

who were with him through it all receive their share of the mention and more. He is entirely deserving of the additional honors proposed and in order that they may be extended without wearisome delay let us, as they say in the conventions, make it unanimous.

#### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

In a country like this, where the government is—or should be at least—by the people as well as for the people, it is but natural that greater interest is taken in politics. But it may be questioned whether it is as great as it should be except among the comparatively few that are personally concerned in the emoluments to be gained, and their immediate friends. The privilege of universal suffrage, however, imposes universal duties, and one of these is to take part in the primaries and make them a true expression of the popular will. Every citizen should devote some time, some energy, some intelligence to the affairs of the State, and to the best of his ability aid in obtaining the best results possible, no matter what his party affiliations may be.

A great majority of citizens look to somebody for advice, and it is but natural that they should do so. It is to be feared, however, that if they depend only on the mediums that commonly are supposed to be the framers of public opinion, they will be disappointed instead of enlightened. There is altogether too much vituperation; too much of the kind of logic that changes black into white and white into black; too much one-sidedness. It is almost impossible to the ordinary reader to separate the true from the false, and thus be in a position to act intelligently. All he can do is to exercise his own judgment, as he must do when the management of his own business affairs are involved, with such aid as tried friends may be willing to give. But if he will do this with an honest desire to do right, it is not likely that he will be very much mistaken in the men or women he will select to represent his interests in public affairs. Our government machinery is a wonderful one, and if perchance at some times it does not work to perfection, the fault is ultimately with the people themselves.

#### POLITICS, SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

A couple of gentlemen yesterday, doubtless anent the political campaign with its profuse oratory and silver lining, were speaking of the capabilities of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll as a "spell-binder." One of them thought the only great rhetorical blunder the colonel ever made was when, during the fierce contest of 1896, he espoused the gold side of the case and made the remarkable statement that money was the product of nature, not of law. "Why," said the speaker, "if a man had a bagful of Klondike nuggets and were to offer a creditor the full amount of his claim with heavy interest in virgin gold, it would not be a legal tender because gold is not money until the forms of the law which provides for its conversion into money are complied with. The creditor could refuse the gold and thereupon obtain judgment against the debtor, obtaining which he could levy upon the gold and sell it as so much merchandise to obtain the amount due him in lawful money. That settles Ingersoll's case conclusively." As the colonel was not present to look after his side of the matter, he lost by default; whether properly or improperly the reader can decide for himself.

If Col. Ingersoll, as alleged, made the mistake claimed, it is not the first one

by any means. In a recent letter regarding the taking of the Philippines, he gave some cogent reasons for their retention by the United States. Among these was not the statement made that we should send teachers, not preachers, over there; that we must not throw out Spanish superstition and substitute our own superstition. Those who are best acquainted with his peculiar views and methods of expression understand that by superstition he means without distinction all religions and all things that are religious. Were it otherwise, many of us that do not now agree with him would be compelled to concede his claims in that respect. Superstition and religion may and ought to be vastly different things; one is the offspring of ignorance, the other the very crystallization of the highest thoughts and most soulful impulses of humanity guided by reason, shielded by intelligence and upheld by faith, hope and charity. Col. Ingersoll, as a polemical entity, has neither faith, hope nor charity, as has been abundantly shown. He is simply an iconoclast, an impotent reproduction of the powerful man who pulled out the pillars which supported the temple. He pronounces religion "the upas tree in whose shadow the human heart has withered and turned to ashes"—the falsity of which is before our eyes every day—and adduces nothing else to substantiate his frothy metaphor than the widespread statement that all things in conflict with science are wrong. This is true, but the application is as false as the other statement.

Science and truth are synonymous terms. Religion is the science of metaphysical and spiritual man and is as true as any other department of cosmic philosophy, otherwise it is not religion but pretension, hypocrisy, or, to use the colonel's favorite designation, superstition. But the scoffer against sacred things is not true to himself even there. Like the one who resorts to deceit and must practice more deceit in order that the first may be concealed, he occasionally fails to make his points cohere. Then, if closely watched, he is found out, as Col. Ingersoll has been many times, notably in his memorable controversy with Father Lambert, a Catholic priest of New York. One instance not presented in that debate or elsewhere that we have seen will suffice for present purposes.

The colonel once (at a funeral, if memory serves aright) used a figure of speech which has perhaps been quoted more than any other he ever gave expression to. It was—"Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities." It will be kept in mind that science is his religion; that all that has scientific demonstration or is susceptible of it, is right and all that possesses neither is perforce wrong. Very well. It is demonstrated and demonstrable that all things in existence always existed and always will exist in one form or another, the corollary of which is that something cannot be created out of nothing nor reduced to nothing. How, then, would it be possible to create life—human life at that—out of a "barren peak," and after possessing it with progressive existence, intelligence, capacity and power—all something tangible, surely—pass it along over the other peak into nothingness again? Is there any science in that? Is it remotely to be compared to even the shadowy visions of the North American Indian before being contaminated with Caucasian "superstition," in which he saw the Great Spirit in clouds and heard his voice in the changing winds? The answer to both questions must occur intuitively to the reader—Not at all.

In all, this there is nothing designedly

arraigning Colonel Ingersoll for his peculiar expressions—they cannot all be beliefs, because he is an intelligent man—on the financial or the ecclesiastical question. Nor is there the slightest desire to give offense to any of his admirers, who seem to be somewhat numerous throughout the land. He and they have as much right to their unbelief, real or assumed, as others have to their belief. But when he goes out of his way to assail the whole plan of Christianity and make light of the magnificent work accomplished among the wilds where such as he could never have been induced to set a foot until the Pilgrims had made it safe and pleasant for him to do so (and rail at them while doing it), he goes altogether too far and provokes a rejoinder. This, whenever he permits himself to engage in specific terms, is usually very bad for him, as he is really a vulnerable sort of antagonist in that line. So long as he confines himself to generalities, to ordinary blasphemy and irreverence, he is likely to escape; but he should beware of rushing in where angels fear to tread—only a certain class of people who shall for the present be nameless are supposed to do that.

#### MASONRY AND THE WAR.

As a curiosity it may be interesting to note that Catholic papers charge the Masons of the United States and Spain with the calamities that have befallen the latter country. One journal says one object of Masonry is to destroy eminently Catholic nations, such as Spain, and another asserts that the entire political world is under its domination. It says:

"In France, in Italy, and lately in Spain, all political measures are in the hands of Freemasons and subject to their exclusive control. Germany and the Scandinavian states are ruled by it; Asia, Africa, and China are in its meshes, and 'free' England, 'enlightened' England with her equally enlightened and progressive past and present colonies, is the grand mistress of Masonry throughout the world, for it has made her the mistress of the seas and the possessor of a large share of the wealth of the world. Our American neighbors, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela are in the control of the lodges and governed by the enemies of religion and social order."

Another, a Mexican journal, has this to say:

"One explanation, and only one, is admissible, and that is that the surrender was the result of a Masonic agreement. The Sagasta cabinet, from the premier to the lowest officials, are all Masons. They are all, all Masons, and the government is completely undermined by this accursed society, and the interests of the country, as is universally the case where Freemasonry predominates, are secondary to those of this satanic organization."

It would be a good deal more profitable if the patriotic Spaniards who are endeavoring to find a cause for the national disaster would look for it in the shortcomings of the dominant party that has neglected in the times of peace to provide for the education of the people and for the means of lifting it up to a moral level above that on which it finds enjoyment in brutal bull fights and similar entertainments. It would be more profitable, because when the real source of the misfortune of Spain is found, her redemption is made possible. The Catholic church is a power in the country and should