COLONEL BOB'S BON MOTS

Concluded From Tenth Page.

is one of the most marked traits of his nature.

As he comes to be better understood there is less misrepresentation of his attitude before the world. People have come to believe that he is sincere in his disbelief and are not disposed to quarrel with him about it. I asked him if he did not find a good deal of change in public sentiment in the last few years upon the subject, in the direction of greater tolerance of the views of free thinkers. To this he gave the most decided affirmative. People have greatly changed in the last fifty years, he thought. "If they had not," said he, "I could not live."

He finds, however, that the clergymen are as unrelenting as ever, and from them he receives no concessions. In speaking of this he said: There is such a vein of snobbery that runs all through the existing system of religion. No one in his judgment was so snobbish as a servant in standing up for the importance of his master. The more important the master the greater the snobbishness. So what must be the feeling of the servant toward a free thinker who has criticised the master which he regards as infinite?

A recent caller upon Col. Ingersoll said: "You are too critical. Why, I believe you would even criticise the Lord's Prayer." "It is subject to criticism," said the colonel.

"In what way?" was asked.

"In the phrase 'Lead us not into temptation,'" was the reply. "It is an insult to the power to whom it is addressed to suppose that he should want to lead any one into temptation. Would it not be more respectful to say, 'Lead us from temptation?'"

But I do not wish to devote much space to the colonel's particular religious views, as they are too well known. In some ways, however, he has been recently misrepresented. In the libel suit recently brought by him against Dr. Dixon the latter has charged that Colonel Ingersoll was the attorney of the people who were seeking to pollute the minds of the youth of the country by the circulation through the mails of obscene literature. I was in Washington at the time that Colonel Ingersoll made an argument against the law in question. It was a special law framed for the purpose of giving the postmaster general extraordinary powers to inspect and examine mail matter. Colonel Ingersoll's objection and argument against the law was a view which afterward prevailed, while the object sought to be arrived at was good. The powers given to the postmaster general were such that the public would not approve. It gave the postmaster general nearly as much authority of censorship over the mails as is now had in Russia. It was the greater object of protecting the inviolability of the mails to which the colonel addressed his argument. His libel case against Dr. Dixon will only be prosecuted to the point of making a complete record of his real position and the proving that the doctor is in error. Possibly no other point of attack would have so stirred him up to action. There are few men whose private lives are so clear and clean and who could afford less to be put in the light of the opposite.

The colonel is a profound student of Shakespeare. A bust of Shakespeare always occupies a most important place in his household. A copy of one of the first editions of Shakespeare occupies as prominent a position in his house as does the Bible in most houses. He is a beautiful reader, and his home readings of the great poet have been so admired by critics that the colonel has been repeatedly invited to give a series of dramatic readings. It is possible that some of his future lectures will be upon Shakespearean subjects.

The colonel is a great believer in a man's having sincere convictions. Some time ago a would-be lecturer called upon him for advice as to how he should succeed in the lecture field. The colonel asked him if he had any special subject in hand. The visitor replied no; he had come to the colonel for a subject. The latter replied that the only advice he had to give to any man before going into any field of literature or the like would be, first, to have something to say; second, to believe what he said sincerely, and third, to say it in as simple a manner as possible.

The colonel has made, perhaps, the greatest number of admirers and the fewest enemies in his lectures upon "The Family." His lecture on "The Liberty of Man, Woman and Child" has had, perhaps, the widest circulation of any of his writings. A friend of the colonel related an incident which is suggested by the topic of this lecture. He said that he and the colonel were once walking through the Union railway station at Pittsburg to change a train. On their way through the station they met a man and his family coming in the opposite direction. The man had his hands in his pockets and was smoking a comfortable cigar very much at his ease. Behind him came his wife carrying a baby, weighed down with bundles, and with a second child dragging at her skirts. The man caught sight of Colonel Ingersoll, and then darted back and picked up one of the children and all the bundles. His wife than turned and stopped Colonel Ingersoll. She said: "Colonel Ingersoll, I want to thank you for your lecture on the liberty of man, woman and child. My husband was very much impressed by it, and he is trying his best to be thoughtful. Your presence here in this station just suggested to him this division of labor which he has just assumed." The colonel smiled and passed on. It was of the many thousand and one incidents in his life—the coming in contact with people who like his humanity, his gentle disposition and his thoughtful regard for others. He has a passionate desire for everyone to be comfortable, contented. I have heard him say over and over again: "Every one has a right to be happy, and he is swindled out of his rights when he is unhappy."

