a rare and enviable brilliancy." Henry Ward Beecher, one of the outstanding speakers of his generation, described him as "the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue on the face of the globe." Edgar Fawcett wrote:—

I do wish that, in all these big questions, literary men would take you more for a guide than they do. Your love of letters and your deeply poetic spirit render you worthy of a far greater reverence and respect than it seems to me you receive. I want the brilliance of your thought to penetrate our literature profoundly and permanently. But, of course, that will come. The younger generation of writers cannot escape you any more than the air they breathe.

Said Mark Twain, who corresponded with him on the most affectionate terms:—

His was a great and beautiful spirit. He was a man—all man from his crown to his foot-soles. I prized his affection for me and returned it with usury.

The greatest of the leaders of the Woman's Movement in America, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, wrote of him:—

I have heard the greatest orators of this century in England and America, O'Connell in his palmy

days on the Home Rule question; Gladstone and John Bright in the House of Commons; Spurgeon, James and Stopford Brooks in their respective pulpits, our own Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher and Webster and Clay, on great occasions; the stirring eloquence of our anti-slavery orators, both in Congress and on the platform—but none ever equalled Ingersoll in his highest flights.

The great Chauncy Depew, whose reputation as a speaker stood high in both England and America spoke of Ingersoll as the greatest of living orators. Swinburne said that he was the man of all others he longed to meet. No one who ever came within the sphere of his influence could withhold an admiration that did honour no less to himself than to the one who was honoured.

INGERSOLL THE FREETHINKER.

I HAVE left myself but scant space for dealing with Ingersoll as a Freethinker. This for two reasons. First, because I have been most anxious to indicate the wide scope of his genius, and because there is an impression abroad, active in quarters that should be better informed, that he was concerned only and merely with proving the Christian religion to be untrue. Second, because his writings against religion are so well known, thanks to their phenomenal circulation in both this country and in America, that all, or nearly all, Freethinkers are already well acquainted with them. But it is certainly not because I believe Ingersoll's writings on Freethought to be among the least important of his activities. On the contrary, in his case as in Bradlaugh's, I believe—as they both believed—their purely Freethought work to be the most important they did. And when the future talks, as it will talk about them, it will be as Freethinkers that they will chiefly be remembered.

I certainly have no desire to establish Ingersoll's "respectability" by placing in the foreground his work in politics or sociology, or elsewhere, in order to justify his claim to greatness. That would be as much a reflection on Ingersoll as it would be on Bradlaugh. It is a method that savours too much of the desire of some timid Freethinkers to prove they are as "good" as Christians, and their pleasure at being mistaken for such.

I cordially agree it is a pity that so much of Bradlaugh's time and so much of Ingersoll's time should have been taken up in attacking the foolish doctrines and primitive myths that go to the making of "true" Christianity. But the need granted, and the state of the world being what it is, no better work could have been undertaken by these two men. And the world being what it is, and in spite of what they might have done and the positions they might have gained through sheer native ability, it was their Freethought, their outspoken attack on the established superstition that gave them the command of public attention they usually received. By native ability Bradlaugh and Ingersoll would have achieved positions of distinction, but they would have been units among many other distinguished men. Scores of men have entered politics or the law and raised themselves from obscurity to fame. Something a little out of the ordinary—counting even the possession of great capacity as ordinary on certain levels—was needed to lift these men above even the class in which their qualities justified inclusion, and this something extra was found in their Freethought. The godlessness of "Godless Bob," and the Atheism of the Atheistic "Iconoclast" were the features that centred the attention of two countries upon the men and their work. The bitter enmity that orthodoxy

exhibited would have crushed ordinary men: it required little short of genius to take that enmity, to use it to its own undoing and to make it a trumpet call with which to command the attention of the world.

Ingersoll's first Freethought address—quite an unexpected and an impromptu one—was delivered when he was twenty-three years of age. Judge W. G. Bowman had placed at Ingersoll's service his library—well-stocked with other than library books. There he apparently made his earliest acquaintance with the works of Spencer, Huxley, Darwin and Paine. So much was he impressed by the latter that he had promised himself never to speak in public without mentioning his name. On the day following this resolution he attended a picnic meeting which was addressed by a parson of some note. The parson finished, someone suggested that Ingersoll, known for his attractive speeches, should say something. Floundering about for an opening he remembered his promise to himself about Paine. What he said is not recorded, but it was enough to place Paine irremovably in the minds of the majority of all who listened. Judge Bowman shook him by the hand and said, "A heretic at three-and-twenty. Oh my, oh my!"

