

MR. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL AS HE IS.

**A Complete Refutation of His Clerical
Enemies' Malicious Slanders.**

**The Dishonest Statements Regarding Himself and His Family Author-
itatively Denied, and the Proof Given.**

AND

**THE TRUTH TOLD ABOUT HIM AS A SOLDIER, ABOUT HIS CAP-
TURE BY THE CONFEDERATES, ABOUT HIS FAMILY, HIS
LIFE AT PEORIA, ILL., THE HONORS SHOWN HIM BY THE
NATION'S GREATEST MEN, AND A GREAT MANY
OTHER THINGS CONCERNING WHICH THE
CLERGY OF THE COUNTRY HAVE PER-
SISTENTLY AND DISHONESTLY
MISREPRESENTED HIM.**

By E. M. MACDONALD, Editor of "The Truth Seeker."

"All men are our brothers; and when we injure them by lies, which cut like a sharp razor, by sneers, by innuendoes, by intrigues, by slander and calumny, by hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, by want of thought, or by want of heart, by the lust of gain, by neglect, by absorbing selfishness, we are inheritors of the spirit of the first murderer."—DEAN FARRAR

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There was no Table of Contents in this book and we have built one by taking the headings throughout the book and listing them.

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BUT NOT SOLD.

Emmett F. Fields

INGERSOLL AS HE IS.

Whenever Colonel Ingersoll makes a lecturing trip through the country the clergy resort to slander and defamation to repel attacks upon their religion which they cannot otherwise ward off. Were all people sensible, these attacks would amount to nothing. But the general run of Christians cannot see that even were Ingersoll all that his enemies say he is, it would in no wise affect his arguments against Christianity, and the stories told by the clergy distract their attention and prevent them from considering what he has said. This slander business is an old trick of the ministers. Voltaire, Paine, Bradlaugh, Bennett—every prominent Free-thinker—has been subjected to the same treatment. Colonel Ingersoll himself has pithily put it:

“Countless falsehoods have been circulated about all the opponents of superstition. Whoever attacks the popular falsehoods of his time will find that a lie defends itself by telling other lies. Nothing is so prolific, nothing

can so multiply itself, nothing can lay and hatch so many eggs, as a good healthy religious lie. And nothing is more wonderful than the credulity of the believers in the supernatural. They feel under a kind of obligation to believe everything in favor of their religion, or against any form of what they are pleased to call 'Infidelity.' The old falsehoods about Voltaire, Paine, Hume, Julian, Diderot, and hundreds of others, grow green every spring. They are answered; they are demonstrated to be without the slightest foundation; but they rarely die. And when one does die there seems to be a kind of Cæsarian operation, so that in each instance, although the mother dies, the child lives to undergo, if necessary, a like operation, leaving another child, and sometimes two. There are thousands and thousands of tongues ready to repeat what the owners know to be false, and these lies are a part of the stock in trade, the valuable assets, of superstition. No church can afford to throw its property away. To admit that these stories are false now is to admit that the church has been busy lying for hundreds of years, and it is also to admit that the word of the church is not and cannot be taken as evidence of any fact."

Of course, one who has made himself so obnoxious to the church as has Colonel Ingersoll cannot escape. For years he has been the target for the mudslingers of the church. Upon him the liars for Christ's sake have exercised all their ingenuity. Notoriety seekers have tried to shine in the reflected rays of his reputation. Small preachers have advertised themselves by "answering Ingersoll," and obscure

illiterates have got their names into the papers by "challenging" him. Whole bodies of Christians, even, have achieved fame by praying for his conversion. And when all these schemes have failed to move him from his serenity of conduct, the mudslingers and liars have gone to work more industriously than ever. He has been accused of about all the sins and many of the crimes in the calendar. It is said that he is in favor of disseminating vile literature; he is accused of having eulogized whisky and then of having stolen some pious rodomontade denouncing alcohol; of having surrendered to a boy of the Confederate army; of having abused his sister; of having driven his daughters into the church, and his son insane, and about a hundred more things as idiotic as these. A fair sample is the sermon of a South Dakota minister so impoverished in brains that he would never have been heard of outside of his own parish had he not repeated the slanders invented by another scoundrelly preacher. We subjoin the sermon, calling particular attention to the statement of the preacher that he spoke from his own knowledge. That statement stamps him at once as maliciously dishonest, for all his charges are absolutely false, and his insinuations are of the sort too contemptible for any gentleman to utter by mistake. That he deliberately lied there can be no doubt:

"Rev. J. D. Houston preached one of the most sensational sermons last night ever heard

in Aberdeen. Contrary to the general expectation of his hearers, his remarks, announced to be directed at Ingersoll, did not particularly concern Ingersoll's views, theories, and doctrines, but were devoted to a sharp attack upon Ingersoll's character public and private, and to his standing as a man and citizen. It was not pleasant to say things derogatory of any man, commented the speaker, and he was constrained to do so only in this instance, because Mr. Ingersoll had posed, and his fame had been widely heralded in this respect as well as others, as the model moral man, whose home was his church, and whose family circle was his altar. It was to reveal the great Agnostic as he really is that the minister, cognizant personally to some extent of many things which he should discuss, had been induced to speak. If the essentials of the address ever come to the ears of Colonel Ingersoll, and he contemplates an action for libel and slander, he can summon several hundred witnesses, as the church interior, including the west class room, was filled.

“‘As a boy,’ said Mr. Houston, ‘Ingersoll learned to become a frequenter of saloons and other places of low association. His father was a straitlaced Presbyterian minister, and Ingersoll has been accustomed all his life to slander his departed parent by charging that his unbelief and ridicule of things holy were due to the tyrannical conduct of that parent in religious matters toward his children.’ The elder Ingersoll, according to Mr. Houston, was a man who erred on the side of leniency and license in his management of his children rather than in great severity. He was pious and devout but not particularly puritanical. Ingersoll has thus all his life not only permitted this slander to stand against his father's name, but has done

more to keep it alive than all other influences combined.

"Ingersoll as a young man maintained the reputation he had acquired as a drinking character and became celebrated for his carousals with depraved companions. On one occasion, while a saloon row was in progress, he was cut on the forehead by a beer glass in the hands of some man as low as himself, and is said to carry the scar to this day. He was, charged the minister, once indicted, and the Illinois court records will so show, for being mixed up in a saloon broil. In later years he had frequently been so thoroughly intoxicated as to make it impossible for him to fill public engagements. His own daughters, it was specifically stated, had drank wine from his table until intoxicated to such a degree as to require assistance in getting from the room. And yet this was the man and this the family that had been held up for years as models for the people of the country to follow.

"When he came to speak of Ingersoll as a soldier, Mr. Houston showed considerable heat, and his previous attacks and statements seemed mild by comparison. Up to the time that he was commissioned as an officer in the Union army by President Lincoln at the solicitation of several personal friends he was, said the speaker, an ultra pro-slavery man and much opposed to the war. He participated in only one engagement during the war, and in that was chased into a hog-yard and actually taken prisoner by a sixteen-year-old Confederate boy. When he returned to private life his friends covered him all over with glory, and the fleeting years have served to increase the brilliancy of the halo and conceal the actual facts.

"It was further charged that Ingersoll had

no credit and no standing in the city of Peoria, which was for a long time his home, and that he had been unsuccessful in his political aspirations because he was known to be a godless man, and destitute of the higher and best sensibilities and feelings; that Ingersoll had often insulted the religion of his guests, and was profane in a large degree, vicious and depraved. Instances of his mock baptism of a little child with a glass of beer in a saloon, in ridicule of the practice of sprinkling, and others of somewhat similar bearing, were given.

“Mr. Houston gave his audience to understand that he spoke largely from his own personal knowledge of the man. Facts not gathered this way were learned of ex-Governor Chase, of Indiana, and other gentlemen whose names he spoke. He claimed that Infidelity never had and never could produce a model, moral man, and that Ingersoll had reached the ideal as near as any man could expect to reach it who denied the Bible and its teachings. The effort was so personal in its character, so widely different from anything expected, and so surprising in its statements, that it held the closest attention of the audience for nearly an hour.”

For the benefit of Liberals who have these things thrust at them by their Christian neighbors, and are asked to explain if Colonel Ingersoll is really as bad as the preachers say he is, we have prepared the following consideration of the absurd stories. It is impossible, of course, to nail every lie told, for they often take such grotesque shapes that circumstantial denial is hard to compass. And when one lie is nailed, another is started on the same line, with a little

variation, and then the friends of the Colonel are asked to consider that also! But if we have omitted any particular one of the hundreds of lies, the Liberals and friends of the glorious Colonel are authorized to say on our responsibility, when they hear anything reflecting in any way on his integrity, goodness, honesty, cleanness of life or character, that it is a (blank) lie, and to wager the preacher a hundred dollars that he can't prove it. And if the preacher will put up the money, a letter to us will assure its being covered. We are weary of writing letters exploding these myths in detail, and we make this comprehensive and sweeping denial to save further annoyance. We shall print this article in pamphlet form and send it to every preacher we hear of who attacks Ingersoll's reputation; and we hope every Freethinker in the world will keep a supply on hand to give to any slanderous person who, ignorantly or venomously, repeats the infamous falsehoods of the clergy.

THE CHARGE OF PLAGIARISM IN A "TEMPERANCE" SPEECH.

One of the earliest charges made against Colonel Ingersoll, since he became famous, was that in a "temperance" speech he stole the language of another. This charge, the following letter written by Colonel Ingersoll both explains and refutes. The letter has been given the greatest circulation possible, but still the accu-

sation is made by the ignorant or dishonest clergymen of all denominations :

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Nov, 1, 1881.

"SIR: For several months charges have appeared—mostly in Christian papers—that I am guilty of appropriating the writings of others and palming them off as my own. It is charged that I delivered a speech on Temperance in which I used the language of another and pretended that it was original.

"The facts concerning this foolish and malicious charge are as follows :

"In 1876, in the course of my argument in the Munn trial at Chicago, I used the following language :

" "I believe, gentlemen, that alcohol, to a certain degree, demoralizes those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death, and dishonor, it demoralizes everybody that touches it. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime. All you have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of this stream of death—of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread ; of the men of genius it has wrecked ; of the millions who have struggled with imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing. And when you think of the jails, of the almshouses, of the prisons, and of the scaffolds upon either bank—I do not wonder

that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol.'

"This is the only 'Temperance' speech I ever made.

"A year or so after this some temperance lecturer appropriated what I said in the Munn trial, and also the following from some one else :

" 'Intemperance cuts down youth in its vigor, manhood in its strength, and age in its weakness. It breaks the father's heart, bereaves the doting mother, extinguishes natural affections, erases conjugal loves, blots out filial attachments, blasts parental hopes, and brings down mourning age in sorrow to the grave. It produces weakness, not strength; sickness, not health; death, not life. It makes wives widows, children orphans, fathers fiends—and all of them paupers and beggars. It feeds rheumatism, nurses gout, welcomes epidemic, invites cholera, imparts pestilence, and embraces consumption. It covers the land with idleness, misery, and crime. It fills your jails, supplies your almshouses, and demands your asylums. It engenders controversies, fosters quarrels, and cherishes riots. It crowds your penitentiaries and furnishes victims to your scaffolds. It is the lifeblood of the gambler, the aliment of the burglar, the prop of the high wayman, and the support of the midnight incendiary. It countenances the liar, respects the thief, and esteems the blasphemer. It violates obligations, reverences frauds, and honors infamy. It defames benevolence, hates love, scorns virtue, and slanders innocence. It incites the father to butcher his helpless offspring; helps the husband to massacre his wife and the child to grind the parri-

cidal axe. It burns up men, consumes women, detests life, curses God, and despises heaven. It suborns witnesses, nurses perjury, defiles the jury-box, and stains the judicial ermine. It degrades the citizen, debases the legislator, dishonors the statesman, and disarms the patriot. It brings shame, not honor; terror, not safety; despair, not hope; misery, not happiness, and with the malevolence of a fiend it calmly surveys its frightful desolation—and, unsatisfied with its havoc, it poisons felicity, kills peace, ruins morals, blights confidences, slays reputation, and wipes out national honors; then curses the world and laughs at its ruin. It does all that and more—it murders the soul. It is the sum of villainies, the father of all crimes, the mother of abominations, the devil's best friend, and God's worst enemy.'

"These two pieces—one taken from me and the one just quoted—were put together and published as one piece. Somebody recognized the first part as mine and charged that the whole had been stolen from me. A paper was sent me in which both pieces appeared as mine. I at once disclaimed all authorship and knowledge of the second piece, but admitted that the first part was mine. I have made this explanation hundreds of times, but the charge is still made. Now I wish to say that the first article is mine, and I will give a thousand dollars reward to any one who will show that it is not original.

"As to the second article: I will give the same amount to any one who will show that I ever pretended that I was the author; that I ever uttered it, or wrote it, or repeated it, or published it, or claimed it directly or indirectly, as my own.

"Some persons without my authority have

pretended to publish my lectures. Rhodes & McClure of Chicago have published a book filled with pretended sayings of mine. In this book this 'Temperance speech' appears. I commenced suit to enjoin them not only, but wrote them that the second part of the 'Temperance speech' was not mine and requested them not to publish it as such.

"Hundreds of times I have disclaimed the authorship of this piece. Persons who know my religious opinions ought to know that under no circumstance could I be the author, and that under no circumstances could I afford to appropriate the language of others without giving full credit. Hoping that you will have the justice to print the denial, I remain,

"Yours truly, ROBERT G. INGERSOLL."

It seems the clergy were so angry that Colonel Ingersoll should say anything of which they might be supposed to approve—as this denunciation of alcohol—that they had to try to rob him of the credit by accusing him of plagiarizing it. So much did they hate him for having denounced the cruelties of religion that they could not forgive him even when he joined with them in denouncing alcohol!

Further light on this matter of plagiarism is had by reference to some correspondence published in the *Christian Standard*, of Cincinnati, issue dated October 29, 1881. On October 16, 1881, W. S. Bush, of Washington, D. C., a lawyer then associated with Colonel Ingersoll, wrote to W. H. Lamaster, of Noblesville, Ind. as follows, his communication appearing in

the *Standard* of date referred to: "The charge of plagiarism against Colonel Ingersoll is an old, stale charge, exploded again and again, and now revamped by Braden. It originated first with the Jacksonville (Ill.) *Journal*, and was followed up until it was proven that the portions published in Gunn's book in 1866 were stolen from prior temperance documents published in Ohio and New York."

In 1899, the New York *Methodist Advocate* published the libel in answer to a correspondent, and the writer of this corrected the editor, setting forth these facts, which induced him to investigate the matter, and in the *Advocate* of January 18, 1900, the explanation appeared, as written by D. C. Babcock of Dover, N. H., as follows: "If you will look in Volume II, pages 19 and 20, of 'Permanent Temperance Documents,' you will find a petition to the Ohio legislature from Portage, dated February, 1838, when Mr. Ingersoll was about three [five] years old. The documents referred to above are in the James Black Library in the National Temperance Society's rooms, Nos. 3 and 5 West Eighteenth street."

That is all there is to the "temperance" speech which the clergy accuse Mr. Ingersoll of plagiarizing. But this portion, as he says, was never uttered by him nor claimed by him.

A few years afterwards, however, they endeavored to get even with him by crying out that he is a eulogist of whisky. The occasion was when he wrote this letter:

“NEW YORK, April, 1887.

“MY DEAR FRIEND: I send you some of the most wonderful whisky that ever drove the skeleton from a feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June; the carol of the lark; the dews of night; the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it and you will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the 'Harvest Home,' mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it and you will feel within your blood the star-lit dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men.

“R. G. INGERSOLL.”

Now, the truth about this is as follows: Colonel Ingersoll's young friend Brown—now his son-in-law—was sick with pneumonia. The doctor prescribed whisky in small doses, as nearly all doctors do in such cases. Another friend of Mr. Ingersoll's had some time previously made him a present of a jug of very old whisky. Of this jug the Colonel sent Mr. Brown a bottle, and to cheer him up and give a happy moment he sent the letter with it. That is all there is to this much-talked-of “eulogy of whisky.” The letter is simply a highly poetic description of the process of manufacturing whisky, and anyone with a bit of imagination in him can see it. The Colonel did not ask Mr. Brown to get drunk, nor does he intimate that whisky is a beverage to be

drank inordinately. He sent it as a medicine, and we never heard that it is a crime for even an Infidel to desire that his sick friend should recover. And one would think, too, that his previous denunciation of alcohol would have been sufficient to restrain the men of God in some slight degree.

But we do not want to convey the impression that Colonel Ingersoll is a Prohibitionist. He is not. On this subject he has said in a letter to a gentleman of Galveston, Texas :

“ WASHINGTON, D. C., May 19, 1887.

“ MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: I was never a Prohibitionist—never have believed in sumptuary legislation—but have always advocated the greatest individual liberty. The editor [of a paper, who had asserted that he was a Prohibitionist] is mistaken. The trouble with Prohibition is that it fills the country with spies—makes neighbors suspicious of each other—fills the community with meddlers—with people who poke their impudent noses into the business of others. Besides, Prohibition does not prohibit—it does not even prohibit the Prohibitionists.

“ Yours truly, R. G. INGERSOLL.”

ON TOBACCO.

Colonel Ingersoll wrote also a eulogy of tobacco, of which he is not a bit ashamed. It is as follows :

“ Nearly four centuries ago Columbus, the adventurous, in the blessed island of Cuba, saw happy people with rolled leaves between their lips. Above their heads were little clouds of

smoke. Their faces were serene, and in their eyes was the autumnal heaven of content. These people were kind, innocent, gentle, and loving.

“The climate of Cuba is the friendship of the earth and air, and of this climate the sacred leaves were born—the leaves that breed in the mind of him who uses them the cloudless, happy days in which they grew.

“These leaves make friends and celebrate with gentle rites the vows of peace. They have given consolation to the world. They are the companions of the lonely—the friends of the imprisoned—of the exile—of workers in mines—of fellers of forests—of sailors on the deep seas. They are the givers of strength and calm to the vexed and wearied minds of those who build with thought and brain the temples of the soul.

“They tell of hope and rest. They smooth the wrinkled brows of care—drive fear and strange, misshapen dreads from out the mind, and fill the heart with rest and peace. Within their magic warp and woof some potent, gracious spell imprisoned lies that, when released by fire, doth softly steal within the fortress of the brain, and bind in sleep the captured sentinels of care and grief.

“These leaves are the friend of the fireside, and their smoke-like incense rises from myriads of happy homes. Cuba is the smile of the sea.”

Various persons have taken these eulogies of whisky and tobacco too seriously, as inculcating bad morals. To one of these the Colonel once replied :

“There are some people so constituted that there is no room in the heaven of their minds for the butterflies and moths of fancy to spread

their wings. Everything is taken in solemn and stupid earnest. Such men would hold Shakspeare responsible for what Falstaff said about 'sack,' and for Mrs. Quickly's notions of propriety.

"There is an old Greek saying which is applicable here: 'In the presence of human stupidity, even the gods stand helpless.'"

Since reading that we have never felt like trying to correct Mr. Ingersoll's morals.

COLONEL INGERSOLL IN THE ARMY.

On the authority of a scurrilous pamphlet by a nameless scoundrel, the preachers of the country are telling their congregations that Colonel Ingersoll's war record is derogatory to his manhood. The form of their accusations is substantially the same, showing that they emanate from a common source, and the words are usually these: "He was in but one engagement, and in that was chased into a hogyard and actually taken prisoner by a sixteen-year-old Confederate boy."

There is not one word of truth in this, except that he was captured by the Confederates. He was in two battles previous to this skirmish—Shiloh and Corinth, Miss.,—and won an enviable record in both, as is proved by his soldiers and officers. The following letter from one of the Colonel's officers gives a brief and correct history of Mr. Ingersoll's army experience. It was published in the Peoria daily *Transcript* of

April 11, 1891, and was written to D. N. Harwood, of Shelbyville, Ill.

“PEORIA, ILL., March 14, 1891.

“MR. D. N. HARWOOD, Shelbyville, Ill.—*Dear Sir*: I have received your letter asking in regard to the service of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll in the Union army and the battles in which he was engaged. I am glad to be able to answer your inquiries from an intimate personal knowledge of the facts.

“The Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, Colonel Ingersoll in command, left camp in Peoria, Ill., February 22, 1862, marching overland to St. Louis. From that point it proceeded by transport to Pittsburg Landing, where it arrived in March, and on the sixth and seventh days of April participated in the memorable battle of Shiloh, where Colonel Ingersoll did good service, several of its number being killed and wounded.

“Its next experience, except the constant scouting required of a cavalry command, was in that other two days' fight at Corinth, Miss. There again, under command of its gallant Colonel, it proved its loyal bravery, like the regiments that fought by its side, by its list of wounded and dead. The regiment was next stationed at Jackson, Tenn., and, on the 28th day of November, 1862, news of the movements of the raiding rebel cavalry under Forrest having been received, Colonel Ingersoll, with a force consisting of a part of his own and another cavalry regiment and a section of artillery, in all numbering six hundred men, was dispatched on a reconnoitering expedition in the direction of Lexington, Tenn. We camped at night near the village, and very early the next morning were attacked by a rebel division at least ten

thousand strong. He (Colonel Ingersoll) had only time to deploy his small force in a single rank on each side of the road, where he had planted the artillery, and where, having dismounted, he was personally directing the service of his two guns, when we were literally overwhelmed by the rebel forces, charging six ranks deep. A good many of our command, being run over and passed by the enemy, escaped as best they could, but Colonel Ingersoll, fighting on foot, together with part of his men and the battery, was entirely surrounded and overborne by numbers, and surrendered to the enemy. Forrest, supposing, no doubt, that a large force was in his front, immediately paroled his prisoners and pushed forward. Colonel Ingersoll was sent to St. Louis to command a paroled camp, and here, attacked by illness, he waited weary months for his exchange. As there appeared little prospect of this, all exchanges at this time having been suspended by the government, Colonel Ingersoll, despairing of a return to active service, visited his regiment in the fall and declared his intention to resign. Though deeply regretting the loss of their brave and genial commander, the boys bade him good-bye with the conviction that under the circumstances his course was the wisest one. Thus the government lost his personal services in the field, but on his return home his matchless eloquence in behalf of the old flag and his old comrades in the front were worth thousands of men and millions of money, and will live when marble has crumbled to dust.

“I have thus sketched in such meager outline as will come within the limits of an ordinary letter the facts you request; and as I am personally unknown to you, I refer you, as to the correctness of these statements, to some of the

officers of Colonel Ingersoll's regiment. I will name Lieut.-Col. B. D. Meek, of Eureka, Ill.; Major S. D. Puterbaugh, Capt. P. F. Elliott, Capt. Geo. W. Odell, and Lieut. W. G. A. Buchanan, all of Peoria, Ill. The last named comrade, having been wounded in the field, was an eye-witness of the capture of Colonel Ingersoll and his men by the rebels.

"Yours very respectfully,

"JOHN W. KIMSEY,

"Late Lieutenant, Company B, 11th Illinois Cavalry."

We want to ask the preachers if they see any evidence of cowardice in that account. Any disgrace in having six hundred men captured by ten thousand? Is a man, in their opinion, personally a coward who will get down off his horse, and, with only two ranks of three hundred men each, work a couple of guns in the face of and at ten thousand men? Is a man who commanded a regiment throughout the battle of Shiloh, doing "good service," a military failure or a coward? Be honest, gentleman, now, and tell the truth.

On another occasion Mr. Kimsey referred to the charge that Colonel Ingersoll shirked his duty in the war, as follows, his letter being printed in the *Transcript* of Peoria, Ill., September, 1889:

"TO THE EDITOR: It makes my blood boil, as it no doubt does that of every survivor of the 11th Illinois Cavalry, to read the unscrupulous and groundless charges against the bravery of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll.

"Now, I am no guardian of the Colonel or his interests. He needs none. History is slow and calumny is swift. Time, therefore, will do Colonel Ingersoll justice if I and every member of his command remain silent.

"It was in the fall of 1862 that our regiment was encamped at Jackson, Tenn. Then came word of a raid by Forrest in force, in the direction of Lexington, some twenty miles away; and to that point, with a part of his command, he was ordered to move. With some six or seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery, Colonel Ingersoll moved out that afternoon, and at the end of a forced march encamped late that night near Lexington, an old tumble-down village, not Corinth, as this monumental liar says.

"Very early the next morning the command was ordered 'to horse,' for the pickets had been driven in and the woods in front were swarming with rebel cavalry. Forrest, with his whole division, not less than ten thousand cavalry, was bearing down on our handful, that an hour before had seemed an army. Then Colonel Ingersoll arose to the height of the hour. He formed a single line across the Lexington road, all that his meager force would permit, planted his park of artillery in the road, and awaited the assault. He did not wait long, for Forrest, with a line longer than his own, and five or six ranks deep, an avalanche of men and horses, came down upon him. It was then that the Colonel dismounted in the middle of the line, and standing by the two guns in the road, encouraged the men, as one after the other went down, with his calm instructions to 'Give them canister!' 'Give it to them in their faces!' 'Shoot low, boys, and shoot slow, but hit 'em!' And there he stood when the moving mass of men and horses,

of friend and foe, were mingled for a moment (it seemed like an hour!) in a hand-to-hand conflict. Then it was by the very fact of overwhelming numbers the rebels could not find us all, and Ingersoll, with a portion of his regiment, actually broke through the solid mass and came out in the rear of the rebel line, where we were surrounded and captured.

"Ingersoll was paroled that night, as Forrest had no idea that he had struck anything more than our skirmish line. He supposed that the battle was ahead, and had no time to fool with prisoners. The Colonel was then sent up to command a parole camp at St. Louis, where he waited wearily to be exchanged, so as to get back to the front. Some of his men, weary of waiting, got leave to go out and work in Missouri harvest fields; and it was here that, after months of this illness, the Colonel resigned. He came into camp and told the boys why. He could not rust there as a paroled prisoner, and all approved his choice to resign and get back, since he could, into life's activities.

"Call Ingersoll an Infidel; say that he was reckless; say that he was blasphemous under provocation; but do not say in the presence of a member of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry that he was a coward, or that he shirked a post of duty because of its dangers."

The letter of Lieutenant Kimsey's has been in print several years, yet it did not prevent the little minister of Aberdeen from preaching the sermon before printed, which induced the editor of the *Fargo Argus* to say in his issue of Dec. 21, 1895:

"The writer knew Colonel Ingersoll personally, and the charges against him by the Aber-

deen preacher are too silly to talk about. On the battlefield of Shiloh his personal courage was tested and found not wanting. This also the writer witnessed. His home life is as beautiful as a poem. In character he is a clean, loving, manly man, hating the vile and reverencing the good. As for his religion—that seems not to be in the question; but as for his personal character, only those ignorant of the facts assail it.”

One word from a man who knows is better than a whole book by one who does not.

Colonel Ingersoll did not surrender to a sixteen-year-old Confederate boy, but to Major G. V. Rambaut, of Forrest's command. And in regard to this the following pleasing little story is now going the rounds of the press of the country:

“During the recent visit of Robert G. Ingersoll to Memphis, Tenn., an incident occurred that served to remind him of his war experience. After the lecture he attended a reception given in his honor by Col. and Mrs. William R. Moore. Of the guests that were presented to him, he regarded one with an eye of vague recognition.

“‘Surely I have seen you somewhere before,’ said the Colonel.

“‘Was it not about thirty years ago?’ asked the other. ‘That is to say, in December, 1862?’

“‘I have reason to remember that month,’ said Colonel Ingersoll. ‘It was then that I was captured by the Confederates.’

“‘And so have I,’ replied the guest, ‘for it was then that I had the honor of capturing a certain Federal Colonel. Don't you remember

Major G. V. Rambaut, of General Forrest's command?'

"The Colonel did remember, and the two ex-warriors sought a corner and recalled the details of the event. Colonel Ingersoll, in command of an Illinois regiment of cavalry, was overwhelmed by a large force of Forrest's cavalry. The colonel was on foot, and the enemy, led by Major Rambaut, was on him before he could get away. Immediately after the capture of Ingersoll, General Forrest rode up.

"'Who's in command of those troops?' cried Forrest, pointing toward the flying Illinois cavalrymen.

"'I don't know,' replied Ingersoll, jocularly.

"'Who was in command?' amended the general.

"'If you'll keep the secret,' said Ingersoll, blandly, 'I'll tell you. I was.'

"Colonel Ingersoll's good humor pleased Forrest, who treated him well. After the war Forrest and Ingersoll renewed their acquaintance in Washington and became warm friends, but the Colonel did not meet Major Rambaut until his recent visit to Memphis, thirty years later.'

While serving at Jackson, before his capture, Colonel Ingersoll was chief of cavalry, and he was offered a generalship, but declined it on the ground that, with his lack of experience in military matters, the command of a regiment was all the responsibility he was willing to accept. The Colonel was one of the very first to respond to the call for troops, and raised four regiments early in the summer of 1861. He took the colonelcy of the Eleventh Illinois Cav-

alry, and went to the front, with the results told by Lieutenant Kimsey.

A little incident which occurred during his captivity illustrates well the unselfish character of the man. Among the officers captured with him was one named Frye (afterward Colonel) on whom the imprisonment told severely because of his greater age, and the Confederate officers had ordered him to be sent to Libby prison. Ingersoll wrote a letter to Forrest, on behalf of Frye, asking to be allowed to take Frye's place; and so eloquently did he plead that Forrest was touched and consented to the immediate exchange of the whole of them. The Colonel, however, was not exchanged, but was sent to command a parole camp at St. Louis, as related by Lieutenant Kimsey. Frye probably owes his life to Colonel Ingersoll's fetching way of putting things. Some of the prisoners were sent to Andersonville, and when the roll of those to go was called it stopped just short of R. G. Ingersoll. The next name would have been his.

Another pleasant story connected with the Colonel's capture is this, told to a reporter of the *New York Sun*: "I served in Col. Bob Ingersoll's command," said a veteran of the Ochiltree Club at the panorama of Bull Run this morning, "and whenever I want to have a good laugh I recall in my mind the incidents connected with his capture in Tennessee. I have seen somewhere a cruel paragraph to the effect that the Colonel surrendered very willingly, and

I want to brand that falsehood for just what it is. A braver man I never saw in five years of service. We were scattered over a good deal of territory surrounding a village at the time the Colonel was taken in and cared for by the Johnnies. We were in a skirmish at the time, and had been run over by about 10,000 of Forrest's men. But the Colonel kept on fighting. A number of his men saw that he was in imminent peril, and that if he didn't surrender he would be killed, and they yelled at him at the top of their voices to give up. He heeded, but I could see that he did so with regret and disgust. Here is where the humor began. When the Colonel stopped fighting he threw up his hands and screamed out, 'Stop firing! I'll acknowledge your d—d old Confederacy.'

"The Colonel was taken over to a store for safe keeping, and he proved to be a great curiosity. People flocked around him, listened to his stories, laughed, and declared that they were having more fun than they ever had in their lives. One night the Colonel sat around the store till a goodly number of the rebels came in, and then he began to treat and tell yarns. Finally the crowd overflowed the place and blocked up the entrance to it. Then the Colonel went outside. The boys were all feeling well under the potency of words and drinks, and every man, woman, and child within the sound of his voice loved him. Directly the Colonel was asked to make a speech. This was what

he was working for, and a minute later he was on a box and addressing the crowd—and it was a right rough crowd, too. No lecture that great orator has ever delivered contained so much that was good in it. It fairly bubbled over with good will and the milk of human kindness. He pictured how regretfully the North took up arms against the South, reminding his hearers that they had fired the first shot in their assault upon Fort Sumter. Then he went off on slavery, placing the poor white before him in the place of the unfortunate blacks, a people with souls and all the instincts of the whites, but downtrodden for no other reason than that they were black. He pictured the scenes, when those who had held human souls in bondage were called before the judgment throne to answer for deeds done in the flesh. It was a touching appeal, and brought out streams of tears and storms of applause from the very men who had but a few hours before shot at and captured him. At the moment when the most pathetic passages in his speech were being delivered, General Forrest rushed into the crowd, all aglow with excitement, but not anger, and exclaimed: ‘Here, Ingersoll, stop that speech and I’ll exchange you for a government mule.’ He was demoralizing the whole of that command.” Forrest wanted to exchange him, but as our government had suspended exchanges, all Forrest could do with him was to send him to command the parole camp at St. Louis.