I think that much of his hatred of religious forms of orthodox methods comes from an ultra puritanical training given him by his Vermont ancestors. He is a natural born rebel against prescribed methods for doing anything unless the methods appeal to his common sense. He is an extreme believer in human rights, and as freely accords the right of criticism to the clergymen who oppose his views as he does in return demand on his own part the privilege of criticising them. It is one of his lines of thought that if religion is strong it cannot be weakened by criticism.

He does not believe in the Parkhurst system of reforming society. I shall not quote any of his language upon the subject, because he is rather averse to criticising clergymen to the public, upon the theory that his view of this class is considered by many prejudiced. He considers, however, Parkhurst's method a wrong one and one that has done more to poison the minds of the youth throughout the country than any one thing that has occurred during the century. The name of Parkhurst is associated in the minds of nearly every one more with what was sought to be destroyed than by the purpose which is supposed to have actuated his conduct.

The colonel is nearly always at work. He possesses monumental industry and an extraordinary capacity for mastering a case. His mind works with lightning like rapidity. He seems to see all around and through a question at the same time. He cuts short long winded clients by anticipating in the briefest possible moment what they wish to say. He is slightly impatient with those who seek to waste his time. He is a wide reader of the best literature of this country and of Europe and is to-day a student.

His powers of satire coupled with a colder disposition would make him very unpopular, but his satire is shaded by a kindly humor that softens the shaft. He has such a keen appreciation of the ludicrous, such a hatred of posing, that he soon brings opposing counsel who are anything but simple and natural down to his earth. One day he was arguing a case in Chicago against a very pompous attorney, who from the time he entered the court room until he left it always played along the line of a prescribed part. He never made a natural move. In the course of his argument before the jury the Chicago lawyer laid out with a great show of theatrical display fifteen sheets of paper in a row. Upon each sheet of paper was a massive point which he argued for the jury, then formally laid the sheet aside. As he progressed down this row of points laid out in this elaborate fashion the colonel, who was then much younger than he is now, was seized with a wicked idea. He possessed himself of fifteen sheets of blank paper and when it came his turn to answer the fifteen point lawyer he walked up to the table in front of the jury, laid out his fifteen blank sheets with as great a solemnity and as much preparation as his opponent had employed. "Now," said the colonel, "I will address myself to the fifteen points made by the learned counsel who preceded me." He then picked up the first sheet, which was blank. He addressed his remarks to the point contained thereon, which was just nothing at all. He went through with the fifteen sheets in this same way, calling the attention of the foreman of the jury gravely to each blank sheet of paper. This witty fashion of saying to the jury that counsel who preceded him had said nothing which had any real bearing on the case was so effective that it convulsed every one and carried the case without any real serious argument.

Colonel Ingersoll is a very proud, high spirited, kind hearted man. He loves the beautiful things of life. For music, for art, for literature, he is an enthusiast. He is always ready to help a beginner in any walk of life which leads upward. He is always finding some person of talent and genius. His introductions and help have contributed to the success of many.

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Albert Ross has just published his latest novel entitled, "Why I am Single." The sale of his novels has been unprecedented, sales to date being over 520,000 copies. For sale at the Bee Hive

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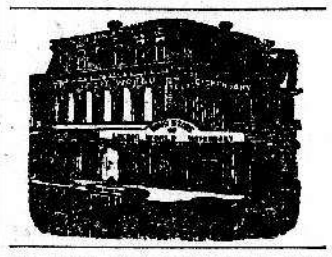

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