EUGENE V. DEBS
PASTELS OF MEN

Including an Appreciation of Debs
by
FRANK HARRIS

New York 1919
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Eugene V. Debs:
The Beloved Disciple

When I came to New York in November 1914, Eugene Debs was only a name to me. I knew he had been more than once the Candidate of the Socialist Party for President, and had received more than a million votes.

As soon as I became Editor of Pearson's I asked Debs to write for me about the choice and master spirits he had known; in the next year or so he wrote those half dozen biographies which I am now reproducing.

His writings reveal the man: he deals in nothing but praise and yet his praise say of Ingersoll is subtly differentiated from his praise of Wendell Phillips and his admiration of the Hoosier Poet has different roots from his admiration of Eugene Field.

His style is very simple and hall-marked with sincerity: all the while he is saying just what he means and feels, no more, no less, and yet he is always enthusiastic.

Still he never falls as the French say, into marmalade: he has the sweetness but with all the dignity of a great personality.

I wanted to meet him and wrote telling him my desire. The next time he came to New York he came to see me and we lunched together. He made a far greater impression on me than even his writings. Every one knows his tall lean figure and face that with the addition of a goatee would do for the typical Uncle Sam; but Uncle Sam's countenance has not the charm of unaffected kindliness that radiates from Debs'.

We were some hours together: when we parted I summed up my impression of him by calling him "The Beloved Disciple", the most Christlike man I have ever had the honor of knowing.

And so this democratic administration arraigns him under its own law in direct contradiction of the Constitution and of right and justice and a judge desiring the rewards of infamy sentenced Eugene Debs to ten
years imprisonment and he is now locked up in a cell in this "land of the free".

As Bernard Shaw wrote to me the other day his sentence is a disgrace to America and a disgrace to republican institutions. We are all ashamed by his punishment, disgraced, all of us, save the justices and President Woodrow Wilson who is chiefly and forever responsible for punishing one of the noblest of men.

I like to recall Debs's praise of Ingersoll: its even truer of Eugene Debs:—

"He freely laid his all upon the altar that those who came after him might escape the curse of slavery and the horror of superstition, and know the joy of being free. He was absolutely true to the highest principles of his exalted character and to the loftiest aspirations of his own unfettered soul. He bore the cruelest misrepresentation, the foulest abuse, the vilest calumny, and the most heartless persecution without resentment or complaint. He measured up to his true stature in every hour of trial, he served with fidelity and without compromise to the last hour of his noble life, he paid in full the price of his unswerving integrity to his own soul, and each passing century to come will add fresh luster to his immortal fame."

Frank Harris.
Riley The Hoosier Poet and Interpreter

“Nature is fine in love, and where 't is fine
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves”
—Shakespeare.

O ears attuned the morning stars in hoosier skies
must have sung together on the day James Whitcomb Riley was born. Nature, in love, certainly
crooned above his cradle and dowered him with
her most precious gifts as he opened his baby-eyes upon
the world.

The house in Greenfield in which the poet was born—

“A simple old frame house — eight rooms in all—
Set just one side the center of a small
But very hopeful Indiana town”—
is still standing, and pointed out with peculiar pride by
old friends and neighbors to the many devotees who visit
there to pay homage to the birth-place of Indiana's most
famous and beloved singer of her folk-lore and inter-
preter of her common life. It was here that he spent
his carefree boyhood days, played truant at school, and
followed his fancy out into the fields and woods, whither
he was lured by the myriad voices of nature that haunted
his poetic imagination.

Riley's father, a country lawyer and a sturdy specimen
of the hoosier type of that day, had named the future
poet James Whitcomb, in honor of one of Indiana's
pioneer governors, and intended that he should become,
like himself, an ornament to the legal profession. But
the lad demurred. He simply could not swallow the dry
stuff of which law-books are made, and whatever else
fate or fortune might have in store for him, it soon be-
came evident that there was not the making of a lawyer
in that restless, romantic, nature-loving youth.
It was along the winding creek-bank, sun-tanned and bare-footed, or rioting with chums in the "Old Swimmin' Hole," or chasing butterflies across richly-scented clover-fields, or wandering whither his roaming fancy might lead among the paw-paw bushes, the hazelthickets, the persimmon trees, or the towering hickories and walnuts in the pathless woods—it was in these artless quests and amidst such rustic scenes that young Riley drank deep draughts from the fountain of boyish enthusiasm and had his poetic fancy aroused by the inspiration he drew from the very heart of nature.

Riley was still a lad at school when he first gave evidence of his poetic genius, but it was not greatly appreciated. The schoolroom had a little attraction for him as had the law office at a later period. The lessons were tedious and the hours dragged slowly by as he heard through the open window the murmuring voices of the great out-doors, reminding him of play-time and setting his heart ajingle with the prospect of release from the bondage of the schoolroom and of escape from the sharp eye of its stern and vigilant master.

Ah, how many of the little folk there are, even today, who are tied down to dismal studies which do not interest them, while their natural aptitudes and tendencies are either disregarded or repressed, and their "education" finally fits them for success in the multitudinous ranks of the world's wretched failures. It is this sort of education, so-called, that, as Ingersoll aptly characterized it, "polishes pebbles and dims diamonds," and if young Riley had submitted to the regulation and discipline of the country schoolroom, his mentality would have been dwarfed, his personality effaced, and the fire of his genius utterly extinguished. He might have written grammatical commonplaces and composed polished rhymes but he would never have produced the vivid verses, the inspiring sonnet, sweet and homely as "Old Fashioned Roses" and tender and pathetic as the love of "Old Aunt Mary."

The hoosier lad who was to immortalize the homely dialect of his people yearned for freedom from the days of his childhood freedom to roam the fields and wade the creeks, to lie in the shade of an old sycamore and
listen with rapture to the feathered choristers in its overhanging boughs. Like the vagrant butterfly, he loved to flit, in perfect abandon, from field to field, from flower to flower extracting the native sweets his riper genius was to distill into the dripping honey of his melting melodies.

He loved nature in all her changing, charming moods and abandoned himself joyously to all her enticing overtures:

"Under some old apple tree,
   Jes' a-restin through and through,
   I could get along without
   Nothin' else at all to do.

   *   *   *

   Lay out here and try to see
   Jes' how lazy you kin be:—
   Tumble round and souse your head
   In the clover-bloom, er pull
   Yer straw hat acrost your eyes,
   And peek through it at the skies."

And this is how James Whitcomb Riley received the education that made him the poet of the children and the interpreter of the simple life of the common people. He had sprung from their loins and he incarnated their life. He breathed their spirit and shared their joys and sorrows, their hopes and yearnings: He glorified them in song and story, gave their language, rude and uncultivated, to poetry and literature, and they loved him with all their honest hearts.

Always do I remember Riley as I first saw him in the flush of his young manhood. He was midway in his twenties, yet seemed a boy to me, and remained so to the end of his days. Happily, he could not outgrow his boyhood. The magic of his own entrancing fairy-world of childhood held him willing captive and kept his spirit sweet and his heart young.

He carried about with him the jaunty air of a youth in love, he overflowed with delicious humor, and he heard music and saw poetry in all things about him. He sang
of the honey-bee and the butterfly, the tree-toad and the cricket, the hollyhock and the clover-blossom, and they were all precious in his sight and all essential to his world.

"'Cause I'm happier in these posies,
And the hollyhawks and sich,
Than the hummin' bird 'at noses
In the roses of the rich."

The rapturous tribute of Robert Ingersoll to Robert Burns applies with peculiar fitness to the hoosier poet: "Here was a man who plucked joy from the mire, made goddesses of peasant girls, and enthroned the honest man . . . a man who loved this world, this life, the things of every day, and placed above all else the thrilling ex-stasies of human love. . . . A little valley, not very wide, but full of sunshine; a little stream runs down making music over the rocks, and children play upon the banks; narrow roads overrun with vines, covered with blossoms, happy children, the hum of bees, and little birds pour out their hearts and enrich the air. That is Burns."

Some years ago Riley visited St. Louis as the guest of the Indian Society. The St. Louis Globe Democrat, incidental to the visit, published some "Riley Stories" told by friends of the poet which will bear repeating at this time:

"We hoosiers ought to be everlastingly grateful to 'Lije' Halford," began one, "for bringing Riley into prominence, by dismissing him from his job as writer for the Indianapolis Journal. Riley was getting a few dollars a week from the Journal for original poems when 'Lije' Halford, afterward private secretary to President Harrison, came to the paper as managing editor. Halford at once decided that expenses should be cut down, and picked upon Riley as the first victim. He told Riley that the poetic department would be continued if Riley wanted to furnish the poems without expense to the office. The blow was a hard one on Riley, and he was ready for a time to give up in despair. While things were looking decidedly blue for him a convention was held in Indian-
One of the men nominated was a big fellow who had never made a speech in his life. He was called before the convention, and, shifting from one foot to the other in perfect agony for a moment, he blurted out: 'Gentlemen, I thank you for this nomination. I can't make a speech, but I can tell you one thing: The ticket you've nominated here today is goin' to win "when the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock." I heard that speech," continued the narrator, "and it took the house by storm. It was evident that the little poem by Riley, which had been published but a few days before, had been read by the delegates to that convention and by the spectators, who joined in the applause which greeted the apt quotation from the poem. That circumstance brought the business manager of the Journal to Riley's rescue, and his first book, "The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems," was published and made a great hit. . . . If Halford hadn't fired him he might never have discovered himself."

Another member of the party told the following:

"Riley used to have a fondness for dogs, and always, in his younger days, had one at his heels. One day in Indianapolis he came across a magnificent coach dog, and induced it to follow him away from the place it had been left by its owner. Riley took the dog down to the Journal office and tied it to the leg of his table, where he was doing some work. Along in the afternoon the owner of the dog came in with an advertisement in which he offered a reward for the return of his prize coach dog. Riley's explanation did not go and only the intervention of other members of the staff saved the poet from a trouncing at the hands of the irate owner of the dog. The story got out and Riley was joked a good deal about it. He usually turned the matter to account by using the story to prove that it paid to advertise."

"Riley told me once how he happened to adopt his homely style in writing poetry," said another member of the party. "He had been credited with having discovered a new field, but told me that the idea came to him like a flash. He had been abroad and was on his way to
Indianapolis. He looked up at the sky and decided that it was just as blue as it was in Italy. The purling brooks purled just the same in Indiana as they did in Switzerland. The trees were just as green on the Wabash as they were in France, and the birds sang just as sweetly in America as they did any place in the world. It came to the poet that it wasn't necessary to get out of the sight of the plain people to find the poetry of life. The popularity of everything he has written along homely lines is proof sufficient that he was right about it.

Back in the seventies when Riley first began to entertain the home-folk with his quaint studies of hoosier life, it was in the country towns adjacent to Indianapolis, whither he had gone to make his home after leaving his native Greenfield. The audiences were small as a rule but not lacking in appreciation of the entertainer's serious and comic readings from his writings and his clever impersonation of his homespun characters. The people were beginning to read his dialect verses, the children were especially becoming interested in his poems and sketches of child life, and his fame, until now of a local character, began to spread over the state. It was at this time that he was given the sobriquet of "Hoosier Poet" by his admirers, the endearing title that clung to him to the end of his life.