At the re-union of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry at Elmwood, September, 1895, Colonel Ingersoll was the honored guest and orator of the occasion. The town was gayly decorated, and pictures and busts of Mr. Ingersoll were in every window. The surviving comrades of six regiments were present. Colonel Ingersoll was accompanied from Peoria to Elmwood by a delegation of more than five hundred prominent citizens. As he passed to the stand, his old regiment lined up on both sides of the way, and as he went through, his old soldiers gave him the most pathetic reception. "We are glad to see you, Bob," was the shout, and scores of them had tears in their eyes as they said it. And so did the Colonel. After a parade of the veterans, Colonel Ingersoll made a speech. In introducing him the chairman, E. R. Brown, referred to the time the Colonel declared, in a speech in Rouse's Hall, that from that time forward "there would be one free man in Illinois," and expressed the country's indebtedness to him for what had been done since for the freedom and happiness of mankind, "by his mighty brain, his great spirit, and his gentle heart." The appearance of Colonel Ingersoll (we quote from the Peoria *Transcript's* report) "was the signal for a mighty shout, which was heartily joined in by every one present. It was fully ten minutes before the cheering had subsided, and when Colonel Ingersoll commenced to speak the cheering was renewed and he was forced to wait

several minutes more. For an hour and a half he held the vast audience spellbound."

Would that reception have been accorded him had he been the undeserving soldier the ministers say he was? Would those veterans have cried over a coward, or a man unfit to lead them in war, or who had lacked bravery in battle? It is an insult to them to think it, and it would be very dangerous to say it where they could hear.

COLONEL INGERSOLL IN POLITICS.

It is also alleged by the same disreputable authority which started the story as to the capture of Colonel Ingersoll, that he was a violent pro-slavery man before the war. The facts are that Colonel Ingersoll was a Democrat at that time, and held the political opinions common to his party. But on slavery, when he was running for Congress against William Kellogg, a Republican, in the Fourth Congressional District of Illinois, in 1860, he went further than Kellogg in denunciation of that brutal institution.

He was then only about twenty-six years of age, and of course with unformed opinions. J. K. Magie, for many years a Republican politician of Illinois, and for several years a reading clerk in the Illinois legislature, once wrote for us this about Mr. Ingersoll at that period:

"He was overflowing with good nature and wit, and his speeches at that time pleased the crowd more than they instructed it. But when

the war broke upon us Mr. Ingersoll became more serious and in earnest. Now he began to discover deep thought and impassioned utterances which thrilled and stirred his hearers and carried them to higher and better conceptions of their duties to government and to each other. . . . He was in great demand as a speaker during the latter part of the war, and no man in Illinois did more for the cause of the Union than did Mr. Ingersoll."

Along about 1866 Mr. Ingersoll was appointed attorney-general of Illinois by Governor Oglesby. He could have succeeded himself when the office was made elective, but was induced to become a candidate for governor, and was thrown down by John M. Palmer, who accepted the candidacy after having said he would not, thus inducing Mr. Ingersoll to enter the field. In the convention Palmer's friends used the argument that Colonel Ingersoll was an Infidel to defeat him. Then the politicians endeavored to get Colonel Ingersoll to accept the candidacy for attorney-general, but he refused, saying: "When I say I am a candidate for a particular office I mean it; and when I say I am not a candidate for a particular office I mean that too. When I became a candidate for governor I renounced my candidacy for attorney-general, and other candidates were invited into the field. I would despise myself forever were I now to become a candidate against any of these men whom by my action I have invited to become candidates." Mr.

Ingersoll was as square in politics as in all things else, and the treachery of Mr. Palmer so disgusted him that for eight years he took no active part in politics. In 1876, however, he was sent to the Republican national convention as a delegate, and made his great speech nominating James G. Blaine. When Hayes got the office of President, Colonel Ingersoll's friends thought that he should have the mission to Berlin, and presented his name to Mr. Hayes for that office. Illinois felt that as she had no representative in the cabinet she should have one of the first-class missions for one of her favorite sons, and the entire delegation of senators and representatives in Congress from that state went to Mr. Hayes and requested that he appoint Colonel Ingersoll minister to Berlin. And it was the intention of Mr. Hayes, as every well-informed politician knew at the time, to do so; but the Methodists got the ear of *Mrs.* Hayes, and she prevailed upon her husband to delay the appointment, and while it was hanging up Colonel Ingersoll went to the secretary of state and told that personage that he did not desire his name used in connection with the Berlin mission, as he did not wish the position. It was the general impression before that, that the Colonel would accept. Whether he would or not, no one but himself knows, but it may be surmised that he heard of the efforts of the Methodists with *Mrs.* Hayes, and he probably knew her influence with the then President,

probably the smallest man who ever by accident obtained an office. The Illinois papers, at any rate, were indignant, and one of them said: "Our people are unanimously of the opinion that Colonel Ingersoll was most shabbily treated by the present national administration, and they wonder how he has managed to be so lenient towards President Hayes after such inexcusable neglect. Probably the religious element of the country has had much to do with this." Concluding, the paper paid a tribute to the charitable disposition of the Colonel by saying that those who saw in Colonel Ingersoll's activity in the lecture field a retaliation for the treatment accorded him by Hayes, were, in its opinion, mistaken. Undoubtedly they were, for Colonel Ingersoll is too big a man to harbor malice against little people "who do as they must," as he puts it; and Hayes was one of those, if ever there was a man subject to his environments.

On the subject of slavery the following from the autobiography of Frederick Douglas is interesting reading to all but ministers:

"A dozen years ago, or more [1868 or earlier], on one of the frostiest and coldest nights I ever experienced, I delivered a lecture in the town of Elmwood, Illinois, twenty miles distant from Peoria. It was one of those bleak and flinty nights when prairie winds pierce like needles, and a step on the snow sounds like a file on the teeth of a saw. My next appointment after Elmwood was on Monday night, and in order

to reach it in time it was necessary to go to Peoria the night previous, so as to take an early morning train, and I could only accomplish this by leaving Elmwood after my lecture at midnight, for there was no Sunday train. So a little before the hour at which my train was expected at Elmwood I started for the station with my friend Mr. Brown, the gentleman who had kindly entertained me during my stay. On the way I said to him: 'I am going to Peoria with something like a real dread of the place. I expect to be compelled to walk the streets of that city all night to keep from freezing.' I told him 'that the last time I was there I could obtain no shelter at any hotel and that I feared I should meet a similar exclusion to-night.' Mr. Brown was visibly affected by the statement, and for some time was silent. At last, as if suddenly discovering a way out of a painful situation, he said: 'I know a man in Peoria, should the hotels be closed against you there, who would gladly open his doors to you—a man who will receive you at any hour of the night, and in any weather—and that man is Robert G. Ingersoll.' 'Why,' said I, 'it would not do to disturb a family at such a time as I shall arrive there, on a night so cold as this.' 'No matter about the hour,' he said, 'neither he nor his family would be happy if they thought you would be shelterless on such a night. I know Mr. Ingersoll, and that he will be glad to welcome you at midnight or at cock-crow.' I became much interested by his description of Mr. Ingersoll. Fortunately I had no occasion for disturbing him or his family. I found quarters at the best hotel in the city for the night. In the morning I resolved to know more of this now famous and noted 'Infidel!' I gave him an early call, for I

was not so abundant in cash as to refuse hospitality in a strange city when on a mission of goodwill to men. The experiment worked admirably. Mr. Ingersoll was at home, and if I have ever met a man with real living human sunshine in his face, and honest, manly kindness in his voice, I met one who possessed these qualities that morning. I received a welcome from Mr. Ingersoll and his family which would have been a cordial to the bruised heart of any proscribed and storm-beaten stranger, and one which I can never forget or fail to appreciate. Perhaps there were Christian ministers and Christian families in Peoria at that time by whom I might have been received in the same gracious manner. In charity I am bound to say there probably were such ministers and such families, but I am equally bound to say that in my former visits to this place I had failed to find them. Incidents of this character have greatly tended to liberalize my views as to the value of creeds in estimating the character of men. They have brought me to the conclusion that genuine goodness is the same, whether found inside or outside the church, and that to be an 'Infidel' no more proves a man to be selfish, mean, and wicked than to be evangelical proves him to be honest, just, and humane."

During the campaign of Hayes, Colonel Ingersoll, who was stumping for him, made a speech in Peoria in his behalf. To show what his neighbors thought of him at that time, long after these charges were made, we quote the following dispatch to the *Chicago Tribune*: "Peoria turned out en masse to-night to extend to her gifted Ingersoll a cordial, hearty welcome

home. The hall was filled at an early hour with not less than four thousand enthusiastic people, while thousands were unable to obtain admission and stood in the streets adjacent to the building vainly endeavoring to catch the speaker's words. At eight o'clock Colonel Ingersoll and a large number of leading citizens entered the building and mounted the platform. As soon as the crowd caught a glimpse of Bob's well-known form such a shout went up from that building as made the rafters ring. The Colonel's appearance in front was another signal for deafening applause, and it was at least five minutes before he could proceed. He spoke for an hour and a half and was listened to with the closest attention, closing amid tremendous applause. He held an impromptu reception on the stage immediately after his speech, and hundreds paid their respects to him."

Is such a reception as that, from one's neighbors evidence that the recipient is a reckless and dissolute character? Do people turn out like that to listen to a "barroom loafer?"

COLONEL INGERSOLL IN PEORIA, ILL.

Among other charges that the clergy are making against Mr. Ingersoll are those first made by the infamous nameless scoundrel we have mentioned, to the effect that when in Peoria the great Agnostic associated with disreputable people, and that his credit was as bad as his character. In 1881, when these accusations

were first made, an acquaintance of Colonel Ingersoll's wrote to the mayor of Peoria, as being an old citizen and leading man of the city—one who knew the Colonel well, and was in a position to know the truth. The mayor replied as follows :

“ PEORIA, ILL., Nov. 28, 1881.

“W. H. LAMASTER, Noblesville, Ill.,—*Dear Sir:* Yours of the 23d instant is at hand, and I hasten to reply. I know nothing of —— (naming the nameless scoundrel) or his pamphlet. I am not acquainted with him, and have never had the pleasure of seeing or reading that production. I judge, however, from reading your letter that he charges in his article given to the public many unsavory things against Colonel Ingersoll, and, without repeating them in this reply, I will endeavor to give a frank, candid, and truthful statement as to the estimation in which the Colonel has been held for many years in this city, and the opinions of the public in Peoria in regard to him at the present time; also as to whether Colonel Ingersoll did not for years in this city lead a dissolute life, and associate at improper places with the low and abandoned.

“ Whether Colonel Ingersoll, when a boy, was a good boy or a bad one, I cannot say. I did not know him when a boy, but suppose he was like other high-spirited boys, full of mischief, and violated his mother's rules as well as a few of the Ten Commandments?

“ For twenty-five years, or half his life-time, I have known him thoroughly, and during that time I have found him an honest, truthful man. His associates during these years were merchants, railroad-officials, and senators, gov-

errors, representatives in the legislature, active business men, and in fact ambitious aspirants for the presidency of the United States. He was looked upon by all, without respect of station, class, or creed, as nature's nobleman, blessed and esteemed by the people in general, and cursed or traduced by none, except those who did not like his politics (and I am one who disliked his sentiments in that respect), and those who did not like his views on religion. Not being a theologian, or one who claims it to be my duty to damn those I have a mind to, and save those I am inclined to, I never joined issue, as the lawyers say, with Colonel Ingersoll on this subject.

"During his twenty-five years of life in this city as a neighbor I can truthfully say that no citizen was more esteemed, none whose views were more sought for, and none who received, whenever he addressed our people, such tokens of public approval.

"During that time Colonel Ingersoll found a warm place in the hearts of our people for his broad-gauged charity. The hand of want was never extended to him in vain. The deserving always found him a cheerful giver, and an earnest, eloquent advocate.

"He made money fast and spent liberally. In a word, he paid his debts; his credit was in a sense unlimited; his note was accepted as cash, and his check was never dishonored that I have ever heard of.

"It may be that Colonel Ingersoll has not the grace of God. It may be that without that grace a man must necessarily be a bad man, but if a man may be a good man without that grace, then I hesitate not to say that Colonel Ingersoll is a good man—at least as good a man as his critics.

“Colonel Ingersoll has never spoken in this city during the last twenty-five years without disappointing hundreds who desired to hear him on account of the want of space in the building he spoke in, even when he lectured for charity at a dollar a ticket. The religious views of the Colonel I care nothing about; his politics I dislike. But the man himself I admire, honor, and esteem; and such I believe to be the sentiments of nine-tenths of the people of his old home, Peoria. Our great regret is that he has left us.

“Hoping the above may prove satisfactory, I am respectfully, &c., JOHN WARNER, Mayor.”

Eight years afterwards the same story was again started by the ministers. This time it reached Canada. The following from the *Daily Transcript*, of Peoria, Ill., of July 26, 1889, explains the matter :

“Everybody who remained in Peoria any great length of time knew Bob Ingersoll when he flourished and bloomed in this city. And let it be added right here, that there are few who knew the great man that did not love him. A few days ago Mayor Warner received a letter from Prince Edward’s Island in reference to Colonel Ingersoll. By this letter it will be seen that some one has been slandering the great and good Bob, and the citizens of Peoria are ready to rise almost en masse and mob the aforesaid slanderer in case he shows himself within the corporate limits of Peoria. Mayor Warner answered the letter yesterday, and he took particular pains to impress upon the mind of his questioner that Colonel Bob was a saint and nothing else. Here is the Mayor’s answer :

'John McKenzie, Esq., Prince Edwards Island—Dear Sir: You ask me to state what the standing and character of Col. R. G. Ingersoll was in this city during the many years of his residence here. Let me say briefly that the gentleman referred to was one of our most beloved and esteemed citizens, in his social, professional, and general bearing. While differing from myself and many others in politics, and having independent views on religion, which he fearlessly expressed, he had the respect and confidence of all those who differed from him on that line, for the reason that he respected the opinions of others and aimed to give no offense in the advocacy of his own views. Mr. Ingersoll was noted for his devotion to his family, his liberal-hearted charity to those in need, and his general nobility of character. His reputation was that of a sober, truthful, and honorable citizen, charitable towards all, and a true friend to the deserving.

“‘We Peorians hold his name and fame as things to be cherished, and among us no slanderer could attack him without being rebuked and silenced.

“‘Had Mr. Ingersoll remained with us he could have long since had a seat in the United States Senate, in my judgment, for he is worthy by character and fitness to fill even a more exalted post. It is unfortunate for mankind that the world has not more men like Colonel Ingersoll. I consider his life a blessing and a sunshine upon the highway of life. Respectfully yours, JOHN WARNER.’”

That ought to settle that question forever, unless the ministers are prepared to set the Mayor of Peoria down as a liar.

When Colonel Ingersoll left Peoria to live in Washington, in 1877, the *Peoria Transcript* said editorially :

“We deeply regret to announce that Col. R. G. Ingersoll and family have probably finally abandoned Peoria as a place of residence.

“In common with the entire mass of our citizens we shall deeply miss the Colonel and his family from among us, and in common with that same mass we wish them abundant prosperity and unalloyed happiness in their new home. As a citizen and neighbor Colonel Ingersoll had won the hearts of everyone, and whatever may have been said about either his politics or his religion, or rather, if you will, his irreligion, he had not a single enemy among us. Democrats as well as Republicans, church-members as well as non-churchmen, all liked Bob. There was no man’s hand they would shake any heartier than his; no man they liked to see prosper in life better than to see him, and no man they would go farther to hear than they would to hear him. We do not believe there was ever another man in Peoria whom Peorians were half so proud of, and not one who could rally as many around him on any project he might espouse, as Bob. Generally, our people have been rather jealous than otherwise of each other, and if any one man’s head happens to rise above the mass there is always somebody ready to hit it. It has not been so with Ingersoll. Everybody is agreed that the Colonel could have their good wishes in everything except his peculiar religious views. In politics, the Colonel would be pretty sure to carry about as many Democrats in Peoria as his opponent would be able to withhold to himself.”

Would the press of a town say that of a reckless and dissolute man who was about to leave it? Think the ministers who lie about the Colonel could get the papers of their town to print anything similar about them when they went away to accept a "call" with a bigger salary?

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S HOME LIFE.

To show the positive side of Colonel Ingersoll's home life we take a few paragraphs from a letter Harrison Grey Fiske published in the *Star* of this city a few years ago. Mr. Fiske is a friend of the Colonel's, and knew what he was talking about. Mr. Fiske said:

"I believe in the fireside. I believe in the democracy of home. I believe in the republicanism of the family. I believe in liberty, equality, and love.' This is the creed of domesticity that Robert Ingersoll proclaims in one of his discourses, and this is the creed he adheres to in his private life. . . . If you would form a true estimate of the man the world calls great, seek him in his home, with his family about him, and where his pictures and his books and belongings betoken his temper and his tastes. Singular as it may appear, no hoofs clatter in the marble halls of the Ingersoll dwelling. The man who pointed out the mistakes of Moses, who disbelieves in the Bible and divine origin of Christ, who denies the existence of any supernatural agency whatsoever, whose voice has been the trumpet of Free-thought—this man enjoys domestic relations of rare loveliness and happiness. . . . Mr. In-

gersoll's demeanor to his family and friends is in keeping with the ideas that have characterized his utterances on the subject of man's social duties. There is no reserve, no self-consciousness, no ceremony. You are put at ease at once by the warm and hearty clasp of the hand, the directness and honesty of your host's speech, and the total absence of insincerity and frippery, small talk and gossip, that constitute so much of drawing room conversation. There never is a loss for topics in this house, where books, paintings, plays, science, and public questions are brightly and intelligently discussed. . . . Simplicity and honesty are the ingredients of the welcome accorded to his friends. The favorite and oft-recurring phrase in his lectures, 'Let's be honest,' would serve very appropriately for the motto of this home. Mrs. Ingersoll is a tall, fine looking woman, who entertains charmingly and converses with fluency and good sense on all manner of topics. Mrs. Ingersoll's sister is the wife of Clinton P. Farrell, who is the publisher of Colonel Ingersoll's works. They and their pretty little daughter form a part of the household. Mr. Farrell is Mr. Ingersoll's inseparable companion. . . . In money matters Mr. Ingersoll has for years exemplified some characteristic ideas that he originated early in life. 'Do you know?' he says, 'that I have known men who would trust their wives with their hearts and their honor, but not with their pocket-book—not with a dollar? When I see a man of that kind I always think he knows which of these articles is the most valuable. Think of making your wife a beggar.' There is a cash drawer in the Ingersoll dwelling to which wife and daughters have duplicate keys and free access. And Mrs. Ingersoll also keeps a bank account. Mr.

Ingersoll goes to the drawer occasionally and renews the supply, but no account of expenditures is given to him, and it is distinctly forbidden that he shall be asked for money. He wants his wife and his children to feel that what is his is theirs, and that they can be trusted to help themselves and exercise discretion. What a contrast to the homes of many rich men, where wives approach their lords and masters as slaves approach a king, and tremble to frame a request for small sums of money that are to go for actual feminine necessities! There is no nagging, contradicting, or any indication of the petty and irritating friction here that is often felt in the domestic circle. 'Good nature,' remarks Mr. Ingersoll, 'is the cheapest commodity in the world, and love is the only thing that will pay ten per cent. to borrower and lender both. Happiness is the legal tender of the soul. Joy is wealth.' The wealth of the Ingersolls in this currency is beyond computation."

Is that a description of the family of a profligate? How many Christian families in the land would it fit?

In the same article from which the foregoing is taken Mr. Fiske thus describes the Ingersoll girls. This was in 1886:

"Mr. Ingersoll says: 'Children have the same rights that we have, and we ought to treat them as though they were human beings.' He has two daughters, Eva and Maud, and they have been reared in conformity with this idea. Love is the keynote in this harmonious family. Miss Eva Ingersoll, the elder, is a tall, slender, spirituelle girl, sweet-mannered and gentle-voiced. A pastel portrait of this young lady

by Dora Wheeler, recently hung in the gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, fails to do justice to her sweet and soulful face, which belongs to a type that cannot be adequately transferred to canvas. Miss Maud Ingersoll is not so tall as her sister. She is dark-haired, black-eyed, and handsome, while her manner is delightfully ingenuous. Indeed, neither has been tainted with the artificiality that society seems to demand of its young women. They are entirely unaffected and thoroughly well informed. They have read everything from Darwin and Huxley to Talmage and Sam Jones. If you unwarily enter into an argument, no matter how intricate or abstruse the subject, you will find them armed to the teeth with data, and highly skilled in the weapons of rhetoric and logic. Unless you are similarly equipped you had best retire as gracefully as possible before you are worsted."

And that was written of two young ladies who at the time it was penned were being slandered by all the little preachers of the country—on the authority of a scoundrelly mountebank—as girls who drank wine from their father's table "until intoxicated to such a degree as to require assistance in getting from the room." This very month and week and day the clergy are revenging themselves upon Colonel Ingersoll by repeating these infamous falsehoods. What can they think of themselves? Every man—lay or cleric—who repeats this lie about the daughters of Colonel Ingersoll, ought to be horsewhipped—or at least knocked down.

Still further evidence is the following from

Washington correspondence of the *Galveston News*, Feb. 15, 1881 :

“Last night,” says the writer, “I was the guest at the happiest home I ever saw, and met the most devoted and affectionate family I ever knew. I allude to the home of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll. Perhaps it would seem a violation of delicacy for one to accept the invitation to spend an evening with a family and their friends, and then make newspaper mention of a fireside, and I am the last to do so. Yet, inasmuch as Colonel Ingersoll occupies the peculiar attitude which he does, and has been the subject of so many attacks from the clergy, both as to his private and public character, I shall, for the benefit of those who do not personally know this brilliant son of genius, one time violate my ideas of the rules of social etiquette, and mention the home circle of Colonel Ingersoll.

“What a domestic love and devotion would exist in our country if every fireside in America presented the family affection and true happiness that is so manifest in the home of Ingersoll! It is truly an intellectual treat to visit the home of Ingersoll. His parlors contain the choicest statuary and paintings and the most refined works of the great authors. Last evening a number of friends were invited to spend the evening with him and his family. Among them were several senators and representatives and their wives. No one ever visited a more hospitable home. No one ever saw more genuine love and happiness between father, mother, daughters, and relatives than in the family circle of Colonel Ingersoll. Those who admire a happy home, admire love and devotion between members of a family, could

have seen the picture had they been with me last evening. His conception of the purity, loveliness, and affection of woman, to which he so feelingly alludes in his lectures, must have been gathered from his own family. Mrs. Ingersoll is the type of a devoted wife and mother. His two daughters are the embodiment of refinement, modesty, and loveliness. I never saw two faces which portrayed more refinement, purity, and innocence than those of the young daughters of Colonel Ingersoll. I now see how and why this brilliant scholar and gentleman forms such a lofty and beautiful estimate of the purity and loveliness of woman and the happiness and love of home. In his lectures he calls home his heaven. The affection and devotion of the daughters and wife for father and husband—the love and sunshine of that home must be heaven for him. No poor and needy creature ever called at the door of Col. Bob Ingersoll for charity in vain. This is the home of the Pagan Prince whom so many abuse and censure for his views on religion.

“For the first time in my life as a correspondent I have violated the rules of social etiquette and made public mention of a home at which I was a guest. It was such a picture of family happiness, love, and affection, that I could not refrain from what I have done in writing this.”

We could make a big book of such tributes as this, and unless the correspondents and writers are engaged in a gigantic plot to deceive the public, the fellow who charges the Ingersoll girls with coarse conduct is a miserable and dastardly falsifier.

Another story circulated for the past ten or

fifteen years, and thousands of times denied, but still going the rounds, is that one of Colonel Ingersoll's daughters had joined the Presbyterian church. So circumstantially has this lie been put that at a Methodist conference in Worcester, Mass., it was stated that "one of his daughters has been converted and joined the church, and his wife begs him not to say anything against the religion their child thinks so much of." This statement having been brought to the attention of Colonel Ingersoll, he wrote as follows :

"NEW YORK, April 16, 1889.

"MRS. W. B. CLARK, Worcester, Mass.—*My Dear Madam*: There is no truth in the report that one of my daughters has joined the church, or that my wife has ever objected to my saying anything against what is known as orthodox religion. Neither of my daughters is a member of any church. The statement of the Rev. J. O. Peck is without the slightest foundation. He probably told what was told him, supposing what he said to be true, but he was entirely mistaken. Yours always, R. G. INGERSOLL."

In the same speech the Rev. Mr. Peck said that the conversion of his daughter had kept the Colonel silent for two years. To another friend who wrote him about it, Mr. Ingersoll replied :

"You need not trouble yourself to deny the lies of orthodox ministers about me, but for your own information I will say that neither of my two daughters has been 'converted or joined

the church,' or has ever dreamed of it. As to my 'silence' against religion for two years, the Rev. Dr. Peck has probably not seen the discussions with Field and Gladstone, and others in the *North American Review*."

This story was not original with the Rev. Mr. Peck. Seven years before it was a good vigorous lie, and Peck but gave it a push along. Colonel Ingersoll wrote a denial of it, but the truth never caught up. The denial was as follows :

"WASHINGTON, D. C., Jan. 21, 1882.

"MR. EDITOR (of the Boston *Investigator*): A paragraph has been going the rounds of the newspapers to the effect that one of my daughters is a Presbyterian—in fact, that she has become a member of that church.

"I have two daughters, and neither of them ever heard a Presbyterian sermon, ever was in a Presbyterian church, ever heard a Presbyterian prayer, or ever joined a Presbyterian church; nor has either of them ever exhibited the slightest, faintest Presbyterian tendency.

"They know that the Presbyterian church teaches the dogma of eternal pain; that God, simply as an exhibition of his power, damns the best and saves the worst; that he sends infants to perdition to increase his glory, and murderers to heaven to show the riches of his grace. They know that this church teaches that a being of infinite wisdom and benevolence created countless millions of human beings knowing that nearly all of them would suffer agony forever. They know that nothing can exceed the barbaric heartlessness of the Calvinistic creed. Their knowledge upon these points may account

for the fact that they have never joined that church. Yours truly, R. G. INGERSOLL."

Mr. Ingersoll's daughters do not like publicity, but after the statement made by the Rev. Mr. Peck, Miss Eva Ingersoll talked to a reporter for the *World*, and we quote her words in order that the Colonel's friends may get some further idea what the young ladies are like. They were printed in the *World* of April 28, 1889 :

"Yes, Miss Ingersoll is in," and the butler led the way to the drawing-room in the great iconoclast's stately home. The room, with its booklined walls, bits of colored porcelain and carved silver—artists' dreams in marble and on canvas—was beautiful enough, but the slim, sweet, timid creature, in her silver-gray dress, was radiant. She might have been taken for a Quaker maiden, for a member of some new order of nuns, but for the daughter of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll—that alleged monster, commonly denounced from every pulpit, and by every preacher in every tongue and creed—never!

"But there sat Miss Eva Ingersoll in a little slipper chair, beaming in the loveliness of her youth and beauty, and this is what she had to say regarding the Rev. Dr. Peck's address before the General Conference of the Southern New England Methodist societies:

"That is about the fifth time I have joined the church, in print, and it is so ridiculous because neither my sister nor myself has ever attended service. Once Mr. Carnegie invited us to hear Henry Ward Beecher. It was in the

evening, and the address he delivered was the only one we have ever heard. Another time we went to Dr. Collyer's church to attend a friend's wedding, and that is the extent of our knowledge of churches.'

"'But why haven't you gone out of curiosity?'

"'Well, I don't know. I never had any desire, somehow. I have been told that the music might be entertaining, but I am sure it can't compare with operatic music, and we go to some opera or concert three or four nights in a week. I have read a great many sermons, but never was sufficiently pleased or interested to care to hear one. Our parents are not responsible for our attitude. Indeed, sister and I are more radical than they. Father has always told us that he wanted us to realize the greatest happiness in life, and advised us to examine for ourselves, and to act in accordance with our convictions. We have had books of all kinds and all sorts, and friends to exchange ideas with. Father has read with us, and together we have looked up references, localities, and proofs, but the more we know about Christianity the less admiration we have for it.

"'Did I ever pray? Never. We were never taught prayers as children, but when old enough to reason mother selected the prayers that are considered most beautiful and touching, and told us, as she always did in making selections of poetry and prose, to read them carefully and learn the ones that pleased us. None pleased me especially, and I didn't commit any of them to memory. I could not see the wisdom of praying for or against things I knew were beyond human influence.

"'And I never prized a Bible as most girls do, not even in silver or ivory covers. I don't like the book, because there are too many im-

probable and impossible things in it, and worse than that, it abounds in cruelties.

“We doubtless seem horrible people to you believers, but we are very happy together, and if my parents are as odious as some people fancy them, they must still have very many redeeming qualities of mind and heart, because it is a tax for them to make new friends, the old ones are so numerous, and so exacting in their affections. In all my life I have never heard a cross word spoken by my parents, either to one or the other, or to my sister or myself.”

And yet, in spite of all this, these stories go right along, finding plenty of preachers stupid and malicious enough to repeat and support them. This very year a Boston clergyman related them from his pulpit, and retracted only after he had been shown the following letters, published in the Boston *Investigator* of March 9, 1895:

“DEAR MR. MENDUM: I agree most heartily with my father in his religious belief, and think he is doing the greatest possible good. Of course I have never for a moment thought of joining a church. Sincerely yours,

“MAUD R. INGERSOLL.”

“MY DEAR MR. MENDUM: I wish to deny most emphatically the statement that I have joined a church.

“My sister and I, who are the only children of Robert G. Ingersoll, never for one moment disagreed with him in any way. My mother, as you know, has always been in perfect accord

with my father. We all feel that he is doing the greatest and noblest work of this world.

“Believe me most sincerely yours,

“EVA R. INGERSOLL BROWN.”

“LACROSSE, WIS., Jan. 14, 1895.

“ERNEST MENDUM, ESQ.—*My Dear Friend*: I have two daughters, and neither of them ever joined any church. On the subject of religion both of them agree with me, or I with them.

“My wife and I are of the same opinion as to the supernatural. We both believe in the natural, and in what I have done against what is called religion I have always had her support and sympathy. So you may say from me that the reverend gentleman was entirely mistaken, and in what he said there is not the slightest truth.

“Yours always,

R. G. INGERSOLL.”

Surely the “conversion” story ought now to be disposed of, but we expect to see it come up bright and smiling every year or two, and go the rounds of the pulpit and press.

Another myth, less extensively circulated, but still met with on the back streets of civilization, is to the effect that Colonel Ingersoll's son, having been raised in the atmosphere of Infidelity, had become insane and died in an asylum. The fact that the Colonel never had a son made no difference to the religious gentleman who first put this story into print, and will make no difference to the clerics who repeat it.

Still another story about Colonel Ingersoll's family, vouched for by no less a blatherskite than Joseph Cook, is to the effect that Colonel

Ingersoll's hatred of orthodoxy is caused by the harshness of his father's character. The following from the Colonel was written to a friend who had approached him on the subject :

“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 endeavoring to dig open the grave and calumniate the dead. This they are willing to do in defense of their infamous dogmas. I was not driven by the unkindness of my father to hate a God who would order, according to the Old Testament, the sweet bodies of women to be ripped open with the sword. My father was a kind and loving man. He loved his children tenderly and intensely. There was no sacrifice he would not and did not gladly make for them. 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.