The date of Ingersoll's first lecture on Freethought was 1860, when he delivered an address at Pekin, Illinois, his subject being "Progress." The editors of the Dresden edition have unfortunately omitted a bibliography, but I should place his lecture "About the Holy Bible" as one of his fundamental deliverances, and it opens in characteristic tone:—

Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries. Politicians dare not. They would be defeated. Editors dare not. They would lose subscribers. Merchants dare not, because they might lose customers. Men of fashion dare not, fearing that they would lose caste. Even clerks dare not, because they might be discharged. And so, I thought I would do it myself.

And he did it, but in a way for which the Christian clergy never forgave him. Here, for example, is the manner in which he summarises the policy of the Christian Church as a whole, its compromising, and temporising, its clinging to falsity so long as it possibly and profitably can, and the coining a new falsehood in the act of admitting as much of the truth as it is forced to concede. It is an essay in a paragraph, and I think will be new to most British readers:—

Orthodox religion is a kind of boa constrictor; anything it cannot dodge it will swallow. The Church is bound to have something for sale that someone wants to buy. According to the demand will be the pulpit supply. In old times the pulpit dictated to the pews. Things have changed. Theology is now run on business principles. The gentleman who pays for the theories insists on having them suit him. Ministers are intellectual gardeners, and they must supply the market with such religious vegetables as the congregations desire. Thousands have given up belief in the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, the atonement idea and original sin. Millions believe now that this is not a state of probation; that a man, provided he is well off, and has given liberally to the Church, or whose wife has been a regular attendant, will, in the next world, have another chance; that he will be permitted to file a motion for a new trial. Others think that Hell is not so warm as it used to be supposed; that while it is very hot in the middle of the day, the nights are cool; and, that, after all, there is not so much to fear from the future. They regard the old religion as very good for the poor, and they give them the old ideas on the same principle that they give them their old clothes. These ideas,

out at the elbows, out at the knees, buttons off, somewhat ravelled, will, after all, do very well for paupers. There is a great trade of this kind going on now—selling old theological clothes to the coloured people in the South. All I have said applies to all Churches. The Catholic Church changes every day. It does not change its ceremonies, but the spirit that begot the ceremonies, the spirit that clothed the skeleton of ceremony with the flesh and blood and throb of life and love, is gone. The spirit that built the cathedrals, the spirit that emptied the wealth of the world into the lap of Rome, has turned in another direction. Of course, the Churches are all going to endeavour to meet the demands of the hour. They will find new readings for old texts. They will re-punctuate and re-parse the Old Testament. They will find that "flat" means "a little rounding"; that "six days" meant "six long times"; that the word "flood" should have been translated "dampness," "dew," or "threatened rain"; that Daniel in the lion's den was an historical myth; that Samson and his foxes had nothing to do with this world. All these things will be gradually explained and made to harmonise with the facts of modern science. They will not change the words of the creed; they will simply give "new meanings"; and the highest criticism to-day is that which confesses and avoids. In other words the churches will change as the people change. They will keep for sale that which can be sold. Already the old goods are being "marked down." If, however, the Church should fail, why then it must go. I see no reason, myself, for its existence. It apparently does no good; it devours without producing; it eats without planting, and is a perpetual burden. It teaches nothing of value. It misleads, mystifies and misrepresents. It threatens without knowledge and promises without power. But if it does not go in name, it must go in fact, because it must change; and therefore it is only a question of time when it ceases to divert from useful channels the blood and muscle of the world.

Probably the most widely circulated and the most famous of his works was *The Mistakes of Moses*. This was not actually a lecture, that is, it was not its entirety a lecture. Neither was it a pamphlet. In the full text as published in the Dresden edition it covers 270 pages. It was a gathering together of what he had said at various times and in various lectures on that subject. And it is *all* there—that is, nothing that is germane to an understanding of the orthodox claims for the Bible is omitted, the whole ground of modern research and knowledge is ransacked in order to establish the truth about the Bible. There is no parade of scholarship, no asking an open-mouthed reader to admire the number of books he had read—those who knew the literature knew also how much he had read—there was no calling a galaxy of professors as evidence to overwhelm those who had as Christians already committed the sin of relying too much upon authority; what was set forth was the truth about the Bible, and about other things, and in such plain terms that the understanding followed easily, and the wit with which the exposition was enlivened made it as engaging as a first class vaudeville.