The publication of "The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems," the charming dialect series contributed originally to the Indianapolis Journal over the nom de plume of "Benjamin F. Johnson" of Boone (country), and the first of his writing to attract attention, in a modest, paper-covered little volume, was quite an event in the rising young author's life. These homely studies in hoosier life, both grave and gay, went straight to the hearts of the people. Old and young were equally astonished and delighted to find themselves, their inmost thoughts and moods, and their simple, honest ways so faithfully interpreted and so charmingly impersonated by a native singer of their own hoosier soil.

The poem in this series which struck the most responsive chord and won instantaneous popular favor for the author was "When the Frost is on the Punkin and the Fodder's in the Shock." The hoosier farmer and his
family were elated beyond expression. It was their psalm of life. They were electrified by its vivacious spirit and hung enraptured upon its rhythmic, stirring appeal. It was in their own backwoods language, and to their simple taste it was the sweetest melody that ever charmed mortal ear.

The boys declaimed the rollicking new poem at school and thousands repeated its jocund, jingling lines everywhere. To this day its popularity has scarcely waned. It is still widely quoted and holds its timehonored place in the program of many a popular entertainment. But Riley himself was the only person who could do justice to this typical hoosier dialect poem on the stage. His impersonation of the old farmer was perfect. Riley himself completely vanished and reappeared in the rôle of the homespun tiller of the soil. As a mimic he was incomparable—the perfect master of the art. His dramatic power was marvelous—his humor irresistible, and his pathos melting to the last degree. Sol Smith Russell once declared that as a dramatic impersonator Riley stood alone and I think that all who ever saw and heard him in "Nothin' to Say, My Daughter" or "Out to Old Aunt Mary's" will agree with Russell.

It was Riley's impersonation of the old farmer and his reading of "The Frost is on the Punkin" that captured by storm the great audience gathered at the Academy of Music in New York as the guests of the American Authors and Writers on one of their annual celebrations some twenty-five years ago. The most distinguished authors and men of letter were in attendance. They had never seen Riley. Most of them had not even heard of him. His appearance was a surprise to that cultured gathering, that high-brow assemblage; his performance a revelation. The audience went wild and actually broke into boisterous cheers Riley was something new and vital and oh, how natural and refreshing! He was from the wild and woolly west, homely, unspoiled, a type of genius native to his common soil—and he won the honors of the day in the great metropolis where were gathered the shining lights of the literary world.

The fame of Riley now flashed over all the land. Mrs. Grover Cleveland, whose husband was then President,
was in the New York audience and like the rest was carried away by the fascinating hoosier poet. Soon after he was a guest at the White House and from that time to the day of his death he was in demand in every part of the country, and packed the largest opera-houses and entertainment halls to their utmost capacity.

The sweet and homely dialect lines in the golden mouth of the hoosier lad had wrought the magic. I can see and hear him still in the rôle of the hale, hearty, bluff old farmer. Never was there another like him. With rapt attention the great audience follows every facial whim, laughs at every gesture, and hangs breathless upon every tender, pathetic word that falls from his eloquent lips. How vivid it remains in my memory after all these years!

“When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock
And you hear the kycuck and gobble of the struttin’ turk’y cock,
And the clackin’ of the guineas and the cluckin’ of the hens,
And the rooster’s halleylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence,
O its then the time a feller’s a feelin’ at his best,
With the risin’ sun to greet him from a night of gracious rest,
As he leaves the house bareheaded and goes out to feed the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder’s in the shock.”

All these early poems, fresh from the heart of the buoyant young author, have their themes in the common life that inspired them—the life of honest toil, of homespun simplicity, neighborly kindness, and sweet content. The country fiddler comes in for his full share of recognition and we hear him pour out his soul in rhapsody to his darling old fiddle:

“That’s how this here old fiddle’s won my heart’s endurin’ love!
From the strings across her middle to the screechin’ keys above—
From her 'apern, over bridge, to the ribbon round her throat,
She's a woo'n', cooin' pigeon singin' 'Love me' every note;
   And so I pat her neck and plink
   Her strings with loving hands,
And list'rin' clos't, I sometimes think
   She sort o' understands!"

Riley could not only write in tender appreciation of the "fiddle" but he could touch its strings and caress it into softest strains; he could pick a banjo and make it sing or sob, according to his moods. He had special talent for sketching and drawing and would without doubt have become a great cartoonist. The art of lettering was natural to him and quite early he excelled at painting novel and attractive signs. His hands were skilled at decorating and in many ways he showed himself possessed of creative talent and of a rare artistic temperament.

No one I have ever known worked more painstakingly or conscientiously at his task than Riley. His letters are all written as if they had been intended for the printer. Never a careless line or a slipshod expression. Every paragraph precisely prepared, every word carefully chosen, and every line neatly penned. He was indeed a model letter-writer. Every letter in his hand is a perfect specimen of the art. In writing his poems and sketches he was, if possible, even more particular. He spent hours over a single couplet. As Hilliard said of Edward Everett: "He is as careful to select the right word as a workman in mosaic is to pick out the exact shade of color which he requires."

Much of what Riley wrote came to him spontaneously, but in the preparation of his literary work he was a most conscientious craftsman. He never relaxed in industry or patience until every word was just right and that meant perfection so far as he could make it so.

I remember once asking Riley if his work came easy and his witty answer: "Easy! I should say not. It's like grinding sausage-meat with bones in it." On another occasion I asked him if he had worked very hard at a certain task he had performed and if he felt tired when
he had finished it. The answer made me laugh and I have laughed about it many times since: “I felt when I got through with that job as if I had given birth to a roughshod colt.”

Riley sympathized deeply, tenderly with the poor and lowly. He did not attempt, as did Shelley and Burns, to incite them to revolt against their exploiters and despoilers, for it did not occur to him that poverty, in the present age of mavelous machinery and rapid production, was an unnecessary evil, the tolerance of which was scarcely less than a social crime. Nevertheless, he had the profoundest respect for and sympathy with honest toil and in many of his poems he paid sincere tribute to the working class. He loved the poor but he did not envy the rich. He knew the effect of great wealth upon its possessor, and here is the greatest line he ever wrote:

“There’s nothing ’at’s patheticker than jest a bein’ rich.”

Riley had known poverty; he had had his part in the fierce and oftentimes tragic struggle for existence, and he had not forgotten it. His heart was with the poor. Later he became well-to-do, rich, indeed, from the large and rapidly increasing royalty on his books, but there was nothing in wealth and power that appealed to his simple, unostentatious nature.

“I pray not that
Men tremble at
My power of place
And lordly sway,—
I only pray for simple grace
To look my neighbor in the face
   Full honestly from day to day—
Yield me his horny palm to hold,
   And I’ll not pray
   For gold;—
The tanned face, garlanded with mirth,
It hath the kingliest smile on earth—
The swart brow, diamonded with sweat,
Hath never need of coronet.”
The hoosier poet was born among the common people, the "lowly," as they are sometimes called, and this was his supreme fortune. Had he been the pampered, offspring of the "upper class" the world would never heard of him. It was because he was of the common folk, of their own simple habit and sympathetic nature, that he knew them so well and loved them with such intense fidelity and devotion. He knew them as he knew his own heart, out of the fullness of which he sang their praises and glorified their virtues in his tender, loving, inimitable poems and sketches. To them he looked for sympathy and encouragement and from them he drew his virility and inspiration. And their honest love and hearty pride in his brilliant achievement and his growing fame made him rich, indeed, rich in the moral wealth and spiritual treasure that come as the reward of self-forgetting consecration and social service, and could not be purchased with all the guilty, blood-stained gold that ever cursed the world.

The money that came to Riley in later years added nothing to his inspiration, nothing to his fame, and nothing to his happiness. The rich were eager to patronize him and vied with each other to do him honor after he had triumphed in his struggle and was loved and honored by the world. He had occasion to see and study the "upper class" at short range and it was then that he concluded that—

"There's nothing 'at's patheticker than jest a bein rich."

Rich in purse and poor in spirit; rich in purple and fine linen and poor in intellect; rich in all that money will buy and poverty-stricken at heart and soul, this is poverty, indeed!

There is no poverty that so blights and blasts, so withers and destroys as the poverty of the spirit and soul; and it was this spiritual pauperism in luxurious raiment and ablaze with diamonds and precious stones that Riley had in mind when he said: "There's nothing 'at's patheticker than jest a bein' rich."

After the fame of the hoosier poet had spread beyond the boundaries of his native state he responded to in-
vitations to entertain audiences in all parts of the coun-
try. He was associated during this period with Eugene
Field, Bill Nye, Charles Eugene Banks and other literary
lights and wits of that day and they served the public
with a unique and interesting bill of entertainment. Riley
and Nye remained long in double harness and a rare
attachment of mutual affection grew up between them
that ended only with death.

It was during this time that I saw much of Riley, and,
like all others who have known him intimately, learned
to love him. When we met at Indianapolis, his home,
we shared the last minute together and he invariably saw
me off at the station. When he came to Terre Haute,
my home, as he frequently did, he was our guest. It was
my privilege to arrange the first public entertainments
he gave in Terre Haute. His first audiences were small,
but later there was never room enough to accommodate the
eager multitude that thronged to hear him. He was a
consummate artist, and he would have made a wonderful
actor. His power of mimicry was simply marvelous. By
the magic of his art he could with equal facility contort
his face into that of a babe or an octogenarian. His body
yielded to the same strange sorcery and accommodated
itself perfectly to all his wide range of poses and perso-
nalities. He had a soft, musical and deliciously modulated
voice which, with his wonderfully mobile and expressive
features, wrought a spell almost of witchery upon his
listeners. His pathos was incomparably tender and im-
pressive. I have seen large audiences sit breathless, tears
glistening in their eyes, under its potent spell. Old and
young, cultured and unlettered shared equally in their
appreciation of his opulent gifts. They all understood
Riley, and were equally charmed by his grace and power,
and all loved the poet and honored the man.

Riley dressed with the same scrupulous care that he
wrote. His clothes, like his words, had to fit to per-
fection. He was always clean-shaven and neat as a fash-
ion-plate. Yet he was modest in his attire and dressed
with becoming simplicity of taste. He retired late at night
and when he went to his room carried an armful of books
with him and read until almost daylight. He instinctively
shrank from personal praise. Once I complimented him
upon a signal honor which had been bestowed upon him: he did not thank me but quoted the memorable line from Lowell to Lincoln: "He dreaded praise, not blame."

The monumental work of Riley was his creation of the child-world, and the love the little children lavished upon him was the crowning glory of his life. Riley himself remained a child at heart among his troops of merry children and with them he romped and played, he sang and danced, he loved and dreamed the festive hours away in the enchanting bowers of the fairy-world of his own creation. And who shall say that the child-world is not after all the real world, the sweet and sane world where love and peace and innocence and kindness reign and war and strife and hatred are unknown!

The beautiful characteristic personal letters from Riley keep him near to us now that he has passed from earthly scenes. He always wrote in optimistic mood and in a vein of kindly, wholesome humor. The following letter was received from him after a delightful visit at his home, during which I had jocularly called him "The bench-legged poet," and following which I had sent him some roses of which he was passionately fond:

My dear Debs:—

Do you think I've entirely forgotten all I owe you? No: that query is gratuitous, and knowledge of your loyalty throughout the past forbids all affection of questioning it now. But I've been anything but a well man for a long, long time, and in consequence I've simply been deprived of the pleasure of expressing to you, until now, my ripest, richest gratitude for your recent floral remembrance. Tom Moore sings in effect,—

"You may break—you may shatter the little bench-legged poet if you will,
But the scent of Debs' basket of roses will cling round him still!"