“Seeing the effect upon him—seeing that religion simply made men unhappy, I learned to hate what is generally known as orthodox religion. I abhor the outrageous cruelties and horrors described in the Old Testament, perpetrated, as it alleges, by the command of God. I abhor the threatenings in the New Testament. I utterly despise the doctrines of total depravity and eternal punishment. I hate any book that teaches these doctrines ; I hate any God who writes such a book ; I hate these things because I have a brain and heart. I hate them because they are infamously, and heartlessly, and brainlessly false, cowardly, and infamous. My father

was infinitely better than the God he worshiped, infinitely better than the religion he preached. And these stories about his unkindness are maliciously untrue. The bigots of to-day are willing to slander him in order to get even with me. Can anything exceed the arrogance of humility and the malice of universal forgiveness? Yours truly, R. G. INGERSOLL."

It may be noticed that the foregoing letter is pretty warm in its denunciation of the Christian religion, but that is caused by the villainy of the ministers who started the story. Nothing makes Mr. Ingersoll more indignant than these lies about his family. Were he not the big-brained, broad-minded, kind-hearted man that he is—with an almost infinite compassion for little people who "do as they must;" that is, are governed by their environment—probably somebody would have been hurt ere this.

And yet the list of miserable slanders of Ingersoll as related to his family is not completed. Another grave was visited for earth to throw at him. On the word of the nameless and shameless scoundrel who invented a large portion of these libelous lies, it was said, back in 1881, that Ingersoll had suffered a sister to die in poverty and neglect in Laporte, Ind. The lady's name was Black. The following complete refutation of the charge, by W. H. Lewis, of Laporte, Ind., a gentleman knowing the circumstances, was published in the *Saturday Review*:

“LAPORTE, IND., Nov. 20.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Saturday Review*: In your paper of November 5th appears an article that is so unjust that I have taken the trouble to refute it. The author of this infamous lie, who has neither the brains nor the ability to answer Colonel Ingersoll, has thought to gain favor by pursuing the dead into the grave.

“In speaking of the Colonel’s sister, Mrs. Black, who died in Laporte, Ind., where she had lived for more than ten years, and where her husband still lives, the writer of the article says: ‘She died in poverty and neglect. There was not even charity to her. Benevolence did not reach her.’ . . .

“Below I give the statement with names of some of the best people of Laporte. There are many people here familiar with the facts, but these are enough, and further comment is unnecessary.

“Mort. Nye, attorney-at-law and ex-mayor of Laporte, said: ‘I knew Mrs. Black well for ten years, transacted all her legal business, and was knowing to the fact that she received from her brother, Mr. Ingersoll, fifty dollars a month. I did not see every draft in all that time, but did see most of them.’

“I next showed the article to Jacob Wile, a banker, who said: ‘I do not agree with Mr. Ingersoll in his radical opinions, but the man who wrote that article tells an infamous lie, for there never was a month passed while Mrs. Black lived in this place that I did not pay to her, at the request of Mr. Ingersoll, fifty dollars. At three different times I knew of him sending her money in addition to these monthly payments—at one time one hundred dollars, at another one hundred and fifty; and still another time, when they bought property here, two

hundred and fifty dollars. I saw many letters from him to her, and they were the most beautiful and affectionate letters I ever read in my life. And no man could be bad and write such letters and treat a sister as he did.'

"I next called on Mr. Black, who is a picture of health, and looks quite as able physically to make his way in the world as Colonel Ingersoll. He said: 'I have not one word to say against his treatment of my wife. He treated her like a kind brother.'

"Ivory Lord, undertaker, said: 'I buried Mrs. Black, and Mr. Ingersoll paid me. I know that when she was taken sick he came here, and there was nothing left undone that could have added to her comfort; and after she died he had her buried nicely and paid all the expenses.'

"In another place he paid an account of one hundred dollars to Dewitt Decker long after her death. I learned of many other acts of kindness where money was freely given, but I will not recite them here. W. H. LEWIS."

Thus another myth is laid. During the last part of Mrs. Black's illness Mr. Ingersoll was constantly with her, and in her last moments she said to him, "I would like to live, but die content, thanks to your philosophy." Could a sister pay a higher tribute to a brother?

Colonel Ingersoll's kindness and generosity are too well known by his friends to permit charges of unkindness or neglect of one of his relatives to have any influence with them, but those who do not know him personally might be swayed by such recitals. We once heard it said by a personal intimate of Ingersoll's

that he practically supported about thirty people. An instance of his goodness once came under our knowledge. He was attending a Free-thinkers' convention in Cleveland, and during his absence from Washington a woman had drawn a draft upon him for \$100. She was an acquaintance, but had no claim upon him even as a relative, depending only upon his kindness to help her out. Knowing that there was no reason why the Colonel should give her a hundred dollars, his people in the office had refused to pay the draft. So she wrote to the Colonel telling him she was needy. The Colonel got the letter while attending the convention and he just drew a check and sent it to her. The circumstance was the more impressed upon the mind of the person who told us this by the remark the Colonel made as he wrote the check, that he didn't know whether or not he had any money in that bank, but he "guessed they'd cash it anyway."

The next family story we encounter is that which concerns a second cousin to Mr. Ingersoll, Mrs. Sarah B. Cooper, of San Francisco.

Mrs. Cooper is a benevolent and good woman, who has devoted most of her time to ameliorating the condition of children in one way and another, but chiefly through establishing kindergartens. In this she has been aided by many prominent people. Mrs. Leland Stanford has given her a great deal of money, perhaps several hundred thousands of dollars, to spend in this

way. When Colonel Ingersoll went to San Francisco to lecture he met Mrs. Cooper. Afterward the Cooper family sent a man to him at Peoria, who wanted the best lawyer in the country to conduct a case at Washington. The Colonel took the case, won it, got a fee of \$12,000, and promptly sent a check for \$3,500 to Mrs. Cooper for her kindergarten work, or anything else she wanted to do with it. The meeting in San Francisco and the legal matter naturally put the families on good terms, and Colonel Ingersoll presented her with one of his books, in which he wrote this :

“I present this to my dear cousin, Sarah B. Cooper, with the remark that if all Christians were like her this book never would have been written.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

“August 7, 1881.”

The meaning of the inscription is plain enough for even a fool to see. Mrs. Cooper is a benevolent and kind woman, devoting her life to doing good. If all Christians did that there would be no need for Colonel Ingersoll to attack their doctrines, for it is the doctrines of Christianity which have made its devotees so cruel. The Old Testament is a record of cruelties committed in this world ; the New Testament is full of cruelties for the next world, the existence of which it teaches. Against the horrible doctrine of eternal punishment Colonel Ingersoll has waged relentless war because of his innate goodness of heart. In the keenest language man

ever commanded, he has denounced the cruelties and persecutions committed by the church. If he had a creed it would be : Liberty, Love, and Kindness.

With these feelings, and knowing Mrs. Cooper's active work of benevolence and her real kindness of heart, what more natural than that he should write this inscription in her book? Yet it is from this simple thing that the following absurd yarn has been twisted. We take it from the pen of Lady Somerset in the *Arena* of March, 1895. She omits the name :

“When a cousin of this same gifted man [Mrs. Somerset had just previously quoted a story which we shall notice next], who is a woman of rare intellect and a philanthropist, told him some years ago of her Christian faith, which, though deep and strong, was free from Calvinism and extreme doctrinal views, he said, while the tears coursed down his cheeks, ‘I would give all I have, cousin, if I could believe as you do, but I cannot.’”

Mrs. Somerset uttered that gem in the interest of the prenatal influence theory, and her reference to “this same gifted man” was made after telling as a fact the following :

“It will be of interest to know the following facts, which are from the lips of the man himself to a confidential friend. He said that his mother, who was most impressionable, recoiled from the Calvinistic doctrines taught by his father, who was a minister, and during the prenatal period of his life his mother went on a

visit to the home of a relative, where she found the writings of Voltaire. She had never read Infidel literature, but her mind was naturally given to doubt. In her present nervous state the books had a fascination for her and she read them with intense interest. When the boy was born he had a fine poetic nature and one to which restraint was odious, and as he developed he was from the first a pronounced unbeliever in the divine revelation."

The second is of course as absurd as the first, and it does not add to Lady Somerset's reputation for veracity that she tells as the actual truth, giving them the fullest credence, two plain and absolute falsehoods. Colonel Ingersoll's mother did not "recoil" from the doctrines of her husband, and she never read a line of Voltaire. Voltaire's works were practically unobtainable in those days in this country, and the story is a simple lie.

What Mr. Ingersoll did inherit from his mother perhaps is his intense love for liberty, for she was one of the active Abolitionists, and presented to Congress the first petition ever sent to that body asking for the abolishment of chattel slavery. All honor to her! She died when Colonel Ingersoll was between two and three years of age.

It was not very long after Mr. Ingersoll met Mrs. Cooper in San Francisco that the lady herself was tried as a heretic by the session of her church, and expelled by a vote of nine to eight. During the controversy over her expulsion she

made the remark that she would rather have her cousin Robert's society in hell than her pastor's in heaven. That Mr. Ingersoll's influence with her was good and lasting may be seen from the answer she made to the inquiry as to what her personal feelings toward her accuser were: "I can best answer that," she said, "by quoting a remark Colonel Ingersoll made to me once. 'My dear cousin, we cannot afford to hate, for he who hates takes snakes into his own bosom.'" From these things it may be seen that Mrs. Cooper came nearer getting "converted" than Colonel Ingersoll did.

Another story may properly come in here, as it evidently sprang from this Cooper tale, particularly the "tears" part of it. It is as follows:

"An Atchison woman who comes from Pennsylvania, and therefore knows a great deal, says that she heard before leaving there that every evening before Bob Ingersoll goes out on the stage to lecture, he retires into his dressing-room and weeps because he is compelled to deliver such impious lectures in order to make a living. The Atchison woman says she knows the story is true, because she heard her mother tell it."

If the good, pious fellows who repeat this tale for the marines will put up the money to pay expenses provided they are wrong, we will produce several thousand persons who have seen Colonel Ingersoll go on and off the platform, not only without a whimper, but even jolly.

Still another yarn about his lectures is told by a man who said Colonel Ingersoll himself told him that he did not believe what he talked, but lectured solely for the money there is in it. We have forgotten this liar's name, but the allegation was denied by the Colonel in print, yet it is constantly repeated. This is more than an insult to Mr. Ingersoll's character; it is an insult to his intelligence as well, and at the same time it refutes itself; for, supposing the allegation to be true, who is there stupid enough to believe that Colonel Ingersoll would be fool enough to say it?

The same charge was made by the Rev. B. F. Morse, a Baptist minister of New York, at a meeting of Baptist ministers on Dec. 13, 1886, and the next day the *Herald* contained this interview with Colonel Ingersoll on the subject :

"This aquatic or webfooted theologian who expects to go to heaven by diving, is not worth answering. Nothing can be more idiotic than to answer an argument by saying that he who makes it does not believe it. Belief has nothing to do with the cogency or worth of an argument.

"There is another thing. This man, or rather, this minister, says that I attacked Christianity simply to make money. Is it possible that, after the preachers have had the field for 1800 years the way to make money is to attack the clergy? Is this intended as a slander against me or the ministers?

"The trouble is that my arguments cannot be answered. All the preachers in the world cannot prove that slavery is better than liberty.

They cannot show that all have not an equal right to think. They cannot show that all have not an equal right to express their thoughts. They cannot show that a decent God will punish a decent man for making the best guess he can. This is all there is about it."

And that settles that. But if the ministers prefer the word of one of their own profession, let them consider this opinion by the Rev. M. J. Savage, of Boston: "I believe," he said recently in a sermon, "that Colonel Ingersoll is as honest and as earnest as was John Calvin or Richard Baxter. I believe he is as sincere in his opinions—whether you choose to call them religious or irreligious—as any man that ever lived or spoke. Does he need to lecture on religious subjects to get money? If he had no other resources, or if he made twice as much in that as in other way, and if he devoted himself exclusively to that, the charge might have some basis. But he is able to earn money as a successful lawyer, and he does in that way earn all that he wishes or needs. Besides, he can earn money by lecturing, whatever his subject may be. Then, again, it seems to me that, so long as the great majority of ministers feel a divine call to leave a small parish and a poor salary in order to go to a large parish and a large salary, it is not quite safe for them to trust to the attempt to blacken Colonel Ingersoll's character by charging him with being influenced by pecuniary motives. I believe, then, that he is earnest and sincere."

ABOUT THE "CHALLENGES" TO COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Colonel Ingersoll never goes on a lecturing trip without receiving "challenges" from every corner of the country. Little preachers who want to get their names into print infest him at his hotel or send cheeky deacons to defy him to combat. When he declines to notice them they write letters to their local papers saying the great Agnostic ran away from them through fear of being worsted in debate, and preach sermons from their pulpits abusing him.

The truth about this matter is that the Colonel hasn't the time to lift these people into fame. In Gladstone and Manning and Field and Black he has met the best the Christians have, and how can the ministers who have not brains enough to make more than a local reputation expect to succeed when these world-known and really able men have failed? The Colonel's position is well known. His lectures and public discussions and essays on religious subjects are all in print. Let the preachers who are so anxious to discuss with him prove their merits by answering the lectures, if they can, from the platform, or in the periodicals or magazines.

On this subject Colonel Ingersoll himself once said to the writer, in answer to the question why he apparently slighted the clergy :

"In the first place, it would be a physical impossibility to reply to all the attacks that have been made—to all the 'answers.' I receive

these attacks, and these answers, and these lectures almost every day. Hundreds of them are delivered every year. A great many are put in pamphlet form, and, of course, copies are received by me. Some of them I read, at least I look them over, and I have never yet received one worthy of the slightest notice, never one in which the writer showed the slightest appreciation of the questions under discussion. All these pamphlets are about the same, and they could, for that matter, have all been produced by one person. They are impudent, shallow, abusive, illogical, and in most respects ignorant. So far as the lectures are concerned, I know of no one who has yet said anything that challenges a reply. I do not think a single paragraph has been produced by any of the gentlemen who have replied to me in public, that is now remembered by reason of its logic or its beauty. I do not feel called upon to answer any argument that does not at least appear to be of value. Whenever any article appears worthy of an answer, written in a kind and candid spirit, it gives me pleasure to reply.

"I would like to meet some one who speaks by authority, some one who really understands his creed, but I cannot afford to waste time on little priests, or obscure parsons, or ignorant laymen."

In other words, he hasn't the time to stop and kill all the fleas on the dog. He is after the dog. When the canine is dead the fleas won't trouble any one.

One of the most persistent fellows in bragging that he has "scared Ingersoll," is a priest named Lambert, who wrote a book in which he took

isolated sentences from Ingersoll's lectures and wove fancy wreaths of lies and illogic and distortion and perversion around them ; and then bristled up to the Colonel and said, Answer that, will you ? Of course he was allowed to go unnoticed, and he probably thinks (for his intelligence is of about that order) that Colonel Ingersoll is afraid of him ! But what the Colonel really thinks of his book is found in the following interview with the editor of the *Sun* of Saginaw, Mich :

“ ‘ I have a book here entitled “ Notes on Ingersoll,” written by Father Lambert, a Catholic priest, claimed by both Catholics and Protestants to be the strongest thing ever written against you. Have you ever read it ? ’

“ ‘ I have seen it. ’

“ ‘ What do you think of it ? ’

“ ‘ I haven't paid any particular attention to it, as I didn't consider it worthy. ’

“ ‘ Is it the strongest thing that has yet appeared against you ? ’

“ ‘ I don't consider it strong at all. It may be more ingenious and cunning than some of the others, but they are all weak and evade the point at issue. ’

“ ‘ Did you ever say that this book contained the strongest arguments used against you, and that they were unanswerable ? ’

“ ‘ I never made any such statement. ’

“ ‘ Will you please write your denial on the fly-leaf of the book ? ’

“ The great apostle of Infidelity took out his pencil and wrote lengthwise in a large, bold hand on the fly-leaf, the following words :

“ ‘ I never thought this reply unanswerable. ’

On the contrary, I never thought it worth answering. I have read but little of it, but that little is poor and puerile. R. G. INGERSOLL.

“*East Saginaw, Mich., Feb. 15, 1885.*”

In the same interview, in answer to the query, “Do you often have challenges from clergymen?” the Colonel said: “Yes, nearly every week, and sometimes every day. If I stopped to notice such, I wouldn’t have time for anything else.” Asked again, “Would you accept a challenge for public discussion from any of the great lights of Christianity?” Mr. Ingersoll said: “Most assuredly I would. And you can state on authority that I am ready at any time to accept such a challenge, leaving the audience and public to decide as to the merits of the arguments.”

On another occasion the writer heard the Colonel say in reply to such a question: “I can’t bother with such little fellows as Lambert. Let them bring on the pope, or a cardinal, and I will give him a whirl.”

If this explanation of why Colonel Ingersoll does not meet all the six-by-nine preachers in the country is not satisfactory to them they will have to go unsatisfied.

THE “ROBBED HIM OF HIS CRUTCHES” STORY.

This story has been going the rounds of the religious press for the past ten or twelve years. Who invented it we do not know. Probably

some fellow on a religious paper. It runs as follows :

“ Colonel Ingersoll and Mr. Beecher were once in company, and in answer to a defense of heresy by Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. Beecher related that, as he was walking along the street, a ‘ big, burly ruffian ’ robbed a poor cripple of his crutches, leaving him sprawling in the mud. Turning to Mr. Ingersoll (so the yarn goes), Mr. Beecher, rising from his chair and brushing back his long, white hair, while his eyes glittered with the old-time fire as he bent them on Ingersoll, said, ‘ Yes, Colonel Ingersoll, and you are the man ! The human soul is lame, but Christianity gives it crutches to enable it to pass the highway of life. It is your teaching that knocks these crutches from under it, and leaves it a helpless and rudderless wreck in the slough of despond. If robbing the human soul of its only support on this earth—religion—be your profession, why, ply it to your heart’s content. It requires an architect to erect a building ; an incendiary can reduce it to ashes.’ The old man sat down, and silence brooded over the scene. Colonel Ingersoll found that he had a master in his own power of illustration, and said nothing. The company took their hats and parted.”

Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Beecher denied the story in a letter to Horace Seaver, the Christians circulated it vigorously, and probably every religious paper in this country and in England has printed it. We denied it time and again in the *THE TRUTH SEEKER*, and finally one of the Colonel friends asked him for

something on the subject to use on the liars. In reply to this request he wrote the following letter :

“NEW YORK, Sept. 8, 1887.

“J. L. TREUTHART, ESQ.—*My Dear Sir* : There is not one word of truth in the article you sent me, entitled ‘Robbed Him of his Crutches,’ which I reinclose to you. People are continually manufacturing falsehoods for the purpose of avoiding arguments that they cannot answer. I never had any such conversation with Mr. Beecher, nor with any other human being, nor anything approaching it, nor anything out of which such a story could honestly have been made. Yours very truly, R. G. INGERSOLL.”

With the denials of both of the alleged parties to the fairy tale before them, we really think that the Christians should stop circulating it.

But any Christian who thinks that such a retort as Mr. Beecher is said to have made would floor the Colonel doesn't know the man. Denying this story once to the *San Francisco Post*, the Colonel added :

“As a matter of fact, nothing could be more idiotic than the idea that men who are destroying superstition are taking crutches from Christian cripples. Will the Christians admit that they are cripples? and will they admit that their creeds are crutches? Will they also admit that the Free-thinker takes away their crutches and leaves them helpless? It would be cruel to take crutches from a cripple; on the other hand, it would be exceedingly philanthropic and humane to cure the cripple, so that he would throw away the

crutches himself. My effort has been to make man superior to superstition—to educate him to that degree that he shall need no crutches, and to convince him that a good cause never has, and never will, need the assistance of falsehood.”

There is no need of going to the religious press to learn Mr. Beecher's opinion of Colonel Ingersoll, nor of reading apochryphal stories about it. These two great orators once spoke from the same platform, and as it was in Mr. Beecher's home town it devolved upon him to introduce Mr. Ingersoll, which he did in the following words: “The gentleman who is to speak to you to-night is not speaking in a conventicle nor in a church. He is speaking to a great body of citizens, and I take the liberty, in your behalf, to say now that we greet him to-night as a man who has done valiant things for the right without variableness or shadow of turning for a full score of years. On the ground of a pure patriotism, of a pure humanity, and of a living faith in liberty, I give to him the right hand of fellowship. Now, fellow-citizens, let me introduce to you a man who, I say not flatteringly but with sincere conviction, is the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue in any land on the globe. I introduce to you Colonel Ingersoll.”

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S BELIEFS.

Colonel Ingersoll's opinion of the Christian scheme is well known, but on the questions of

“God” and “immortality” there are various opinions as to his position. On these subjects the honest way is to take a man’s own words, which we quote. In his latest lecture on “The Foundations of Faith,” he has this to say about “God”:

“God the Father.

“The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the God of the Christians.

“He it was who created the Universe, who made all substance, all force, all life, from nothing. He it is who has governed and still governs the world. He has established and destroyed empires and kingdoms, despotisms and republics. He has enslaved and liberated the sons of men. He has caused the sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and his rain to fall on the just and unjust.

“This shows his goodness.

“He has caused his volcanoes to devour the good and the bad, his cyclones to wreck and rend the generous and the cruel, his floods to drown the loving and the hateful, his lightning to kill the virtuous and the vicious, his famines to starve the innocent and criminal, and his plagues to destroy the wise and good, the ignorant and wicked. He has allowed his enemies to imprison, to torture, and to kill his friends. He has permitted blasphemers to flay his worshipers alive, to dislocate their joints upon racks, and to burn them at the stake. He has allowed men to enslave their brothers and to sell babes from the breasts of mothers.

“This shows his impartiality.

“The pious negro who commenced his prayer: ‘O thou great and unscrupulous God,’ was nearer right than he knew.

“Ministers ask : Is it possible for God to forgive man ?

“And when I think of what has been suffered—of the centuries of agony and tears, I ask : Is it possible for man to forgive God ?

“How do Christians prove the existence of their God ? Is it possible to think of an infinite being ? Does the word God correspond with any image in the mind ? Does the word God stand for what we know or for what we do not know ?

“Is not this unthinkable God, a guess, an inference ?

“Can we think of a being without form, without body, without parts, without passions ? Why should we speak of a being without a body as of the masculine gender ?

“Why should the Bible speak of this God as a man?—of his walking in the garden in the cool of the evening—of his talking, hearing, and smelling ? If he has no passions, why is he spoken of as jealous, revengeful, angry, pleased, and loving ?

“In the Bible God is spoken of as a person in the form of man, journeying from place to place, as having a home and occupying a throne.

“These ideas have been abandoned, and now the Christian's God is the infinite, the incomprehensible, the formless, bodiless, and passionless.

“Of the existence of such a being there can be, in the nature of things, no evidence.

“Confronted with the universe, with fields of space sown thick with stars, with all there is of life, the wise man, being asked the origin and destiny of all, replies : ‘I do not know. These questions are beyond the powers of my mind.’

The wise man is thoughtful and modest. He clings to facts. Beyond his intellectual horizon he does not pretend to see. He does not mistake hope for evidence or desire for demonstration. He is honest. He deceives neither himself nor others.

“The theologian arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and he calls this God. The scientist arrives at the unthinkable, the inconceivable, and calls it the Unknown.

“The theologian insists that his inconceivable governs the world, that it, or he, or they, can be influenced by prayers and ceremonies, that it, or he, or they, punishes and rewards, that it, or he, or they, has priests and temples.

“The scientist insists that the Unknown is not changed so far as he knows by prayers of people or of priests. He admits that he does not know whether the Unknown is good or bad—whether he, or it, wants or whether he, or it, is worthy of worship. He does not say that the Unknown is God, that it created substance and force, life and thought. He simply says that of the Unknown he knows nothing.

“Why should Christians insist that a God of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power governs the world?

“Why did he allow millions of his children to be enslaved? Why did he allow millions of mothers to be robbed of their babes? Why has he allowed injustice to triumph? Why has he permitted the innocent to be imprisoned and the good to be burned? Why has he withheld his rain and starved millions of the children of men? Why has he allowed the volcanoes to destroy, the earthquakes to devour, and the tempest to wreck and rend?”

From these words, according to the capacity of the reader for splitting metaphysical hairs, Mr. Ingersoll is an Atheist, a Spencerian Agnostic, or a Huxleyan Agnostic, with some variations from each which may make him an Ingersollian Agnostic. The Christian would call him an Atheist. But Deist or Theist he is not, and there is where he is ahead of Paine and Voltaire.

On the subject of immortality he says :

“‘Oh,’ but they say to me, ‘you take away immortality!’ I do not. If we are immortal it is a fact in nature, and we are not indebted to priests for it, nor to Bibles for it, and it cannot be destroyed by unbelief. As long as we love we will hope to live, and when the one dies whom we love, we will say, ‘Oh, that we could meet again,’ and whether we do or not it will not be the work of theology. It will be a fact in nature. I would not for my life destroy one star of human hope, but I want it so that when a poor woman rocks the cradle and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling wood for hell.”

Again :

“I have said a thousand times, and I say again, that the idea of immortality, that, like a sea, has ebbed and flowed in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow

beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death.

“I have said a thousand times, and I say again, that we do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door—the beginning, or end, of a day—the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings—the rise or the set of a sun, or an endless life, that brings rapture and love to every one.

“The belief in immortality is far older than Christianity. Thousands of years before Christ was born billions of people had lived and died in that hope. Upon countless graves had been laid in love and tears the emblems of another life. The heaven of the New Testament was to be in this world. The dead, after they were raised, were to live here. Not one satisfactory word was said to have been uttered by Christ—nothing philosophic, nothing clear, nothing that adorns, like a bow of promise, the cloud of doubt.”

Again :

“One world at a time is my doctrine.

“It is said in this Testament, ‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;’ and I say: Sufficient unto each world is the evil thereof.

“And suppose after all that death does end all. Next to eternal joy, next to being forever with those we love and those who have loved, us, next to that, is to be wrapt in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak

again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear.

“I had rather think of those I have loved and lost, as having returned to earth, as having become a part of the elemental wealth of the world—I would rather think of them as unconscious dust, I would rather dream of them as gurgling in the streams, floating in the clouds, bursting in the foam of light upon the shores of worlds, I would rather think of them as the lost visions of a forgotten night, than to have even the faintest fear that their naked souls have been clutched by an orthodox god. I will leave my dead where nature leaves them. Whatever flower of hope springs up in my heart I will cherish, I will give it breath of sighs and rain of tears. But I cannot believe that there is any being in this universe who has created a human soul for eternal pain. I would rather that every god would destroy himself; I would rather that we all should go to eternal chaos, to black and starless night, than that just one soul should suffer eternal agony.”

And in this place it may be well to give the oft-discussed and sometimes misrepresented letter which Mr. Ingersoll wrote to a bereaved mother of San Francisco. The circumstances were, briefly, as follows: In the year 1885, in the summer, a lady of San Francisco was suddenly overwhelmed by a crushing affliction. Her son, an only child, had gone on a short journey, expecting soon to return. Sudden and fatal illness befell him, and a brief telegram

announced the fact to his mother. The terrors of the Calvinistic creed in which she had been brought up, and according to which, as she well knew, there was no hope for future happiness for the unconverted young man, added greatly to her agonizing grief, and her friends feared that her reason, if not her life, would be destroyed. A friend who sympathized deeply with and vainly sought to console her, informed Colonel Ingersoll, and begged him, if possible, to write something which might at least relieve in a measure the terrible apprehension she felt as to the fate of her son. His letter, which, as will be seen by the lady's grateful reply, was in a good measure effective, was given to a reporter to be printed on the condition that the name of the recipient was to be withheld :

“**MY DEAR MADAM :** Mrs. C. has told me the sad story of your almost infinite sorrow. I am not foolish enough to suppose that I can say or do anything to lessen your great grief, your anguish for his loss ; but may be I can say something to drive from your poor heart the fiend of fear—fear for him.

“If there is a God, let us believe that he is good ; and if he is good, the good have nothing to fear. I have been told that your son was kind and generous ; that he was filled with charity and sympathy. Now, we know that in this world like begets like, kindness produces kindness, and all good bears the fruit of joy. Belief is nothing—deeds are everything ; and if your son was kind he will naturally find kindness wherever he may be. You would not in-

flict endless pain upon your worst enemy. Is God worse than you? You could not bear to see a viper suffer forever. Is it possible that God will doom a kind and generous boy to everlasting pain? Nothing can be more monstrously absurd and cruel.

“The truth is, that no human being knows anything of what is beyond the grave. If nothing is known, then it is not honest for anyone to pretend that he does know. If nothing is known, then we can hope only for the good. If there be a God your boy is no more in his power now than he was before his death—no more than you are at the present moment. Why should we fear God more after death than before? Does the feeling of God toward his children change the moment they die? While we are alive they say God loves us; when will he cease to love us? True love never changes. I beg of you to throw away all fear. Take counsel of your own heart. If God exists, your heart is the best revelation of him, and your heart could never send your boy to endless pain. After all, no one knows. The ministers know nothing. And all the churches in the world know no more on this subject than the ants on the ant-hills. Creeds are good for nothing except to break the hearts of the loving.

“Let us have courage. Under the seven-hued arch of hope let the dead sleep. I do not pretend to know, but I do know that others do not know. Listen to your heart, believe what it says, and wait with patience and without fear for what the future has for all. If we can get no comfort from what people know, let us avoid being driven to despair by what they do not know.

“I wish I could say something that would put a star in your night of grief—a little flower

in your lonely path—and if an unbeliever has such a wish, surely an infinitely good being never made a soul to be the food of pain through countless years.

Sincerely yours,

“R. G. INGERSOLL.”

Was ever a better letter written to a heart-broken mother? Certainly the argument to a Calvinist that God loves his children as much after death as before is unanswerable, and to one who believes in a personal God, consequently consoling. That the letter proved such is evidenced by the following reply:

“DEAR COLONEL INGERSOLL: I found your letter inclosed with one from — at my door on the way to this hotel to see a friend. I broke the seal here, and through blinding tears—letting it fall from my hands between each sentence to sob my heart out—read it. The first peace I have known, real peace, since the terrible blow, has come to me now. While I will not doubt the existence of a God, I feel that I can rest my grief-stricken heart on his goodness and mercy; and you have helped me to do this. Why, you have helped me to believe in an all-merciful and loving creator, who has gathered (I will try to believe) my poor little boy—my kind, large-hearted child—into his tender and sheltering arms. There is a genuine ring in your words that lifts me up.

“Your belief, so clear and logical, so filled with common sense, corresponds, so far back as I can remember, with my own matter-of-fact ideas; and I was the child of good and praying parents, and my great wondering eyes, questioning silently when they talked to me, my strange ways, while I tried to be good, caused

them often great anxiety and many a pang—
God forgive me!

“I am writing, while people are talking about me, just a line to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the comfort you have given me to-day. You great, good man; I see the traces of your tears all over your letter, and I could clasp your hand and bless you for this comfort you have given my poor heart.”