How often the book was reprinted I do not know. It was reprinted in parts and as a whole. What quantity was sold I do not know, save that the number must have been enormous. It appeared in all kinds of forms in England and America, and it sold by the hundreds of thousands. This was, of course, not the only one of Ingersoll's works that enjoyed a large circulation. It is true of them all. In this country every one who set up as a publisher of Freethought literature issued Ingersoll. The late Robert Forder once told me that he had nothing in his shop that sold so regularly and so largely. And not a

single penny in the shape of royalties went to the author, nor did he ask for payment. I am certain that no writings since Paine's had anything like so large a circulation, and no man of his time in this country or in America did so much to make Freethinkers as did "Godless Bob."

As a controversialist he was deadly. In the famous discussion with Gladstone one ceased to admire Ingersoll in order to pity his opponent. Never did a man come so shattered out of a contest. Huxley wrote Ingersoll complimenting him on his victory, and one retort made by Ingersoll is well worth recording. Gladstone had complained that Ingersoll failed to treat the Bible with the "deep reverential calm" it deserved, and said that he was apt to "ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck." Ingersoll reserved his comment until the very end of his reply when his retort received added point from what had gone before. "It may be," he said, "that to ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck gives a greater variety of sensations, a keener delight, and a better prospect of winning the race, than to sit solemnly astride of a dead one, in a 'deep reverential calm,' with the bridle firmly in your hand." Someone ought to have advised Gladstone that suicide was criminal under the British law.

"Rome and Reason," another characteristic Ingersollian reply in a discussion with Cardinal Manning, is a remarkable piece of propaganda. Full of confidence, the Cardinal was foolish enough to repeat the arguments that have done duty with Catholics times out of number, and of which a few have an influence with Protestants when it happens that some of their claims are substantially identical with those of Roman Catholics.

But not even Gladstone could have accused Ingersoll in this discussion of riding an unbroken horse with a loose rein. Step by step the Cardinal is followed, his fallacies exposed, his claims shattered, history, science and experience are marshalled against the poor Cardinal, the whole fundamental case against the Roman Church is set forth, and the "testimony of the fathers" is dismissed with the contemptuous, but irrefragible truth. "The testimony of the Fathers is without the slightest value. They believed everything, they examined nothing. They received as a waste-basket receives. Whoever accepts their testimony will exclaim with the Cardinal: 'Happily men are not saved by logic.'"

The Cardinal—representative of a divinely established and divinely protected Church, had enough. He did not venture on a second encounter. He had no wish to return to what I say without any hesitation, is one of the finest exposures of the claims of the Roman Church that has yet been made.

I must pass over his other Freethought addresses, pausing only at a striking work running to over 400 pages dealing with one of the most famous of orthodox Christian preachers of the day—Talmage. That Presbyterian minister had delivered a number of sermons attacking Ingersoll. The latter, after some delay, met the criticism in an imaginary interview in which a series of questions are put by Ingersoll to himself, on the questions raised by the preacher. The whole ends with "A Talmagian Catechism," in which the sermons are reduced to the form of a catechism for the young. The catechism must be read to be enjoyed. It weakens the wit and dulls the wisdom it contains to give excerpts. I venture of these only, the first question:—

Question. Who made you?

Answer. Jehovah, the original Presbyterian God.

And the last:—

Question. What do you consider is the strongest argument in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures?

Answer. The dying words of Christians.

Question. What do you consider the strongest argument against the truth of infidelity?

Answer. The dying words of Infidels. You know how terrible were the death-bed scenes of Hume, Voltaire, Paine, and Hobbes, as described by hundreds of persons who were not present; while all Christians have died with the utmost serenity, and with their last words have testified to the sustaining power of faith in the goodness of God.

Question. What were the last words of Jesus Christ?

Answer. My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Ingersoll's last lecture, on any subject, was delivered before the American Religious Association on June 2, 1899. He died on July 21, nearly seven weeks later and there are circumstances which make an examination of this lecture advisable, even necessary. For some time Ingersoll had been aware that he was suffering from an affection of the heart, and that his death might come at any moment. For the sake of his family he kept this knowledge to himself, and also bound his doctors to secrecy. At all times he remained his old cheery, human, lovable self.