May this find you as glad at heart as your gift made me, and may your gentle interest in all human kind never wax nor wane though all the stars of heaven keep up their
speciality. My love to you—your brother, and all friends—particularly Ben Cox.

Affectionately as always yours,

J. W. Riley.

And now, his chosen work completed, his beautiful life ended, his fame secure, and his name immortal, he has fallen asleep, pillowed upon the bounteous breast of the mother of us all. He sleeps in the sanctuary of the elect, in the blessings of the children he loved, and they will weave garlands of "Old Fashioned Roses," fresh with the breath of the morning, in memory of their poet and friend through all coming years.
Wendell Phillips: Orator and Abolitionist

“Thkz people is a Deast of muddy Uxain
That knows not its own strength, and therefore stands
Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands
Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein;
One kick would be enough to break the chain,
But the beast fears, and what the child demands
It does; nor its own terror understands,
Confused and stupefied by bugbears vain.
Most wonderful! With its own hands it ties
And gags itself—gives itself death and war
For pence doled out by Kings from its own store.
Its own are all things between earth and heaven;
But this it knows not; and if one arise
To tell the truth, it kills him unforgiven.”

—Campanella.

To pay homage to the martyrs of history, the men and women who died that we who came after them might live, has always been to me a duty of love.

I never go to Alton, Illinois, without visiting the tomb of Elijah P. Lovejoy, the pioneer abolitionist who was murdered there by a pro-slavery mob on November 7, 1837. The tragic end of Lovejoy’s stormy career was the signal for the beginning of the still more tempestuous career of Wendell Phillips. When the torch fell from the nerveless grasp of the slain anti-slavery editor in Illinois it was eagerly seized and defiantly held aloft by a rising young lawyer in Massachusetts, who was destined to become the commanding figure and achieve world-wide fame in the bitter and bloody struggle, then in its incipient stages, for the overthrow of chattel slavery in the United States.

It was in 1831, when young Phillips was in his twentieth year, that William Lloyd Garrison began the publica-
tion of his anti-slavery firebrand, *The Liberator*. In January of the following year, 1832, the Anti-Slavery Society of New England was organized in Boston with twelve apostles, Garrison heading the list. In October, 1835, the mob of “gentlemen of property and standing” attacked Garrison in Boston and attempted to lynch him for protesting against the lawless suppression of a meeting of the “Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society.” Wendell Phillips, then a youth of twenty-four, was an eye-witness to this cowardly and disgraceful scene, the significance of which flashed upon his keen brain and struck him with horror and indignation. Says one of his biographers: “A young man, tall, stately, impassive, of deep convictions and of unquenchable resolves, witnesses the events of a day. His soul knows the manhood of force as well as the eloquence of speech.” Garrison is being dragged through the streets of Boston; the young man follows, while respect for law, peace tenets, and personal rights are rioting in his brain. Pregnant liberty is heaving in the qualms. The mob, incited by the cries of violence, lay hands on Garrison, put a rope about his waist and drag him to imprisonment! What a memorable day for the Puritan city! The abolitionist, Wendell Phillips, is born.”

Yes, it was on this eventful day that Wendell Phillips was born. He had but recently been admitted to the bar completing his course in college with the most brilliant honors, but this shocking incident, so pregnant with sinister forebodings, terminated his career as a lawyer almost before it was begun. He had been struck speechless with amazement when he saw that the mob consisted of his own Beacon Hill friends, eminently conservative gentlemen of the “upper class”—that it was in truth a “broadcloth mob,” as he afterward characterized it, and with his keen intuition he understood at a glance what that mob and the incident which had given rise to it portended to the future of his country. He closed up his law books and turned the key in his office door. The brilliant future his friends had predicted for him at the bar now lay inexorably behind him. In the mad cry of that brutal mob he had heard the clarion call of his own high destiny. There was a sharp and sudden turn in his
career. The path of duty now lay clear before him. It was a thorny road in travel, and perilous, but this mind was made up and he would follow that road straight to the end wheresoever it might lead.

Friends and admirers of the brilliant, cultured and aristocratic young man were shocked beyond belief when he proclaimed himself the foe of slavery. He must be taking leave of his senses to turn his back upon the wealth and culture which invited him with open arms, to spurn the honors and emoluments of the elect, and to ally himself with the despised abolition movement! For at that time Boston was even more abjectly servile to the slave power than were the cities of the South where slavery had its actual existence. Bourgeois Boston of 1835 did not disgrace herself by having slaves of her own. That would have done violence to her "culture" and, besides, the application of machinery to industry and the development of the factory system had made free (?) labor preferable to slave labor, and so she sold her slaves to her Southern neighbors and was content to enrich herself henceforth by trading with the slave owners, building her palatial splendors upon the bowed bodies and scarred backs of a race in chains, and amassing her proud fortunes out of their unpaid labor.

And this shameless and inhuman traffic in which the ruling class of Boston and New England engaged had the unqualified and almost unanimous support of the press and the pulpit, the colleges and universities, as well as the courts, executive chambers, and legislative halls. The brutal mobbing of Garrison was approved and applauded by almost the entire press and pulpit of Boston. Editors, preachers, professors, politicians, office-holders, all were subservient, as they had always been and are to-day, to the "business interests," the master class power based upon the exploitation of labor, which ruled the community and the state.

The Southern states were frankly built upon the foundation of chattel slavery and defiantly avowed their determination to maintain their "peculiar institution" at any cost. The following article in the Telescope of Columbia, South Carolina a representative Southern journal, voiced the sentiment and proclaimed the attitude of that section:
“Let us declare, through the public journals of our country, that the question of slavery is not, and shall not be, open to discussion; that the very moment any private individual attempts to lecture us upon its evils and immorality, in the same moment his tongue shall be cut out and cast upon the dunghill.”

The Southern states were frankly built upon the foundation of a response in the sons of the men who fell at Bunker Hill, Boston, “The Cradle of Liberty!” What a myth and what a mockery! The slave mart had swept the cradle into the bay and cold-blooded “business interests” now ruled supreme. All else, especially liberty to the slave, was under the ban.

The manufacturing, business and trading interests of Massachusetts were hand in glove with the slave-owning power of South Carolina.

And this was the condition that confronted Wendell Phillips in his native Boston when he renounced his allegiance to his kith and kin and threw down the gauntlet to the heartless power that held a race in chains and discredited the government under which he lived. That hour his fate was sealed. The darling of Beacon Street had now become the fiend incarnate. Wendell Phillips, by his own deliberate choice, turned his back upon society and all it had to offer him, bade farewell to family, friends and neighbors, and plunged into the fiery furnace to be tempered for the perilous part he was to take in the impending catastrophe.

The example was inspiring; the spectacle sublime. The soul of the orator was born. The tongue of Wendell Phillips became the scourge of flame and hot eloquence burned for utterance from his inspired lips. The scarred and bleeding back of the slave had set fire to every drop in his veins and charged him to the lips with avenging wrath.

At this supreme juncture the inevitable happened and the lightning fell. Lovejoy was foully murdered and Wendell Phillips stirred the nation with the first outburst of his fiery eloquence. Beside the fallen form of the first martyr stood erect and defiant the first orator of the abolition movement. Lovejoy’s murder and martyrdom were Phillips’ inspiration and consecration.
The Lovejoy speech of Wendell Phillips in Faneuil Hall, December 8, 1837, is the most remarkable utterance of its kind in history. The great crowd which packed the hall was anything but sympathetic when the youth of twenty-six arose to answer the commonwealth's apologist for Lovejoy's murder. But from the moment the first impassioned sentence fell from his lips he was the master of the situation. The pro-slavery claques showed their teeth and snarled aloud, but soon subsided under master of the situation. The pro-slavery claques showed silenced all clamor and converted a threatening mob into a cheering multitude.

Wendell Phillips stood forth the matchless champion, the unrivalled orator of the anti-slavery movement, and during almost thirty years of storm and stress, of trial and tempest, of savage hatred, bitter persecution and oft-repeated threats of mobbing and assassination, he stood his ground fearlessly, defiantly, with never a shadow of compromise, until at last the bloody conflict ended in the overthrow of the slave power and the emancipation of the chattel slaves. The lofty motive, the supreme courage, the masterly oratory, the single-hearted devotion, the utter unselfishness, the noble idealism, the sublime faith of the man were challenged and tested by fire a thousand times. But he never trimmed or evaded, never dodged or excused, never apologized, explained or compromised. He was the thunderbolt of retributive justice and knew only how to strike and shatter, to denounce and destroy the iniquitous slave system. The higher its defenders the bolder his attack and the fiercer his invective. Webster and Choate, when all they were ever famed for is forgotten, will be remembered for their merciless castigation by Wendell Phillips.

“He stood upon the world’s broad threshold: wide
The din of battle and slaughter rose;
He saw God! stand upon the weaker side,
That sank in seeming loss before it foes;
Many there were who made great haste and sold
Unto the coming enemy their swords.
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power, and gold,
And, underneath their soft and flowery words,
Hear the cold serpent hiss; therefore he went,
And humbly joined him to the weaker part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the widespread veins of endless good.

To the sordid merchants of Boston who were coining
the blood of slaves into luxurious self-indulgence and
forcing fugitives back into the jaws of hell from which
they escaped, he thundered: "One hundred per cent
profit is better than the most eloquent lips that ever
spoke. You may think it strange for an American to
speak thus of a system that is to make bankrupt one-
half of this country, and paralyze the other; but though
I love my country, I love my countrymen more, and these
countrymen are the colored men of America. For their
sakes I say, welcome to the bolt that smites our com-
merce to the dust, if with it, by the blessing of God, it
will strike off the fetters of the slave."

To the cowering black slaves and the meek and sub-
missive majority of all colors he appealed with flaming
passion and thrilling eloquence: "The greatest praise
government can win is, that its citizens know their rights
and dare maintain them. The best use of good laws is
to teach men to trample bad laws under their feet."

He was in very truth "the unconscious hero of the
cause he pleaded."

I was too young to realize the monumental work, the
immortal achievement of Wendell Phillips until long
after it was completed. Slavery had a firm grip on
Indiana where I lived, and we did not learn of Phillips
and Garrison in our school books. But in the years that
followed we began to hear about these apostles of free-
dom. Their cause had finally triumphed. They were
no longer infamous but honorable, no longer monsters
but heroes. Garrison's work was finished, Phillips' just
begun. Phillips saw with prophetic eye that the aboli-
tion of chattel slavery was but the prelude to the in-
finitely greater struggle for the emancipation of
the working classes of all races and colors on the face
of the earth. He clearly foresaw the mission and com-
prehended the import of the labor movement, and once more his great heart, his magnificent abilities and his moving eloquence were enlisted in the cause of oppressed and suffering humanity. He glorified the cause of labor and declared the labor movement the greatest of the age. He wrote labor's platform of protest against exploitation under the wage system and its declaration of revolt against that cruel and oppressive system. At a Labor Convention held at Worcester, Massachusetts, in September, 1871, the first platform containing the essential principles and demands of socialism in the United States was unanimously adopted. This platform was written and presented by Wendell Phillips and reads, in part, as follows:

"We affirm, as a fundamental principle, that labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates. "Affirming this, we avow ourselves willing to accept the final results of the operation of a principle so radical,—such as the overthrow of the whole profit-making system, the extinction of all monopolies, the abolition of privileged classes, universal education and fraternity, perfect freedom of exchange, and, best and grandest of all, the final obliteration of that foul stigma upon our so-called Christian civilization,—the poverty of the masses....

