

AFTERNOON.

The noon has passed; but earth is bright
With tender touch of summer's light;
And soft the air
O'er mellowed scenes that tranquil lie
Stretched out beneath the azure sky,
In beauty fair.

The trembling dew of early day,
That glittered in each dawning ray,
Will shine no more.

The hours that morning's triumph led
Have with their buoyant freshness fled,
Their cheer is o'er.

And yet the day is newly blest;
The happy sunlight falls with rest
And gentler beams,
And softer, sweeter are the clear
Bird notes that greet the ear,
Like songs in dreams.

Earth's beauty and its calm repose
Bring quiet thought that deeper grows.
In calm review,

We see the truth the hours have taught,
The latest moments are each fraught
With treasures new.

Beyond the noon the day's far spent.
A peaceful spirit of content
Now broods o'er all.

The ripened harvests round us lie;
Ere long will glow the sunset sky
And night will fall.

But with the night comes restful sleep;
And soon, when twilight shadows creep,
Will gleam and shine

For us the guiding lights above,
To show the Father's watchful love
O'er day's decline.

—MARY FRENCH MORTON.

INGERSOLL'S RELIGION.

Colonel Ingersoll recently addressed "The Free Religious Association" in Boston. The colonel's religion was so "free" that even he could not pin it, define it, or fence it in, not even with words. The doughty champion of anti-ecclesiasticism is, as a religionist, much like Mr. Bryan as a politician. The colonel—well, which colonel?—is an agnostic. All agnostics are fence-straddlers. Agnosticism is very much of an "I don't know; it may be, and then agin it mayn't." There are some things Ingersoll knows something about, morality being one of them. There are others of which he knows nothing—here again he bears a strong resemblance to Colonel Bryan. Ingersoll knows as much about religion as Bryan does of finance. Both are blind leaders of their respective fields. Both go to authority for their information. In both cases the authority is equally blind. Is it any wonder that they and their followers find themselves falling into the ditch together? Ingersoll goes to the theologians, to ask about the "living God," who seek their information in the mouldy vaults of traditional superstition. In some things Ingersoll stands on "common sense" but not in religion. He goes prowling around the dismal cavern of tradition—like some thief in the night—looking for the living truth among the mouldy skeletons of gangrenous error. Ingersoll is a curiosity. He flatly denies the existence of the mould while boldly affirming that religion con-

sists in fear of it. There is still a very dense film of theological moulds attached to Ingersoll's ganglion cells. This accounts for their restricted action. Ingersoll's rebellion against traditional superstition is of an emotional rather than intellectual nature.

Ingersoll's Irreligion is Dead Tradition.

Ingersoll says "Religion has done nothing to reform human beings." How is it possible for a dead and mouldy tradition to perform that act of prestidigitation in the living. Even Ingersoll does not believe that the dead can come to life again. Then why demand that it give vitality to a dead moral nature? He says that "religion makes slaves," because based on fear. That shows that Ingersoll knows naught of true religion. He has studied the spurious article put up by theologian in the rusty casing of ecclesiastical ignorance. No more is Ingersoll's "real religion, real worship," the religion in Nature, for it is not the work of religion in all things "to find the subtle threads that join the distant with the now," unless it be the religious action; nor has real religion anything directly to do with "taking burdens from the weak; to develop the brain, to defend the right, to make place for the soul." So far as religion goes Ingersoll knows naught of the ripe fruit of the tree of knowledge. He needs some of the madness of Paul to drive the superstition of Festus from his mind. He talks glibly of philosophy and may have been a dilettante peripatetic along the by-ways of Athens, but he never stopped in the Stoa to converse with Zeno, nor has he tasted of the waters of living truth as they gush from the oracle at Delphi. Ingersoll knows not himself or he would know that religion is in, of and through all things. Had he been as diligent a follower of the "spirit" as he has been a student of the letter of Thomas Paine, he would have cast the musty precedents of theological irreligion behind him, and, looking within, have felt the springs of eternal religion overflowing his whole being like a perennial fountain. Ingersoll reviles the Bible, seeing naught in it but the decaying mould of traditional ignorance, while the grand religion in it utterly escapes him, e'en though the psalmist was overwhelmed by it, as we all are, when standing on some hill-top at eve and with the sun sinking in its golden bed unconsciously lose all thought save that

The Heavens declare the glory,
The firmament showeth the handiwork,
Day unto day speaketh, and
Night unto night manifesteth,
The universality of religion.

True religion knoweth not fear. True religion worshipeth not. True religion hath not a characteristic of traditional irreligion. True religion countenances no rival. It knoweth naught of religions. It is not Nature worship. Self-worship

is the basest idolatry. True religion leaves that to the advocates of pseudo religions.

True Religion

is the mightiest, most all-embracing manifestation of force. To the true scientist there is but one force in Nature. That is, attraction. The "forces of Nature" are but manifold degrees or forms in which attraction is manifest. Attraction makes the continuity and solidarity of the whole. While each individualized part of Nature attracts every other part all the other parts exert a compound-complex attraction on each individual part. Thus is the unity or oneness of the whole maintained. The intensity of the religious attraction, the actual force of the religious feeling in man, understood by scarcely any, can only be approximately appreciated when it is realized that there is always a force transmission from the body of greater magnitude to the body of lesser, and we think that man, individually, is the body of lesser magnitude, while the entire cosmos, outside ourselves, is the body of greater magnitude. Religion then is that conscious yet incomprehensible feeling which binds all things into an unchangeable and eternal whole, and the intelligent conception of this unity. It was some such conception that filled the mind that formulated the materials in the first two chapters of Genesis. It was this that man meant when he said "God made man in His own image" and, do not forget it, "male and female created He him." It was this again man meant when he said "God made man out of the dust of the ground." Again man expressed the unity and inseparableness of all things when he said "From dust thou art, unto dust shalt thou return." The theologians have done their best to perpetuate a blind idolatry and to shut the eyes of the people to the universe religion of which they are but a manifestation in common with the Heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mighty ocean and the mountain torrent. Man sings of it, the lark carols it, the cricket harps it; the tiny violet manifests that which maketh all things one. To Ingersoll it might be said: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." The same eternal force marketh its intelligence which is manifest in the sublimest reason of the most profound philosopher.

FRANK S. BILLINGS.

Grafton, Mass.

SOOTHING
SYRUP.

The artificial sleep produced in babes by soothing syrups is not more detrimental to physical health than the free-coinage-silver syrup is to the political health of those who habitually use that economic nostrum.