But no one was more alive to the malignancy of Christian opposition, or of the lies that were circulated, as a religious duty, about famous Freethinkers, and the lecture leaves no doubt as to his position. About this lecture he seemed unusually anxious. It was evidently prepared very carefully; its title was "What is Religion," and it was clearly intended as a final testament of his faith. There were many clergymen present at its delivery.

Very early in the lecture, after describing the difficulties in the way of belief in God he asks the question, what is Religion? The reply is:—

It is fear. Fear builds altar and offers the sacrifice. Fear erects the cathedral and bows the head of men in worship. Fear bends the knees and utters the prayer. Fear pretends to love.

Religion teaches the slave virtues—obedience, humility, self-denial, forgiveness, non-resistance. Lips religious and fearful tremblingly repeat this passage: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." This is the abyss of degradation. Religion does not teach self-reliance, independence, manliness, courage, self-defence. Religion makes God a master and man his serf. The master cannot be great enough to make slavery sweet.

Then an attack on the praise of God:—

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away, the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood, the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shrivelled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning's stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn and the robed hypocrites, with clasped and bloody hands, who thanked their God—a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished.

from the world, these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

Then a criticism of Christianity:—

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland? What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest.

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and worshipped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer and cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

The latter part of the lecture consists of that mixture of social teaching and religious criticism which is so pronounced a feature of many of Ingersoll's lectures and writings. It concludes with this final confession of faith:—

Religion can never reform mankind because religion is slavery.

It is far better to be free, to leave the forts and barricades of fear, to stand erect and face the future with a smile.

It is far better to give yourself sometimes to negligence, to drift with wave and tide, with the blind force of the world, to think and dream, to forget the chains and limitations of the breathing life, to forget purpose and object, to lounge in the picture gallery of the brain, to feel once more the clasps and kisses of the past, to bring life's morning back, to see again the forms and faces of the dead, to paint fair pictures for the coming years, to forget all Gods, their promises and threats, to feel within your veins life's joyous stream and hear the martial music, the rhythmic beating of your fearless heart.

And then to rouse yourself to do all useful things, to reach with thought and deed the ideal in your brain, to give your fancies wing, that they, like chemist bees, may find art's nectar in the weeds of common things, to look with trained and steady eyes for facts, to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now, to increase knowledge, to take burdens from the weak, to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make a palace for the soul.

It was Ingersoll's last message to the world.

This, I am conscious, is but a very poor sketch of the freethought writings of Ingersoll, it is almost like exhibiting a bottle of sea water in order to show the glories of the ocean. But when we add to the beauty of the language, the felicity of the illustrations, and the flashes of wit that played over the spoken words like lightning over a landscape, and add to these the voice of the speaker, and the forcefulness of his presence, we begin to understand why multitudes of men and women flocked to hear one who spent his marvellous gifts on none but worthy causes. I am sure that no greater force for the furtherance of freethought was seen during his time.

THE LAST ACT.

INGERSOLL died at the comparatively early age of sixty-six. The fact may be chronicled without lamentation. I do not say this because I consider Ingersoll's work was, to use a common phrase, done. So long as his mental powers remained unimpaired his work would never have been finished. While there was wrong to be righted, while ignorance remained to be dispelled, and the possibility of his contributing to these ends came within the ambit of his opportunity, one cannot conceive Ingersoll inactive. But death comes to all; and when it came to Ingersoll it

was without pain, with his family around, with his last conscious gaze upon the faces of those he loved. Could he have had the power of selection it is the death he would have chosen. He was spared the possibility of physical decrepitude that might have made him an object of pitying sympathy; there was no impairment of his splendid powers; there was no weakening of his strength or of his influence. Life had not been unkind to him, and death came with the gentle touch of a sympathetic friend.