"We declare war with the wages system, which demoralizes the hirer and the hired, cheats both and enslaves the workingmen; war with the present system of finance, which robs labor, and gorges capital, makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, and turns a republic into an aristocracy of capital."

The platform pledged the movement to the coöperative control of industry, a shorter work-day, equal rights for women, and in advocating its adoption Mr. Phillips said: "I regard the movement with which this convention is connected as the grandest and most comprehensive movement of the age. . . . I can hardly name the idea in which humanity is interested, which I do not consider locked up in the success of this movement of the people to take possession of their own." That was almost half
a century ago. The keen eye of Wendell Phillips saw even then the proletarian forces of the future gathering, and there spread out before his clarified vision the modern labor movement embracing its millions of revolutionary devotees of all races and nationalities and destined to emancipate all the working classes of the world.

Having myself joined the labor movement in 1875, I came to hear and know more and more of Wendell Phillips. He was then in the lecture field and I proposed to a little club of which I was a member that we secure him if possible for a date at Terre Haute. The arrangement was soon made and on November 25, 1878, he came to our city to fill his engagement. It was the first and only time I ever met him. He was then sixty-seven, erect as a pine, and the handsomest figure of a courtly elderly gentleman I had ever seen. His locks were white as snow but his complexion was florid, his step agile, the grip of his hand firm and hearty, and he appeared, notwithstanding his years, a tower of strength. Yet, alas, less than seven years later he fell into his last sleep.

The fires of his earlier life had softened to a mellow glow at sixty-seven, and the asperity of the fighter seemed entirely gone. The majestic form, the elegant figure, the graceful carriage, the gentle manner, the benignant smile, all betokened the sweet and soulful nature of the genuine gentleman. He was the very essence of bodily and spiritual refinement. Every line in his handsome countenance denoted nobility of birth and breeding. His eyes were kind and gentle as those of a mother, and I remember wondering how eyes filled with such tenderness could once have flashed with the fires of volcanic wrath which burst from his indignant soul. His voice was soft and sweet and musical as the tinkling of a silver bell, and his manner gracious and urbane, without the slightest affectation. I was too young to study critically the features of our illustrious guest, but I remember distinctly feeling that I stood in the presence of true greatness. Behind the gentleman I could visualize the man, the warrior, the liberator, the humanitarian, the lover of his kind. I did not look upon him with awe, but with reverence and love. He had fought for me and my class with all his strength of body and soul his whole
life long. He had been hated, denounced, and socially exiled that I and mine might live and enjoy, aspire and fulfil, and here he stood, and with my own eyes I could now behold the man, meditate upon his greatness, and find inspiration in his noble example. Here before me stood the hero who had challenged the whole wicked, malevolent power of human slavery and had preserved unsullied as the honor of his mother the high purpose of his manhood and the priceless integrity of his soul. He never once lowered his standard, never hesitated or faltered, never cowered or compromised, but stood erect and unafraid in every hour of trial and demanded the unconditional surrender of the robber systems of chattel and wage slavery.

The beautiful lecture he gave at the opera house at Terre Haute cannot be described in words. The picture of the great abolition orator on the stage that night is vividly preserved in my memory. His commanding figure, clad in conventional black, was one of noble majesty, his florid features eloquent with animation, his every gesture grace itself; he spoke in soft, mellow, musical tones and held his audience breathless to the last word of his masterly discourse, which was as scholarly as it was eloquent, profound and impressive.

After the lecture he was our guest at a quiet little luncheon. He seemed to enjoy the occasion. He chatted with us freely in a most familiar manner. He thanked us graciously for our hospitality and then accompanied him to his room at the hotel. As the chairman of the lecture committee it fell to me to pay the lecturer his fee. The audience, unfortunately, had not been large and the financial loss was considerable. Mr. Phillips felt this keenly, and it plainly distressed him not a little. "Please take back part of the fee to cover your loss," he said to me in the kindest possible way, when I placed the money in his hands.

"No, Mr. Phillips," said I, "you have earned it, it is yours, and you must keep it. If we had come out ahead you would have accepted no more than your fee and we cannot consent to your accepting less than the stipulated amount." He generously insisted upon handing
back part of the money, but it was as persistently declined, and he consented at last, reluctantly, to keep it.

Soon afterward he left the city. The next day I received a note from him which read as follows:

Tuesday.

_Dear Sir:_

Should you chance to receive any more letters for me, please forward them care of Jno. I. D. Bristol, Milwaukee, Wis: I shall not soon forget yesterday's pleasant evening.

_Yrs. truly,_

_E. V. Debs._

Two years later the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, with which I was then officially connected, held its annual convention at Terre Haute, and I extended an invitation to Mr. and Mrs. Phillips to be our guests. The following acknowledgment came by due course of mail:

8 Sept., '82.

_My dear Sir:_

Many thanks for your invitation to Mrs. Phillips and myself to the Annual Convention of the Locomotive Firemen. Most earnestly do I wish we were in such health as would allow us to come.

But I feel glad to be remembered in the far off city whose hospitality I have enjoyed so often.

_Cordially yrs.,_ 

_Wendell Phillips._

Mr. _Eugene V. Debs._

The brave, beautiful wife of Wendell Phillips, a lifelong invalid, was his unfailing solace and his chief inspiration. They were lovers indeed, and their mutual tenderness and devotion was touching in the extreme. Mrs. Phillips, who had been Ann Terry Greene, was as heroic of soul as she was frail of body. She was abolitionist to the core and gloried with her husband in the high privilege of serving the cause.

_Woman Suffrage_ had in Wendell Phillips one of its
earliest and most eloquent and effective champions, and it is noteworthy that the last public speech he delivered was in eulogy of Harriet Martineau and of the cause she had so fearlessly and faithfully served. He advocated prison reform and he opposed capital punishment. He stood for equal suffrage, for equality of opportunity, and for universal freedom. He knew no distinction of race, color or sex, and recognized no boundary lines between human beings. He had cosmic vision and the highest sense of social obligation. His heart was in this work and his soul was in his speech. The great work he did will endure and his matchless orations will live for all time.

The name of Wendell Phillips will forever honor the cause of freedom and forever glorify the American Republic.
Recollections of Ingersoll

It was in the national political campaign of 1880 that Henry Ward Beecher introduced Robert Green Ingersoll to a great audience in the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, as "the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue of all men on this globe." Coming from Beecher, himself a master of language and the most eloquent pulpit orator of his day, this remarkable tribute, greeted with tumultuous cheers by the vast audience, but confirmed the popular verdict rendered long before by the American people.

Robert G. Ingersoll was without doubt the most brilliant speaker of the English tongue then living, and in another century when the ignorant prejudice that still clings to his name shall have been cleared away the world will know his true greatness and honor him as one of the foremost men of his age.

The fame of Ingersoll as an orator of surpassing eloquence and power was established as a very young man. At twenty-seven, in the campaign of 1860, he was the candidate of his party for congress in the Fourth District of Illinois, and it was in the series of debates he had with Judge William Kellogg, his republican opponent, that he first showed his brilliant powers to the people of his state. Curiously enough, as it now appears, Judge Kellogg, the republican candidate, upheld the Fugitive Slave Law and defended the laws in favor of slavery, while Ingersoll as a Douglas democrat denounced the Fugitive Slave Law in the fiercest terms and condemned slavery as the most infamous crime of the age. Colonel Clark E. Carr, the author of Illini, who heard these debates wrote as follows:

"It may be doubted whether there was ever pronounced by any human being so terrific a philippic against human slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law. I myself had heard Beecher and Garrison and Wendell Phillips and Lovejoy and Giddings, but I had never heard it equaled."
It was after hearing the opening debate at Galesburg that Colonel Carr said of Ingersoll: “From that hour I have always believed that Robert G. Ingersoll was the greatest orator who ever stood before a public audience.”

But it was not until he made his celebrated speech nominating Blaine for the presidency in the Republican national convention at Cincinnati in June, 1876, that the country at large came to know him. That eloquent and thrilling speech fairly electrified the great convention and instantaneously the name of Ingersoll was flashed over the land and next morning was on the lips of millions. The national fame of the master orator was won by a single speech.

Three months later the brilliant speech to the old soldiers at Indianapolis containing his wonderful “Vision of War” was delivered and the report of it and its magical effect upon the multitude who heard it spread far and wide in all directions.

It was at this time that I first heard of Ingersoll and of his marvelous eloquence, but it was not until he made his lecture tour of the Pacific coast, a year or so later, and was assailed with such vituperative frenzy by the pulpit in every city he visited for his telling blows against orthodoxy, that I felt myself stirred by his appeal and eager to see the man who dared thus boldly to speak his honest thought and defy all the hosts of ignorance and superstition. For be it known that although less than forty years ago, an incredibly widespread belief still existed in a literal hell of fire and brimstone.

The truth and terror of this orthodox hell had been burnt into my child-mind at Sunday school, and to deny or even to doubt it was to fly in the face of God himself and deny the beneficence of his works.

The ranker a superstition, the more sacred it is held by its unreasoning devotees. Ingersoll was guilty of attacking the sacred dogma of hellfire and the eternal roasting of the race for the sin of having been created, and only a monster could be guilty of such an abominable crime. The church felt itself outraged and the priesthood and ministry turned out en masse to crush the wicked infidel and impious iconoclast. The fury of these clerical assaults upon Ingersoll now seem almost
unbelievable. He was denounced in a perfect frenzy of malicious abuse as the vilest of sinners and the basest of mortals. Ingersoll, great soul that he was, stood serene and unruffled through it all, observing calmly that "these are the holy gentlemen who love their enemies and treat their neighbors as themselves."

It was while he was being thus shamefully maligned, misrepresented and persecuted for denying that God was a monster and that a roaring hell awaited most of his children, that his calm courage, his serene self-reliance, and his eloquent and fearless espousal of the truth as he saw it, enlisted my sympathy. He stood his ground alone and fought his fight without compromise to the end. I can never forget how his heroic spirit stirred me; how I felt myself thrilled and inspired by his flaming appeal and impassioned eloquence. He did more than any other man, living or dead, to put out the fires and fears of hell and rid the world of superstition. Scarcely anyone outside of an asylum any longer believes in the barbarous dogma of an everlasting torture-chamber. The Reverend Billy Sunday is one of the few monuments of the stoneage of theology. He plagiarizes Ingersoll to fan the dying embers into flame again and to keep salvation on a sound and paying commercial basis.

Robert Ingersoll could without doubt have been president of the United States. But not for one moment was he tempted by the lure of political preferment. The highest office the people had to bestow appeared contemptible to him because he knew it could be obtained only at the politician's price of manhood and self-respect. Above all place and power, all earthly honors, Robert Ingersoll held his principles, his convictions, the integrity of his own soul. He hated sham and superstition, he abhorred slavery in every form, he loved truth and justice with a sacred passion, and with his soul inviolate he worshiped at the holy shrine of freedom. A thousand times he declared he wanted no right, no opportunity denied any other human being on earth, and he meant it. He boldly challenged the powers that oppressed the weak; he held in lofty scorn the titled snobbery of state and church that imposed meekness and submission upon their
despoiled victims, and he heartily despised the social conventions which honored idleness and parasitism and degraded useful service and honest toil.