This lady's friend who sent her to Colonel Ingersoll for consolation evidently was Mrs. Cooper, and that fact and this reply is the best evidence possible that instead of Mrs. Cooper converting Colonel Ingersoll, as Lady Somerset says, he very nearly converted them all. That she should ask the Colonel to write this letter of consolation instead of a minister tells the tale, and when some future Lady Somerset draws upon her imagination for facts upon which to build a ridiculous theory regarding this same gifted man it will be found to be sufficient answer. It reminds the writer of an incident at the Reynolds trial for blasphemy. After the Colonel had made his speech to the jury the court adjourned for lunch. During the lunch hour the people who had heard the speech crowded around the Colonel and told him how much they agreed with him. Among them was the son of the Congregational minister of the place and other decent people who somehow belonged to the church. When the court reconvened, Colonel Ingersoll joined in a conference of the three judges as to the case, and in com-

menting on the matter while the jury were deliberating he told the judges what the people had said. And he added, "You better discharge Reynolds or I will appeal and try the case again and convert the whole town." So they let Reynolds off with a fine of \$25 and costs (amounting to about \$50 more), which Colonel Ingersoll paid out of his own pocket, refusing reimbursement. His legal services were also gratuitous, and one of the days he was down there he refused an offer of a thousand dollars to go elsewhere for a few hours to another court. But this is a digression. The point is that Colonel Ingersoll practically converted Mrs. Cooper and the Calvinist lady instead of being converted himself. Instead of relying on the "Lord Jesus Christ" to comfort the bereaved mother, Mrs. Cooper relied on Colonel Ingersoll; and the unhappy Christian mother found the comfort in his letter that she could not in the "word of God" and the "messages" of the "prince of peace."

INGERSOLL AND BLACK.

In 1881 Colonel Ingersoll had a little discussion with Judge Jeremiah Black, of Pennsylvania, since deceased. The discussion would have lasted longer, but Judge Black became displeased with the editor of the *North American Review*, and refused to contribute a second article to the pages of that magazine. A Christian stump speaker, erstwhile a general, with

that great regard for truth characteristic of Christians when speaking of Infidels, said in a public lecture in this city that Colonel Ingersoll personally appealed to the editor of the *Review* to suppress Black's rejoinder to him. This statement was telegraphed all over the country and every Christian editor printed it with appropriate comments. The truth of the matter will be found in the two following letters—the first from Colonel Ingersoll, the second from Allen Thorndike Rice, the editor of the *Review*:

“NEW YORK, April 18, 1888.

“The statement that I interfered to prevent the publication of Judge Black's reply to an article of mine in the *North American Review* is, of course, without the slightest foundation in fact.

“I never said one word to the editor or the manager of the *Review* on that subject until long after the quarrel between the manager and Judge Black had taken place. Had it been left to me, I should have requested the publication of the so-called ‘reply.’

“I was asked to write an article for the *Review*, not knowing who was to answer it. I did write the article, and a reply was written by Judge Black, and both the articles appeared in the same number of the *Review*. The reason for this, as the manager told me, was that he thought it better to have both sides represented, fearing that people might object to my article unless a reply was in the same number. His experience made him somewhat bolder, and he concluded that it was not necessary to publish both the articles in the same number, so he published my second article by itself, and

offered to publish Judge Black's reply in the next number.

"With this arrangement Judge Black found fault, why I do not know and never inquired. Black published his reply in some Philadelphia paper, claiming that he had not been fairly treated by the *Review*. I never understood that he blamed me. If he did, he was entirely mistaken.

"No one wanted Judge Black's reply published more than I did, because in that way, and in that way only, could people have a realizing sense of the utter weakness of the true orthodox side.

Yours very truly,

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

Mr. Rice's letter on the subject was printed in the *New York World* of May 28, 1888 :

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE *World*: Permit me to correct an error which I find in your report of a lecture delivered in this city, published May 1st, and now called to my attention.

"The lecturer charges Colonel Ingersoll with having prevented Judge Black from replying to him in the *North American Review*. This statement, although corrected again and again, continues to be made. Colonel Ingersoll never has sought, directly or indirectly, by request or suggestion, to influence in the slightest degree the conduct of the *North American Review*.

"With regard to the charge that Colonel Ingersoll in some way prevented Judge Black from replying to him in the *Review*, the facts are as follows: Colonel Ingersoll was asked to write an article for the *Review*. He did not know at the time who was to reply. The arrangement was that Colonel Ingersoll should

write an article; that some one would answer it; that he then should have the privilege of replying; then that one, two, or three others might answer him, and that he (Colonel Ingersoll) should have the final reply.

"The first two articles were published in one number, and the next two papers would have appeared simultaneously but for limitations of space, it being deemed inadvisable to fill the *Review* with the discussion of the one question.

"Colonel Ingersoll's reply was published, and Judge Black was informed that the same number of pages of the next issue would be at his disposal. But the Judge could not be induced to write a second article, although strongly urged to do so. It was evident that he did not wish to continue the controversy on any conditions, and, although Judge Black's ability as a lawyer and writer is disputed by none, it was the general verdict of disinterested readers that he was unequal to maintain a controversy with his more gifted opponent, and that he sought to cover his retreat by resorting to personal abuse of myself.

"I happen to know that Colonel Ingersoll regretted the withdrawal of Judge Black, and was ignorant of any dissatisfaction on his part until after his article had appeared. The charge that Colonel Ingersoll was afraid to meet Judge Black is palpably absurd. Without desiring to become a partisan in this discussion, I may permit myself as a spectator to suggest that it is hardly credible that any man would run away from Judge Black to cross swords with Mr. Gladstone.

"ALLEN THORNDIKE RICE."

These letters closed the mouth of the whilom general who had set the charges going, but

every once in a while some ignorant Christian repeats the slander.

There was, however, in this Ingersoll-Black controversy one man who *was* afraid, and that was George P. Fisher, who wrote the concluding paper in the controversy. When Judge Black refused to continue the argument, the editor of the *Review* looked about for some other able man. It is reported that he applied to Henry Ward Beecher, and Mr. Beecher refused on the ground that no one could answer Mr. Ingersoll. "It can't be done," are the words he is reported to have used. But whether this is true of Mr. Beecher or not, Mr. Fisher was approached by the editor of the *Review*, and he did agree to "answer" Mr. Ingersoll, with only one stipulation—and that was, that Mr. Ingersoll should not be permitted to answer him. That stipulation has been observed, and Fisher's "answer" stands to-day a monument of Christian cowardice.

ANOTHER STORY.

One of the latest apocryphal tales and amusing comments based thereon, is the following, which we take from the *Jewish Ledger* of New Orleans :

"Colonel Ingersoll is now engaged in the novel occupation of keeping a record of all ministers who have gone astray. Recently in a public address he declared that he had ascertained in various ways that at least forty min-

isters and priests had during the past year committed penitentiary offenses, or been guilty of gross immoralities.

"The *Presbyterian*, commenting on this fact, estimates the ministerial army of this land at 111,036, and averages the fallen ones, conceding the truthfulness of Ingersoll's assertion, at one in 2,700, and further declares that if the great defamer can make no better showing than he has done he had better spike his guns and retire in shame."

The facts are of course that Colonel Ingersoll has never thought of keeping such a record, and never made any such declaration in any speech. The Truth Seeker Company, however, publish such a book, necessarily imperfectly compiled, but the rascals noted exceed many times the number given. And this emphasizes the distinction between the great Agnostic and his clerical detractors. The charges brought against him are all lies; when the same things are alleged against the ministers the truth is invariably understated. So, while Colonel Ingersoll's character is absolutely unimpeachable, his slanderers are helping to fill our penitentiaries by being justly convicted of about all the crimes in the calendar of crime. The book, "Crimes of Preachers," furnishes indisputable proof of this.

There have been circulated many other stories than these, of varying degrees of villainy, but the foregoing are the principal ones, and constitute the stock-in-trade of the preachers who

write sermons on the Colonel. Congregations all over the country are periodically regaled with them, from West to East, and the listeners go from the church with great admiration of the boldness of their pastor in exposing so prominent and so vile a man. Their faith in God is greatly strengthened by it. They do not know that they have been listening to lies. Perhaps even the preacher is deceived, but we fear that too often he would not care to be undeceived. If he can keep his congregation from going over to Infidelity by slandering its greatest exponent his purpose is accomplished. He has prevented the destruction of his business, and will reap his reward here on earth.

"CONVERTING" COLONEL INGERSOLL.

With their great talent for manufacturing facts, of course the Christians have had Mr. Ingersoll converted several times. Every now and then a fairy tale to that effect has been printed by some ignorant but pious editor in his obscure sheet, and the story has been copied and repeated by other ignorant editors in other obscure sheets, to be believed and repeated by ignorant and obscure readers and preachers in backwoods districts where the literature read is confined to *Zion's Herald* and the Bible. A good sample of this kind of conversion is the one circulated some years ago in England, and commented upon by Colonel Ingersoll himself as follows:

“Thousands of Christians have asked : How was it possible for Christ and his apostles to deceive the people of Jerusalem? How came the miracles to be believed? Who had the impudence to say that lepers had been cleansed, and that the dead had been raised? How could such impostors have escaped exposure?

“I ask : How did Mohammed deceive the people of Mecca? How has the Catholic church imposed upon millions of people? Who can account for the success of falsehood?

“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, some one will erect a monument over the grave, and the lie is born again as an epitaph. Let me give you a case in point.

“A few days ago the *Matlock Register*, a paper published in England, printed the following :

‘CONVERSION OF THE ARCH ATHEIST.

‘Mr. Isaac Loveland, of Shoreham, desires us to insert the following :

“1 GROVE-ROAD, ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON, }
Nov. 27, 1886. }

“DEAR MR. LOVELAND : A day or two since I received from Mr. Hine the exhilarating intelligence that through his lectures on the ‘Identity of the British Nation with Lost Israel,’ in Canada and the United States, that Col. Bob Ingersoll, the arch Atheist, has been converted to Christianity, and has joined the Episcopal church. *Praise the Lord!!!* Five thousand of his followers *have been won for Christ* through Mr. Hine's grand mission work, the other side

of the Atlantic. The Colonel's cousin, the Rev. Mr. Ingersoll, wrote Mr. Hine soon after he began lecturing in America, informing him that his lectures had made a great impression on the Colonel and other Atheists. I noted it at the time in the *Messenger*. Bradlaugh will yet be converted; his brother has been, and has joined a British Israel Identity Association. This is progress, and shows what an energetic, determined man (like Mr. Hine) who is earnest in his faith can do. Very faithfully yours,
"H. HODSON RUGG."

"How can we account for an article like that? Who made up this story? Who had the impudence to publish it?"

"As a matter of fact, I never saw Mr. Hine, never heard of him until this extract was received by me in the month of December. I never read a word about the 'Identity of Lost Israel with the British Nation.' It is a question in which I never had, and never expect to have, the slightest possible interest.

"Nothing can be more preposterous than that the Englishman, in whose veins can be found the blood of the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman, the Pict, the Scot, and the Celt, is the descendant of 'Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' The English language does not bear the remotest resemblance to the Hebrew, and yet it is claimed by the Rev. Hodson Rugg that not only myself, but five thousand other Atheists, were converted by the Rev. Mr. Hine, because of his theory that Englishmen and Americans are simply Jews in disguise.

"This letter, in my judgment, was published to be used by missionaries in China, Japan, India, and Africa."

To show how hard it is to kill one of these lies about Colonel Ingersoll, we quote his words concerning the controversy he had with the *Observer*, the Presbyterian organ of this city, about the death of Thomas Paine :

"A few years ago I had a little controversy with the editor of the New York *Observer*, the Rev. Ireneus Prime (who is now supposed to be in heaven enjoying the bliss of seeing Infidels in hell), as to whether Thomas Paine recanted his religious opinions. I offered to deposit a thousand dollars for the benefit of a charity if the reverend doctor would substantiate the charge that Paine recanted. I forced the New York *Observer* to admit that Paine did not recant, and compelled that paper to say that 'Thomas Paine died a blaspheming Infidel.'

"A few months afterward an English paper was sent to me—a religious paper—and in that paper was a statement to the effect that the editor of the New York *Observer* had claimed that Paine recanted ; that I had offered to give a thousand dollars to any charity that Mr. Prime might select, if he would establish the fact that Paine did recant ; and that so overwhelming was the testimony brought forward by Mr. Prime that I admitted that Paine did recant, and paid the thousand dollars.

"This is another instance of what might be called the truth of history.

"I wrote to the editor of that paper, telling the exact facts, and offering him advertising rates to publish the denial, and in addition stated that if he would send me a copy of his paper with the denial, I would send him \$25 for his trouble. I received no reply, and the lie is in all probability still on its travels, going from

Sunday-School to Sunday-school, from pulpit to pulpit, from hypocrite to savage—that is to say, from missionary to Hottentot—without the slightest evidence of fatigue—fresh and strong, and in its cheeks the roses and lilies of perfect health.”

The latest attempt to convert Mr. Ingersoll was made by the Christian Endeavorers in the fall of 1895. Had it not been so public, and its failure so widely noticed by the great dailies of the country, the little obscure sheets would ere this have set it down as a fact that he was converted—and probably some of them will do so yet. The attempt was made in the form of a prayer simultaneously uttered by all the Endeavorers, many thousands in number. A few weeks after the prayer, the New York *Sun* interviewed Mr. Ingersoll as to its effect. We subjoin the interview :

“Col. Robert G. Ingersoll found a heavy mail from the Christian Endeavorers who have been praying for him in convention when he returned home from his Western trip, and he said last night to the *Sun* reporter : ‘No, I have not been converted by their prayers, I am glad to say, and there is no occasion for taking a “before and after” picture of me.’

“‘Why glad?’ asked the *Sun* reporter.

“‘I want to finish my days without the consolation of a hell,’ said the Colonel, looking very solemn, though there is nothing in his appearance to indicate that his days are likely to be finished for half a century or more.

“ ‘Did it annoy you to have the Endeavorers take such a public interest in your conversion?’

“ ‘Dear me, no,’ said Colonel Ingersoll. ‘They meant it kindly and for my good. The only difference of opinion that we have is that I believe that this world is natural and they believe it is supernatural, something that was constructed by sleight-of-hand, by some one up in the clouds. That is all.’ And Colonel Ingersoll settled back comfortably in his chair, as if the difference of opinion were too trifling to discuss.

“ ‘But what if you should be converted?’ suggested the *Sun* reporter. An expression of mock terror spread over the Colonel’s rosy cheeks as he replied :

“ ‘That would be a dreadful misfortune, and I should be unhappy all the rest of my life.’

“ ‘If you had absolute faith in the Christian religion, would it make you unhappy?’

“ ‘It certainly would. How could it be otherwise? A man of intelligence who is a Christian and who has imagination couldn’t help but be unhappy. Just think of the hell that it holds out. If he is a Christian he must believe that the people whom he knows and loves on earth are to be separated in death, and some are to go to hell and some are to go to heaven, and they are to stay there forever. It would make me very unhappy to believe that. This is to be for eternity. I have asked many Christian people, “What are you going to do in heaven?” and they reply that they are going to be happy there. ‘But how are you going to be happy?’ I ask. Are they just going to do nothing and be happy, or are they going to get their happiness from playing on golden harps all the time? Are they going to be happy knowing that some of those whom they

loved here are suffering eternal tortures in hell? I couldn't be happy under those circumstances.'

" 'Admitting the truth of the Christian religion, wouldn't you wish to be converted?'

" 'Why, if there is some one up in the clouds to whom these people who pray give advice and instruction how things should be run down here, I certainly want to know about it. But, you see, I don't believe there is. I should very much dislike to accept the Christian religion and all that it holds out even to those who believe it and live by it.'

" Colonel Ingersoll hadn't time to read all of the hundred or more letters that were waiting for him, and the two or three that he had opened struck him as very foolish. One writer made a violent attack on the Colonel and another wrote in a kindly, argumentative way. Neither produced any effect, however."

When Colonel Ingersoll returned from a lecture trip on Jan. 20, 1896, he was interviewed by a reporter for the *Evening Sun*, which printed the following in its issue of Jan. 21st :

" Colonel Ingersoll was found at his home, Madison avenue, this morning, and he talked freely of his trip. He was asked whether the prayers of the Christian Endeavorers had had any effect on his belief on religious matters. He was silent awhile as if carefully considering his reply. Then he said :

" 'I take it for granted that the people who prayed for me are my friends, and that they really want their God to convert me. Of course, no prayer was ever answered. Prayer may be a kind of relief to the one who prays, but whether the prayer is addressed to a stone god or a

wooden one, to a stuffed snake or a totem, or to Jehovah, the result is the same. All these gods answer prayers precisely the same. It may be that sometimes the thing prayed for has happened, but it would have happened had the prayer been exactly the other way.

“I do not think that the prayers have affected me. I believe that I have as much sense, as good judgment now, as before the prayers were made, and that I am as much opposed to orthodox savagery as I was before the prayers were made.

“I cannot be converted unless my brain is changed or weakened; unless my credulity is increased and my reasoning powers weakened. At the same time I am much obliged for the prayers. I feel toward those who prayed for me as the girl did toward the young man who squeezed her hand. She said: ‘It pleases him and doesn’t hurt me.’”

Commenting upon this endeavor of the Endeavorers, the great illustrated journal *Judge*, of New York, in its Christmas number, said:

“We doubt if there are many Christians who lead a purer life than Colonel Ingersoll, or whose principles involve more of justice and humanity. He won’t say he knows what he cannot positively know. The praying that has been done for him may be looked upon either as a kindness or as an impertinence; but surely there is no man who enters more fully into the joyousness and thoughtfulness of the Christmas season, and that of itself partakes of the essence of Christianity. He professes nothing, but despite his doubt he acts magnificently.”

We will not stop to show that the allegation of the *Judge* that goodness is the essence of Christianity is untrue, for that apology has been controverted so many times that no one now seriously alleges it in defense of faith, and the *Judge* threw it in evidently as a peace offering to those pious ones who might otherwise be tempted to stop their subscriptions because it said a good word for an Infidel. We quote its words to show what those who know Colonel Ingersoll know of him.

Among other papers which devoted considerable space to this attempt of the Endeavorers to convert Colonel Ingersoll was the *Boston Advertiser*, which published in its issue of Dec. 3, 1895, several interviews had with clergymen in regard to it. One of them was this :

“Rev. Dr. Hamilton, of the Congregational church, Roxbury, is very much interested in Colonel Ingersoll’s welfare, and believes that the time is not far distant when he will be numbered among the followers of Christ, and will then be as radical a Christian as he is now an Infidel.

“‘With regard to a public attempt to convert him by prayer,’ said he, ‘of course we do not wish to stand on the corners that we may be seen of men, yet I think that there is much benefit to be derived from public prayer.

“‘To tell the truth,’ he continued, ‘I do not think that Colonel Bob believes all that he preaches; and I consider that he talks simply to catch the dollars. A short time ago, when he was in Boston, he stopped at the Parker

House, and while there was visited by a friend of mine; and both talked over the subject of religion. As the latter was about to leave he knelt down and prayed earnestly for Ingersoll; and before he had ended, the latter stood before him with his head bowed and enwrapped in thought. I quote this simply to show that the heart of the Infidel is not as hard as it might be.' ”

This, it will be noticed, is a circumstantial, direct statement of what purports to have been an actual occurrence. And yet it is a falsehood, absolutely, a baseless fabrication, as the following letter to the editor of the *Advertiser* shows :

“NEW YORK, Dec. 30.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Advertiser* : Dr. Hamilton has been deceived by his friend. No man or woman ever called on me at the Parker House, or at any other house, and prayed for me in my presence or with my knowledge. There is not one word of truth in the story.

“Yours truly, R. G. INGERSOLL.”

The very latest story of the Colonel's conversion to Christianity (that is, up to this date, February 5, 1896) is told in the following, which was sent as a special dispatch to all the prominent papers of the country, and copied from them into the obscure secular and religious sheets, and it is probably believed in thousands of Christian homes to-day that Colonel Ingersoll has “renounced” his Infidelity and joined the church :

“KALAMAZOO, MICH., Jan. 11.—Robert G. Ingersoll, during his lecture on ‘Lincoln’ here last night, created a sensation. In the middle of his discourse he stopped and told his audience that he desired to relate the incidents of the afternoon. Then he spoke of his visit to the People’s church, and said :

“‘It is the grandest thing in your state, if not in the whole United States. If there were a similar church near my home I would join it, if its members would permit me.’

“Nothing in his whole lecture caused such a stir as this, and when some of his friends escorted him to the hotel they asked him if he was in earnest about the statement, and he is said to have replied that he was very much in earnest, and if opportunity ever was given him of joining such a church he would seize it quickly.

“It now seems that when the Colonel arrived in Kalamazoo he was taken to visit the People’s church, of which Miss Caroline J. Bartlett is the pastor. This church was rendered possible by the liberality of Silas Hubbard, who bequeathed it a large sum of money. It is institutional in its plan, and is built more like a home than an ordinary church. It has reception rooms for social gatherings, libraries, rooms for study, a dining room, a kitchen, and equipments of this kind. It is utterly undenominational, and has no creed whatever.

“Colonel Ingersoll was conducted through the various departments, and was more than pleased while at the church, but nobody supposed that he would mention it in his discourse.

“The prominent members of the church are enthusiastic to-night, and say they believe that

through the People's Church of Kalamazoo the great Agnostic will be led to joining the church. They say they see in his words the answer to the thousands of prayers sent up by the Christian Endeavor members all over the country. They say that while no organized effort has been made to get Colonel Ingersoll to join the church, yet such an effort will be made in the near future. They also profess to believe that the great disciple of Agnosticism will deliver no more Agnostic lectures."

It is needless to say that the tale is as much a myth, so far as the "conversion" is concerned, as the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, or the legend of the Gadarene pigs and the devils. Regarding it Colonel Ingersoll wrote to the compiler of these pages :

"NEW YORK, Jan. 23, 1896.

"MY DEAR MR. MACDONALD: So many foolish things have been published about my visit to the 'People's church' at Kalamazoo that it occurred to me, for the enlightenment of our friends, to tell you the story.

"A few days ago, at the request of the pastor, Miss Caroline J. Bartlett, I visited the People's church. This church has no creed, and those who support it may, or may not, be believers in the existence of God, the inspiration of the Bible, or the immortality of the soul. This church has nothing to do with the supernatural, or miraculous. It is for the good of people in this world—to increase happiness this side of the tomb. It desires to increase knowledge, to develop the brain, to give light and heat and soil to all the seeds of good that

can be found within the human heart. It takes no interest in the miracles of ignorant antiquity, but is delighted with the truths of our day and the facts of all time. It teaches the little children of the poor, reforms abuses, protects the weak, and sides with the suffering and unfortunate. Its only object is to do good—to add to the sum of happiness. It does not ask you to believe right, but to do right. The pastor of this church is earnest, enthusiastic, and self-sacrificing. The dream of her heart, the ambition of her soul, is to do good. Of course the orthodox ministers are her enemies and denounce her work as contrary to the religion of Christ. These ministers may be right, and yet I think her work is good, and that she will accomplish more for the benefit of man than all the orthodox churches in the world.

“Yours always, R. G. INGERSOLL.”

In the *New York Evening Sun* of January 21st was this interview had with Mr. Ingersoll :

“There have been reports in the East that while in Kalamazoo Colonel Ingersoll visited a church which was organized and managed by a woman, and that he was so pleased with the services that he publicly stated that if he ever joined a church he would join one like that. The Colonel laughed when he heard of the rumor, and quickly said :

“I visited what is called the People's church at Kalamazoo, and was greatly pleased with it. This church has no creed. No belief is required. It makes no difference whether a person believes in God or not, or in the inspiration of the Bible. The object is to make people better, nobler, more charitable—to educate the

little children of the poor—to correct the abuses and errors of the time—to make people happy in this world. This church cares nothing about the wonders and miracles of the past—does not care whether the whale swallowed Jonah, or Jonah the whale. It turns its attention to the present, and wishes to develop the brain, strengthen the body, and civilize the heart.

“ ‘The orthodox churches do no good. The people are getting tired of hearing about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and about the consolations of hell, and I believe that in a few years there will be hundreds of churches like the “People’s church” all over this country.’

“ ‘Is there any possibility of you or anybody else organizing such an institution in New York?’ was asked.

“ ‘I do not know. I have not heard of such a movement being on foot as yet,’ was the reply.

“As to the results of his tour and teachings Colonel Ingersoll said :

“I have to judge by my experience. When I was a young man I was the only “Infidel” in the town where I lived. Now there are millions of Freethinkers in this country. People are changing every day. When I commenced lecturing there were very few women in the audiences. Now they are often in the majority. I sometimes think that the women are thinking more than the men.

“ ‘Yes, I believe that what I say has a good deal of effect, and the answers that the preachers make help the cause of Freethought ; their answers are so absurd, lame, malicious, and idiotic, that thousands conclude that there are no arguments in favor of orthodox Christianity.

“ ‘If the preachers wish to hold their congre-

gations they must drop their absurdities and preach better sense.' ”

If this is not enough, here is the denial of the story by the minister of the church in question :

“ KALAMAZOO, MICH., Jan. 23, 1896.

“ MR. E. M. MACDONALD, Editor THE TRUTH SEEKER, New York, N. Y.—*Dear Sir* : Replying to your letter of January 19th, I inclose printed statement of the facts concerning Colonel Ingersoll's visit to this city, and his commendation of the People's church. I do not understand that Colonel Ingersoll is converted to anything. He has simply found a church which offers fellowship to any honest man entirely irrespective of belief. I do not indorse Colonel Ingersoll's theological views, nor he mine. That is no reason why we could not work together for the things of practical righteousness upon which we *are* agreed. The Bond of Union of the People's church is a statement of *purpose*, not a declaration of theological *belief*.

“ Sincerely, CAROLINE J. BARTLETT,
“ Minister of People's Church.”

The printed statement to which Miss Bartlett alludes includes another letter from Colonel Ingersoll, which, as it describes the church, we print. It was written to the *New York Journal*, which had heard of the Colonel's alleged conversion and had telegraphed him for a statement in regard thereto. It was written only two days after the alleged event, while Colonel Ingersoll was in the field, delivering his famous anti-Christian lectures :

"TOLEDO, OHIO, Jan. 12, 1896.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Journal*: At Kalamazoo, day before yesterday, I was shown over the People's church by Miss Caroline J. Bartlett, the pastor. This church has no creed. All are welcome whatever their belief may be. The doors are open to Jews, Infidels, Agnostics, Atheists, and even to orthodox Christians.

"The object of this church is to make people better, kinder, and nearer just by developing the brain and civilizing the heart. The church is a character builder. It wants to do something for this world, to help the poor, educate the ignorant, and do away with crime.

"This church building is open all the week. There is a kindergarten, where sixty poor children are taught and given a dinner every day. There is also a gymnasium for girls and boys, fine baths, a good kitchen, rooms for parties and concerts. The auditorium is beautiful, will seat six or seven hundred, and there is a fine organ.

"Miss Bartlett, the pastor, is a remarkable person. She has intelligence of the highest order, great industry, and that divine thing called enthusiasm. I like that church.

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

The advertisement of itself which the church makes on its official program, sent to the writer by the minister, Miss Bartlett, is as follows :

"The People's church is as absolutely unsectarian in fact as it is in name. It leaves each person free to choose his own religious *belief*, while seeking to unite all upon the lines of endeavor after *right living*, holding that the truest religious faith must grow out of the most

faithful life. Following is the simple 'Bond of Union,' signing which constitutes one a member of the People's church.

“ ‘Earnestly desiring to develop in ourselves, and in the world, honest, reverent thought, faithfulness to our highest conceptions of right living, the spirit of love and service to our fellow men, and allegiance towards all the interests of morality and religion as interpreted by the growing thought and purest lives of humanity, we join ourselves together, hoping to help one another in all good things, and to advance the cause of pure and practical religion in the community; basing our union upon no creedal test, but upon the purpose herein expressed, and welcoming all who wish to join us to help establish truth, righteousness, and love in the world.’ ”

It will be seen that the People's church is not a “church” at all, but an association of people for humanitarian purposes. In the printed matter which the minister sent us is this paragraph:

“The People's church is not regarded as orthodox by members of the Catholic, Episcopal, or evangelical churches, *but it is such a long step nearer the orthodox standpoint than Colonel Ingersoll's Agnosticism that the declaration was taken to mean all that the hearers wished it to mean.*”

In sending this, expressly for our information, Miss Bartlett crossed out the words which we have placed in italics, which indicates very plainly that the declaration was *not* taken, by

her at least, to mean any such thing. Or else that the People's church is no nearer being orthodox than Colonel Ingersoll's Agnosticism. This latter view finds support in the utterances of the religious press about the church. A typical church paper, the *Wesleyan Christian Advocate*, published at Atlanta, Ga., in its issue of January 21st, this year, alludes to Kalamazoo as the place where "good celery and sorry Christianity abound," and calls the People's church "a semi-religious establishment in which a Miss Bartlett exercises and calls herself pastor." The same paper quotes the letter Colonel Ingersoll wrote to the *Journal*, and thus comments :

"And this is the extent of his conversion! He is willing to join a church provided it believes nothing, aims at a vague sort of humanitarianism, and the instruments of which are a kitchen, a kindergarten, a gymnasium, and a bath tub!

"Victuals, entertainments, muscular development, and a cake of soap are the ingredients of the gospel he accepts!

"It appears to us that the public will find here, not the conversion of the skeptic, but the perversion of 'the People's church.'

"Indeed, it has come to pass in this country that any gang which gets together on Sunday and listens to a harangue, forthwith sets up a claim to be called a church, especially if it makes loud profession of humanitarianism. Even 'Christian Science,' in which there is no science and no Christianity, sets up churchly pretensions. And so it goes, folly running the

entire scale of sensationalism to cut a figure in the public prints.

“But, beloved, ‘try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.’ ‘Every spirit which confesseth not that Jesus has come in the flesh, is not of God.’ That is what St. John says, and that is the truth.”

And so it is settled that if the institution at Kalamazoo is a church at all, it is not a Christian church; and that is why Colonel Ingersoll *could* join it without straining his principles.

But in all this talk about the Colonel's conversion, there is one fact overlooked by all—and that is, that Colonel Ingersoll goes right along keeping his lecture engagements to speak against Christianity. Would he do that if he had been “converted?” How do those who believe he “experienced a change of heart” explain this?

Another tale for the marines, which really has no place here at all, but which we notice because some people seem to think that if some distant relative of the Colonel's can be got to join a church, why, that settles the Colonel's arguments! So absurd is the reasoning of the average Christian! In 1892, a man calling himself Samuel Ingersoll, gave out, at Northport, L. I., that he was a cousin to Mr. Ingersoll, but nevertheless had become converted and impelled to take up the work of an evangelist. His stock-in-trade, by which he advertised himself and obtained engagements, was the alleged fact

that he was a cousin to Mr. Ingersoll. The Colonel's attention having been called to him and his assertion, he wrote the following letter:

"NEW YORK, Sept 11, 1892.

"JAMES E. LARMER, ESQ.—*My Dear Sir*: I have no cousin, so far as I know, by the name of Samuel Ingersoll. I never heard of him until I read your letter. Yours truly,
"R. G. INGERSOLL."

THE CHARGE THAT MR. INGERSOLL DEFENDED THE CIRCULATION OF OBSCENE LITERATURE.

One of the charges most persistently made against Colonel Ingersoll is that during and after the trial of D. M. Bennett, persecuted by Anthony Comstock, the Colonel endeavored to have the law against sending obscene literature through the mail repealed. That the charge is maliciously false is fully shown by the following brief history of events connected with the prosecution of D. M. Bennett and Mr. Ingersoll's efforts in his behalf. It was first printed in **THE TRUTH SEEKER** of April 7, 1888, in reply to a minister who published a pamphlet pretending to convict Colonel Ingersoll in detail and by circumstantial evidence of these charges:

"On Nov. 12, 1877, D. M. Bennett was arrested for mailing a polemical tract called 'An Open Letter to Jesus Christ,' written by himself, and a scientific tract entitled, 'How Do Marsupials Propagate?' written by Hon. A. B. Bradford, of Enon Valley, Pa. Previously to this Comstock had arrested E. H. Heywood for

mailing 'Cupid's Yokes.' Mr. Heywood was convicted in January, 1878; while in the same month Mr. Bennett's case was dismissed. In the same month Frank Rivers also was arrested for selling 'Fruits of Philosophy,' a scientific treatise obnoxious to Comstock principally because Freethinkers sold it. Mr. Mendum, we think, possesses the original plates in this country, and in England the book was issued by Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant.