The account of his death is best taken from a signed affidavit by his wife and daughter:—

On November 16, 1896, while on a lecture trip, at Janesville, Wisconsin, Colonel Ingersoll had a cerebral hemorrhage. He continued to lecture for a few days, but at the solicitation of his family went to Chicago and consulted Dr. Frank Billings, who advised him to return home and rest for two months, which he did. He then, January 24, 1897, resumed lecturing, which he continued up to the time of his death. It was at this time, early in 1897, that he developed angina pectoris, from which he suffered greatly and which was the cause of his death. Since his death we have learned that he knew exactly his condition. In other words, his physicians had told him that he was likely to die at any moment, but acceding to earnest entreaties they did not tell his family. In spite of the fact that death was ever beside him, he was always very cheerful, and when asked as to his health invariably replied "all right." During the night of July 20, 1899, he had an acute attack of indigestion and slept very little, but he came to breakfast the next morning and afterwards sat in the piazza, as he was wont to do, reading and talking with the family. At about ten-thirty he would lie down and rest a little and then would come down and play pool with his son-in-law. Mrs. Ingersoll accompanied him to their bedroom and remained with him while he slept. At about 11.45 he arose and sat in his chair to put on his shoes. Miss Sue Sharkey came into the room followed by Mrs. Sue and Mrs. Farrell. Mrs. Ingersoll said, "Do not dress, papa, until after luncheon. I will eat upstairs with you." He replied, "Oh, no, I do not want to trouble you." Mrs. Farrell then said, "How absurd after we have eaten hundreds of times upstairs with her." He looked up laughingly at Mrs. Farrell as she turned to leave the room, and then Mrs. Ingersoll said, "Why, papa, your tongue is coated; I must give you some medicine." He looked up at her with a smile, and as he did so, closed his eyes and he passed away without a struggle, a pang, or even a sigh. No one else was present. It is said that he recanted. This is a cruel and malicious falsehood, without the slightest foundation in fact. His conviction on the subject of religion remained absolutely unchanged.

Of course, no statement could stop the religious liar getting to work and dragging out the ancient falsehood about infidel death-beds, and which have done duty ever since "Christian truth" was established. The truth is that the average Christian is so great a coward in the face of death that he is loth to believe that anyone can meet it without some artificial stimulant that will screw his courage to the sticking point. He uses his religion as the "rum ration" was used during the war to nerve men to the task of "going over the top." To the fervent religionist death is a real "King of Terrors"; he never realizes that the terror he feels is the product of the religion he has accepted. The majority of Christians simply cannot conceive a freethinker facing with serenity what they themselves think of with fear.

Ingersoll did not receive a national funeral—in form. But if by national grief is meant genuine sorrow felt by large numbers of one's fellow-countrymen, numerous appreciative notices in the American press, and unsought letters of sympathy from very many distinguished men and women, then the

feeling exhibited at his death was far more "national" than any organized official mourning could possibly be. The coloured population of America, equally with the whites, recognized the passing of a great figure. Edgar Fawcett expressed a common feeling with those who enjoyed Ingersoll's company:—

So large is his charity, so rich his tenderness, that intimately to know him means an incessant stimulus. One can almost warm one's hands at him as at a great fireplace full of burly and glowing logs.

For more than a generation no worthy cause had ever appealed to Ingersoll in vain. He had helped them with tongue, with pen, with lavish gifts of money and service. Wherever the rights of men were threatened, whether the persons threatened were black or white or yellow, whether the infringement of right occurred in the case of a criminal, a working man, or of one highly placed, the brain and matchless eloquence of Ingersoll were ready in defence of justice and common sense.

I wish to emphasize that expression, "justice and common sense," because I feel it is as expressive of Ingersoll's character as anything of which I can think. He viewed justice not as composed of a number of fearsome abstract symbols with which ordinary folk need not bother, but as something so concrete, something so indispensable to human welfare, that it concerned all alike. Justice and injustice were always visualized by him in terms of happiness and misery, in terms of human welfare or misfortune. This comes out strongly in his defence of the Chinese, not a popular line in America, and in his defence of the Jews, again not a popular occupation; and still more in his defence of the coloured people of the United States. How many besides Ingersoll, in that America in which Christians, and Christians alone, had planted the curse of the black slave traffic, where it had been carried to a degree of degradation unknown to the ancient world, and where the coloured people were treated and are still treated as a class apart, how many prominent white men would have addressed an audience of coloured men in this way?—

I wonder that you ask a white man to address you on this occasion, when the history of your connexion with the white race is written in blood and tears, is still upon flesh, put there by the branding-iron and the lash. I feel like asking for your forgiveness for the wrongs that my race has inflicted upon yours. If in the future the wheel of fortune should take a turn, and you should in any country have white men within your power, I pray you not to execute the villainy we have taught you.