During these years of crusade and conflict Ingersoll was the central and commanding figure in public life and the most talked about man in America. The line between his friends and foes was sharply drawn. He was either loved or hated, honored or despised. His enemies, goaded to frenzy by his merciless attacks upon their ancient Jehovah, their orthodox hell, and their pious traditions, denounced him with implacable hatred, while his friends, the people who actually knew him and who understood his pure, unselfish motives, his noble, high-souled purpose, fairly worshiped him as a savior of humanity.

He pleaded for the negro as no one ever had before, he espoused the cause of the Chinaman when it was almost treason to breathe a sympathetic word in his behalf, he protested passionately against the persecution of the Jew, he stood staunchly for the rights of woman, he thundered with a Titan’s voice in condemnation of the crimes committed against childhood, he made the most eloquent, touching, inspiring appeal ever made in behalf of the criminal class, so-called, and to the hour of his death he never once turned a deaf ear to the voice of distress or refused aid and comfort to a suffering fellow-being. The weak and unfortunate, the sorrowing and despairing, regardless of color or creed, whoever or whatever they might be, had in “Bob” Ingersoll as tender a sympathizer and as true a friend as ever ministered to the needs of fellow-men.

Garfield called him “Royal Bob” because everything he did was in royal fashion, but he was never more royal than when he poured out his great heart in loving sympathy to the poor and needy and emptied his purse to the last dollar to relieve their poverty and distress. I have borne frequent witness to Ingersoll’s great-hearted love for the poor. I have more than once seen him press a five dollar bill into the hands of a chamber-maid, a bell-boy, or a train porter, and then raise his finger to his lips to admonish the recipient that no thanks were due and that no mention was to be made of it. Inger-
soll spent what would have amounted to an immense fortune in just that quiet, unostentatious manner.

When Ingersoll had his office in New York it was always besieged with the unfortunates who reckoned on his sympathy and called on him for the aid denied them by their Christian friends and neighbors. And he never refused as long as he had the wherewithal to give. But the demands not infrequently exceeded his means. Once he said me with tears in his eyes: "I can hardly go to my office any more; I can't help them all and I haven't the heart to turn them away."

Among his callers one day there was a young woman whose father had been rich but had suddenly failed. She had belonged to a fashionable church but when bankruptcy came she found herself alone. Her former friends no longer knew her. The minister had told her they would see what could be done to help her—and that was the end of it. Her situation finally became desperate. She must find some way of getting a living. She had heard of Ingersoll. He was a wicked infidel, of course, but he helped the poor, and to him she went as a last resort.

"What can I do for you, my young friend?" The kind, gentle blue eyes of the great agnostic looked with ineffable tenderness into the agitated features of the young woman in his ante-room. At once her fear departed, her trembling ceased, and she briefly told her pathetic story. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the "wicked infidel." He did not tell her he would "see what could be done for her," but the first thing he did was to thrust his hand deep into his pocket, draw forth a twenty-dollar gold piece, and press it into the astonished woman's hand; he then bade her be of good cheer and return to his office at the same hour the following day. She was in a transport of delight. A new hope brightened her outlook and warmed her heart to life again. She had found a real friend, and when she returned the next day it was to be told that arrangements had been made for her for a course in stenography and typewriting, for her care while she was taking her lessons, and for a position in which she could earn her own living as soon as the course was completed. That
is how Ingersoll the "godless infidel" practiced his religion while his cruel and malicious detractors mouthed their pious phrases and made loud profession of their creeds.

Late in the seventies, when Colonel Ingersoll was lecturing under the management of James Redpath and packing the greatest auditoriums in the country to overflowing, he came to Terre Haute and I saw him for the first time. I met him at the railway station on arrival and escorted him to his hotel. He at once filled my eye and captivated me completely. There was something intensely fascinating in his personality, an irresistible charm in his presence, a liquid melody in his voice—and withal he bore the stamp of genius and the towering majesty of a man! I felt that here was the greatest man in all the world.

We had in Terre Haute at that time an organization known as the Occidental Literary Club. It was under the auspices of this club, consisting of young men of literary ambition, that Ingersoll delivered his first lecture in Terre Haute—April 30th, 1878.

Ingersoll's manager, Mr. Redpath, had written me from Washington under date of April 14th: "You need not be afraid of speaking so extravagantly of the Colonel's eloquence that people will be disappointed. He is the most eloquent man now living. He astonished New England and in Boston where they hear the best oratory all the time he made the profoundest sensation of the last fifteen years and drew the biggest audiences. . . . You will find that I have not over-stated his marvelous power over audiences. Boldly announce him as the greatest orator of the world. He is."

The opera house was packed to the doors. All the surrounding towns had sent in delegations and standing room was at a premium. Many had to be turned away. The subject was "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child." It was my privilege to introduce the speaker to the audience.

Never until that night had I heard real oratory; never before had I listened enthralled to such a flow of genuine eloquence. The speaker was in his prime, not yet forty-five, tall, shapely, graceful and commanding, the
perfect picture of the beau ideal of his art. Never can I forget his features, his expressive blue eyes, his mellifluous voice, his easy, graceful gestures, and his commanding oratorical powers. He rippled along softly as a meadow brook or he echoed with the thunder of some mighty cataract. He pleaded for every right and protested against every wrong; he touched every emotion and expressed every mood of his enchanted listeners. His words fell as pearls in sunshine from his inspired lips and his impassioned periods glowed with the fervid enthusiasm of their thrice-eloquent author.

Redpath was right. Ingersoll was the greatest orator in all the world. No pen or tongue could ever describe his brilliant eloquence or his matchless powers.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote of Ingersoll's oratory: "I heard Mr. Ingersoll many years ago in Chicago. The hall seated 5,000 people; every inch of standing room was occupied; aisles and platform crowded to overflowing. He held that vast audience for three hours so completely entranced that when he left the platform no one moved, until suddenly, with loud cheers and applause, they recalled him. He returned smiling and said: 'I'm glad you called me back, as I have something more to say. Can you stand another half hour?' 'Yes; an hour, two hours, all night,' was shouted from various parts of the house; and he talked on with unabated vigor, to the delight of his audience. This was the greatest triumph of oratory I had ever witnessed." . . . "I have heard the greatest orators of this century in England and America; O'Connell in his palmiest days, on the Home Rule question; Gladstone and John Bright in the House of Commons; Spurgeon, James and Stopford Brooks, in their respective pulpits; our own Wendell Phillips, Henry Ward Beecher, and Webster and Clay, on great occasions; the stirring eloquence of anti-slavery orators, both in congress and on the platform, but none of them ever equaled Robert Ingersoll in his highest flights."

But it was not only as orator that Ingersoll was without a peer, he was great, supremely great in all his conceptions of human relationships and in his outlook upon the world. He was as modest as he was great, as simple and as unassuming as he was lofty-minded and
noble-souled. He had a heart great enough for a god and he overflowed with love and kindness for his fellow-men. He was the least selfish and the most generous and magnanimous soul I have ever known. Despite his bitter hatred of mind-dwarfing and soul-enslaving superstitions, or perhaps because of it, he had a profoundly reverent nature and was saturated in every fiber with the essence of true religion, the religion of love and service and consecration to humanity.

When he was trying the famous Davis will case in Butte, Montana, he learned of a couple of orphan sisters who had been left destitute. He gave his lecture on Shakespeare for their benefit. Some two thousand dollars were realized. The entire proceeds were given over to the orphans. He did this times without number during his career on the platform. I happened to be in his room at his hotel in Indianapolis when he received a telegram requesting him to deliver a lecture in Philadelphia for the benefit of Walt Whitman, and I can still see his fine features light up as he said, "Certainly I will. It will give me real pleasure to be of service to dear Old Walt."

The good Christian board of managers of the Academy of Music refused Ingersoll the use of their house because he was an "infidel," but another place was secured and the lecture given for the benefit of the good gray poet who soon afterward passed to the great beyond.

In the fall of 1878 Colonel Ingersoll returned to Terre Haute and gave his beautiful and poetic lecture on Robert Burns. On the day of the lecture it rained in torrents. We of the committee felt that we were in for a considerable financial loss. The colonel was not slow in noticing our plight. "Boys," said he, in the most cheerful voice, "don't worry in the least. If the rain keeps the people away I will charge you nothing for the lecture and pay my own expenses." That was characteristic of the great-hearted humanitarian. We were relieved of our anxiety. But in spite of the rain the house was crowded. The late Daniel W. Voorhees, United States senator from Indiana, the "Tall Sycamore of the Wabash," whose home was at Terre Haute, and myself accompanied Colonel Ingersoll to the Opera House.
we got aboard a street car the rain fell in a perfect deluge. Senator Voorhees remarked: "The rain will make no difference to-night. Colonel Ingersoll is the only man in America who can draw against the elements and fill the biggest house on the rainiest night." And so it proved to be.

From Terre Haute Colonel Ingersoll went to Cincinnati on the midnight train. I went to the depot to see him off, but when the train pulled out I was aboard with him. The Colonel was too magnetic, too kind and hospitable, and I simply had to go with him. The rain continued to fall at Cincinnati, Colonel Ingersoll looked out of the hotel window, shook his head and said: "That rain is apt to cost me $500.00 and yet I haven't even been consulted about it." But it didn't, for the house could not have held more people.

The personal company of Colonel Ingersoll was a joy indeed and his conversation a continuous charm and delight. On the stage his eloquence was brilliant and sustained from his opening note to the last word of his peroration, but it was in the social circle, surrounded by the choice spirits that loved to do him honor, that the magnetism of the man and the marvelous gift of his conversation were made manifest and shone forth in all their incomparable glory. Ella Wheeler Wilcox said: "His conversation is a string of pearls." It was true. Henry Ward Beecher called him "The golden-mouthed American." Every one who ever sat heart-to-heart with him will bear willing testimony to the enchantment of his personal discourse. His lips were golden and his tongue tipped with the sacred fire. He could entertain one or a hundred and charm them all with his brilliant wit, his infectious humor, and his alluring philosophy of life. The very soul of him shone from his fine countenance as he scattered with spendthrift hands the sparkling jewels of his genius. He spoke in pictures and poems about art, literature, science, philosophy, history, music, the drama—everything—and it is a thousand pities that so many of his most brilliant intellectual gems failed to find their way into print and are forever lost to the world.

Sitting in the room of his hotel at Terre Haute after
his lecture one night, he was telling us about his visit abroad when a cock crowed in a nearby barnyard. He paused instantly and said, "Shakespeare called that rooster the 'herald of the dawn'—his genius changed a brick into a diamond in a second."

"Wit," said he, "is the lightning of the soul." And this: "Think of the alchemy that turns bread into Hamlet."

Some time later during the conversation the Colonel was asked how long his brother Ebon had been dead. The question went to his heart like a dagger. He dropped his face in his hands, sobbed aloud, and when he raised his head to answer his cheeks were wet with tears. The love these two noble brothers bore each other can never be told in words.

The sensitive nature of Ingersoll, his tenderness of heart, his overflowing pity, his boundless sympathy were all characteristic of the man. He saw much in his daily life to pain and shock him, and his tears, like his smiles, lay very near the surface.

