



Ingersoll, ca. 1880

Coverage of the speech in the *New York Times*, 29 Oct. 1880, included as a footnote to the speech in *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, Vol. IX, New York: The Dresden Publ. Co., 1909.

A political demonstration was made in Wall Street yesterday afternoon that stands without a rival among the many out-door meetings in that place, which for years have been memorable features of Presidential campaigns.

Bankers and brokers, members of the Produce Exchange, and dry goods merchants assembled at their respective rendezvous and marched in imposing processions to the open space in front of the Sub-Treasury building, from the steps of which Col. Ingersoll delivered an address. Written words are entirely inadequate to describe this demonstration of Wall Street business men. It never was equaled in point of numbers, respectability or enthusiasm, even during the excitement caused by the outbreak of the Rebellion. Throughout the day the business houses, banking offices and public buildings down town were gay with flags and bunting. Business was practically suspended all day, and the principal topic of conversation on the Exchanges and in offices and stores was the coming meeting. Long before the hour set, well-dressed people began to gather near the Sub-Treasury Building and by two o'clock Wall Street, from Broad and Nassau half way down to William, was passable

## Robert G. Ingersoll

# Wall Street Speech

**New York City, 28 October 1880 ♦ Excerpts**

### **FELLOW-CITIZENS of the Great City of New York:**

This is the grandest audience I ever saw. This audience certifies that General James A. Garfield is to be the next President of the United States. This audience certifies that a Republican is to be the next mayor of the city of New York. This audience certifies that the business men of New York understand their interests, and that the business men of New York are not going to let this country be controlled by the rebel South and the rebel North. . . .

The Republicans of New York know that the colored party in the South which allows every man to vote as he pleases, is better than any white man who is opposed to allowing a negro to cast his honest vote. A black man in favor of liberty is better than a white man in favor of slavery. The Republicans of New York must be true to their friends. This Government means to protect all its citizens, at home and abroad, or it becomes a byword in the mouths of the nations of the world. . . .

. . . You can only trust the party that has been honest in disaster. From 1863 to 1879 — sixteen long years — the Republican party was the party of honor and principle, and the Republican party saved the honor of the United States. And you know it. . . .

. . . Republicanism means justice in politics. Republicanism means progress in civilization. Republicanism means that every man shall be an educated patriot and a gentleman. I want to say to

only with difficulty. While the crowd was fast gathering on every hand, Grafulla's band, stationed upon the corner buttress near the Sub-Treasury, struck up a patriotic air, and in a few minutes the throngs had swelled to such proportions that the police had all they could do to maintain a thoroughfare. A few minutes more and the distant strains of another band attracted all eyes toward Broadway, where the head of the procession was seen turning into Wall Street. Ten abreast and every man a gentleman, they marched by. At this time Wall Street from half way to William Street to half way to Broadway, Nassau Street half way to Pine, and Broad Street as far as the eye could reach, were densely packed with people from side to side. Everything else, except the telegraph-poles and the tops of the lamp-posts, was hidden from view. Every window, roof, stoop, and projecting point was covered. The Produce Exchange men finding Broad Street impassable made a detour to the east and marched up Wall Street, filling that thoroughfare to William. It was a tremendous crowd in point of numbers, and its composition was entirely of gentlemen—men with refined, intelligent faces—bankers, brokers, merchants of all kinds—real business men. Thousands of millions of dollars were represented in it. On the left of the Sub-Treasury steps a platform had been erected, with a sounding board covering the rear and top. A national flag floated from its roof, and its railing was draped with other flags. After the arrival of the several organizations the banners they bore were hung at the sides by way of further ornamentation. Mr. Jackson S. Schultz then introduced Col. Ingersoll, the speaker of the day. The cheering was terrific for several minutes. Raising his hand for silence, Col. Ingersoll then delivered his address.

you to-day that it is an honor to belong to the Republican party. It is an honor to have belonged to it for twenty years; it is an honor to belong to the party that elected Abraham Lincoln President. And let me say to you that Lincoln was the greatest, the best, the purest, the kindest man that has ever sat in the presidential chair. It is an honor to belong to the Republican party that gave four millions of men the rights of freemen; it is an honor to belong to the party that broke the shackles from four millions of men, women and children. It is an honor to belong to the party that declared that bloodhounds were not the missionaries of civilization. It is an honor to belong to the party that said it was a crime to steal a babe from its mother's breast. It is an honor to belong to the party that swore that this is a Nation forever, one and indivisible. It is an honor to belong to the party that elected U. S. Grant President of the United States. It is an honor to belong to the party that issued thousands and thousands of millions of dollars in promises — that issued promises until they became as thick as the withered leaves of winter; an honor to belong to the party that issued them to put down a rebellion; an honor to belong to the party that put it down; an honor to belong to the party that had the moral courage and honesty to make every one of the promises made in war, as good as shining, glittering gold in peace. And I tell you that if there is another life, and if there is a day of judgment, all you need say upon that solemn occasion is, "I was in life and in my death a good square Republican."

I hate the doctrine of State Sovereignty because it fostered State pride; because it fostered the idea that it is more to be a citizen of a State than a citizen of this glorious country. I love the whole country. I like New York because it is a part of the country, and I like the country because it has New York in it. I am not standing here to-day because the flag of New York floats over my head, but because that flag for which more heroic blood has been shed than for any other flag that is kissed by the air of heaven, waves forever over my head. That is the reason I am here. . . .