There was no question here of masking generations of villainy under the cloak of a late compassion; no attempt to pretend that the forcible deprivation of a people of their liberty was wiped out by giving them back with niggardly hand some part of that of which they had been robbed; no demand for the admiration of one's villainy because it was not then so truculent as it had been. It was a frank, manly wearing of the white sheet of repentance for a great wrong done.

To a large gathering of judges and lawyers, whom he had been asked to address, where other men would have dwelt upon the majesty of the law, upon the august character of justice, and upon the dignity of the legal profession, Ingersoll brought them all to the bar of humanity for judgment, and bade them think of the human consequences of the power they wielded:—

There is no reformation in degradation. To mutilate a criminal is to inform all the world that he is a criminal, and to render his reformation substantially impossible. Whoever is degraded by society becomes its enemy. The seeds of malice are

sown in his heart, and to the day of his death he will hate the hands that have sown the seeds.

A punishment that degrades the punished will degrade the man who inflicts the punishment, and will degrade the government that procures the infliction. The whipping-post pollutes, not only the whipped, but the whipper, and not only the whipper, but the community at large. Wherever its shadow falls it degrades.

In defence of the Chinese in America, whom he said were hated on account of their virtues, not because of their vices, and who were treated unjustly because "they are of no use to politicians except as they become fuel to supply the flame of prejudice," he spoke as warmly as when defending the Negroes. In saying that "Where the rights of even one human being are held in contempt the rights of all are in danger," he was voicing no mere piece of rhetoric; it was an expression of his deepest convictions. His vision of President Blaine as a plumed knight riding into the arena in defence of right and justice might well have been applied to himself. Perhaps he saw Blaine in the light of his own idealism.

I must draw this very inadequate sketch of the great Freethinker to a close. If what I have said is enough to send the younger generation of Freethinkers to a study of Ingersoll I shall have done well. If this outline is all too slender I must blame Ingersoll himself. Looking over the twelve volumes of his works—speeches, lectures, interviews, pleadings in the courts, interviews etc.—my great difficulty has been one of selection. I know of no other man whose work represents such a compact mass of quotable matter as does Ingersoll's. The only way to do him full justice would be to quote the lot. Nearly every page is alive. He scatters gems of eloquence, of wit and wisdom with the prodigality of a millionaire scattering pence—and without any apparent decrease in his available capital. There is hardly a page that an intelligent boy or girl may not master, and not many in which the mature mind may not find much to carry away for further and elaborated use. He plays with words as a juggler does with flying balls, and one stands amazed at the easy dexterity with which he gives old truths a new setting and with which new ones are expressed in an unforgettable manner. No matter the subject with which he is dealing—politics, sociology, religion, music, painting, literature, riches, poverty, crime at its lowest and virtue at its highest, the love of home, of country, of humanity—the touch of the master of words is at once noticeable. It is not the touch of the mere word-spinner, but of the thinker who has made language the servant of his thought and has found out how to clothe the profoundest of thoughts in the simplest and the most beautiful of verbal forms. America should be proud of Ingersoll; the world should be prouder still—Freethinkers proudest of all.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A list of Ingersoll's Pamphlets published by The Pioneer Press.

ROME OR REASON P . . .	3d.
WHAT IS RELIGION P . . .	1d.
WHAT IS IT WORTH P . . .	1d.
HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH . . .	1d.
MISTAKES OF MOSES . . .	2d.

The above will be sent post free for 3d.

The Oxford Movement Centenary.

The Centenary of the Oxford Movement still continues to occupy much attention in pious, and, in so far as it is the subject of controversy, journalistic circles. The *pièce de resistance* of the show was a solemn "High Mass," at which important clerics were present, notwithstanding that it is the official teaching of the Church of England that "masses are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." In all the leading and misleading articles about these pious functions, the fundamental fact about the Anglo-Catholic Movement of to-day is ignored. It is that it is *not* at all the same thing as the Oxford Movement which, for its own purposes, it is exploiting. One hundred years ago, in July of that year, John Keble preached a sermon before the University of Oxford on "National Apostacy." This occasion has been commonly regarded as the birthday of the Oxford Movement. Its bearing and influence on the life of the nation have been and are grotesquely exaggerated.