With the whole of his great heart he sympathized with working men and women who toil. Again and again in the most thrilling eloquence he appealed to the working class to assert its rights and take possession of its own. He loathed and despised aristocratic idleness and denounced in the most scathing terms the vampires that feed upon the vitals of unrequited toil. He could not discuss the wrongs and sufferings of the poorly-paid and wretchedly-housed victims of exploitation without passionate protest and bitter resentment. He could and did put himself literally in their places, and with his sensitive sympathetic, justice-loving nature he felt the cruel injustice they suffered as keenly as if he shared their daily lot. The women and children in factories and sweatshops cried out to him, and with every throb of his heart he sympathized with them in their tragic struggle for existence. One evening as I sat with him he talked about the poor girls who have to sew for the pittance that keeps them alive. He had made inquiry and found that the girls who had made his shirts had received but a miserly wage for their labor. This stirred his wrath and he resolved that the wrong should be righted so far at least
as the making of his shirts was concerned. Said he: "Of course I can't change these inhuman conditions, but I can and will see to it that the girls who now make my shirts are paid for their work and are no longer robbed of their honest earnings."

The birthday of Colonel Ingersoll, August 11th, was for many years the occasion of a letter or telegram of congratulation from our family. The letter that follows was received in acknowledgment of a birthday telegram:

Walton,

Dobbs' Ferry-on-Hudson,

Aug. 12, '92.

"My dear Mr. Debs:

A thousand thanks for your beautiful telegram. The years are growing short. Time seems in a hurry to bring the birthday around. Well, all we can do is to get what good we can out of the days as they pass.

Each moment is a bee that flies
With swift and unreturning wing,
Giving its honey to the wise,
And to the fool its poison sting.

I hope that you and yours will have honey all your lives. We all send best regards to your father and mother—to your sisters and to Mrs. Debs and yourself.

In spite of the hot weather we are all perfectly well—including the baby.

With more thanks for your kindness, I remain

Yours always,

R. G. Ingersoll.

Mrs. Ingersoll says—'Give my love to all'—and so say I."
Great as Ingersoll was in public life he was greater still in the charmed circle of his beautiful family and his happy home. Beneath the blessed roof-tree of the Ingersolls four generations dwelt together in perfect love and made home and heaven synonymous terms. Mrs. Ingersoll, her venerable mother, the beautiful daughters, the devoted sister and their husbands and children, ah, what supreme happiness reigned in that royal household! And to see them all swarm about the Colonel and cover him with caresses and kisses was a picture for the soul never to be erased from the memory. A temple of freedom, a house of love and joy, a holy shrine was the Ingersoll home when its master spirit reigned there, and they who passed its sacred portals, beheld its touching scenes of felicity and devotion, and enjoyed its hearty, wholesome hospitality visioned a veritable paradise on this planet.

Seventeen years have passed since Robert G. Ingersoll passed from among his fellowmen, but the world has yet to learn of the true greatness of the man and the infinite value of his service to humanity.

He freely laid his all upon the altar that those who came after him might escape the curse of slavery and the horror of superstition, and know the joy of being free. He was absolutely true to the highest principles of his exalted character and to the loftiest aspirations of his own unfettered soul. He bore the cruelest misrepresentation, the foulest abuse, the vilest calumny, and the most heartless persecution without resentment or complaint. He measured up to his true stature in every hour of trial, he served with fidelity and without compromise to the last hour of his noble life, he paid in full the price of his unswerving integrity to his own soul, and each passing century to come will add fresh luster to his immortal fame.
John Swinton: Radical Editor and Leader

WHEN the history of labor's struggle for emancipation is written, the name of John Swinton will illumine some of its darkest as well as some of its brightest pages. He stood forth in the defense of the poor and pleaded their cause at a time when he was not half understood and not appreciated at all.

The grand figure of John Swinton looms before me as I write. Twenty-two years have passed since first I met him. He had been one of my heroes long before.

During the darkest days of the Pullman strike John Swinton was one of its staunchest champions. He stood face to face with Wall street and charged it with infamous crimes, and when John Swinton spoke the people listened. He had been the friend of Greeley, Raymond, Thurlow Weed, the elder Bennett, Charles A. Dana and other eminent journalists of that time and had served as editorial writer and editor-in-chief of New York's principal daily papers. After Greeley he was the only radical in that group of journalistic celebrities; the only one among them to denounce the crimes of the ruling class and to espouse the cause of the common people. He was profoundly respected by his associates, notwithstanding he told them the truth about themselves and their servility to the powers that corrupted the government and plundered the people. His response to the toast "The Independent Press," in which he declared that the vaunted "independent" press was a myth and that he and his associates were far better qualified to celebrate the prostitution of the press, has become a classic. He did not mince words and his eminent associates took no exception to his scathing indictment.

But it was as a distinctive champion of the working people that John Swinton found his chief inspiration and delight, although it cost him dearly in a material sense. He had it in his power to command the post of editor-
in-chief of any of the great New York dailies and might easily have become one of their owners had he been so inclined, for Wall street, though he hated it and fought it bitterly, appreciated fully his great force of character and commanding ability, which the working people he loved and passionately served appreciated not at all.

John Swinton, who might have had unlimited wealth and power and "fame," died in poverty and almost in obscurity, because he was truly great and uncompromisingly honest, scorning to barter his principles and convictions for a gilded cage and a life-lease of pampered self-indulgence to soften his brain, eat out his heart, and petrify his soul.

He knew that the masses for whom he did everything, denied himself everything, and gave up everything, could never—at least in his life-time—understand or appreciate him, and this thought harrowed his sensitive soul and gave him unutterable pain, not on his account but on theirs. I can still hear him say as he held my hand in his humble flat in New York, as he put me through a course of questioning as to how much I could stand for the sake of labor: "They'll break your heart." When I answered, "I'll not let 'em," he said, "Bravo!"

And when I went on to say that in the labor struggle my heart could be broken only by myself and that only if I was less than true to myself; that I could stand anything for labor, and that I desired neither office, nor honors, nor rewards, and that I was not serving to win the applause or gratitude of others but from a sense of duty to myself, he fairly beamed with joyous approbation and gave me his loving benediction.

It was during the Pullman strike that John Swinton wrote his great book, "Striking for Life; or Labor's Side of the Labor Question." This book of five hundred pages, in Swinton's boldest and most brilliant style, is especially interesting in the light of to-day's turbulent and chaotic situation. Many of its pages bear evidence of clear insight and prophetic vision. The preface of this volume could have been written but yesterday:

"The times are revolutionary. The energies of mankind in our day are immense. There is an extraordinary activity of the powers of life in our new age. The world
seems to be whirling more rapidly than ever before. Vast changes have been brought about in our generation; others are in progress; still others are impending. There is a new spirit abroad and its manifestations are everywhere. . . .

"The Labor Question is in the front. It is of supreme importance to all men, and to all women. It is related directly to the life of the whole people, to their natural and essential rights, to the welfare of the community, to popular freedom, and to the public peace."

John Swinton, like his friend, Wendell Phillips, understood the labor question in its deeper significance and wider aspects; he had a clear grasp of its fundamental principles and its international scope and character, and he knew that the labor movement was revolutionary and that its mission of emancipating the working class from wage-slavery could be accomplished only by destroying the system and reorganizing society upon a new economic foundation. This he makes clear in the following paragraphs quoted from the same preface:

"The 'War for the Union' . . . grew out of the Labor Question, and was waged over it. Shall the working population of our country or any part of it be held in slavery? Stupendous sacrifices were then made to secure the emancipation of the black laborer, and the old chattel system was overthrown at a price that has not yet been paid. We had to abolish this system before we could grapple with any of the other wrongs which must be done away with.

"Since that time a question of even greater magnitude, and yet more revolutionary, has been brought to the front—one which is often summed up in the phrase: 'the rights of labor.' It has not been brought up by any theorist or agitator, or yet by any group of men or organization of labor. It has grown out of the forces of nature and the human mind, out of evils not to be borne forever, out of industrial and social wrongs, out of suffering indescribable and aspiration irrepressible. It is the question of our age and of our country. It is a question with which the world is pregnant. Not by all the enginery of power can it be suppressed—not by combined capital, or by harsh laws, or by big armies,
or by newspaper invective, or by chop logic—not by the thunders of the Church, or the devices of the State—not certainly by the order of that puerile part of the community which is called 'society'—and not even by philanthropic tomfoolery. Futile, also, as a means for its settlement, are the crude schemes put out by many purblind reformers, or favored, at times, by some of the organizations of labor. I say the question is one of stupendous proportions. It is not to be postponed. In it are the issues of life and death."

To the mind of John Swinton there was nothing in human affairs equal in importance to the labor question. He knew that fundamentally it was the struggle of the whole human race for emancipation; that it embraced the principles of democracy and self-government and that if the brotherhood of the race was ever to be achieved it must be through the triumph of the labor movement. For more than a quarter of a century he traveled over the country east and west and from the Lakes to the Gulf, delivering hundreds of lectures and speeches in the almost vain hope at that time of arousing the working class and opening the eyes of the people to the true meaning of the labor question. For this he resigned his lucrative editorial employment, cut off every dollar of his revenue, turned his back squarely on his own class, severed his relations with his professional associates, and grimly faced the future and told the truth to a gainsaying world.

Grand old John Swinton! How much he gave, how little he received, how well he understood! None knew better how to sympathize with the men and women who fight unflinchingly labor's battles and are equally indifferent to flattery or abuse. At the time during the Pullman strike when we were being so falsely accused and so venomously maligned by the capitalist press of the whole country, John Swinton came to the front with one of the most loyal tributes and glowing eulogies ever penned by one agitator to another. It is too generous to quote. I had never seen him. He had never seen me. He knew nothing in my favor. All he had read was in terms of violent personal denunciation. But he was not deceived. He clearly grasped the situation and
the animus of the personal abuse and detraction. The very things that made others hate me, commended me to his most generous consideration. He at once became my friend and I never had a better. His fine eulogy was inspired by my imprisonment in a Chicago jail, the same in which the Haymarket comrades of 1887 were incarcerated, my cell being within a few feet of where these labor heroes were finally hanged. This he included in his book, to which he added:

"I am not afraid thus to praise Eugene Victor Debs, though he is a new figure in the gallery of my statuary. I praise him, though he be a victim of Grosscup's ruthless law; though he has been assailed by Cleveland and Olney, Pullman and Egan, Schofield and Miles, by the rapacious corporations, the dastardly plutocracy, the Sodomite preachers, the Satanic press, and our bribe-taking Congressmen. I praise him, though he is in prison."

John Swinton had learned by his own bitter experience what men and women had to contend with who, in the service of the robbed and oppressed, were too honest to betray their trust, and no arrested or persecuted labor leader had to solicit his sympathy and support.

"We must stand by our champions. all the more," he wrote, "because of the enemies by whom they are assailed; all the more because every man who takes a bold stand for labor is sure to be pursued with diabolical malice, to be showered with lies, to be charged with base motives, and to be reviled as long as he lives; all the more because labor is too often untrue to itself or false to its defenders; all the more because these defenders are weakened by the skulking of men who ought to be in the ranks and are liable to be stabbed in the back by traitors who lurk in the rear."

When John Swinton crossed the Atlantic he found that his fame had preceded him to the old world. Victor Hugo greeted him as "The Great American Journalist." He was an ardent admirer of Hugo's and on being interviewed on his return to America as to the incident of his journey which had given him the most satisfaction, his answer was, "Shaking the hand of the author of 'Les Miserables.""
He visited Karl Marx and it may be readily imagined that these two great revolutionary souls found genial companionship in each other. When Swinton asked Marx what he saw in the future, the latter buried his face in his hands for a moment, then raising his head he answered laconically, "Struggle!"

Swinton and Marx alike saw "struggle" ahead. The years which have followed have amply vindicated their prescience. Struggle there has been over all the face of the earth, increasing steadily in violence and intensity until today the whole of humanity seems seized with a madness for bloodshed and destruction that threatens an upheaval wide as the world and unparalleled in the world's history.