"In Anthony Comstock's report to his society for 1878, issued just after these arrests, on page 7, occur these words:

"'Another class of publications, issued by freelovers and Freethinkers, is in a fair way of being stamped out. The public generally can scarcely be aware of the extent that blasphemy and filth commingled have found vent through these varied channels. Under a plausible pretense men who raise a howl about free press, free speech, etc., ruthlessly trample underfoot the most sacred things, breaking down the altars of religion, bursting asunder the ties of home, and seeking to overthrow every social restraint.'

"Comstock also subsequently repeated these threats before an auxiliary ecclesiastical society of Rochester, saying that Infidel publications and Infidel tracts would soon be suppressed. Before another society in Boston he referred to the *Investigator* and *Banner of Light* as publications to which he should soon pay attention, and he made another threat against Freethought literature before his society in St. Louis.

"After Mr. Bennett's arrest in 1877, he printed a petition to Congress, written by T. B. Wakeman, asking for the *repeal or modification* of Comstock's law by which he expected to stamp out the publications of Freethinkers. This

petition was referred to the committee on revision of the laws of the House, who gave hearing to E. B. Foote, Jr., A. E. Giles, and J. B. Wolff in its favor, and Samuel Colgate and Anthony Comstock against it. On May 1st the committee reported adversely. Before the committee Comstock, on Saturday, April 20, 1878, said that D. M. Bennett published a 'villainous and blasphemous sheet,' which ought to be suppressed. Mr. Comstock said the same thing to two United States senators, who agreed with him, and agreed also to vote for the retention of the law. Now, if the law did not affect Infidel publications, why this argument and appeal to legislators to retain the law on the statute books? At this time, too, Comstock made a threat to soon have Mr. Bennett arrested again. Comstock also visited Mr. Bennett's printers, threatening them with arrest if they continued printing THE TRUTH SEEKER. He also asked the American News Company to stop selling it.

"The connection of Mr. Ingersoll with this petition is soon explained. Mr. Ingersoll knew of Comstock's attempts to suppress heresy by means of this law, and when called upon by the Washington committee in charge of the petition, he allowed his name to go on the petition for modification, but he told them distinctly and plainly that he was *not* in favor of the *repeal* of the law, as he was willing and anxious that obscenity should be suppressed by all legal means. His sentiments are best expressed by himself in a letter to the *Boston Journal*. He says:

“ WASHINGTON, March 18, 1878.

“ TO THE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON JOURNAL: My attention has been called to the following article that recently appeared in your paper:

““ Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, and others, feel aggrieved because Congress, in 1873, enacted a law for the suppression of obscene literature, and, believing it an infringement of the rights of certain citizens, and an effort to muzzle the press and conscience, petition for its repeal. When a man's conscience permits him to spread broadcast obscene literature, it is time that conscience was muzzled. The law is a terror only to evil-doers.”

““ No one wishes the repeal of any law for the suppression of obscene literature. For my part, I wish all such laws rigidly enforced. The only objection I have to the law of 1873 is, that it has been construed to include books and pamphlets written against the religion of the day, although containing nothing that can be called obscene or impure. Certain religious fanatics, taking advantage of the word “immoral” in the law, have claimed that all writings against what they are pleased to call orthodox religion are immoral, and such books have been seized and their authors arrested. To this, and this only, I object.

““ Your article does me great injustice, and I ask that you will have the kindness to publish this note.

““ From the bottom of my heart I despise the publishers of obscene literature. Below them there is no depth of filth. And I also despise those who, under the pretense of suppressing obscene literature, endeavor to prevent honest and pure men from writing and publishing honest and pure thoughts. Yours truly,

““ R. G. INGERSOLL.”

“This is sufficiently easy of comprehension for even ministers, but of course they misrepresented and lied about the writer. From that

day to this he has been accused of favoring the dissemination of obscene literature. That the friends of Colonel Ingersoll may know just how infamous this is, we will give a brief history of the repeal or *modification* movement.

"In June, 1878, E. H. Heywood was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for mailing 'Cupid's Yokes.' In August a big indignation meeting was held in Boston to protest. The repeal of the law was demanded. On August 24th, Mr. Bennett, W. S. Bell, and Josephine Tilton were arrested at Watkins for selling the same book. These prosecutions never amounted to much besides making trouble for the defendants. On October 26th the National Liberal League held its Congress in Syracuse. At this Congress the League left the matter of repeal or modification of the laws open, taking no action as an organization, either way, but elected officers known to be in favor of repeal. On December 10th, Mr. Bennett was again arrested for mailing the book, 'Cupid's Yokes.' He was tried, and found guilty; he appealed, the conviction was affirmed, and he was sentenced to thirteen months' imprisonment at hard labor.

"After the trial Colonel Ingersoll interposed, and endeavored to get a pardon for Mr. Bennett, who was held in Ludlow street jail pending President Hayes's reply. The man who occupied the president's office promised to pardon the Infidel editor; then he went back on his word, and Mr. Bennett served his term of imprisonment.

"Then preachers opened the sluiceways of vituperation and billingsgate upon Colonel Ingersoll for having interceded for a man convicted of mailing obscene literature. The charges were as infamously false then as they are now, and to show it, it is only neces-

sary to quote Colonel Ingersoll's words during the year or two succeeding, when the Free-thinkers and the Christians were not only opposing each other vigorously, but the Free-thinkers themselves were divided on the question. In 1879, while Mr. Bennett was in prison, a correspondent of the Nashville, Tenn., *Banner* said that the National Liberal League and Colonel Ingersoll were in favor of disseminating obscene literature. To this Colonel Ingersoll replied in a letter to a friend :

“ 1417 G St., WASHINGTON, Aug. 21, 1879.

“ MY DEAR SIR : The article in the Nashville *Banner* by “ J. L. ” is utterly and maliciously false.

“ A petition was sent to Congress praying for the repeal or modification of certain postal laws, to the end that the freedom of conscience and of the press should no be abridged.

“ Nobody holds in greater contempt than I the writers, publishers, or dealers in obscene literature. One of my objections to the Bible is that it contains hundreds of grossly obscene passages not fit to be read by any decent man, thousands of passages, in my judgment, calculated to corrupt the minds of youth. I hope the time will soon come when the good sense of the American people will demand a Bible with all obscene passages left out.

“ The only reason a modification of the postal laws is necessary is that at present, under color of those laws, books and pamphlets are excluded from the mails simply because they are considered heterodox and blasphemous. In other words, every man should be allowed to write, publish, and send through the mails his thoughts upon any subject, expressed in a decent and becoming manner. As to the propriety of

giving anybody authority to overhaul mails, break seals, and read private correspondence, that is another question.

“Every minister and every layman who charges me with directly or indirectly favoring the dissemination of anything that is impure, retails what he knows to be a willful and malicious lie. I remain, Yours truly,

“R. G. INGERSOLL.”

“Three weeks after this letter was written the National Liberal League held its third annual Congress at Cincinnati. Colonel Ingersoll was chairman of the committee on resolutions and platform and unfinished business of the League. One of the subjects to be dealt with was these Comstock’s laws. The following are Colonel Ingersoll’s remarks and the resolutions he presented:

“It may be proper, before presenting the resolutions of the committee, to say a word in explanation. The committee were charged with the consideration of the unfinished business of the League. It seems that at Syracuse there was a division as to what course should be taken in regard to the postal laws of the United States. These laws were used as an engine of oppression against the free circulation of what we understand to be scientific literature. Every honest man in this country is in favor of allowing every other human being every right that he claims for himself. The majority at Syracuse were at that time simply in favor of the absolute repeal of those laws, believing them to be unconstitutional—not because they were in favor of anything obscene, but because they were opposed to the mails of the United States being under the espionage and bigotry of the church. They therefore demanded an absolute repeal of

the law. Others, feeling that they might be misunderstood, and knowing that theology can coin the meanest words to act as the vehicle of the lowest lies, were afraid of being misunderstood, and therefore they said, Let us amend these laws so that our literature shall be upon an equality with that of theology. I know that there is not a Liberal here, nor in the United States, that is in favor of the dissemination of obscene literature. [Cheers.] One of the objections which we have to the book said to be written by God is that it is obscene. [Cheers, yells, and cheers.]

“The Liberals of this country believe in purity, and they believe that every fact in nature and in science is as pure as a star. We do not need to ask for any more than we want. We simply want the laws of our country so framed that we are not discriminated against. So, taking that view of the vexed question, we want to put the boot upon the other foot. We want to put the charge of obscenity where it belongs, and the committee, of which I have the honor to be one of the members, have endeavored to do just that thing. [Cheers.] Men have no right to talk to me about obscenity who regard the story of Lot and his daughters as a fit thing for men, women, and children to read, and who worship a God in whom the violation of [Cheers drowned the conclusion of this sentence so the reporters could not hear it.] Such a God I hold in infinite contempt. [Redoubled cheers.]

“Now I will read you the resolutions recommended by the committee.

“RESOLUTIONS.

“Your committee have the honor to submit the following report:

“ ‘First, As to the unfinished business of the League, your committee submits the following resolutions :

“ ‘*Resolved*, That we are in favor of such postal laws as will allow the free transportation through the mails of the United States of all books, pamphlets, and papers, irrespective of the religious, irreligious, political, and scientific views they may contain, so that the literature of science may be placed upon an equality with that of superstition.

“ ‘*Resolved*, That we are utterly opposed to the dissemination, through the mails or by any other means, of obscene literature, whether “inspired” or uninspired, and hold in measureless contempt its authors and disseminators.

“ ‘*Resolved*, That we call upon the Christian world to expunge from the so-called “sacred” Bible every passage that cannot be read without covering the cheek of modesty with the blush of shame ; and until such passages are expunged, we demand that the laws against the dissemination of obscene literature be impartially enforced.’

“ During the reading of these resolutions, when he came to the words ‘obscene literature,’ Colonel Ingersoll said, ‘I thank them for that word ; we will see who the obscenists are.’ The Congress also resolved :

“ ‘That we express the deepest sympathy with D. M. Bennett and his family, for the reason that he has been convicted by religious bigotry and ignorant zeal, and has been imprisoned, and is now languishing in the cell of a felon, when in truth and fact he committed no offense whatever against any law of the land.’

“This ought to have stopped the ministerial ghouls, but it did not, for the reason that they did not take the trouble to inform themselves of the position held by Colonel Ingersoll on the question. Neither did the critics in the Liberal ranks cease their caviling at the League. The discussion over the Comstock laws went on with vigor and acrimony, and the writer of these lines was as acrimonious as anybody else. We believed then, as we believe now, that the Comstock laws are unconstitutional, and should be repealed. We do not believe that Congress has power to legislate on the morality of mailable matter. We believe that the language of the House committee on post-offices of the present Congress [1888] in dealing with the bill to exclude newspapers containing lottery advertisements applies to the Comstock laws. The committee says ;

““In the opinion of the committee the legislation proposed by these bills violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the article of the Constitution which declares that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of the press. If Congress may exclude from the mails a newspaper or a periodical which contains an advertisement of a lottery, it may make non-mailable all newspapers and periodicals in which are printed advertisements, news reports, or editorials which in its judgment the people should not read. In other words, it may declare what shall and what shall not be printed in every newspaper and periodical in the country which is circulated wholly or in part through the mails.

““Another objection to this legislation is that it establishes a censorship of the press. Surely no one will maintain that Congress, if it should

pass laws to effect that purpose, would not violate the provision of the Constitution which was intended to protect the liberty of the press. And yet that is what one of these bills, viz., No. 3,320, does. It clothes the postmaster-general with authority to determine what printed matter in any newspaper or periodical is an advertisement of a lottery, making him in that respect a censor of the press. The inevitable result of such legislation is the establishment of a precedent which may be considered in the future an authority for the creation of a censor of the press in all respects.'

"We believe that lotteries and obscenity should be dealt with by state and municipal legislation, and offenders punished in the county in which they commit their offense. So in those days we argued for the repeal of the Comstock laws, as did dozens of others—James Parton, Elizur Wright, O. B. Frothingham, T. C. Leland, Courtlandt Palmer, and many more whose names we do not recall. *But Colonel Ingersoll did not*, and when the National Liberal League met the next year at Chicago (Sept. 17, 1880), he was opposed to the League's making a pledge to defend every case under the Comstock laws, and he was opposed to a resolution demanding a repeal of those laws. The following is what Colonel Ingersoll said upon the subject:

"Mr. Chairman, I wish to offer the following resolution in place and instead of resolutions numbered 5 and 6:

"*Resolved*, That the committee of defense, whenever a person has been indicted for what he claims to have been an honest exercise of the freedom of thought and expression, shall investigate the case, and if it appears that such

person has been guilty of no offense, then it shall be the duty of said committee to defend such person if he is unable to defend himself.

“Now allow me one moment to state my reasons. I do not, I have not, I never shall, accuse or suspect a solitary member of the Liberal League of the United States of being in favor of doing any act under heaven that he is not thoroughly convinced is right. We all claim freedom of speech, and it is the gem of the human soul. We all claim a right to express our honest thoughts. Did it ever occur to any Liberal that he wished to express any thought honestly, truly, and legally he considered immoral? How does it happen that *we* have any interest in what is known as immoral literature? I deny that the League has any interest in that kind of literature. Whenever we mention it, whenever we speak of it, we put ourselves in a false position. What do we want? We want to see to it that the church party shall not smother the literature of Liberalism. We want to see to it that the viper of intellectual slavery shall not sting our cause. We want it so that every honest man, so that every honest woman, can express his or her honest thought upon any subject in the world. And the question, and the only question, as to whether they are amendable to the law, in my mind, is, Were they honest? Was their effort to benefit mankind? Was that their intention? And no man, no woman, should be convicted of any offense that that man or woman did not intend to commit. Now then, suppose some person is arrested, and it is claimed that a work written by him is immoral, is illegal. Then, I say, let our committee of defense examine that case, and if our enemies are seeking to trample out Freethought under the name of immorality, and

under the cover and shield of our criminal law, then let us defend that man to the last dollar we have. But we do not wish to put ourselves in the position of general defenders of all the slush that may be written in this or any other country. You cannot afford to do it. You cannot afford to put into the mouth of theology a perpetual and continual slur. You cannot afford to do it. And this meeting is not the time to go into the question of what authority the United States may have over the mails. It is a very wide question. It embraces many others. Has the government a right to say what shall go into the mails? Why, in one sense, assuredly. Certainly they have a right to say that you shall not send a horse and wagon by mail. They have a right to fix some limit; and the only thing we want is that the literature of liberty, the literature of real Free-thought, shall not be discriminated against. And we know now as well as if it had been perfectly and absolutely demonstrated, that the literature of Freethought will be absolutely pure. We know it. We call upon the Christian world to expunge obscenity from their book, and until that is expunged we demand that the laws against obscene literature shall be executed. And how can we, in the next resolution, say those laws ought all to be repealed? We cannot do that. I have always been in favor of such an amendment of the law that by no trick, by no device, by no judicial discretion, an honest, high, pure-minded man should be subjected to punishment simply for giving his best and his honest thought. What more do we need? What more can we ask? I am as much opposed as my friend Mr. Wakeman can be to the assumption of the church that it is the guardian of morality. If our morality is to be guarded

by that sentiment alone, then is the end come. The natural instinct of self-defense in mankind and in all organized society is the fortress of the morality in mankind. The church itself was at one time the outgrowth of that same feeling, but now the feeling has outgrown the church. Now, then, we will have a Committee of Defense. That committee will examine every case. Suppose some man has been indicted, and suppose he is guilty. Suppose he has endeavored to soil the human mind. Suppose he has been willing to make money by pandering to the lowest passions in the human breast. What will that committee do with him them? We will say "Go on; let the law take its course." [Applause.] But if, upon reading his book, we find that he is all wrong, horribly wrong, idiotically wrong, but make up our minds that he was honest in his error, I will give as much as any other living man of my means to defend that man. And I believe you will all bear me witness when I say that I have the cause of intellectual liberty at heart as much as I am capable of having anything at heart. And I know hundreds of others here just the same. I understand that. I understand their motive. I believe it to be perfectly good, but I truly and honestly think they are mistaken. If we have an interest in the business, I would fight for it. If our cause was assailed by law, then I say fight; and our cause is assailed, and I say fight. They will not allow me, in many states of this Union, to testify. I say fight until every one of those laws is repealed. They discriminate against a man simply because he is honest. Repeal such laws. The church, if it had the power to-day, would trample out every particle of free literature in this land. And when they endeavor to

do that, I say fight. But there is a distinction wide as the Mississippi—yes, wider than the Atlantic, wider than all the oceans—between the literature of immorality and the literature of Freethought. One is a crawling, slimy lizard, and the other an angel with wings of light. Now, let us draw this distinction, let us understand ourselves, and do not give to the common enemy a word covered with mire, a word stained with cloaca, to throw at us. We thought we had settled that question a year ago. We buried it then, and I say let it rot.

“This question is of great importance. It is the most important one we have here. I have fought this question; I am ever going to, and I will not allow anybody to put a stain upon me. This question must be understood if it takes all summer. Here is a case in point. Some lady has written a work which, I am informed, is a good work, and that has nothing wrong about it. Her opinions may be foolish or wise. Let this committee examine that case. If they find that she is a good woman, that she had good intentions, no matter how terrible the work may be, if her intentions are good, she has committed no crime. I want the honest thought. I think I have always been in favor of it. But we haven't the time to go into all these questions.

“Then comes the question for this house to decide in a moment whether these cases should have been tried in the state or federal court. I want it understood that I have confidence in the federal courts of the nation. There may be some bad judges, there may be some idiotic jurors. I think there was in that case [of Mr. Bennett]. But the Committee of Defense, if I understand it, supplied means, for the defense of that man. They did, but are we ready now to decide in a moment what courts shall have

jurisdiction? Are we ready to say that the federal courts shall be denied jurisdiction in any case arising about the mails? Suppose somebody robs the mails? Before whom shall we try the robber? Try him before a federal judge. Why? Because he has violated a federal law. We have not any time for such an investigation as this. What we want to do is to defend free speech everywhere. What we want to do is to defend the expression of thought in papers, in pamphlets, in books. What we want to do is to see to it that these books, papers, and pamphlets are on an equality with all other books, papers, and pamphlets in the United States mails. And then the next step we want to take, if any man is indicted under the pretense that he is publishing immoral books, is to have our Committee of Defense well examine the case; and if we believe the man to be innocent we will help defend him if he is unable to defend himself; and if we find that the law is wrong in that particular, we will go for the amendment of that law. I beg of you to have some sense in this matter. We must have it. If we don't, upon that rock we will split—upon that rock we will again divide. Let us not do it. The cause of intellectual liberty is the highest to the human mind. Let us stand by it, and we can help all these people by this resolution. We can do justice everywhere with it, while if we agree to the fifth and sixth resolutions that have been offered I say we lay ourselves open to the charge, and it will be hurled against us, no matter how unjustly, that we are in favor of widespread immorality.

“Mr. Clarke: We are not afraid of it.

“Colonel Ingersoll: You may say we are not afraid. I am not afraid. He only is a fool who rushes into unnecessary danger.

“Mr. Clarke: What are you talking about, anyway?”

“Colonel Ingersoll: I am talking with endeavor to put a little sense into such men as you. [Applause and laughter.] Your very question shows that it was necessary that I should talk. [Applause.] And now I move that my resolution be adopted.

“Mr. Wakeman moved that it be added to that portion of the sixth resolution which recommended the constitution of the Committee of Defense.

“Colonel Ingersoll: I cannot agree to the sixth resolution. I think nearly every word of it is wrong in principle. I think it binds us to a course of action that we will not be willing to follow; and my resolution covers every possible case. My resolution binds us to defend every honest man in the exercise of his right. I can't be bound to say that the government hasn't control of its morals—that we cannot trust the federal courts—that, under any circumstances, at any time, I am bound to defend, either by word or money, any man who violates the laws of this country.

“Mr. Wakeman: We do not say that.

“Colonel Ingersoll: I beg of you, I beseech you, not to pass the sixth resolution. If you do, I wouldn't give that [snapping his fingers] for the platform. A part of the Comstock law authorizes the vilest possible trick. We are all opposed to that.

“Mr. Leland: What is the question?”

“Colonel Ingersoll: Don't let us be silly. Don't let us say we are opposed to what we are not opposed to. If any man here is opposed to putting down the vilest of all possible trash he ought to go home. We are opposed to only a part of the law—opposed to it whenever they

endeavor to trample Freethought under foot in the name of immorality. [Applause.]

“Afterward, at the same session of the Congress, the following colloquy took place between Colonel Ingersoll and T. B. Wakeman :

“ ‘ Colonel Ingersoll : You know as well as I that there are certain books not fit to go through the mails—books and pictures not fit to be delivered.

“ ‘ Mr. Wakeman : That is so.

“ ‘ Colonel Ingersoll : There is not a man here but what is in favor, when these books and pictures come into the control of the United States, of burning them up when they are manifestly obscene. You don't want any grand jury there.

“ ‘ Mr. Wakeman : Yes, we do.

“ ‘ Colonel Ingersoll : No, we don't. When they are manifestly obscene, burn them up.

“ ‘ A delegate : Who is to be judge of that?

“ ‘ Colonel Ingersoll : There are books that nobody differs about. There are certain things about which we can use discretion. If that discretion is abused, a man has his remedy. We stand for the free thought of this country. We stand for the progressive spirit of the United States. We can't afford to say that all these laws should be repealed. If we had time to investigate them we could say in what they should be amended. Don't tie us to this nonsense—to the idea that we have an interest in immoral literature. Let us remember that Mr. Wakeman is sore. He had a case before the federal courts, and he imagines, having lost that case, you cannot depend on them. I have lost hundreds of cases. I have as much confidence in the federal courts as in the state courts. I

am not to be a party to throwing a slur upon the federal judiciary. All we want is fair play. We want the same chance for our doctrines that others have for theirs. And how this infernal question of obscenity ever got into the Liberal League I could never understand. If an innocent man is convicted of larceny, should we repeal all the laws on the subject? I don't pretend to be better than other people. It is easy to talk right—so easy to be right that I never care to have the luxury of being wrong. I am advocating something that we can stand upon. I do not misunderstand Mr. Wakeman's motives. I believe they are perfectly good—that he is thoroughly honest. Why not just say we will stand by freedom of thought and its expression? Why not say that we are in favor of amending any law that is wrong? But do not make the wholesale statement that all these laws ought to be repealed. They ought not to be repealed. Some of them are good. The law against sending instruments of vice in the mails is good, as is the law against sending obscene books and pictures, and the law against letting ignorant hyenas prey upon sick people, and the law which prevents the getters-up of bogus lotteries sending their letters through the mail.'

“At the evening session of the Congress, on the same day, Mr. Ingersoll made this speech in opposition to the resolution demanding the repeal of the Comstock laws :

“‘I am not in favor of the repeal of those laws. I have never been, and I never expect to be. But I do wish that every law providing for the punishment of a criminal offense should distinctly define the offense. That is the objection to this law, that it does not define

the offense, so that an American citizen can readily know when he is about to violate it, and consequently the law ought in all probability to be modified in that regard. I am in favor of every law defining with perfect distinctness the offense to be punished, but I cannot, I have the cause of Freethought too much at heart, to say by wholesale these laws should be repealed. Neither will I consent to the repeal simply because the church is in favor of those laws. In so far as the church agrees with me, I congratulate the church. In so far as superstition is willing to help me, good! I am willing to accept it. I believe, also, that this League is upon a secular basis, and there should be nothing in our platform that would prevent any Christian from acting with us. What is our platform? And we ought to leave it as it is. It needs no amendment. Our platform is for a secular government. Is it improper in a secular government to endeavor to prevent the spread of obscene literature? It is the business of a secular government to do it, but if that government attempts to stamp out Freethought in the name of obscenity, it is then for the friends of Freethought to call for a definition of the word, and such a definition as will allow Freethought to go everywhere through all the mails of the United States. We are also in favor of secular schools. Good. We are in favor of doing away with every law that discriminates against a man on account of his belief. Good. We are in favor of universal education. Good. We are in favor of the taxation of church property. Good—because the experience of the world shows that where you allow superstition to own property without taxing it, it will absorb the net profits. Is it time now that we should throw into the scale, against all these splendid

purposes, an effort to repeal some postal laws against obscenity? As well might we turn the League into an engine to do away with all laws against the sale of stale eggs. What have we to do with those things? Is it possible that Freethought can be charged with being obscene? Is it possible that, if the charge is made, it can be substantiated? Can you not attack any superstition in the world in perfectly pure language? Can you not attack anything you please in perfectly pure language? And where a man intends right, no law should find him guilty; and if the law is weak in that respect, let it be modified. But I say to you that I cannot go with any body of men who demand the unconditional repeal of these laws. [Cheers.] I believe in liberty as much as any man who breathes. I will do as much, according to my ability, as any other man to make this an absolutely free and secular government. I will do as much as any other man of my strength and of my intellectual power to give every human being every right that I claim for myself. But this obscene law business is a stumbling-block. Had it not been for this, instead of the few people voting here—less than one hundred—we would have had a Congress numbered by thousands. Had it not been for this business, the Liberal League of the United States would tonight hold in its hand the political destiny of the United States. Instead of that, we have thrown away our power upon a question in which we are not interested. Instead of that, we have wasted our resources and our brain for the repeal of a law that we don't want repealed. If we want anything, we simply want a modification. Now, then, don't stain this cause by such a course. And don't understand that I am pretending, or am insinuating, that anyone here

is in favor of obscene literature. It is a question, not of principle, but of means, and I beg pardon of this Convention if I have done anything so horrible as has been described by Mr. Pillsbury. I regret it if I have ever endeavored to trample upon the rights of this Convention.

“There is one thing I have not done—I have not endeavored to cast five votes when I didn't have a solitary vote. Let us be fair; let us be fair. I have simply given my vote. I wish to trample upon the rights of no one; and when Mr. Pillsbury gave those votes he supposed he had a right to give them; and if he had a right, the votes would have been counted. I attribute nothing wrong to him, but I say this: I have the right to make a motion in this Congress, I have the right to argue that motion, but I have no more rights than any other member, and I claim none. But I want to say to you—and I want you to know and feel it—that I want to act with every Liberal man and woman in this world. I want you to know and feel it that I want to do everything I can to get every one of these statutes off our books that discriminates against a man because of his religious belief—that I am in favor of a secular government, and of all these rights. But I cannot, and I will not, operate with any organization that asks for the unconditional repeal of those laws. I will stand alone, and I have stood alone. I can tell my thoughts to my countrymen, and I shall do it, and whatever position you take, whether I am with you or not, you will find me battling everywhere for the absolute freedom of the human mind. You will find me battling everywhere to make this world better and grander; and whatever my personal conduct may be, I shall endeavor to keep my theories right. I beg

of you, I implore you, do not pass the resolution No. 6. It is not for our interest; it will do us no good. It will lose us hosts of honest, splendid friends. Do not do it; it will be a mistake; and the only reason I offered the motion was to give the members time to think this over. I am not pretending to know more than other people. I am perfectly willing to say that in many things I know less. But upon this subject I want you to think. No matter whether you are afraid of your sons, your daughters, your wives, or your husbands, that isn't it—I don't want the splendid prospects of this League put in jeopardy upon such an issue as this. I have no more to say. But if that resolution is passed, all I have to say is that, while I shall be for liberty everywhere, I cannot act with this organization, and I will not.'

"The resolution was finally adopted, and Colonel Ingersoll resigned his office of vice-president in the League, and never acted with it again until the League dropped all side issues, and came back to first principles—the enforcement of the Nine Demands of Liberalism."

In 1892, writing upon this subject in answer to a minister who had repeated these absurd charges, Colonel Ingersoll made this offer: "I WILL PAY A PREMIUM OF \$1,000 A WORD FOR EACH AND EVERY WORD I EVER SAID OR WROTE IN FAVOR OF SENDING OBSCENE PUBLICATIONS THROUGH THE MAILS."

As Colonel Ingersoll's word is good for a great many thousands of dollars, we advise any minister who feels like repeating these charges to

prove them, and become rich and famous instead of making himself infamous by lying.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS.

While engaged in gathering together the material of this pamphlet, the writer received the following letter, which will answer as the text and apology for mentioning a few of the hundreds and thousands of benevolent deeds done by Colonel Ingersoll :

"LESLIE, MICH., Jan. 7, 1896.

"THE TRUTH SEEKER, New York.—*Dear Sirs:* I attended the lecture of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll at Jackson last evening, and on my return to-day had an argument with a 'divine' concerning the Colonel. The minister, a well-meaning gentleman, said that there was not an instance on record where Ingersoll had ever given a cent for any charitable or benevolent association. I asserted that he was one of the most charitable of men and that a large portion of his income was devoted to such objects. I believe that a short time ago, in San Francisco, he gave the whole of his receipts to a charitable association, but I had no proof of my assertion. The minister says if I can prove to his mind that Ingersoll has ever done anything of the kind he will take back what he has said in public concerning the Colonel.

"Now can you cite me to a few instances of Mr. Ingersoll's generosity? I desire to be able to refute this charge hereafter.

"Hoping to receive a reply from you, without causing you too much trouble, I remain, fraternally,
B. M. GOULD."

We can mention but a few of the many instances of generosity attributable to Mr. Ingersoll, for the reason that he does not care to have them talked about; most of them are concealed from all but his family, and his family have too great respect for his wishes to violate his confidence, even though it might redound to his credit. But some of his good deeds are public property, and these we can cite.

The reference in Mr. Gould's letter to a sum given to a San Francisco charity is based upon the fact that Colonel Ingersoll did once give a large sum to several charities in that city. In the papers of San Francisco, in the first days of July, 1877, appeared this advertisement: "Grand Opera House. Monday evening, July 9th. Col. Robert G. Ingersoll will repeat his lecture, Liberty for Man, Woman and Child. The proceeds to be equally divided among the following charitable institutions of this city: Ladies' Protection and Relief Society, Pacific Hebrew Orphan Asylum and Home Society, Orphan Asylum Society (Protestant)."

The lecture was given and realized a large amount, and the money was handed over to Mrs. Cooper to divide, as she was the almoner, or good genius, for the societies.

In 1891 Colonel Ingersoll was in Montana engaged in a law case of great magnitude—the Davis will case. The legislature of Montana had just met and elected Hon. A. C. Witter speaker of the house. His sudden death fol-

lowed. He left two little girls, who, but for the well-known generosity of their parents, would have been in good circumstances. As it was, they were left penniless. The members of the legislature raised a purse for them, and the people of Helena and Butte and other towns in Montana contributed liberally. At the time the money was being raised Colonel Ingersoll was in Helena, on his law matter. A committee of the legislature, knowing his sympathetic nature and great generosity, waited on him and requested him to lecture for the benefit of the children. The Butte (Mont.) *Miner*, of Feb. 5, 1891, said that "the promptness and heartiness with which the proposition of the committee was accepted by the Colonel was in keeping with the record of the big-hearted orator. It was Ingersollian!"

The lecture netted the fund for the children \$1,165. This was Colonel Ingersoll's contribution to two orphan children, who, let us hope, will grow up and call him blessed. It is usual with Colonel Ingersoll to give friends passes to his lectures; but on this occasion he bought a lot of tickets to his own lecture and gave them out instead.

One of Colonel Ingersoll's gifts to charity was his lecture before the people of New York, for the Grand Army of the Republic, on May 30, 1882. A great many of the unco guid tried to dissuade the Grand Army committee from inviting him to deliver the oration of the day;

the Colonel himself asked the committee to carefully consider the matter, and H. A. Barnum again laid the subject before them, with the result that he sent the following telegrams to the Colonel:

“Our committee unanimously renew our invitation and urge your acceptance. All are enthusiastic on the subject. We want Rogers and the sword of Bunker Hill.”