Keble, Pusey and Newman were concerned with the maintenance and defence of Authority, both in Church and State. The divine authority of the Church, and, hardly less, the divine right of constituted authority in the State, were their chief doctrines. Keble's sermon was preached the year after the passing of the great Reform Act of 1832, and just after the Test and Corporation Acts had been repealed. The rising spirit of revolt, both in religion and politics, was the enemy which the original Oxford Movement set out to fight. Newman saw the implications of what was common to him and the others, and took the logical step of 'verting to Rome. What afterwards developed under the various names above-mentioned became more and more a movement concerned with sacramentalism and ceremonial; the doctrine and the rites of historic Christianity. Side by side with these developments there was a wide departure from the conservatism of the founders. It is the mutual boast of pious "Socialists," and "Socialist" Anglo-Catholics, that they have broken down the "superior" social class of the parson, and made large numbers of the working classes susceptible to their influence by their devotion to their material interests. Such a course might well make Keble squirm in his grave.

Nobody, we may suppose, had less sympathy with the political outlook of the founders of the Oxford Movement than Gladstone. Yet when he had long ceased to be a Tory, and was a devout High Churchman, he described "the greatest object of all" of the latter to be "the re-establishment of the Eucharist in its proper and scriptural place as the central act of at least our weekly worship." This is to say, as Mr. Birrell has pointedly said, "it is the Mass that matters." Father Dolling, one of the most popular and respected Anglo-Catholic priests—a "socialist"—is described by his biographer as having made "the main object of his life and work" the "bringing of the service which the First Prayer Book (of Edward I.) recognized as the Holy Communion, commonly called the Mass, out of the secondary and occasional position into which it has fallen in England."

In a sermon preached on the forty-first anniversary of Newman's death (already quoted here, September 20, 1931), Rev. A. E. Baker, a well known Anglo-Catholic, claimed that it was the supreme triumph of that movement that "the rulers of the Church of England to-day, unlike their predecessors in Newman's time, suffer men to practise the Catholic religion."

In other words, while the Oxford Movement had its origin in an English conservative tendency and aim, the Anglo-Catholic Movement of to-day—mis-named, since Anglo-Catholic is as much a contradiction in terms as Anglo-Socialist, and Christianity, Socialism and Catholicism are all international—is a movement on the one hand to Romanize the Establishment from within, and, on the other, to free it from the compulsion of the law and the Courts, and to make a religion whose *raison d'être* was its Protestantism, a yet more glaring and insupportable anomaly than it would be at this time of day were it still in fact what it is in law.

(The late) ALAN HANDSACRE.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, August 13, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Do We Need Religion?" "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2, 8.0, Thursday, August 17, Mr. Paul Goldman.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, August 13, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, August 13, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, August 14, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, August 17, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, August 13, Mr. C. Tuson. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 16, Mr. H. C. Smith. Aliwell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, August 18, Mr. C. Tuson.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Regents Park): 3.0 and 6.30.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Wood. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Platform 1, Messrs. E. C. Wood and B. A. Le Maine. Platform 2, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and E. C. Saphin. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden. Thursday, E. C. Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and B. A. Le Maine.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES. A Conference will be held in the Dolphin Hotel, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, on Sunday, August 13, at 2.30. Demonstration at 6.30 p.m.

OUTDOOR.

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.30, Tuesday, August 15, Mr. J. Clayton.

DERBY BRANCH N.S.S. (Nottingham, Council House Square): 7.30, Thursday, August 10, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. Derby (Market Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 13 and Tuesday, August 15, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): August 13 to August 20, Mr. G. Whitehead will address each meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, August 13, C. McKelvie and J. V. Shortt. Grierson Street, Monday, August 14, H. Little and D. Robinson, Corner of Hight Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, August 17, A. Jackson and E. S. Wollen.

MANCHESTER (Platt Fields): 7.0, Sunday, August 13, Mr. J. Clayton.

NAPTON: 7.30, Wednesday, August 16, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWBIGGIN: 6.30, Sunday, August 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.30, Saturday, August 12, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SHILDON: 7.0, Friday, August 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Pier Head): 7.0, Wednesday, August 16, Mr. Flanders.

TRAWDEN: 7.45, Friday, August 11, Mr. J. Clayton.

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