The lives of both the great American and the great German had been a fierce, unceasing struggle, a continuous conflict amidst shifting scenes and changing conditions, and as their suns began to decline and their powers to wane the years of struggle still stretched out wearily before them. They had both toiled tirelessly for little recompense and through stress and storm, through poverty and hate had fought unflinchingly the good fight and striven to the last to achieve their aims and realize their ideals.

Both Marx and Swinton are gone but their work remains and the heroic, unselfish example they set will be a perpetual inspiration to the world. As long as such men are born the upward struggle of humanity, even at its bitterest and gloomiest, is infinitely worth the waging.

The Letters of John Swinton in my files, filled with kindness, with loyalty and greetings of good cheer, are all characteristic of the noble nature of the man. Long before he had ever seen me he had given substantial proof of his sympathy and support. Under date of July 2nd, 1894, he wrote:

"You can't have time these days to read much of anything, even about yourself; but I must send you a piece from today's New York Tribune and another from today's New York World, which you can lay aside now in order to look at and smile when the racket is over. You can't imagine the uproar you've raised in the papers here. Honor and success to you!"
Three days later he wrote: “You are waging a Napoleonic battle amidst the admiration of millions. God give you the victory for the sake of all mankind. ... I wrote to President Cleveland three days ago. Be strong, Brother Debs.”

In a letter dated July 17, 1895, he says: “You do not seem to have been aware that I was in the prison with you by day and by night, during the past month. Never a word have you spoken to me, though you were in my company. ‘Not a mutineer walks handcuffed into jail but I am handcuffed to him and walk by his side.’ I have not at any time thought you cared for my praises, so I shall not praise you now. But I believe you are stout of heart, and I must hope you are not depressed in spirit. Be strong! I know you will be faithful unto death. I send you my best love. P. S.—Sunday of this week was the Anniversary of the Fall of the Bastile.”

In a later letter, under date of June 30th, 1897, he wrote me after learning that the railroad managers had sworn that the American Railway Union should not be organized and that their detectives were dogging my footsteps by day and by night:

“The strength of your faith, the liveliness of your hopes, the persistency of your valor, the breadth of your thought, and the energy of your genius fill me with admiration. These things belong to that kind of Americanism which is ever regenerative.

Life and luck to you!
Greetings from my wife and from
Faithfully yours,

John Swinton.”

When I visited New York after coming into personal touch with John Swinton, the little visits we had together were occasions of special enjoyment and delight to me. He had the reputation of being somewhat brusque in manner, but I never found him so. On the contrary, he was always genial as sunshine to me and at his home he was the very soul of hospitality. He lived modestly with his wife, whom he addressed as “Angel” and in whom he had a most sympathetic and helpful companion in all his arduous labors and disappointing experiences.
JOHN SWINTON: RADICAL EDITOR AND LEADER

In personal appearance Swinton was tall, well proportioned and courtly in manner, and one recognized in him at a glance a distinguished personage. He certainly looked the man he was. His features were strikingly clear-cut, his eyes keen and piercing, though kindly, his hair snow-white, as were also his mustache and eyebrows, which set off his fine, smooth brow and pallid complexion to perfection.

John Swinton's powerful personality was marked in every line and curve of his finely chiselled features, in the poise of his handsome head, and in every movement of his virile body. He had no need to be introduced. He was John Swinton even to the stranger, who passed him on the crowded city street and turned about hastily to get another look before he disappeared in the crowd.

The speeches of John Swinton are scholarly in thought, classical in composition, and contain some of the most thrilling and eloquent passages to be found in American oratory. Lack of space prevents adequate quotation, but I cannot resist incorporating a few characteristic utterances of this eloquent and fearless apostle of the toiling and enslaved millions:

"Back through the ages every new dispensation, including that of the gibbeted Galilean, has perplexed and dismayed the men of the old order, who associated it with impending calamities and deplorable results. But still we know, as we look back through time, that the recurring, transformations have but shown the development of the human race under the operation of invisible law. Does any simpleton suppose that they have come to an end, or that he can put a stop to them, or that there is no further necessity for them?"

"Our Government is in the hands of pirates. All the power of politics, and of Congress, and of the Administration is under the control of the moneyed interests. The 'self-evident truths' of the Declaration of Independence are trampled underfoot. . . . Is Liberty compatible with the existence of these famished millions and these overgorged millionaires?"

"Danger ahead? Of course, there is. Danger is always ahead when wrong is at hand, and explosions always take
place, from time to time, when suffering becomes intolerable.

"Crack goes the earthquake, and the Hebrew slaves stride out of Egypt as Pharaoh sinks in the Red Sea.

"Crack it goes again, and the agrarians of Rome seize their short swords.

"Crack again, and the serfs of Germany and Hungary carry terror before them through the peasant wars.

"Crack once more, and the fires of the French Revolution give dread to monarchs.

"Crack goes the earthquake, here or there, now and then, again and again, the wide world over. Heedless are men, after the terror of each crack, till they are stirred again by the alarm of the next."

A copy of the last issue of "John Swinton's Paper" is before me as I write. It is dated August 21st and contains his "Farewell," which reads as follows: "To my many faithful friends and sturdy fellow-workers all over this broad land, who have stood by me in this paper, aiding the work it was founded to promote, or cherishing the principles which it has steadily proclaimed—I now bid farewell—John Swinton."

How many of the readers of PEARSON'S remember "John Swinton's Paper," published weekly in New York from 1883 to 1887 and circulated over all the states of the Union? It was a paper of remarkable ability and force and by far the best radical paper then in existence, but it had to succumb at last. It was a menace to Wall Street and the moneyed interests, and they finally succeeded in forcing it to the wall.

The Motto of "John Swinton's Paper" was: We are Preparing the Way for the Establishment of the Natural Rights of Man; 1, His Right to a Footing on the Earth; 2, His Right to Labor; 3, His Right to the Fruits of His work."

The last issue of this pioneer publication was an especially brilliant one and well worthy of preservation as a souvenir of radical journalism in the United States a third of a century ago. In this issue innumerable personal tributes to John Swinton appear, tributes from friends and readers to his pluck and persistency and to his fidel-
ity and devotion to the cause of the people in sinking his last dollar before succumbing to the enemy. One of these tributes is from the pen of Gideon J. Tucker, New York City, and is here reproduced as follows:

"A Sower Went Forth to Sow"
—Gospel of St. Matthew.

To John Swinton

He sowed the seed on sterile soil,
Through days and months and years of toil;
Slow was its growth midst rock and weed;
It mattered not—he sowed the seed.

His steady zeal could not be quenched,
Others might quail, he never blenched,
Patient he taught his earnest creed;
Let others reap—he sowed the seed.

To-day it may ignore or spurn—
Some day the world from him shall learn
How wise in thought, how just in deed,
It may become!—he sowed the seed.

Yes, he sowed the seed, but alas, how few of the present generation know that they are reaping, perhaps in opulence, where he sowed in pain and self-denial! The world owes more, far more to John Swinton than it knows or perhaps ever can know. He was one of the real heroes of American history. He lived and labored wholly for his fellow-men. He struggled bravely with all the adverse fates and forces that others might be spared the pains and privations that fell to his lot and have life richer and more abundant. Aye, he fought as heroically and unselfishly for humanity as any man that ever won the crown of martyrdom.
Eugene Field: Poet and Humorist

TWENTY-FOUR years ago, in April, 1893, I first met Eugene Field. He was then in his forty-third year, but in spirit and manner seemed more like a boy of twenty. I never met a man to whom I took a readier liking. He was full of rollicking humor and the soul of geniality and kindness. We at once became friends. Within a few hours after our introduction he brought me copies of his books, beautifully inscribed, which I still treasure among my literary possessions.

Eugene Field, born in St. Louis in 1850, was of Puritan stock, but there was no trace of narrowness or asceticism in his nature. He loved the world and he mingled freely, joyously with all sorts and conditions of people. He had many admirers among the rich, but his heart was with the common man. Best of all, however, he loved children and in turn was fairly idolized by them.

When Eugene Field left college he was inclined to take up the law, but changed his mind. It is fortunate for him and for the world of letters, that he did not become a lawyer. He was temperamentally too poetic and imaginative to succeed in the legal profession. He was an excellent mimic and had marked dramatic ability. For quite a while he had an eye on the stage. In that he would have succeeded better. But the poetic instinct predominated and he was destined to court the muses and achieve fame in the literary world.

Eugene Field began his professional career as a paragraph writer for a St. Louis paper. In that capacity he excelled from the start and his pithy, humorous and sarcastic jottings were copied widely by other papers. From St. Louis he went to St. Joseph and thence to Kansas City, where he remained a year and a half engaged in newspaper work. The lure of the West was fairly upon him and from Kansas City he found his way to Denver. This was in the summer of 1881. Denver was just blossoming out as a typical western city. The free, easy-
going unconventional life of the people of the plains and
mountains appealed to the romantic nature of young Field
and here he began to write the dialect “Western Verse”
which so endeared him to the common people among
whom he had cast his lot, and which soon found its way
into the channels of circulation and introduced the gifted
young author to thousands who had never before heard
his name. It was here that Field indulged to the limit his
propensity for practical joking. The gentlest of beings
himself, he yet enjoyed immensely a practical joke at the
expense of a friend. He laughed uproariously at the
results of his own mischief, which was nearly always of an
innocent and harmless nature. The older residents of
Denver still tell of the pranks of Eugene Field and the
dismay of victims of his capricious plottings.

A friend of Field’s who kept a grocery store in Denver
found himself one morning in a plight he did not soon
forget as the result of one of the poet’s practical jokes.
It was early in the summer. The first ripe watermelons
were being shipped in from South. An innocent-looking
paragraph in Field’s paper announced that his grocer
friend had just received a carload of fine, juicy melons
and that they would be handed out free of charge at his
doors to the colored people of the city. Soon after the
paper appeared the report spread over the city and within
an hour or two the whole colored population swooped
down upon the unsuspecting grocer and demanded the
ripe, juicy melons which had been promised them.

The mining camps of Colorado, nestling far up in the
canons and hugging the rugged sides of the Rocky Moun-
tains, were a source of inexpressible delight and inspira-
tion to Eugene Field. He loved the plain, honest, sturdy
folk that made up the primitive communities a few de-
cades ago. He loved the large-hearted, care-free, happy-
go-lucky prospectors and miners. They were kind and
generous and brave, and in their cabins there was peace
and content. There was little law in the camp, but as a
rule the square-deal and even-handed justice prevailed.
The cowardly practice of carrying concealed weapons was
unknown. Every man had his six-shooter on his hip in
full view. Short shrift was made of the crook and thief,
and the “bad man” was not long in coming to his own.
The peace of the community automatically kept itself—and life in a rough-and-ready gold camp was more secure and justice more swift and certain than in New York City, with its army of police and its almost countless courts and churches.

The gold and silver camps as they then existed are no more and the free and jocund life of that day has practically disappeared. "Civilization" has closed in on the rugged mountain communities which knew neither riches or poverty, but respected a man for what he was—communities composed of the "black sheep" of the families back in the states who had the spirit of adventure and were not satisfied to stay on the old farms cultivated by their grandfathers; who had little polish of manner and none of the artificial graces of conventional society, but instead had abundance of the milk of kindness in their breasts, boundless love and sympathy for their fellows, and a whole-hearted generosity that was limited only by the resources at their command.