When Colonel Ingersoll had accepted the invitation Mr. Barnum telegraphed:

“Telegram received. Glory hallelujah. The day is ours.”

On the platform at the Academy of Music in New York city on that day were President Chester A. Arthur, two of his cabinet officers, Generals Grant and Hancock, Mayor Grace, Roscoe Conkling, and even the Rev. Dr. Newman. Would Mr. Barnum have been so solicitous to get Mr. Ingersoll to speak, and would this distinguished company have been present, had the Colonel been the bad man his enemies try to make out? Who believes it?

The proceeds of this lecture were given to the Grand Army—about \$4,000—every dollar of which was earned by Colonel Ingersoll, for he was the orator of the occasion. And from the amount he refused to take even traveling expenses. It was reported that when remuneration was suggested to him (the committee wanted him so badly that they were willing to pay) he

replied, "I couldn't talk about dead soldiers for money." The money the people paid to hear him speak was given to the veterans, disabled soldiers, widows of soldiers, and orphans, and a portion went to the Garfield statue fund.

In 1890 Colonel Ingersoll lectured in Philadelphia for the benefit of Walt Whitman. The lecture is called a "Testimonial to Walt Whitman," and it was indeed a very substantial testimonial, for it netted nearly a thousand dollars, every penny of which went to the beneficiary, and the last months of Whitman's life he lived largely upon the bounty of Mr. Ingersoll. Even the copyright of the lecture was not retained by Mr. Ingersoll, but was given to the publishers, the Truth Seeker Company.

And, speaking of copyrights, this is a good place to inform those who accuse Colonel Ingersoll of making money from his writings, that he never in any way received one cent from the sale of his books. He has given it all to others—every cent of it. His income is derived from his law practice and his lectures; and until the ministers all work for nothing, and find themselves, the accusation that he is mercenary comes with poor grace from them.

To the Mt. Vernon, Ill., sufferers, in 1888, Colonel Ingersoll sent his check for \$50—"to relieve the immediate wants of some sufferer," as he wrote to Col. Geo. W. Evans, of that place; in 1879 he sent his check for \$100 to the

Negro Emigrant Aid Society, and would have given them the benefit of a lecture had not the controllers of Lincoln Hall passed a resolution denying him the right to speak in that building, as he had been invited to do by the society; he sent \$100 dollars to the Johnstown sufferers; and he gave an equal amount to help erect the statue to Giordano Bruno in Rome. He gave the New York State Freethinkers' Association the proceeds of his lecture at their convention in Albany one year, netting between \$800 and \$900, and at a previous convention he divided the proceeds between two needy Infidels—several hundred dollars apiece. He contributed the proceeds of one of his lectures on Paine (in Chickering Hall, New York) to the Manhattan Liberal Club, of the same city. He gave the financial results of another lecture in the same place ("A Lay Sermon") to the American Secular Union, and his contributions in cash, besides, to that organization were in one year several hundred dollars. In the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, he spoke for the benefit of the Ethical Society's work, the result of which is made known in the subjoined letter:

"NEW YORK, Jan. 20, 1896.

"E. M. MACDONALD, ESQ.—*Dear Sir:* I have received your lines of the 14th inst., and should have replied at once but for great and unusual pressure of work.

"It gives me great pleasure to say, in answer to your inquiry, that Colonel Ingersoll responded with great kindness and alacrity to our re-

quest that he should speak for the benefit of the Workingman's School and our other charities, and that the net proceeds amounted, if I remember rightly, to between \$1,500 and \$2,000 on that occasion. Very truly yours,

"FELIX ADLER."

He lectured again in this city for the benefit of some kindergartens, and the receipts paid all the expenses of two of these institutions in Harlem for a year.

Some years ago the erection of a monument to Thomas Paine was mooted by the Liberals of Chicago, and Colonel Ingersoll promptly responded to an invitation to lecture for the benefit of the fund for that purpose. The net proceeds were about \$1,200, and that sum is now drawing interest, awaiting the completion of the enterprise. Bronson C. Keeler, author of "A Short History of the Bible," and General Stiles, now deceased, of that city, were two of the trustees of the fund.

His personal charities, of which the world never hears, are simply innumerable. The following from the *Mail and Express*, of Jan. 3, 1891, shows how he treats the poor and lowly who come in contact with him :

"One of the most royal tippers is Col. Robert G. Ingersoll. Dollar bills slip through his philanthropic fingers like peanuts down a schoolboy's throat. He invariably tips the waiter and all other servants in a hotel who have the good fortune to wait on him. Sometimes he will hand a dollar bill to a fale-faced,

thinly clad newsboy and say, 'Good luck be with you, my boy!' in such a cheery way that the surprised urchin wants to bless the giver, but his tongue usually clings to the roof of his mouth. Colonel Ingersoll gives away in charities between \$25,000 and \$40,000 annually."

Some other pleasant stories concerning him, which have the merit of being true in substance, are these: The first is from an unknown Indiana paper:

"Colonel Ingersoll, while walking in front of the hotel yesterday, was approached by 'Rooster,' the cross-eyed little newsboy, who is about two feet high, and a most forlorn looking little fellow. 'Take a paper, sir?' he asked, holding one up to the gigantic Pagan, 'take a paper, sir? All about Ingersoll.' 'Ingersoll!' exclaimed the Colonel, 'what's Ingersoll been doing?' 'I dunno, sir,' said Rooster helplessly, 'but something orful, I expect.' The Colonel took the paper and gave the boy seventy-five cents as a reward for his unconscious humor."

"While in the city Colonel Ingersoll met some friends from Shawneetown, and began inquiring about others. Among them was an honest old woman who supported herself at the washtub. 'And she's washing yet, you say?' asked the Colonel. 'Yes, but she is getting rather old and feeble to keep it up much longer.' When Mr. Bowman, of Shawneetown, went home he carried fifty dollars in his pocket as a present from Colonel Ingersoll to the old washerwoman. It's worth paying a man six hundred dollars a night if he spends it all in this manner."

Another is from the New York *Mirror*, written by the late Mary Fiske, one of the most talented writers of her time, and a friend of the Ingersoll family. She makes what to other writers would have been an ordinary—or extraordinary—act of kindness, a very, very pretty story to read. It was printed in the *Mirror* of Nov. 20, 1886:

“On one of the very wet days of last fall—a dreary, gloomy afternoon in late November—I was waiting in a coupé at the door of a friend's house in Thirty-ninth street, and I fell to watching a poor devil of a man who had sat down in a church door opposite.

“I thought he was the result of some corner ginmill until he lifted his miserable head and showed a lean, anxious, but perfectly sober face, and I made up my mind that I would not leave the spot without an effort to help an evidently suffering human being.

“It was approaching dinner time, and a world of returning citizens hurried past the homeless man. Perhaps he thought the story of his need was written on his haggard face, for he kept it upturned in speechless misery to the callous passers by.

“The side door of the church opened, and three sleek, well-fed gentlemen, one of them in clerical cut garments, came forth.

“‘Thank the Lord!’ said I to myself; ‘here's help at last. They will never fail to see that poor sinner by the gate.’

“But they raised their umbrellas, they exchanged parting words at his very knees, and went their several ways as indifferent to the water-soaked wretch who leaned against their

door-post as they would be to a bottle of cod-liver oil in a drug-shop window.

"Perhaps ten minutes went by; fifty more prosperous gentlemen gave the poor man a careless look, when, piling down the street, I saw a big man with a boy's face and a very small umbrella. Robert Ingersoll, by the big unlighted torch of liberty!

"I made a mental bet in a second that this man, this Cheeryble brothers rolled into one, would never bestow indifference on my miserable claimant. And he didn't. On he lumbered, into one puddle and out of another, revolving some pleasant circumstance in his mind, for almost a smile played over his broad, jolly face. He plodded straight by my man, his head bent. Was it possible he didn't see him, or, seeing him, would display the same Christian indifference I had been watching for twenty minutes?

"No, bless him! He halted in the pleasantest puddle on the block; he turned an inquiring look on the lowly wayfarer; he held the small umbrella carefully over his humble brother that the streaming tips might not add a drop to his streaming misery. I watched him question the sitter by the tabernacle, and as the answers were given from the pitiful face, a sympathetic interest shone on my good Samaritan's. He stretched forth his hand and helped the man to his feet; he steadied him for a moment, for the drenched wretch was ill, and finally Mr. Ingersoll, who had been heading eastward, reversed his engines, took the poor man by the arm, and went off to the west, piloting, sustaining, comforting, and, I have no doubt, providing for a woe it had struck no other man to relieve during all the afternoon.

"I've seen Robert Ingersoll in very swell

company. I've seen him in more dress-coat than would run a Delmonico ball—guests and waiters. I've seen him when he thought he looked well enough to have his picture taken. But I could see a nimbus round his trouser-legs and a halo round his shirt-collar as he paddled off down the street with the famished wanderer of the church-gate, and I know he was the finest looking man in the United States that afternoon.

“Just all that incident indicated I heard him say in Chickering Hall the other night. Through all the magnificent passages of his splendid appeal for the poor and down-trodden I could see the old picture framed by the coupé window, and I shall never cease to remember thankfully the time when he did what I wanted to do, and what I sat in the rain planning how to do.”

The Chickering Hall speech Mrs. Fiske alludes to is the “Lay Sermon,” and it is evident that the opening passage, a quotation of King Lear's prayer for the

“Poor, naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,”

recalled it to her mind. This magnificent appeal for the poor was the lecture given for the benefit of the American Secular Union, and with the proceeds of which the Union paid the expenses of its convention.

Still another little story makes public one of the innumerable instances when Colonel Ingersoll has helped some deserving person to win his or her own livelihood. It was first told in the *New York Sun*:

"Every night before I sleep I say, 'God bless Bob Ingersoll,'" said a young lady to a *Sun* reporter recently. "Why? Well, I'll tell you.

"Everything has been going wrong with me lately. I've been what you would probably call 'playing in hard luck.' I've lost all my money, my income has been stopped, and I've been for the first time in my life thrown on my own resources entirely. I tried everywhere to get employment. I am willing to do anything, but everywhere I've been confronted with the question: 'What experience have you had in this line?' Not having had any, it has been simply impossible for me to get a start even—and it sounds funny to me when I say it—even at tying up bundles. No one knows, no one can realize until she is thrown into the world unexpectedly, how hard, oh, how hard it is for a woman to get employment in this great, big, dear old New York.

"Failing at every turn and getting poorer and poorer, I went to a clergyman whom everybody knows, and whom I had known in prosperity personally. Going around among the stores was bad enough, but this was worse. Still, I had known him, and I was now cordially received until I had made known the object of my call, and then I was informed very sweetly that 'we have so many members of our own congregation to assist, you know, that really I—well—I'll talk it over with the ladies of our society, and will see if we can't recommend you to some place,' etc. And this was about the result with them all.

"By this time I was in actual need, when the thought occurred to me to go to the opposite extreme and see Robert Ingersoll, a total stranger to me. I knew he couldn't kill me, and was sure I would be at least politely treated.

I was shown into his private office with my heart beating furiously, my brain in a whirl, and without an idea of what I should say first. We shook hands, and showing me to a chair opposite to him, he said: 'Sit down, please, and let's see what the trouble is,' with such a kindly, cordial smile that I was at once at ease, and told him plainly just what a predicament I was in. He watched me closely and questioned me shrewdly, and then kept people waiting while he gave me a lot of his precious time and just such friendly, fatherly advice as I have been yearning for. I could have just hugged him, while my eyes were full of tears. I felt already rich with his earnest, sympathetic words, but before I left he voluntarily helped me substantially. Then he came way out to the door with me, and, after asking me to let him know how I got along, his last words were, as he shook my hand: 'Good-bye; success to you.'

"I think I've got a little start now, and that's why I say every night before I sleep, and a thousand times a day, God bless 'Bob' Ingersoll."

We have quoted these little stories because they are true in substance, and show the spirit of the man. No one is more easily touched to tears by the sufferings and miseries of others than Colonel Ingersoll, and no one will do more to relieve these sufferings and miseries than he. All his life he has made money, in later years large sums annually, and he has spent it as though a dollar was but a "dry leaf" and he "the owner of unbounded forests." And the better part of it has gone to help others.

Colonel Ingersoll has received many honors from distinguished bodies, which would not have been the case had he been what the little preachers would have the people believe him to be. When Roscoe Conkling died, the legislature of New York determined to hold memorial services, that the representatives of the people of the state might put on record their appreciation of Mr. Conkling's public services. On April 25, 1888, H. J. Coggeshall and James W. Husted, for the legislature, telegraphed Colonel Ingersoll as follows :

“You are the unanimous choice of the legislative committee to deliver the memorial address in the assembly chamber in honor of the late Roscoe Conkling.”

Colonel Ingersoll accepted the invitation, and his address was printed by the state, and ten thousand copies distributed at the state's expense. The assembly chamber was not large enough to hold the audience, and 3,500 were crowded into the Academy of Music and over 2,000 were turned away for want of room. In moving a vote of thanks to the Colonel, Assemblyman Husted said : “On behalf of the legislature of the state of New York and the people of the state, I move a vote of thanks be tendered to the speaker, who has delivered an oration never excelled by Demosthenes and never equaled by Cicero.” In seconding the motion, Senator Coggeshall said : “After the

masterly address we have listened to, anything I might say would be as silver. Silence would be golden. Yet as one who knew the deceased intimately, who admired him deeply, I feel that I must second the motion just made." The motion was carried by 3,500 "ayes."

Think a "drinking character," a "depraved, profane, and vicious" man, would get an invitation from the legislature of New York state to address them on one of the most important occasions? or that such a person would get an ovation like that?

The ministers who repeat these lies must take the population of the whole world to be fools!

In 1890, after Colonel Ingersoll had lived in this city several years, and the lawyers had had time to find out all about him, he was chosen as the orator at the annual meeting of the New York State Bar Association, and delivered before it his famous plea for the erring, called "Crimes Against Criminals." The great hall in which he spoke was filled with the most fashionable people of the state, with great lawyers and distinguished judges, and not one so much as suspected that he was listening to a profane, depraved, and vicious man! Certainly, the members of his own profession would have known something about it if such had been the truth. There are no men in the world more jealous of their professional honor than the members of the New York Bar, and no member

thereof stands higher in the estimation of his fellow lawyers than Colonel Ingersoll, and none among them has a bigger reputation for character and ability, for learning and resource, for absolute and unimpeachable integrity, for fairness to opponents and loyalty to clients, for power with a jury and deserved consideration from the judges, than he. This is a matter of public fame. Everybody in New York, who knows anything at all upon the subject, knows it. And the whole country might know it if they would only make inquiries before making up their minds.

Another occasion when the great men of this country gave Colonel Ingersoll the post of honor was at the Grant Banquet and reunion of the Army of the Tennessee at Chicago, November 13, 1879. There were present, General Grant, Gen. John A. Logan, Col. Wm. F. Vilas, Gen. Stewart L. Woodford, General Pope, General Wilson, Emery Storrs, and Mark Twain, as speakers, and the guests were some of the most distinguished men of the world. The *Cincinnati Commercial* said of the proceedings: "The speech of the evening that brought out the greatest applause was made by Colonel Ingersoll. He responded to the toast, 'The Volunteer Soldiers,' and his effort is only to be compared with his famous speech made at the Soldiers' reunion at Indianapolis in 1876. His speech was the master effort."

Will the defaming ministers please say how

it was that a man so bad as they represent the Colonel to be could easily be the leader in that great company? Does a reckless and dissolute man command the respect and mingle with the great of the land? Does a depraved and dissolute life build up character and genius surpassing that of the greatest soldiers and statesmen of the times? If so, we recommend that a few of the ministers become a little reckless, that they may fill their empty pews and find something to do besides defaming a man the lachets of whose shoes they are not worthy to unloose.

Six years after the meeting at the Academy of Music, New York again honored itself by inviting Colonel Ingersoll to address it. The Grand Army of the Republic was again the host and again Colonel Ingersoll freely gave his services. Perhaps a more brilliant and representative assemblage never was seen in the metropolis of the country than that at the Metropolitan Opera House on Decoration Day, 1888. The Army, the Navy, the Press, the Law, the most famous statesmen, professional men, the greatest orators, distinguished clergymen, were all there; and the vast Opera House was crowded to the doors with the most intelligent of New York's population. A list of the people there who had made national and world-wide reputations would fill two pages of this book. They had met to hear Colonel Ingersoll again eulogize the nation's dead. He was the one man who

could do it to their complete satisfaction. All the great speakers of the Bar, the Army, the pulpit, the professions, had been set aside for him. Would this have been done had he shirked his duty on the battlefield, or were his character other than the best, and his reputation other than the greatest? The press of the city the next day said: "Colonel Ingersoll was received with applause. Enthusiastic cheers greeted all his points, and his audience simply went wild over his peroration, in which he depicted the republic of the future. It was a grand oration, and it was listened to by enthusiastic and appreciative hearers, upon whom not a single word was lost, and in whose hearts every word found a responsive echo."

Did any one of the ministers who have been lying about Colonel Ingersoll ever have such an audience, or such compliments from the press?

In the preceding pages we have told the truth about these matters, and we have conclusively shown that all of the allegations against the Colonel are false. Wherever we could we have reproduced Mr. Ingersoll's own words. In matters upon which he has not spoken, such as his army experience, wherein he himself was solely concerned, and upon which he would never speak, we have produced the testimony of those who knew. On the "obscene literature" charge we have given the truth as taken from the records made at the time, and of which we

were personally cognizant. Everything we have adduced is capable of verification. We have printed but a few of the positive testimonials to Colonel Ingersoll's worth and nobility for the reason that to print them all would make a volume of many hundred pages. Thousands of people can testify, and have testified, that he is a man of unblemished character, of splendid generosity, of all the qualities which right-minded people admire. A list of his good deeds would make a book as big as an unabridged dictionary: a book of his bad deeds would be blank paper. And we have shown:

That those who speak ill of him do not know what they are talking about.

That his character, public and private, is without a flaw.

That his word is as good as a United States bond; his credit as good as the United States treasury's.

That his family is without a stain.

That he is neither an advocate of drunkenness, nor a Prohibitionist.

That his record in the war was not only good, but that his personal bravery was uncommon.

That he participated in several battles, with credit each time, and that he could have had higher military honors had he accepted them.

That he has been opposed to slavery all his public life.

That he helped the black men when the ministers of his town would not.

That he never used as his own a sentence from any other author or orator.

That in the town of Peoria, Ill., where he lived the longest, he is the best loved, and has the most friends.

That his daughters never thought of joining a church.

That he never told his cousin that he would give all he had if he could believe as she did.

That it was neither his father's unkindness nor his mother's reading Voltaire which made him an Infidel.

That he never told anyone that he had lectured against Christianity simply for the money he could make by it.

That ministerial challenges do not scare him, and that he has met the best talent the church could induce to oppose him.

That he has no time to bother with small fry.

That Henry Ward Beecher never likened him to a man robbing cripples of their crutches.

That he never was in favor of repealing the law against mailing vile literature.

That he did not keep Judge Black out of the *North American Review*.

That he never retorted in kind upon the clergy.

And, incidentally, a good many other things.

We do not, however, suppose that the publication of this pamphlet will stop the ministers from repeating the slanders. But we do hope that every friend of Mr. Ingersoll's will take the trouble to call the attention of the slanderers

to this refutation of their tales, and force them to apologize. Every minister who reiterates the charges should be given a copy of this pamphlet that he may know the truth and make amends—if he be fair-minded enough. If he is not sufficiently fair-minded, then a letter to the local paper should be written, stating the facts and exposing the minister's dishonest methods. We urge this line of procedure upon every Freethinker in the land, not to rescue the reputation of Colonel Ingersoll, for that stands unassailable, but to show the world how small and contemptibly mean are his clerical enemies.

And, in concluding, we want to ask the Christians these questions: If Colonel Ingersoll were the profane, depraved, and vicious man—a coward in war, and a shyster in law—that they represent, would he stand where he does to-day in this country—loved by millions and disliked by none who know him? If he were not an able lawyer would he get thousands of dollars as fee in a single case? Would he be engaged in the largest cases before our courts? Would the Bar Association of this state have made him the guest of honor and the orator of the day at its annual gathering? If he had been a coward in war would he have been the orator at the Indianapolis reunion? at the Grant banquet? at the two greatest occasions the Grand Army of the Republic of this city ever had on Decoration Day? Would the soldiers of his old regiment have invited him to *their* reunion, and

wept tears of joy at meeting him again? Were he other than he is would the legislature of the great state of New York have unanimously invited him to deliver the eulogy over a man so dear to the people of the state, one whom they wanted to honor to the fullest extent, as Roscoe Conkling? If Colonel Ingersoll had been depraved, profane, and vicious in his home in Peoria, would every senator and representative in congress from Illinois, and all the people and press of the state, irrespective of creed or politics, have asked a president of the United States to appoint him to represent this country at the court of one of the greatest empires of the world?

The clergymen who slander Colonel Ingersoll are the greatest of knaves, and take the rest of the people to be the greatest of fools.

How much better than these prejudiced detractions of Colonel Ingersoll by interested and ignorant preachers is the estimate of him by that gifted poet Edgar Fawcett, who knows him personally and well, knows his character and his work, which the Christians who slander him do not. We take this poem from the *Arena* of December, 1893. It was written long after these slanders had been concocted—would Fawcett have written it had they been true? It is a splendid and—in the face of all that the ministers say—deserved tribute to a magnificent man, and will well round out this somewhat halting but altogether honest endeavor to

set the world aright as to some things concerning the greatest genius of our times, the most zealous apostle of liberty, the strongest advocate of love and kindness, the most effective foe of superstition, the most unostentatiously charitable,—and, according to the unanimous testimony of those who know him intimately, the best all-around man that our poor frail race has yet produced :

TO ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Thou hast peered at all creeds of the past, and
each one hath seemed futile and poor
As a firefly that fades on a marsh, as a wind
that makes moan on a moor ;
For thy soul in its large love to man, in its heed
of his welfare and cheer,
Bids him hurl to the dust whence they sprang
all idolatries fashioned by fear.

Not the eagle can gaze at the sun with more
dauntless and challenging eyes
Than thou at the radiance of truth when it
rifts the dark durance of lies.
From thy birth wert thou tyranny's foe, and its
deeds were disdain in thy sight ;
Thou art leagued with the dawn as the lark is—
like him dost thou leap to the light!

Having marked how the world's giant woes for
the worst part are bigotry's brood,
Thou hast hated, yet never with malice, and
scorned but in service of good.
Thy compassionate vision saw keen how similitude
always hath dwelt
Between fumes poured from altars to God and
from flames haggard martyrs have felt.

What more splendid a pity than thine for the
anguish thy race hath endured
Through allegiance to specters and wraiths
from the cohorts of fancy conjured?
At the bold pomps of temple and church is it
wonder thy wisdom hath mourned,
Since the architect, Ignorance, reared them, and
Fright, the pale sculptor, adorned?

But sterner thy loathing and grief that the
priesthoods have shamed not to tell
Of an infinite vengeance enthroned in the heart
of an infinite hell;
That they shrank not to mold from void air an
Omnipotence worship should heed
And yet clothed it with ruffian contempt for the
world's multitudinous need.

Thy religion is loftier than theirs; nay, with
vehement lips hast thou said
Its foundations are rooted in help to the living
and hope for the dead.
All eternity's richest rewards to a spirit like
thine would prove vain,
Were it sure of but one fellow-mortal that
writhed in unperishing pain.

Like a mariner drifted by night where tempestu-
ous wracks overshadow
Every merciful star that perchance might with
silvery pilotage aid,
Resolution and vigilance each close-akin as thy
heart-beat or breath,
Dost thou search in thy courage and calm the
immense chartless ocean of death.

There are phantoms ships that lurch up, and
thou seest them and art not allured
By their masts made of glimmering dream, by
their bulwarks from cloudland unmoored;

For the helmsmen that steer them are mist, and
 the sails they are winged with, each one,
 By the feverish hands of fanatics on looms of
 delusion are spun.

At the vague stems are visages poised that in
 variant glimpses appear . . .
 Here the swart and imperial Osiris, the crescent-
 crowned Mahomet here ;
 Or again, mystic Brahma, with eyes full of
 omens, monitions, and vows ;
 Or again, meek and beauteous, the Christ, with
 the blood-crusted thorns on his brows.

But thou sayest in thy surety to all: "Empty
 seemings, pass onward and fade!" . . .
 Not by emblems and symbols of myth wert
 thou born to be tricked and betrayed ;
 For aloof o'er the desolate blank thou discern-
 est, now dubious, now plain,
 The expanse of one sheltering shoreland, worth
 ardors untold to obtain.

Full of promise, expectancy, peace, in secure
 sequestration it lies,
 Undismayed by a menace of storm from its arch
 of inscrutable skies. . . .
 Canst thou reach it, strong sea-farer? . . .
 Yes! for the waves are thy bondsmen devout.
 Look! they wash thee safe-limbed on its coast,
 clinging firm to thy tough spar of doubt!

Roam at large in its glorious domain ; from its
 reaches night half has withdrawn ;
 Over inlet, bay, meadow, and creek broods the
 delicate damask of dawn ;
 Roam at large ; 'tis a realm thou shouldst love ;
 'tis the kingdom where Science reigns king ;

In its lapses of grove and of greensward sleeps
many a crystalline spring.

To the eastward are mountains remote, with ac-
clivities towering sublime:

The repose of their keen virgin peaks mortal
foot hath not ventured to climb ;

In their bastions and caverns occult, in their
bleak lairs of glacier and stream,

There are treasures more copious and costly
than fable hath yet dared to dream.

Thou shalt see not their splendors, for fate may
retard through long ages the hour

That in bounteous bestowal at last shall man-
kind inconceivably dower.

Yet thy prophecies err not, O sage ; thou divin-
est what wealth shall outpour

When exultant those proud heights of knowledge
posterity sweeps to explore.

Not for thee, not for us, those dear days ! In
oblivion our lots will be cast

When the future hath built firm and fair on the
bulk of a petrified past.

Yet its edifice hardier shall bide for the boons
fraught with help that we give—

For the wrongs that we cope with and slay, for
the lies that we crush and outlive !

And if record of genius like thine, or of elo-
quence fiery and deep,

Shall remain to the centuries regnant from
centuries lulled into sleep,

Then thy memory as music shall float amid
actions and aims yet to be,

And thine influence cling to life's good as the
sea-vapors cling to the sea !

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And no wisdom in superstition.**

APPENDIX.

Colonel Robert Green Ingersoll died of heart disease at his summer home in Dobbs Ferry, N. Y., on Friday, July 21, 1899. He was nearly 66 years of age, having been born in Dresden, N. Y., August 11, 1833. The funeral was held on Tuesday, July 25, only the family and a small number of near friends being present. The services consisted of the reading of Colonel Ingersoll's poem, "The Declaration of the Free," by Prof. John Clark Ridpath, a selection from his "Foundations of Faith," by Major Orlando J. Smith, and his "Tribute to Ebon C. Ingersoll," by Dr. John L. Elliott. The body was cremated at Fresh Pond, Long Island, on Thursday, July 27.

Probably the death of no private citizen of this republic ever attracted so much attention as that of Colonel Ingersoll. The press overflowed with comment and anecdote, in general very favorable to the character of the deceased, and few clergymen neglected the opportunity to remark upon the good or ill which they conceived had resulted from the teachings of the great Agnostic. That a certain number of lies should have been told was to be expected, and it is to refute some of the worst of these that this appendix is added to "Ingersoll as He Is."

On July 29, eight days after Colonel Ingersoll's death, the Cincinnati *Enquirer* published an interview with a man who described himself as "the Rev. Robert Nourse of Washington, noted in-

structor, divine, and lecturer," which is perhaps the worst piece of falsehood a reputable paper could print. Nourse's crime is made the blacker by his pretense that he was an acquaintance of Colonel Ingersoll's, "knowing him well," he said.

If this malicious and mendacious interview had been confined to one paper Mr. Ingersoll's friends could well afford to ignore the cruel charges, but it has been copied by all the dishonest and mean journals of the country, we should judge, and it will delude thousands of honest people who cannot know the truth. Fortunately those who knew Colonel Ingersoll at his home in Peoria, Ill., are still alive and can testify for their dead friend. Following will be found what they have to say, as well as what we know of our own knowledge.

But first we will print the interview in order that the Rev. Mr. Nourse's blackness of heart may be seen in all its hideousness, for he is a good specimen of the clerical detractors of the great Freethinker now silent in death :

"The newspapers got me a little mixed in regard to the occurrence at Mt. Vernon," he said, "when we prayed for Mrs. Ingersoll and her daughters. I was lecturing on 'Jekyll and Hyde'—not against Infidelity—when the storm came, and I said: 'As this is the time when the body of Robert Ingersoll is being borne to the crematory, let us bow our heads in prayer and invoke divine comfort and solace for the widow and daughters.' A Catholic has since written a beautiful piece about the incident, in which he says: 'That prayer will remain a rainbow on the throne forever.'"

"Do you believe, doctor," asked the Enquirer man, "that the soul of Ingersoll went straight to sheol, as many of the orthodox are inclined to think?"

"He may be given another chance in the world beyond, the same as some of us. I knew him well, and am familiar with his life from boyhood to the urn. He had the heart of a Christian and the head of an Atheist. He believed in a supreme being and, since the death of his brother, in immortality."

"Do you believe he was sincere in all he said and did?"

"In his younger days I believe that he was sincere and spoke his convictions, but in his later life he was not cocksure of his position. He was a very dissipated and demoralized young man, a pothouse politician in Peoria, but after his marriage his wife had a restraining influence over him and made him a moral man. She did not share, in full at least, his Infidel views, but his daughters, who partook of his nature and views, have never been inside of a church, I understand.

"It is a remarkable fact that where stood his law office in Peoria, where he first commenced his Infidel writings, there now stands a \$125,000 Y. M. C. A. No Christian could successfully combat Ingersoll in controversy, because he could not use the same weapons. His strongest and most effective weapon was ridicule. To go against him was like fighting a duel with a sword against a pistol. He could ridicule anything, and yet he was exceedingly sensitive and could not stand ridicule himself. He was a coward in this respect, and this is why he refused to meet antagonists in the forum. I challenged him to public debate on the Bible and the Christian religion, but he declined. Sam Jones challenged him, but he backed out. It would have been great to have heard those two pitted against each other. The Infidel would have found a foe-man worthy of his steel and well armed for the fray in Jones. Ingersoll loved money, but he lived up all he made, and that was sometimes \$50,000 a year. I saw them hand him a check for \$6,000 as his share of the receipts of one lecture in Chicago. He turned to Buffalo Bill, who was present, and said:

"'God, but don't they like to hear the gospel preached?'"

"He was the most profane man I ever knew or heard of. A singular thing about him was that you could go to him with a story of distress, anyone from the street, and if he believed in its sincerity he would put his hand in his pocket and hand out \$50, but you could not collect a \$50 debt of him. He would not speak unless paid for it. Some years ago there was a meeting in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., of Freethinkers, and many of the leading lights were there to speak gratis. Ingersoll was there lecturing, and was invited to speak. The opera house was jammed with several thousand people. A committee went to Ingersoll's hotel to escort him to the stage. To its astonishment he told it he would not go unless it paid him \$300. It told him it was too late to get the money and that the audience was already clapping for him. He said he didn't care a d—n about the audience, but must have the \$300 before he would budge a foot. They skurried around and got the

\$300, and he cheerily went to the opera house and charmed the audience of 5,000 or 6,000 people."