In these early camps in the Rocky Mountains there were saloons and gambling houses and dance halls galore but there was no city hall, no police court, no court house, and no churches. Drinking there was, to be sure, but drunkenness was exceptional. The rarest sort of democracy prevailed. Men were not only their brothers' keepers but their brothers' brother and lover. The camp was a family. Every man was trusted unless and until he forfeited the confidence of his fellows and then he was promptly given his passport or brought to more summary justice.

There was something wondrously stimulating about the primitive mountain settlements and about the pinoneers and prospectors who flocked there in quest of the golden fleece. They were above and beyond the prosaic and deadening influences of the conventional and cramped existence they had left behind them. They were far up in the canons and mountains fastnesses, surrounded by the snow-capped peaks. The brooks and streams, cool and clear and sparkling, gushed from the earth beneath their feet. The pure, crisp and vitalizing air filled them with energy and enthusiasm. For once indeed these adventurous spirits breathed the air of freedom, and they were happy and content. There was not a fine residence in the
camp, nor a poorhouse—nor a hungry man, woman or child. Every mother's son of these hardy mountaineers would have felt himself personally disgraced if an animal, to say nothing of a human being, had been found suffering for the want of food or shelter. They were rough-spoken, blunt in manner, but tender-hearted as children. They did not give alms to strangers but gave themselves instead. They were human without veneer, and their rugged honesty had the gleam of the gold they dug from the mines. Often, very often was I their guest, sat in their cabins and enjoyed their warmth and hospitality; and readily therefore can I appreciate the love inspired by such men and such scenes and surroundings in the breast of a nature-lover and humanitarian such as Eugene Field.

The old camp is gone and only memory remains. They who know that free, unrestrained, joyous life of a generation ago may regret its passing, but the change was inevitable. Civilization now has sway in the regions once deemed inaccessible to its conquering march. Law and order have superseded the six-shooter and the slip-noose—courts and churches now abound, and so also do jails and poorhouses, tramps and vagabonds, beggars and criminals, the same as in all other civilized communities.

Eugene Field was never more at home than among these sturdy pioneers who opened the treasure chambers of the Rocky Mountains and scattered their gleaming secrets broadcast over the continent. They were after his own heart and he rejoiced like the big boy he was, in having found his way to the Golden West and in living for once among God's own people. No wonder the change came upon him like a revelation and attuned his muse to the sweet minstrelsy that was soon to carry his name back to the Hampshire Hills where he had spent his childhood days and echo his fame to the remotest parts of the country.

The "Red Hoss Mountain" and "Casey's Table D'Hote" are fondly celebrated by the poet who knew them in the days of their glory and cherished the happy scenes they recalled among his most treasured memories:

"Oh, them days on Red Hoss Mountain, when the skies wuz fair 'nd blue,
When the money flowed like likker, 'nd the folks wuz brave 'nd true!
When the nights wuz crisp 'nd balmy, 'nd the camp wuz all astir.
With the joints all throwed wide open 'nd no sheriff to demur!
Oh, them times on Red Hoss Mountain in the Rockies fur away,—
There's no sich place nor times like them as I kin find today!
What though the camp hez busted? I seem to see it still
A-lyin' like it loved it, on that big 'nd warty hill;
And I feel a sort of yearnin' 'nd a chokin' in my throat
When I think of Red Hoss Mountain 'nd of Casey's tabble dote!

Casey, the proprietor of the new restaurant in which the “tabble dote” was introduced for the first time to the simple-minded denizens of Red Hoss Mountain, was a typical character in those days and Eugene Field drew his picture with rare felicity and fidelity:

“This Casey wuz an Irishman,—you'd know it by his name
And by the facial features appertainin' to the same,
He'd lived in many places 'nd had done a thousand things,
From the noble art of actin' to the work of dealin' kings.

“The bar wuz long 'nd rangey with a mirrer on the shelf
'Nd a pistol, so that Casey, when required, could help himself;
Down underneath there wus a row of bottled beer 'nd wine.
'Nd Kag of Burbun whiskey of the run of '59;
Upon the walls wuz pictures of hosses 'nd of girls,—
Not much on dress perhaps, but strong on records 'nd on curls!
The which had been identified with Casey in the past,—
The hoss 'nd the girls, I mean,—and both was mighty fast!
But all these fine attractions wuz of precious little note
By the side of what wuz offered at Casey's tabble dote.”
“The very recollection of them puddin’s ’nd them pies
Brings a yearnin’ to my buzzum ’nd the water to my eyes.”

Truly did the poet lament the passing of his old comrades of the mountain mining camps, and in all the sweet and sentimental tributes they evoked from his sympathetic pen he poured out his love freely to their hallowed memory. He had shared their homely hospitality and been deeply touched by their simple faith and their whole-hearted loyalty and devotion to their fellow men. How could he, the great-hearted, generous, sentimental Field, fail to love these homely, honest, trusting souls, and celebrate their simple annals in immortal song!

If the spirit ears of the pioneers who sleep way out yonder on “Red Hoss Mountain” are attuned to earthly benedictions their hearts will be touched indeed and the mist will come into their eyes as they listen to the offering, tender, tremulous and pathetic, from their old friend:

“And you, O cherished brother, a-sleepin’ way out west
With Red Hoss Mountain huggin’ you close to its lovin’ breast,—
Oh, do you dream in your last dream of how we use to do,
Of how we worked our little claims together, me ’nd you?
Why, when I saw you last a smile wuz restin’ on your face,
Like you wuz glad to sleep forever in that lonely place;
And so you wuz, ’nd I’d be too, if I wuz sleepin’ so.
But, bein’ how a brother’s love ain’t for the world to know,
Whenever I’ve this heartache ’nd this chokin’ in my throat,
I lay it all to thinkin’ of Casey’s tabble dote.”

In 1883, when Eugene Field was in his thirty-third, he was called from Denver to Chicago by a tempting offer from the Daily News, with which paper and the Daily Record, by the same publisher, he was connected during the remainder of his brief life. His work as a writer and his fame as a poet had long been recognized. His newspaper writings and caught the public eye before and he was widely quoted and copied. At Chicago he became the
author of the famous column of "Sharps and Flats," which came to be recognized as the spiciest and most attractive feature of the paper and was eagerly followed by thousands of readers. In this column he commented in prose and verse upon current events and he gave free reign to his exuberant fancy. He had a rare faculty for putting a simple thought into a pungent paragraph. His wit was keen and subtle and his humor spontaneous and good-natured. His pen was "sharp as Ithuriel's spear," but never envenomed. He knew no malice. He had the heart of a child and once when by chance he stepped upon a little chick, he wept with pain and sorrow.

During the eleven years he spent in newspaper work in Chicago, Field was never idle. The scope of his literary work was broadened and his pen was ever active. His more serious poems and prose writings began now to appear. He haunted the bookstalls for rare old volumes and became a close student of the classics. To him a rare old book was the choicest bit of luxury. He turned its musty pages with reverent hands and fondled it as a thing of life.

The beautiful lullabies that rippled from Field's sweet and sympathetic soul gave the truest insight to his noble character. He loved with incomparable tenderness not only his own children but the children of all the world. To him a child, any child, was a delight and an inspiration. His hearty "hello" was given to every youngster he passed upon the street. He would desert almost any gathering of grown-up people to romp and play with the little folks.

Once he came to Terre Haute with George W. Cable, the Southern novelist, with whom he was then associated on the Lyceum platform. The opera house was crowded. Field at once captured the audience and each of his numbers brought him enthusiastic applause. With a child's artless simplicity he repeated his bits of charming childhood rhyme and won his way to the hearts of the people. He had wonderful dramatic resources and in his pathetic passages his audience was moved to tears. The tender, touching lines in "Father's Way" and "To My Mother," in which the poet paid loving tribute to his parents, were rendered with such deep feeling that only sobs broke the solemn silence of the audience.
At the close of the entertainment Field, who was my guest, was invited to the home of a friend and here occurred an incident that revealed his passionate love for children, of whom a number were in attendance. After a time the little folks withdrew to another room to seek their own enjoyment. Not long afterwards, Field also disappeared. The reason soon became apparent. Peals of laughter issued from the adjoining room. Hilarity was evidently at high tide in the child-world. And no wonder. Field had gotten among them and was both ring-master and clown of the show, and when the door was opened he was found minus his dress coat, down on the floor on all fours, and cutting such antics as made the little folks scream with delight.

Eugene Field had a strong personal attachment for James Whitcomb Riley. One day he said to me: “Riley is too modest. He is blissfully unconscious of his high standing in the literary world. He has no equal in his line and need not hesitate to measure up with the best of the literary lights in the cultured East.” Field and Riley and Bill Nye were a great team when they were together. Never before nor since has such a unique combination appeared before the American people. Each was the master of his art and their wits were equally matched and blended to perfection.

Field had only the kindest words for his associates. Never a trace of jealousy of a rival in the bid for popular favor. Generous to a fault, he rejoiced whole-hearted in the applause that came to those associated with him. He was big and broad and chivalrous in the real sense, and no degrading envy ever darkened the doorway to his lofty soul.

He was as generous with his poetic gifts as he was improvident in his financial affairs. He had absolutely no sense of money values, but the highest conception of moral obligation to his fellow-men, especially to those less fortunate than himself, who looked to him for sympathy or for some act of more substantial kindness. It was not in him to say “no” to an appeal for aid, and the only trouble was that his pockets were chronically empty and he never had money enough by half to see him through.

Unlike most gifted people he did not have to be coaxed
to entertain his friends and the friends of his friends. He took genuine delight in responding to the requests made upon him. One night we were invited out together. He was the idol of the gathering, but did not seem to realize it. His modesty was even greater than his genius. All evening and until late at night he entertained his delighted admirers. To each request he responded graciously "with pleasure." To each guest he rendered cheerfully his or her "favorite" selection as if he himself receiving instead of dispensing the evening's favors.

The love and loyalty of Eugene Field for his friends cannot be told in words. When you clasped his hand you felt his generous heart beat, and when you looked into his eyes you saw his great soul revealed.

During the troublous times of the Pullman strike in 1894, I came to know 'Gene Field as one of the truest friends and noblest men. My arrest had been decreed and I was soon to be lodged in Cook County jail. Eugene Field heard of it and at once started out to find me. Failing in this, he went to my hotel and left a note in my box saying that I would soon need a friend and that he wanted to be that friend. It was in that dark day, that trying hour, when bitter hate had sway and friends were not too numerous, that Eugene Field proved himself a real man and a true friend. Some of his rich admirers were amazed that he should have anything to do with a "common criminal," but what he said to them in answer they did not repeat to others.

In the summer following I was at Woodstock and there came to me the last message I received from Eugene Field. In a characteristic note he wrote me jokingly: "Now that you are settled in your summer quarters I shall soon be out to see you." But the intended visit was not to be. I never saw Field again. He went to bed soon after the message was written and fell asleep to awake no more. It was a terrible blow to his family and friends, and when the sad news came to me I was pained and shocked beyond expression.

When the call of the invisible summoner came Eugene Field was but forty-four; he was still in the flush of his splendid young manhood. His greater work, the work for which he was now so eminently fitted and which should
add so immeasurable to his fame, still lay before him. But the end came with startling suddenness and the beloved poet and friend passed to his reward "while the shadows still were falling toward the west."

The life of Eugene Field was cut off in its prime, but he lived long enough to render such precious service to his fellow-men that his work and worth will be cherished and his memory honored by coming generations.
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