With Mr. Nourse's belief as to Colonel Ingersoll's sincerity, and with his sensational posing in prayer, we have nothing to do. Dishonest himself, he may think Colonel Ingersoll was so likewise, or he may not: his word has no significance either way. But with his statements we can deal directly, and we say in the plainest possible language that he has lied most shamefully and in the cruelest way. He is a human hyena.

So far as we are able to ascertain, the Rev. Mr. Nourse is unknown to any one but himself, and so has no reputation to lose. What he said is of importance only because of the medium he deluded into printing his advertising interview and the extensiveness with which it has been copied. Of himself he is not worth noticing, and assuredly would receive no notice from any friend of the illustrious dead.

Colonel Ingersoll did not believe in any supreme being which the theologians of any religion have yet defined. He never declared himself an Atheist, because he did not wish to be as dogmatic as the Christian, and would not commit himself on any subject where he had no positive proof. But he said many, many times that "the supernatural does not and cannot exist." The story that once, when he came from the bedside of President Garfield, who was dying from the murderous attack of the Christian Guiteau, he said, "God save the nation" is a falsehood from whole cloth. It was too absurd a story for him to deny, but let us deny it for him. It is absolutely untrue, and he is no friend to Colonel Ingersoll who repeats it.

Mrs. Ingersoll shared, and shares, her husband's beliefs in full. All of the family were, and are, of the same mind. There is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

The statement that there is a Y. M. C. A. building on the ground where his law office stood is only an attempt to make capital out of nothing. On the ground where stood a house in which he lived for a little while the Y. M. C. A. erected an office building. And in that block is now the office of the committee which is erecting a monument to him. But where his house was is now a hotel, while the house itself is moved back and used as the headquarters of the whisky trust. If the erection of the office building by the Y. M. C. A. be considered a victory of the Lord over the Devil, the present use of his house shows that his satanic majesty is still in the ring, and the fight between them over Ingersoll's real estate is a standoff, as the wicked would say. But what of it, any way? There is within a stone's throw of The Truth Seeker office a theatre which used to be a church.

The reason why Colonel Ingersoll did not meet Sam Jones and this Nourse is not any that Nourse alleges, but one not so flattering to clerical vanity. Colonel Ingersoll was never afraid to "meet antagonists in the forum," and as Thorndike Rice said once, he would not be apt to run from men like Judge Black (to say nothing of such fellows as Sam Jones) to meet Gladstone and Cardinal Manning. The reason why Colonel Ingersoll would not meet Jones and the still smaller fry who sought notoriety in challenging him was because they were too insignificant, to put it plain. They might as well realize it now as later, for the world knows, even if their egotism will not permit the truth to penetrate their thick skulls.

If anyone believes that Colonel Ingersoll ever made any such remark as this Nourse says he made to Buffalo Bill—like a fake showman—his is too hopeless a case of idiocy for us to under-

take to treat. That Colonel Ingersoll was paid for his lectures in Chicago everyone knows, and if he got six thousand dollars for one lecture it was worth every cent of it. But Nourse says that which is not so when he says he saw a check for that amount handed the Colonel. While we were not there, we will guarantee that he was not either, and it is within our accurate knowledge what the size of the check was at the largest meeting the Colonel addressed in that city.

That a debt of \$50 was not collectable from Colonel Ingersoll without trouble is the silliest charge that has yet been made, and we did not think until we read this interview that even a reverend would be so reckless as to make it. Paying debts was almost a mania with Ingersoll, and he not only paid his own but those of several others. We have heard of one instance in which he paid debts of a deceased relative amounting to many thousands of dollars, and of many other cases involving smaller amounts. The charge is not only entirely groundless—it is false to the point of absurdity. Only a low-lived liar would have invented it.

The Rev. Nourse's account of the collision between Ingersoll and a committee of Freethinkers at Poughkeepsie is a pure fabrication. There has not been for at least twenty-five years any large meeting of Freethinkers at Poughkeepsie, and we have no record that there ever was such a meeting. It is the God-strike-'em-dead-for-blasphemy story which should be credited to that town. But there was a large meeting of Freethinkers a few years ago at Albany, N. Y., and Colonel Ingersoll spoke at it. He not only did not get paid for speaking, but he gave the proceeds of his lecture to the Freethinkers' society, some eight hundred or more dollars. The writer of this was treasurer of the society, and speaks

from personal knowledge, for he collected the money from the theatre treasurer and paid it out for the benefit of the society.

We have purposely left to the last the allegation that in his younger days Colonel Ingersoll was "very dissipated," for on that we have much to present. The charge is persistently made, and even one man who means well ignorantly repeats it in a memorial sermon, and so mars what would otherwise have been a splendid tribute, coming from a minister of "the gospel of love." On this point we reprint from the *Peoria Journal* of August 4, 1899, what Colonel Ingersoll's old friends have to say. Their words are to the point and conclusive. The John W. Kimsey, who obtained this testimony, was a lieutenant in Colonel Ingersoll's regiment during the late domestic difficulties in this country. The *Journal* says:

Mr. Alexander S. Bacon, an attorney of New York city and a member of the law firm of Nichols & Bacon, recently wrote to Sheriff John Kimsey regarding these stories, and Mr. Kimsey's answer, given from his own personal knowledge and intimate acquaintance with Ingersoll, together with the stories of many of the old-time citizens of Peoria which he has taken the trouble to gather together, will prove very interesting reading to the many friends the great orator had in this city and throughout the world, and will no doubt hush the tongues of those who have maligned the memory of the illustrious dead by repeating stories for which they had no voucher.

The following is the full text of the letter of inquiry from Mr. Bacon and the answer of Mr. Kimsey:

NEW YORK, July 22, 1899.

SHERIFF, Peoria, Ill., *Dear Sir*: I have been advised by a very prominent old resident of Peoria that Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, lately deceased, was, while a resident of Peoria, in his earlier years, say, before 1860, of a dissolute character and frequently an occupant of the Peoria jail. My informant, whose reputation is beyond reproach, alleges this on his own personal knowledge, and there seems to be no reason to doubt it. Will you kindly favor me with his

police record, if any, during those earlier years, and greatly oblige.

Please send bill of charges.

Yours very truly, ALEXANDER S. BACON.

Those who know John Kimsey will recognize the answer to the letter as characteristic of the man. He has been known for years as "Honest John Kimsey," Blunt as he can be, yet tender-hearted and as true as steel to a friend, he gives voice to his expressions in a terse, candid way that is always convincing.

PEORIA, ILL., July 28, 1899.

ALEXANDER S. BACON, Esq., New York, *Dear Sir*: In answer to yours of the 22d, receipt of which I have previously acknowledged, requesting me to furnish you with the police and jail record of R. G. Ingersoll (now deceased) prior to the year 1860, etc.

I wish to note in the beginning that on other occasions similar questions to those you now propound to me have been asked of the Colonel's old neighbors and acquaintances. I could readily perceive the object then, but on this occasion I am at a loss to know your motive. However, I take it, Mr. Bacon, that you mean all right, and I will endeavor in my answer to state facts.

I have personally known Mr. Ingersoll since 1861; was a member of his regiment and was with him in three engagements, namely: The battles of Shiloh, Corinth, and Lexington. He was taken prisoner at the latter and did not return to his regiment to perform any more military services after he was paroled. A braver or truer soldier than he never drew a sword, and no commanding officer ever went to the front who was better liked and more respected by his men than he.

As he practiced law in this city for a number of years after the civil war, and as I was connected with the sheriff's office about all of the time during Ingersoll's home in this city, after the time mentioned above, I necessarily met him almost daily. During that time I saw nothing in his habits or conduct different from what he has a reputation of practicing at home and abroad, while a resident of your city (New York).

You say you have been credibly informed by a prominent old resident of this city that Colonel Ingersoll in his earlier years (say before 1860) was a dissolute character and frequently occupied the Peoria jail, etc.

In answer to this accusation I will say that I have full access to the records of the Peoria county jail, which date back to the year 1846, some years prior to R. G. Inger-

soll's home in this city. His name does not appear in said record.

I called upon Charles P. Sloan, who is fifty-five years of age, and who has been a resident of this city all his life. He is now desk clerk at police headquarters in this city, and has occupied that position for eighteen years. He has charge of and access to the police records, the same dating back six years prior to Ingersoll's residence in this city. After a careful examination of said records by Mr. Sloan, he found that Mr. Ingersoll's name did not appear in said police records, no charges ever having been preferred against him in the police-court of this city.

I have also interviewed several old residents of this city as to their knowledge of Ingersoll's early habits in Peoria. He being such a brilliant young man, they, without exception, readily could call to mind all the incidents worthy of note connected with his early residence in this city. I will herewith submit to you what a few of them have to say on this subject :

Henry Baldwin, an old and highly respected citizen of Peoria, said : "I am about the same age as Ingersoll. Have lived in Peoria all my life and was intimately acquainted with Colonel Ingersoll during the entire time he made his home in Peoria. I was often in his company and have drank beer and wine with him on many occasions, but never saw him under the influence of liquor to the extent that he was either quarrelsome or manifested a disposition to become in the least disorderly. His company was desirable and accepted (when occasion permitted) by all the young men of the city. His apt story-telling, mingled with an inexhaustible supply of brilliant wit, kept every one in his hearing, as well as himself, in a different mood than that of wanting to break the peace and get themselves locked up at the city hall or county jail. I have no personal knowledge of Mr. Ingersoll ever being arrested for any offense. I did hear on one occasion of Bob, together with several friends, building a big bonfire in the middle of the street in celebration of some event, whereby the boys used a little too freely of empty drygoods boxes belonging to neighboring stores, for which the entire party were cited to appear before the police justice for malicious mischief, etc. There were no warrants issued in this case nor anything more done about it other than probably the young men received a reprimand from the justice and were told to go and sin no more."

Barrett White, who resides at No. 227 Green street, this city, when interviewed said : "I am seventy years of age, have made my home in Peoria continuously since the year 1847, and knew Colonel Ingersoll intimately. I was fre-

quently in his company during all the time of his residence in this city, and more particularly in that part of the time prior to his marriage, which, I think, occurred the latter part of 1861. Ingersoll was the best company and the greatest entertainer I ever saw. There was no end to his liberality. He would not throw his money at the birds, as it were, but no comrade of his ever asked him for the loan of money that it was denied. As long as Bob had a dollar in his pocket he would divide the same with a friend or give it all to a beggar. I never heard the stories of his early dissipation until he became famous the world over as an orator, politician, and Freethinker. I knew that prior to his marriage he was not averse to taking a little nip of the 'Oh-be-joyful' with us boys, but I never saw him drunk in my life, nor do I believe he was ever arrested. Whoever tells that story is either prejudiced against all kinds of the Christian religion other than that which he puts into practice, whereby he expects to save his own soul, or is a worse rock-rooted Democrat than I am myself. I have told Bob a hundred times that I did not like his anti-religious views and hated his politics worse; yet, when I balanced those two things up against that great big heart of his, which bore malice for no living being, and against the many, many acts of charity on his part to the really needy, when the same had been refused by others more able to give than he, I have said privately and publicly, 'I love and respect Colonel Ingersoll.' I want to emphasize my belief that whoever may now be telling of what they know about Colonel Ingersoll's having at any time been locked up in the calaboose or jail, are either crazy or telling what they know to be a pack of lies. I am charitable enough to say that they are affected with the former disease."

Col. John Warner, on being interviewed, said: "I am about the age of Colonel Ingersoll. I came to this city when a boy and was here a number of years before the Ingersoll brothers came. Very soon after their arrival, I became acquainted with them. Robert, or "Bob," as they called him, was a single man and of a disposition rather to my liking, and he and I soon became fast friends. I was at that time engaged in the mercantile business. Robert did some loafing in my store after office hours and in that way, as before stated, we became very thick, as it were. I do think we spent more of our idle time together than did any other two young men in the city. We both went to the army about the same time, yet we were not members of the same regiment. I was in one department of the army and he in another, hence I did not have the pleasure of meeting him while in the service. We both returned home about

the same time. Our separation, however, had not in the least dimmed my admiration for the man. The only change I could see in the Colonel's habits after the war other than those manifested in him before was that he could most generally be found in the company of his family after business hours, he having married the wife who now survives him soon after his enlistment and before his regiment left the state.

"You say you want to know what I know about Colonel Ingersoll's early history in Peoria. Well, as before stated, my opportunities were such that I think I know as much, if not more, about the Colonel's ways and conduct in his early years in this city than anyone now living. The noble and generous hearted man is gone forever. I know nothing so derogatory to his past character that the same should be veiled. As others have said, and I know the same to be true, Bob in his youth was of a jovial turn of mind and no one on earth enjoyed a little innocent fun better than he. This was most generally of the nature of first having a few glasses of beer with the boys, and then witty story telling on his part would follow, at which he was such an adept that he could make a minister of the gospel smile.

"I, in company with half a dozen others, including Ingersoll, was out at a late hour one night celebrating some event, and we wound up by building a bonfire out of empty boxes and barrels. The fire was so large and we made so much noise that the city marshal interfered with our hilarity and cited us to appear before the police magistrate the next morning at 9 o'clock sharp, which verbal summons we all obeyed (no warrant having been issued). Bob made an informal plea for the boys to the court in his characteristic way, which had the desired effect and the matter was dropped. There was one other occasion (and only one) when Bob, together with a few of his friends (I being absent for a wonder) was cited to appear before the police court at a given hour, the offense charged being that of disturbing the peace. There were no warrants issued in this case, the termination of which was (if my recollection serves me right) precisely the same as in the bonfire case.

"On this occasion, one of Ingersoll's companions was a young man who has long since died, but who lived long enough to become as famous throughout the United States as a Sunday school worker and Christian evangelist as did Ingersoll by the spreading of his Agnostic doctrine.

"I have not the least desire on my part to defend Mr. Ingersoll's views of the Bible or his political creed, for I do not agree with him in either. When he was living, it was no uncommon occurrence for some minister of the gospel, or disgruntled politician, to spring up out of the woods and

proclaim (to those who were silly enough to give them an attentive ear), in the churches and upon the hilltops, that they had just received a message from some one who knew ('whose residence was in Peoria'), that Col. R. G. Ingersoll when a young man was the most infernal scapegrace that ever was born; and would then proceed to inform their hearers of the many scrapes with which he had been mixed up, giving a detailed account of each crime he had committed; whereby he had suffered the penalty by serving time in either the city prison or county jail. The authority usually produced for those infamous lies purported to have been furnished by some 'old reliable' making his home in Peoria.

"My home is in the city of Peoria. I can be seen or communicated with at 113 Ayres avenue. This city is not so large but that I am personally known by almost every man, woman, and child within its incorporated limits, and I want to go on record as saying that what I have told Sheriff Kimsey, about Colonel Ingersoll's early life in this city, is the truth, the whole truth, and I defy contradiction. The stories that have been previously published and are now being circulated, that Colonel Ingersoll had at some time during his residence in Peoria been an occupant of the city prison or county jail I declare to be the most unadulterated mess of rot ever uttered or published. The man who tells these stories, it matters not what his reputation may have been for truth and veracity in the neighborhood in which he resides, I brand as the most infamous liar now living, or that ever did live. Every time I hear of such reports being circulated about the early habits of the late Colonel Ingersoll it makes my blood run cold and causes my belief of a hell to become more and more settled in my mind. I know there must be some provision in the other world (after death) to punish such people. There is no way of reaching them on this earth, for they have no conscience."

Dr. William R. Hamilton, being interviewed, said: "I have been a resident of Peoria for fifty-one years. Was intimately acquainted with Robert G. Ingersoll during his residence in this city." The question being asked the doctor as to what he knew about the habits of Ingersoll, say from the time he came to Peoria up to the year 1860, his answer was: "I have heard many uncomplimentary criticisms concerning the Colonel's mode of conduct during the years you have mentioned and, after a careful inquiry as to their origin, I found they emanated from some person or persons who had become intensely prejudiced against Ingersoll on account of something he had said that did not accord with either their religious or political views. The

stories in the first place were exaggerations of the facts and, like a rolling snowball, never got any smaller.

"My official position was such, almost the entire time of Ingersoll's residence in this city up to 1860, as to make my opportunities certainly as good as those of any other citizen to know how this brilliant young attorney was conducting himself. I was a member of the city council from 1853 to 1856 inclusive, and was elected mayor in the fall of 1857 and reelected in the fall of 1858, my term expiring at the beginning of the winter of 1859 and 1860. During my time as chief executive of this city, the dates are given as the times Ingersoll had so forgotten the propriety of his own manhood that he had, on several occasions (as the report goes) been locked up for safe keeping.

"I am getting quite old and realize the fact that my memory for past events is somewhat dim, yet I will assert that I still retain enough of my original faculties to know that such reports circulated about the Colonel are false in the extreme. Men and women who write fairy tales usually have a base or foundation on which to build, but it appears to me that such precaution has not been observed by those who may have had the pleasure to first start on the wing those miserable lies about Ingersoll's early life. I cannot conceive the object any one could have in so doing at this time, even though they were true, but when they are such base fabrications, it is beyond my comprehension to know, or even to think I know, what it all means.

"That bonfire incident, as well as the one where Colonel Warner speaks of a young man's connection therewith who afterwards became a noted evangelist. I remember well, and will say that Colonel Warner's statements to Sheriff Kimsey, as they occurred and terminated, are true.

"I did not share with Ingersoll in his Agnostic views—far from it. Aside from that one fault of his great mind, which seemed to prejudice him with so many, I believe him to be one of the most noble men that ever lived to breathe the breath of life. I knew him in a business way, I knew him in a social way, and I knew him around the family circle. I wish to say now that if all men and women would but follow in his footsteps and put into practice honesty in business, charity towards all, and love for their family, as he did, life upon this earth would be a perfect heaven."

I will enlighten you as to the character of the men who have made the statements herewith submitted, as to their knowledge of Colonel Ingersoll's early life while a resident of this city.

First, Henry Baldwin is an old and highly respected citizen of Peoria. He was elected mayor in the fall of 1862,

serving the city in that capacity one full term. He has been engaged in the foundry business and the repairing of machinery for over forty years. His place of business is situated at No. 717 S. Adams street and his residence No. 112 Flora avenue.

Barrett White has lived here long enough to see Peoria shed her swaddling-clothes and become the second city in this state. He is known by every old citizen in the city and surrounding country. He was elected justice of the peace in 1862 and reelected from term to term until he had filled that office for thirty-one years without a break. His word is as good as gold, as every one who knows him will testify.

Col. John Warner has lived here since he was a mere boy. He was engaged in a merchandise business for a few years prior to the Civil war, at which time he raised a regiment and served as its colonel with honor to himself and country to the end of the war. He has eight times been elected mayor of this city (something unprecedented in a city of this size), having completed his eighth term only last May. He is personally known to nine-tenths of the people in this city, and known by them to be a man whose integrity and truth have never been questioned. He is not in any business at present. His residence is No. 113 Ayres avenue.

Dr. William R. Hamilton is one of the early practitioners of this city and, on account of old age and from the further fact that he has enough of this world's goods to keep the wolf from the door the remainder of his days, he has long since gone out of practice. The old doctor is in full possession of all the sterling qualities in the make-up of a gentleman of the old school. He is well known and highly respected by all the old settlers. His reputation as an honest man and for always speaking the truth has never been questioned.

I could furnish you with statements in regard to Ingersoll's early habits from many more old residents of this city which would not vary one iota from those herewith submitted. I selected those who, I was advised, had the most favorable opportunity for knowing the facts you sought to obtain.

Permit me to add, Mr. Bacon, I am well aware of the fact that this report has not been formulated in either a legal or business-like way. However, I have tried to submit nothing but facts and, if this form is not up to the standard, I will freely admit that I have done the best I could or even knew how to do. Hoping the same may be satisfactory, I am yours most respectfully,

J. W. KIMSEY, Sheriff, Peoria County, Ill.

The only stories told of any "wildness" on the part of Colonel Ingersoll relate to his young manhood days, when he was just a big boy, albeit a great genius. Except one nameless skunk not worth considering, not even the most malicious of the clergy dare whisper aught against him. And the testimony of his neighbors, here given, shows how little there is in these tales; how mendacity is taxed to make up even such as are circulated, and how impotent the malice of his enemies is after all.

In addition we subjoin a few of the tributes printed in the papers published at his old home and circulated among the people who knew him, and where, if undeserved, they could most readily be controverted. The first is from the *Peoria Star* of July 30, by Hiram Brown of Elmwood, Ill.:

EDITOR *Star*: There is a half apologetic tone running through the expressions of those who believe with the late Col. R. G. Ingersoll that has no business there.

These men seem to think that his kindness as a father and his unapproachable family life are among his chief claims to remembrance. It is no doubt true that he was a charming man, a model in his home relations, large of heart and kind of manner. But this is not uncommon—not so uncommon as to excite remark. Even preachers and believers in the doctrine of damnation and the God of vengeance have been most exemplary fathers and loving husbands. These men are good in spite of their beliefs—good because it is their nature to be so, just as it was the nature of Colonel Ingersoll.

What will make his name remembered is his love of humanity and his willingness to accept all contumely while giving expression to that love. His work consisted in freeing the minds of men from the shackles of superstition with all its attendant horrors and fears. His work was like that of William Lloyd Garrison, the great Abolitionist. Garrison struck the shackles from black men's limbs. Ingersoll freed the minds of all men by showing them they had naught to fear from an honest thought and its free expression.

Since the world began some one has had to sacrifice

reputation and fame in the advocacy of any great good that it might prevail. Early in his life Ingersoll felt that he must bury any ambition that he might have in a political or professional sense if he would carry out the work he clearly saw before him. It is there his chief glory lies. With his hand once on the plow he did not waver nor turn back, but labored to the end for the benefit of all humanity. His heart was too large for him to do otherwise. He could not be a hypocrite and he could not be silent.

Preachers now claim that he attacked the religion of the past and not the religion of to-day. Who made it the religion of the past? Ingersoll, with his matchless eloquence and his keen shafts of ridicule. He rendered it impossible for the devil longer to exist and quenched the scorching flames of hell. He took from Christianity its terrors and left only love behind. By this work he did more for humanity than any man who ever lived, unless it be Jesus himself, whose simple teachings have been tortured into the instruments of persecution. The world is better to live in because he lived in it. There is more peace and joy since he lived in peace and joy. The world is better because he said:

"I have known Christians to turn their children from their doors, especially a daughter, and then get down on their knees and pray to God to watch over them and help them. I will never ask God to help my children unless I am doing my level best in the same line. I will tell you what I say to my girls: 'Go where you will, do what crime you may, fall to what depth of degradation you may, in all storms and winds and earthquakes of life, no matter what you do, you can never commit any crime that will shut my door, my arms, or my heart to you. As long as I live you will have one sincere friend.' Call me an Atheist; call me an Infidel because I hate the God of the Jew—which I do; I intend so to live that when I die my children can come to my grave and truthfully say: 'He who sleeps here never gave us one moment of pain.'"

Let me add another word of his to show his love for all mankind:

"I love every man who gave me or helped to give me the liberty I enjoy to-night. I love every man who helped put our flag in heaven. I love every man who has lifted his voice in any age for liberty, for a chainless body and a fetterless brain. I love every man who has given to every other human being every right that he claimed for himself. I love every man who has thought more of principle than he has of position."

HIRAM BROWN

The second, from the Peoria *Star* of August 1, is by a minister who was once located in Peoria. He it is, well-meaning but misinformed, who falls into the error of saying that Mr. Ingersoll was a very wild boy, and we hope he will correct his error of statement. He is the Rev. Frank McAlpine of Charlotte, Mich.:

I am to speak this morning from a personal acquaintance with Robert G. Ingersoll and from many years' residence in his home city of Peoria among the old neighbors who have been intimate friends of the great Agnostic during the greater part of his life.

The large white brick building, famous as the Ingersoll home, stands near the court-house square. Some way the impression is out that this stately old building is now in the hands of the Young Men's Christian Association. A gentleman said to me: "It seems providential that Mr. Ingersoll's old home should have passed into Christian hands." The fact is the building is now owned by the whisky trust and used as its headquarters.

Robert Ingersoll was considered a very wild boy. While not specially bad, he was into almost anything for fun. His convivial habits, however, were fast forming associations that pointed to reckless and intemperate life, but his marriage in 1861 to Miss Parker, a stately and noble woman of commanding presence, cultured mind, and most amiable disposition, proved the turning point in his career. From that time forward Mr. Ingersoll commanded his appetites and passions and made them his servant rather than his master. A woman's gentle hand steadied the life of the man and became the inspiration in all that is best and noblest in his career. Mr. Ingersoll was a model husband, father, patriot, citizen, and friend. Without regard to party or creed the old neighbors of Peoria have a warm place in their hearts for this man of so many social, domestic, and civic virtues. About the only criticism one hears among his old neighbors who are professors of religion is this: "It seems too bad that Mr. Ingersoll did not use his great talent and genius in constructive rather than destructive work." The people of his home city, without regard to party or creed, took part in the memorial held upon his death, and resolved to erect a suitable monument in the charming Glen Oak park to perpetuate his memory.

When I was first introduced to Mr. Ingersoll by a comrade, as a clergyman he gave me a warm handclasp with the statement: "As a rule, the gentlemen of your profes-

sion do not like me very well," to which I responded: "Comrade Ingersoll, we like you, but we do not like some things you teach." This brought the prompt reply: "When we break through the shell of dogma into the presence of man, bitterness ceases and we dwell together in harmony." When waiting at the Peoria depot for the train that was to carry us to Elmwood, Ill., to attend the soldiers' reunion at that place Mr. Ingersoll's pocket was picked. A large crowd had assembled at the station and the thief easily escaped detection. When we expressed our regret that such a thing should happen, he excused the matter by saying that he might have dropped the money when he bought his ticket. He said that he did not want to believe that any one would pick his pocket. "Men are naturally good," he said; "if one becomes a thief he has to acquire the talent. He must study for that profession just as a lawyer, doctor, or preacher learns his profession. Meanness is acquired; it is not natural. No man was ever made good by calling him bad." So, in the closing years of his life, Mr. Ingersoll sought to eliminate all personal references of a suspicious or unkind character. He tried not to speak of a man unless he could speak well of him. He was merciless and sometimes, it seemed to me, unkind in his arraignment of opinions or parties and creeds, but he eliminated personalities as far as possible.

At the last reunion of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, the Colonel's old regiment, and the soldiers of Peoria county, which Mr. Ingersoll attended, a little incident happened which let us into the inner circle of his life. The meeting was held at Elmwood. While the soldiers were passing in review the citizens and young people filled all the seats in the park and crowded around the speaker's stand, so as to occupy all available space. When the soldiers had finished their parade and returned to the park, they found it impossible to get near the speaker. Of course we were all disappointed, but were forced to stand on the outskirts of the vast throng.

As soon as he ceased speaking Mr. Ingersoll said to a soldier that he would like to meet his comrades in the hall at a certain hour in the afternoon. The word spread quickly, and at the appointed hour the hall was crowded with soldiers. The guard stationed at the door was ordered to let none but soldiers pass into the hall. Some of the comrades, however, brought their wives. The guards, true to their orders, refused to let the ladies pass. Just as Mr. Ingersoll was ready to speak word came to him that some of the comrades' wives were outside and wanted permission to pass the guard. The hall was full, but Mr. Ingersoll requested all comrades whose wives were within reach to

go and get them. When his order had been complied with even standing room was at a premium. When Mr. Ingersoll arose to speak to that great assemblage of white-haired veterans and their aged companions his voice was unusually tender, and the wave of emotion that passed through the hall cannot be told in words. Tears and cheers blended as Mr. Ingersoll arose and began his speech with the statement that all present were nearing the setting sun of life, and in all probability that was the last opportunity many of them would have of taking each other by the hand.

In this half-hour impromptu speech the great-hearted man, Robert G. Ingersoll, was seen at his best. It was not a clash of opinions over party or creed, but it was a meeting of hearts and communion together in the holy of holies of human life. The address was a series of word-pictures that still hang on the walls of memory. The speaker, in his most sympathetic mood, drew a picture of the service of the G. A. R., of the women of the Republic, and then paid a beautiful tribute to home and invoked the kindest and greatest influence to guard his comrades and their companions during the remainder of life's journey.

We got very close to the man that day, where we could see the heart of Mr. Ingersoll. I have often wished that a reporter could have been present to preserve the address. Imagine four beautiful word-paintings entitled, "The Service of the G. A. R.," "The Influence of Noble Womanhood," "The Sacredness of Home," and "The Pilgrimage of Life." Imagine these word-paintings as drawn by Mr. Ingersoll under the most favorable circumstances, and you have an idea of that address. Mr. Ingersoll the Agnostic is a very different man from Mr. Ingersoll the man and patriot. I cannot share the doubts of this Agnostic. I cannot help admiring the man and patriot.

This report of a regimental meeting and the resolutions adopted is from the *Peoria Weekly Herald* of July 27.

The meeting was presided over by B. D. Meek of Eureka, who was lieutenant-colonel of the Eleventh while Ingersoll was colonel. They were closely associated during the war, and a warm friendship existed between them. Colonel Meek has been master in chancery of Woodford county for a number of years. In taking the chair he said in part :

“Our leader has gone and we must soon follow. In the death of Colonel Ingersoll the country has lost one of its greatest men. A greater mind than his has not existed since Shakspeare. Had his mind been turned in military channels, he could have been a leader; if in law exclusively, none could have excelled him. He was a marvelous man in intellect and brilliancy.

“While there was a difference in our temperaments we always got along well and corresponded up to the time of his death. No reformer did more for liberalizing thought than did Robert G. Ingersoll.”

The resolutions, as follows, were adopted on motion of R. L. Todhunter :

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 honor to be a remnant, sleeps his last sleep.

No word of ours, though written in flame, no chaplet that our hands can weave, no testimony that our personal knowledge can bring, will add anything to his fame, which the American public will not now freely accord.

The world honors him as the prince of orators in his generation, as its emancipator from manacles and dogmas; philosophy, 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 the military camp where he reigned an uncrowned king, ruling with that bright scepter of human benevolence which death alone could wrest from his hand.

We had the honor 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.

Hence we recognize only a small circle around his recent heaven and home, who could know more of his manliness and worth than we do. And to such we say: Look up, if you can, through natural tears; try to be as brave as he was, and try to remember—in the midst of a grief which his greatest wish for life would have been to help you to bear—that he had no fear of death nor of anything beyond.

And we, the survivors, comrades of the Eleventh Illinois

Cavalry, extend to his widow and children our condolence in this hour of their sad bereavement.

S. A. MURDOCK,
THOS. O'HARRA,
S. S. TRIPP,
C. FRABE,
J. W. KIMSEY.

From the Peoria *Herald-Transcript* of July 24 we take the report of a memorial meeting, held on the evening of the 23d, at which Colonel Ingersoll's personal friends paid their tributes. Some of them are Christians, some Freethinkers. They all spoke from the heart. Would they have said these things of a bad neighbor and dissipated man? This is the report:

Perhaps no more impressive memorial services have ever been held in the United States to the memory of a deceased public man than those held yesterday afternoon in the Tabernacle to the memory of Robert Green Ingersoll, Peoria's former citizen, and the man who without a doubt gave the city wider prominence than all other causes combined.

From the expressions on the faces of nearly every person it was seen that there was deep sorrow over the sudden death of this wonderful man. There were no special decorations, and a bust of the deceased, taken while he was yet a young man, stood in front of the chairman's table. It was not thought that the exercises would continue over an hour at the farthest, but there were so many friends of the dead man present who desired to express their feelings and say a word in his praise that it was after 6 o'clock when adjournment was reached.

Deloss S. Brown was made permanent chairman. Mr. Eugene F. Baldwin, the opening speaker, began his remarks by saying: "When a great man falls the nation mourns. In the death of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll one of the greatest men of the age has fallen—one who has impressed the world with his speech and thought, even more than Huxley, Gladstone, and Bismarck, and not only we, but the whole nation mourns.

"If Colonel Ingersoll was second to any man in the history of modern times, it was to the great Darwin himself, and he alone." Mr. Baldwin said that there was not another case in history where a man had made as great

personal sacrifice as had Colonel Ingersoll in order that he might preach and live up to his belief, He had made himself a poor man by his acts of charity, and his life of brotherly love was religion in a higher sphere. Under the old form of religion it was impossible for a man to express love for his wife and family, but Colonel Ingersoll, by his liberal views, has made that thing possible.

William Hawley Smith said in part: "Colonel Ingersoll left Peoria about two years before I came here to make my residence. I have met him a number of times and have been quite well acquainted with him. I have studied the man, and as I think of his life, the genuine spirit of democracy pervaded the man. He was a genuine democrat—he believed in everybody. The old religious idea was that God was a king and had pets whom he favored. Ingersoll did not believe in pets, but that all men were made to be treated alike. I remember when in one of the Republican state conventions John A. Logan said Peoria county should not be represented in the national convention as the people desired, and how Ingersoll pleaded for us and won out. Logan saw the day he was sorry for his action. Again I say, Colonel Ingersoll was the greatest example of friendship, brotherly love, equality, and genuine democracy the world has ever seen."

The next speaker was Julius S. Starr, who was visibly affected. In part he said: "Colonel Ingersoll and myself were friends for many years. In 1860 when the conflict for the preservation of the nation was being agitated and the members of his party were wavering as to whether they would support President Lincoln or take sides with the Confederacy he showed the greatest patriotism of any man the world has ever produced. I remember the meeting held in the old court house by the Peoria county Democracy, at which it was to be decided on which side they would stand, and at which Colonel Ingersoll was present. He had been defeated for the nomination for Congress by the great Douglass, but after the representatives of the Confederacy had finished their addresses, which had worked the audience up to the pitch that another word would have taken them over to the side in opposition to the administration, he took the floor and carried the meeting by storm in the indorsement of President Lincoln. And in this, fellow citizens, I say with pride that Robert G. Ingersoll showed himself to be the greatest patriot in the United States.

"I went with him into Indiana when he was requested to deliver addresses in defense of Governor Morton, whom the Democrats of that state were trying to down, and the governor told me that he had heard all the great orators

and intellectual men of that period, but Ingersoll was the greatest of them all. None can say but that Colonel Ingersoll did more for humanity than any other man. I knew him in his home life, and there he was the same strong, noble, patriotic man. Peace to his ashes—memory to the good he has done.”

Following Mr. Starr's address, Mr. E. L. Brown of Elmwood sang, "The Old Friends Are the Truest After All." This song was written by a member of Colonel Ingersoll's regiment, and sung in his honor at the reunion of the regiment, the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, held at Elmwood three years ago, at which Colonel Ingersoll was the guest of honor.

Martin Kingman said: "Colonel Ingersoll was my neighbor. His wife and myself were old acquaintances. A small railing separated our houses and we talked nightly across the railing.

"While I disagreed with Colonel Ingersoll on his religious views I always honored his intellect. He was one of the great men of the nation and his name will go down the ages to be remembered by many men and women. I learned a great lesson from this wonderful man through his great love for his family."

Mr. Dan Sheen read this resolution:

Resolved, That a committee of fifteen be appointed by the chairman, to constitute a board of trustees, with full power to raise the necessary funds by private subscription for the erection in Peoria, Ill., in Glen Oak park, of a suitable monument to the memory of the late Col. Robert Green Ingersoll. The committee to be known as the Ingersoll Memorial Committee, and the funds so raised to be known as the Ingersoll Memorial Fund, and that said committee have full power to appropriate such funds for the erection of such monument in their discretion in the said city."

The resolution was greeted with applause, and Dan R. Sheen, Samuel A. Harper, Julius S. Starr, Rudolph Pfeiffer, and Hiram Brown were appointed as the committee.

Dr. J. T. Stewart reviewed the early history of religion, and compared Colonel Ingersoll with Socrates and other great men of ancient times, and said: "He loved the truth and his life aim was to get at it. Those who have talked against him are afraid of the truth, and where you find a Christian who is afraid of the truth there is something rotten about him. Nothing has destroyed more life and brought more misery in the world than superstition, and it was Colonel Ingersoll's life work to destroy this evil. Colonel Ingersoll was a most wonderful man and his name

will go down to posterity as one of the greatest of the age."

Col. Samuel A. Harper said: "Colonel Ingersoll was my friend and I was his friend. I loved and revered him, and I have nothing to take back that I have ever said of him."

Colonel Harper was followed by Mr. Rudolph Pfeiffer, who spoke as follows: "Colonel Ingersoll was the greatest orator that ever lived, but great as he was, his fame does not rest there. We love him for his love of his family. The fame of all intellectual heroes rests on two points—love of mankind and moral courage. Ingersoll was not a coward—he loved liberty for himself and others. It takes a courageous man to fight the dark creeds of theology, and this sort of a man was Colonel Ingersoll."

Mr. Hiram Brown read a letter written by Colonel Ingersoll to a San Francisco mother, who had lost a much loved son, and who was grieving over the future. The letter bade the mother have no fear, and its tenderness brought tears to many men and women in the audience.

Supervisor Stafford said he was never afraid of the sneers and jeers of the world. He was and had been since youth a believer in the teachings of Paine, and said he: "When Ingersoll announced to the world his principles, I was a follower of him. To-day I believe he was the greatest man that ever lived in the United States. He was never afraid to say what his conscience told him. He was a man of true principles. To show the trueness of his manhood and his love for his fellow man, I will say that at one time Fred Douglass, the great colored orator, came to Peoria. At that time a negro would not be admitted to a hotel, but Colonel Bob took him into his own house and entertained him, telling him when he took his departure that if he ever happened around where he lived again he would always find the latch-string hanging out.

"I have been spotted as an Infidel, but I am not afraid. I am proud that I have lived out this bigoted age. Let us honor such men as Paine and Ingersoll, for such men as they made it possible for us to live in this age."

Prof. Leon Van Hoorbeke said that he did not come to the meeting to honor a Democrat or a Republican, but a Freethinker, the greatest in the world. He said he had met Ingersoll and honored him, and next year he would go abroad and spread his greatness on foreign shores.

Major H. W. Wells, who was an intimate friend of Colonel Ingersoll, was then called upon. He declared no better man ever lived than he, and in part said: "Bob Ingersoll honored Jesus Christ, and I have often heard him say that he was a great and good man, and that if he had lived in his time he would have been his friend. Christ was crucified on account of his opinions, and he would be

crucified to-day if he was living. You talk of a monument to Ingersoll's memory—he needs none, for his life and deeds are monument enough, and far grander than any shaft you can raise."

At the close of Major Wells's remarks an old and feeble gentleman rose to his feet and, stating that his name was Buchanan, asked to be allowed to say a few words. He was told to proceed, and said: "I have heard something said of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll's capture by the Confederates during the Civil war, and that he was captured while standing in a hog pen. I am probably the only living witness of his capture, and can say that there was no pig pen or buildings of any kind in sight.

"I was wounded and lying not twenty feet away when he was captured, and if there had been a pig pen near at hand I most certainly would have crawled into it for shelter from the cold, as there was snow on the ground where I was lying. When the Confederates came up to Colonel Ingersoll he shouted: 'Stop your shooting! I have been wanting to recognize your old Confederacy for the last ten minutes.' Those officers thought so much of him that they did not take from him his horse, pistols, or sword. He was not a great soldier, but there was not a cowardly hair in his head. Everybody loved him, and there was not a man in the regiment who would not have followed him to the death."

Col. Isaac Taylor said: "I knew Colonel Ingersoll since 1859. The entire world recognizes him as a fine orator, but that about him which impressed my mind and feeling was his great, big heart. He was truly a great man. God bless his memory."

Capt. John Hall then spoke, saying: "I knew Colonel Ingersoll over forty years, and no better man ever lived. I was at his office when the committee from the state convention called upon him and told him he could have the nomination for governor of Illinois if he would keep his peculiar views out of the campaign. When the leader had finished Colonel Ingersoll stood erect like a giant and said to him, looking him full in the face: 'I would not smother one sentiment of my heart to be president of the United States.'"

M. C. Quinn said: "Fellow-citizens, a giant oak has fallen in the midst of the forest; one of the greatest and grandest men of the day has fallen in the harness; a warrior has dropped in battle with his armor on. He was the grandest specimen of mankind ever seen. He was colossal. His appearance was magnificent, his presence inspiring, and his flow of language as if it came from a well-spring. I say there was no greater man ever lived than

Robert G. Ingersoll, and his name will never be forgotten.*

Mr. William Babcock, Sr., of Canton, an old friend of Colonel Ingersoll, who had come to the city specially to attend the memorial exercises, was called upon, and with tears running down his cheeks said: "I can hardly talk for my emotions. Colonel Ingersoll and I were boys together. We were born within six miles of each other, and I have known him for many years. If there ever was an honest man on God's earth it was he. May his name and deeds live forever."

Thomas H. Sparrow said that Peoria has had many great people. She had made Emma Abbott, the great singer; she had made Robert Ingersoll, the greatest orator and Freethinker the world has ever known, and she had made Gen. Lloyd H. Wheaton, who is making a great record for himself and Peoria in the Philippines.

Capt. R. W. Burt said that he had known many of the great men of the nation, and yet Ingersoll was the greatest of them all, and he (Captain Burt) asked the question, "How could he be changed when his heart made him the great, good man that he was?"

At this point the chair called for the report of the committee on resolutions, which was read by Eugene H. Baldwin, after which, on motion of Hiram Brown, it was adopted by a rising vote. The resolutions follow:

"WHEREAS, In the order of nature—that nature which moves with unerring certainty in obedience to fixed laws—Robert G. Ingersoll has gone to that repose which we call death,

"*Resolved*, That we, his old friends and fellow citizens, who have shared his friendship in the past, hereby manifest the respect due his memory. At a time when everything impelled him to conceal his opinions or to withhold their expression, when the highest honors of the state were his if he would but avoid the discussion of the questions that relate to futurity, he avowed his belief; he did not bow his knee to superstition nor countenance a creed from which his intellect dissented.

"Casting aside all the things for which men most sigh—political honor, the power to direct the fortunes of the state, riches and emoluments, the association of the worldly and the well-to-do—he stood forth and expressed his honest doubts, and he welcomed the ostracism that came with it, as a crown of glory, no less than did the martyrs of old.

"Even this self-sacrifice has been accounted shame to him, saying that he was urged thereto by a desire for financial gain, when at the time he made his stand there was before him only the prospect of loss and the scorn of the public. We, therefore, who know what a struggle it was

to cut loose from his old associations and what it meant to him at that time, rejoice in his triumph and in the plaudits that came to him from thus boldly avowing his opinions, and we desire to record the fact that we feel that he was greater than a saint, greater than a mere hero—he was a thoroughly honest man.

“He was a believer, not in the narrow creed of a past barbarous age, but a true believer in all that men ought to hold sacred, the sanctity of the home, the purity of friendship, and the honesty of the individual. He was not afraid to advocate the fact that eternal truth was eternal justice; he was not afraid of the truth, nor to avow that he owed allegiance to it first of all, and he was willing to suffer shame and condemnation for its sake.

“The laws of the universe were his bible; to do good, his religion, and he was true to his creed. We therefore commend his life, for he was the apostle of the fireside, the evangel of justice and love and charity and happiness.

“We who knew him when he first began his struggle, his old neighbors and friends, rejoice at the testimony he has left us, and we commend his life and efforts as worthy of emulation.

“*Resolved*, That we extend our heartfelt sympathy to his family in their great loss, and that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to them.”

Following the adoption of the resolutions, Mrs. E. L. Brown sang a song, composed by an Elmwood friend of Colonel Ingersoll and dedicated to him entitled, “I May be a Prophet,” after which Mr. Hiram Brown read Ingersoll’s essay on Napoleon Bonaparte, and the meeting was adjourned.

There were many more friends and admirers of the deceased orator present who would have talked had not the time run short, it being after 6 o’clock when adjournment was taken.

HIS BELIEF WAS UNCHANGED.

Clinton J. Robins, ex-telephone operator at police headquarters in Dayton, Ohio, received the following letter written by Colonel Ingersoll, in reply to an inquiry as to whether he had changed his opinion as to religion, the date giving it special significance:

“NEW YORK, July 13, 1899.—C. J. Robins, Esq.—Dear Sir: First accept a thousand thanks.

for your good letter. The only trouble is that it is too flattering. You are right in thinking that I have not changed. I still believe that all religions are based on falsehoods and mistakes. I still deny the existence of the supernatural, and I still say that real religion is usefulness. Thanking you again, I remain yours always,

“R. G. INGERSOLL.”

Secular Thought of Toronto, of which Mr. J. Spencer Ellis is the editor, reprints “from a contemporary” the appended paragraph, which has enjoyed a wide circulation in the United States and probably also in foreign countries:

“A correspondent sends to the Daily Mail the following story of an incident which happened some twenty years ago in Toronto: Colonel Ingersoll, the celebrated infidel orator, was delivering a lecture in a theatre on a Sunday night. The house, of course, was crammed, and he went on with his clever and humorous speech till he gave utterance to some particularly blasphemous comments, which proved too offensive for his audience. In the midst of his brilliant speech a fine voice in the gallery rang out in the well-known hymn, ‘Hold the Fort, for I am Coming.’ Instantly the words were taken up by others until the whole concourse joined in, and Colonel Ingersoll had to retreat ignominiously without being allowed to utter another word.”

Mr. Ellis comments: “It will be understood by every rational man that no such incident ever took place. . . . The editor of this paper, having attended all Ingersoll’s lectures in Toronto, is prepared to assert that the story is simply a foolish invention, no incident such as that related having occurred.” See Secular Thought, Sept. 23, 1899.

In conversation with a friend of Colonel Ingersoll an incident was related to us which has never been made public but which ought to

be recorded for the information of clerical gentlemen. In February, 1898, Fort Smith, Ark., was visited by a cyclone which wiped out a portion of the town, causing great suffering there. Colonel Ingersoll was booked to lecture there on the 14th, but telegraphed to the theatre manager that under the circumstances he thought the date would better be canceled. The manager held him to the contract, however. When the Colonel started on his trip he telegraphed the Fort Smith man that he would lecture there and give the proceeds to the cyclone sufferers. "I can't take any money out of a town in that condition," he said to our informant. So from Texas he traveled up to Fort Smith, at an expense of about a hundred dollars, lectured and gave his share of the proceeds—some \$300—to the committee engaged in relieving the sufferers. The theatre manager, however, took his own share and put it in his pocket.—The Truth Seeker, Dec. 2, 1899.

"EXAGGERATED AND FALSE."

The Rev. George L. Cady of Geneseo, Ill., preached a sermon on Ingersoll in which this old lie was repeated:

"Bob Ingersoll was a cowardly soldier—was in but one battle. Ran at the first fire, bringing up in a pigpen, and was actually captured by a Confederate boy sixteen years old. Now, that was his patriotism when tested."

A statement like the foregoing might have gone unchallenged a few months ago by any resident of Geneseo, but since the publication of "Ingersoll as He Is" retribution is pretty sure to overtake the clerical defamer wherever he may hold forth. One

of our subscribers immediately took the Rev. Mr. Cady to task, and published in the "Henry County Arena" the facts about Ingersoll's war record. As he wrote under the nom de plume of Plebeus the clergyman declined to acknowledge his error, but "Plebeus" continued to pile up the evidence, until in a private letter Mr. Cady finally admitted that the statement was "exaggerated and false." He did not, however, make the public retraction which justice demanded. The controversy brought out a letter, not previously published, from Basil D. Meek, who with Ingersoll, organized the Eleventh Illinois cavalry. It is as follows:

"It affords me great pleasure to give facts in regard to any matters touching the character and conduct of so worthy a gentleman as Ingersoll. No person in the service could know the facts better than myself, as the Colonel and I were together in battle and in camp during his career in the army. Our relations were of the most intimate character, and I can say without fear of contradiction that there was not a braver man in the late war than Colonel Ingersoll. He did not know what fear was in battle or any place else. The charge that 'Bob Ingersoll was a cowardly soldier, ran at the first fire in the first battle, bringing up in a pigpen, and was actually captured by a sixteen-year-old boy,' is to my personal knowledge a gross mistake all through. The first engagement he was in was the battle of Pittsburg landing, April 6 and 7, 1862. His deportment was calm and collected; he made several strong pleas to our men to stand firm and fight the enemy to the last, as our cause was just. Colonel Ingersoll was kind-hearted and generous, beloved and respected by all the men in his commandery, and I am sorry to hear these false charges made against

him by persons who do not know what they are talking about. He is not with the masses in his notions about religion. He and I did not agree on theology, but no man could show greater regard for the religious views of another than Mr. Ingersoll did for mine during our entire time together.

“Eureka, Ill., Mar. 19, 1896. B. D. MEEK.”

We observe that the Rev. J. Morgan Wells of Ft. Worth, Tex., in revising his sermon on Ingersoll, has omitted the myth of the “sixteen-year-old Confederate boy,” as well as all other reference to the Colonel’s war record contained in the sermon as delivered, in which the reverend gentleman, so-called, gave his congregation to understand that the Eleventh Illinois was a colored regiment. But Mr. Wells’s sermon contains other slanders just as vile, and which the preacher knows to be untrue. People who hear or read these sermons must often wonder if the clergy tell as little truth about other things as they do about Ingersoll.—The Truth Seeker, May 23, 1896.

“A PATRON OF SUICIDE.”

Remarking the alleged increase of the tendency of human beings to commit suicide, the “Christian Advocate” says:

“Ingersoll, by reason of his teachings, has earned for himself the title of the Patron of Suicide.”

Ingersoll has affirmed that under certain circumstances “a man has the right to take his life,” and he mentions some of those circumstances. For example, a man may be the last passenger on

the deck of a burning ship, with the alternative of leaping into the water to be drowned or remaining to be devoured by flames. He may have in his possession a drug by swallowing which he immediately becomes unconscious and dies painlessly. Is it not his privilege, asks Ingersoll, to choose the easiest death? Again, he may be in the hands of savages or inquisitors, and death from torture is assured. Is God better pleased if the man suffers indescribable agony for hours instead of cutting the matter short with a quick blow of a dagger? It is under circumstances like these that Ingersoll says a man has the right to take his own life, and it is upon this basis that the "Advocate" calls him the Patron of Suicide! Deliberate lying would be a virtue compared with such distortion of fact, "for a lie that is all a lie can be met and fought with outright," but to paraphrase the poet, a Christian lie is a harder matter to contend with.—The Truth Seeker, October 24, 1896.

A "FAKE" WITH CATHOLIC EMBELLISHMENTS.

"At last Ingersoll has knocked down his man. But it wasn't Dr. Lambert. He would run a mile out of that priest's way. The man the chivalrous colonel flogged was a poor beggar who wanted bread and got a blow."—Union and Times (Catholic).

Fudge! You are repeating the falsehood of some unscrupulous reporter, with a lie of your own added. That Ingersoll repulsed a "burly ruffian" who menacingly "held him up" on the streets of Chicago, was reported by the press, with full details of a "flush right-hander" and a "left-arm hook," whereby the knock-out was accom-

plished, but the "poor beggar who wanted bread and got a blow" is an embellishment added for odious purposes by the "Union and Times." The truth of the matter is that no beggar approached Colonel Ingersoll in the manner described and that no blow was struck. The account is pure fiction.—The Truth Seeker, March 27, 1897.

THE LONGEVITY OF THE UNTRUE.

A friend sends to The Truth Seeker a clipping from a Chicago paper of recent date with this item marked:

"Robert Ingersoll, who is coming to Chicago with a new lecture, is fond of good books. During one of his visits to Chicago he and a friend went to one of the big book stores in Wabash avenue to examine the treasures on the shelves and counters. They had roamed around the establishment discussing history, romance, and theology, and finally the friend said, picking up a volume: 'Ah, Colonel, this is the book you like.'

"'What is it?' he asked.

"'Tom Paine's "Age of Reason:"'

"'Yes; it's a good book, but mighty expensive.'

"'Why, I didn't think so.'

"'I have a copy, and what do you think it cost me?'

"'I don't know, I'm sure.'

"'The governorship of Illinois.'"

It is related that Colonel Ingersoll once asked a lady what good religion had ever done, and that she replied, "It has kept you from being governor of Illinois." She might have added that religion and the bigotry arising out of it had in various other ways rendered null and void the

provision of our fundamental law that no religious test shall be required of a candidate for office. This story is apocryphal, but it has bred with the usual fecundity of the untrue, and the Chicago paper's story is one of its offspring. But the book incident is older than it appears. In *The Truth Seeker* of October 11, 1879 (nearly eighteen years ago), was printed the following paragraph:

"Ingersoll is well aware of the political disabilities put upon him by his peculiar religious views. Some one asked him one day, 'What did this copy of Voltaire cost you?' 'Well, sir, it cost me the governorship of Illinois,' was the quick reply."

That invention was credited to a paper called the "Modern Argo," which is the only reference to that publication we have ever seen. The writer for the Chicago paper might have thought a "copy of Voltaire" somewhat vague, since it would mean a library rather than a single work, and so changed it to Paine's "Age of Reason." The only further improvement made in the story is a picture of Ingersoll looking at a book.—*The Truth Seeker*, May 8, 1897.

"ERRATA."

There is another man out West "answering" Colonel Ingersoll. His name is J. P. D. John, he is a "Rev.," and either he or his advertising manager is a liar. He is ex-president of DePauw College. The vineyard he is cultivating now is the northwest, and he is publishing, as an inducement for people to go and hear him, a statement that Colonel Ingersoll has said that he (John) is the only man who has ever answered him (Ingersoll). Several of our readers having written to us about

it, quoting his "recommendation" from the Colonel, we extended their communications to Mr. Ingersoll himself, and this is what he says:

"NEW YORK, April 5, 1898.

"MY DEAR MACDONALD:

"I never wrote the following to the Rev'd John P. D. John: 'Rev. John P. D. John is the only man who has ever answered me.'

"Never wrote anything like it—nor said anything like it.

"I do not believe that the Rev'd. P. D. John has ever answered me, or that he ever will.

"I may have written or said, or both, that he was fair or decent, but it never occurred to me that he had really answered me.

"Yours always,

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

There is the answer under the Colonel's own signature, and if the Rev. Pedee John and his advertising manager don't reform their show bills they will be open to the charge of wilful misrepresentation for the glory of God, or of the Rev. Pedee, which is the same thing.

About the meanest thing we have lately seen concerning Colonel Ingersoll is a statement in the Johnstown, Pa., "Weekly Tribune" of April 1. Johnstown is the place which a few years ago was wiped off the map by a flood, which caused great loss of life, and much suffering to the survivors, and to help relieve which Colonel Ingersoll sent his check for one hundred dollars. The allegation of the "Tribune" is:

"His [Ingersoll's] personal characteristics are admired only by those who are not acquainted

with them. To one who has had a chance to observe them in a railroad journey of some duration, a sojourn at a hotel, or elsewhere, they appear anything but admirable. Bob is fond of drink, and exhibits his thirst whenever an opportunity presents. He is loud-mouthed, profane, domineering, not over-cleanly, evidently would not lend a hand to assist a fellow-passenger if he could help it."

This sounds very much like the tales about Paine, and is as good a specimen of deliberate lying as one often sees. The facts are precisely and exactly opposite. Mr. Ingersoll is the embodiment of kindness, always assisting others, gentle in speech and manner, extremely temperate if not totally abstinent as to drink, and a "crank" on cleanliness. Statements otherwise are the malicious inventions of Christians who desire to injure him in the estimation of others. Such Christian writers usually wait till the subject of their vituperation is dead, but the Colonel being so very much alive lately has induced them to begin now, possibly with an eye to getting the people away from his lectures and into the church. —The Truth Seeker, April 16, 1898.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S DEATH.

There are so many Christian preachers in the country who think the truth of God will more abound through their lying, that stories of the recantation of his Infidelity and conversion to Christianity of the late Robert G. Ingersoll are being published with a frequency which shows the zeal of the pious ones of the earth. The Ingersoll family have had such stories sent to them by the dozen, with a request for the facts, and The Truth Seeker has answered in the paper and by letter some score or two within the past few weeks. To set the matter at rest, and to have the facts in shape for use by Colonel Ingersoll's friends and by future historians, the family have prepared the following sworn statement:

STATE OF NEW YORK }
 COUNTY OF NEW YORK } ss.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

THE TRUE STORY OF HIS ILLNESS AND DEATH.

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 his 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 attack of acute indigestion and slept very little, but he came to breakfast the next morning and afterward sat on the piazza, as he was wont to do, reading and talking with the family. At about ten thirty he said he would lie down and rest a little and would then 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 M. 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 the hundreds of times you have eaten 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 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 convictions on the subject of religion remained absolutely unchanged. He died as he had lived—an Agnostic.

EVA A. INGERSOLL,
SUE SHARKEY,
SUE M. FARRELL.

Severally affirmed to before me this 17th day of March, 1906.

JOHN H. HAZELTON,
Notary Public, New York County, No. 59.

Several copies of this document have been executed and placed in safe keeping for the use of future historians, and to use in refuting the lies which have been and will be told as to Colonel Ingersoll's death. The pulpit has not only made Colonel Ingersoll recant, but one priest told his parishioners that the Colonel sent for a Roman Catholic priest. The foregoing statement has been made in the interest of the truth. The Sue Sharkey, whose name is affixed to the affidavit, was a member of the family, and is a Roman Catholic in religion.

Whenever one of our readers sees in his local newspaper a repetition of the idle tale that Colonel Ingersoll recanted we hope he or she will copy this and embody it in a letter to that newspaper, and tell the editor that if he is an honest man he will print it; if he refuses to print it, tell him he is just a little less honest than a horsethief, and stop taking his paper.

DENIED BY AFFIDAVITS.

From the New York Truth Seeker, Feb. 19th, 1910.

Immediately upon the death of Robert G. Ingersoll in 1899, a report that upon his "dying bed" he had renounced his Agnosticism, and had expressed regret for having entertained such views, was fabricated and put in circulation by priests, ministers, and evangelists. The family of Colonel Ingersoll, being shocked and outraged by this malicious falsehood, at once published a statement and affidavit describing his last moments and showing the impossibility of the reports being true. The statement of facts did not check the lying, which went on, culminating in an affidavit by a wretch named Berry of St. Johns, Oregon, that the recantation had actually

taken place and giving other details obviously borrowed from previously fabricated accounts of other Infidel deathbeds. Evangelists and the religious press, professing to regard the miserable inventions of Berry as new evidence, have circulated his story East and West, and have refused to desist when informed and placed in possession of the fact that the affidavit of Berry does not contain a word of truth. Their course has shown that they are indifferent to its falsity so long as it serves their purpose. In consequence, the widow and daughter of Colonel Ingersoll have made a second affidavit disposing of Berry's. It is to the shame and reproach of religion that they should be forced by persistent lying on the part of its propagandists to take this course. THE TRUTH SEEKER prints the affidavits of Mrs. Ingersoll and Miss Ingersoll, the originals of which are at this office for inspection. We understand that the genuineness of the previous affidavits published and republished in THE TRUTH SEEKER has, in their desperation, been denied by the circulators of the Berry testimony. Freethinkers, wherever they may hear or see any statement conflicting with the facts with which they are so well acquainted, will be justified in rising up and giving such statement its right name.

MRS. INGERSOLL'S AFFIDAVIT.

STATE OF NEW YORK, }
 COUNTY OF NEW YORK, } ss.

Eva A. Ingersoll, having duly affirmed, deposes and says:

That she is the widow of the late Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, who died at Dobbs Ferry, New York, on July 21, 1899.

That she has been informed that, in December,

1908, a certain affidavit was made reading as follows:

"I do hereby declare that Robert Ingersoll confessed to my father, Joehiel S. Berry, on his dying bed, that he did not believe the doctrine he preached.

"He said these words: 'Joehiel, I wish I had my life to live over again.' When asked why, he said 'Because I do not believe what I have preached and never have. I only did this for the money that was in it.'

"His daughter than asked, 'Whose life shall I live after, yours or mother's?' and he said, 'Live the life of your mother.' Mrs. Ingersoll was a strict Baptist and a sister to my father.

"(Signed) ARCHIE E. BERRY,

"St. Johns, Ore."

or reading as given without the words "on his dying bed."

That the name of deponent's father was Parker; and that the name of deponent's mother was Lyon. That neither her father nor her mother was married more than once.

That she does not know Archie E. Berry; that she never knew Joehiel S. Berry, and that she never saw, so far as she knows, either of them, and that she never heard of either of them except as she has heard of them in connection with the above alleged affidavit.

That, so far as she knows, her late husband never saw or knew either Archie E. Berry or Joehiel S. Berry.

That no one by the name of Berry was present at the death of her said late husband; and that she knows so of her own knowledge, because she herself was present at that time and knows all of the persons then present.

That any statement that Archie E. Berry is deponent's nephew is false.

That any statement that Joehiel S. Berry was present at the death of her said late husband is false.

That any statement that her said late husband recanted from his public utterances, namely, that he was an Agnostic, so far as she knows, or, as she knows, at the time of his death, is false.

That deponent is not and never has been a Baptist and has been and still is an Agnostic.

EVA A. INGERSOLL.

Subscribed and affirmed to before me this 27th day of January, 1910.

JOHN H. HAZELTON,
Notary Public, New York Co., No. 70.

MISS INGERSOLL'S AFFIDAVIT.

STATE OF NEW YORK, }
COUNTY OF NEW YORK. } ss.:

Maud R. Ingersoll, having first duly affirmed, deposes and says:

That she is a daughter of the late Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, who died at Dobbs Ferry, New York, on July 21, 1899, and of Eva A. Ingersoll, who signed in her presence the annexed affidavit, made a part hereof by reference, which she has read and the contents whereof she knows and which contents she believes to be true.

That she has been informed that, in December, 1908, a certain affidavit was made as follows: [Here the Berry affidavit is quoted] or reading as given without the words "on his dying bed."

That she does not know Archie E. Berry; and that she never knew Joehiel S. Berry; and that she never saw, so far as she knows, either of them, and that she never heard of either of them except as she has heard of them in connection with the above alleged affidavit.

That, so far as she knows, her said late father

never saw or knew either Archie E. Berry or Joehiel S. Berry.

That, so far as she knows, her said late father never had any conversation of any kind with Joehiel S. Berry; and that her said late father in her presence and she, or her said late father in her presence or she, never had any such conversation as has been given in said alleged affidavit above given, or any similar conversation, or anything like it, or any part of it, or any conversation having any similar import, at any time, with any person or persons.

That no such conversation as is alleged in said alleged affidavit of Archie E. Berry as occurring between deponent and her said late father in the presence of Joehiel S. Berry could have occurred, because her said late father never made any such statement in her presence, and her said mother has always been, so far as deponent knows, an Agnostic, just as her said late father was, and never, so far as deponent knows, a Baptist nor anything other than an Agnostic.

That any statement that Archie E. Berry is the nephew of deponent's mother is, to the best of deponent's knowledge, information and belief, false.

That any statement that her said late father recanted from his public utterances, namely, that he was an Agnostic is, to the best information, the knowledge and the belief of deponent, false.

MAUD R. INGERSOLL.

Subscribed and affirmed before me this 27th day of January, 1910.

JOHN H. HAZELTON,
Notary Public, New York Co., No. 70.

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Talent has the four seasons: spring, that is to say, the sowing of the seed; summer, growth; autumn, the harvest; winter, intellectual death. But there is now and then a genius who has no winter, and, no matter how many years he may live, on the blossom of his thought no snow falls. Genius has the climate of perpetual growth.

Robert G. Ingersoll

The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know.

Robert G. Ingersoll

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And no wisdom in superstition.**

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