There is another thing: Why is this city filled with palaces, covered with wealth? Because American labor has been protected. I am in favor of protection to American labor, everywhere. I am in favor of protecting American brain and muscle; I am in favor of giving scope to American ingenuity and American skill. We want a market at home, and the only way to have it is to have mechanics at home; and the only way to have mechanics is to have protection; and the only way to have protection is to vote the Republican ticket. You, business men of New York, know that General Garfield understands the best interests not only of New York, but of the entire country. And you want to stand by the men who will stand by you. What does a simple soldier know about the wants of the city of New York? What does he know about the wants of this great and splendid country? If he does not know more about it than he knows about the tariff he does not know much. I do not like to hit the dead. My hatred stops with the grave, and I tell you we are going to bury the Democratic party next Tuesday. The pulse is feeble now, and if that party proposes to take advantage of the last hour, it is time it should go into the repenting business. . . .



Campaign poster for the 1880 Republican Garfield-Arthur ticket

James A. Garfield is to-day a poor man, and you know that there is not money enough in this magnificent street to buy the honor and manhood of James A. Garfield. Money cannot make such a man, and I will swear to you that money cannot buy him. James A. Garfield to-day wears the glorious robe of honest poverty. He is a poor man; I like to say it here in Wall Street; I like to say it surrounded by the millions of America; I like to say it in the midst of banks and bonds and stocks; I love to say it where gold is piled — that although a poor man, he is rich in honor; in integrity he is wealthy, and in brain he is a millionaire. I know him, and I like him. So do you all, gentlemen. Garfield was a poor boy, he is a certificate of the splendid form of our Government. . . .

If your father voted the Democratic ticket, that is disgrace enough for one family. Tell the old man you can stand it no longer. Tell the old gentleman that you have made up your mind to stand with the party of human progress; and if he asks you why you cannot vote the Democratic ticket you tell him: “Every man that tried to destroy the Government, every man that shot at the holy flag in heaven, every man that starved our soldiers, every keeper of Libby, Andersonville and Salisbury, every man that wanted to burn the negro, every one that wanted to scatter

yellow fever in the North, every man that opposed human liberty, that regarded the auction-block as an altar and the howling of the bloodhound as the music of the Union, every man who wept over the corpse of slavery, that thought lashes on the naked back were a legal tender for labor performed, every one willing to rob a mother of her child — every solitary one was a Democrat.”

Tell him you cannot stand that party. Tell him you have to go with the Republican party, and if he asks you why, tell him it destroyed slavery, it preserved the Union, it paid the national debt; it made our credit as good as that of any nation on the earth. Tell him it makes every dollar in a four per cent. bond worth a dollar and ten cents; that it satisfies the demands of the highest civilization. Tell the old man that the Republican party preserved the honor of the Nation; that it believes in education; that it looks upon the schoolhouse as a cathedral. Tell him that the Republican party believes in absolute intellectual liberty; in absolute religious freedom; in human rights, and that human rights rise above States. Tell him that the Republican party believes in humanity, justice, human equality, and that the Republican party believes this is a Nation and will be forever and ever; that an honest ballot is the breath of the Republic’s life; that honest money is the blood of the Republic; and that nationality is the great throbbing beat of the



heart of the Republic. Tell him that. And tell him that you are going to stand by the flag that the patriots of the North carried upon the battle-field of death. Tell him you are going to be true to the martyred dead; that you are going to vote exactly as Lincoln would have voted were he living. Tell him that if every traitor dead were living now, there would issue from his lips of dust, “Hurrah for Hancock!”<sup>1</sup> that could every patriot rise, he would cry for Garfield and liberty; for union and for human progress everywhere. Tell him that the South seeks to secure by the ballot what it lost by the bayonet; to whip by the ballot those who fought it in the field. But we saved the country; and we have the heart and brains to take care of it. I will tell you what we are going to do. We are going to treat them in the South just as well as we treat the people in the North. Victors cannot afford to have malice.

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<sup>1</sup> General Winfield Scott Hancock: Union officer during the Civil War; Democratic presidential candidate in 1880, narrowly defeated by James A. Garfield, the Republican candidate. [NHC note]

The North is too magnanimous to have hatred. We will treat the South precisely as we treat the North. There are thousands of good people there. Let us give them money to improve their rivers and harbors; I want to see the sails of their commerce filled with the breezes of prosperity; their fences rebuilt; their houses painted. I want to see their towns prosperous; I want to see schoolhouses in every town; I want to see books in the hands of every child, and papers and magazines in every house; I want to see all the rays of light, of civilization of the nineteenth century, enter every home of the South; and in a little while you will see that country full of good Republicans. We can afford to be kind; we cannot afford to be unkind.

I will shake hands cordially with every believer in human liberty; I will shake hands with every believer in Nationality; I will shake hands with every man who is the friend of the human race. That is my doctrine. I believe in the great Republic; in this magnificent country of ours. I believe in the great people of the United States. I believe in the muscle and brain of America, in the prairies and forests. I believe in New York. I believe in the brains of your city. I believe that you know enough to vote the Republican ticket. I believe that you are grand enough to stand by the country that has stood by you. But whatever you do, I never shall cease to thank you for the great honor you have conferred upon me this day. [This concludes the speech.]

NOTE:—This being a newspaper report it is necessarily incomplete. [Note at end of *New York Times* article, 29 Oct. 1880, reporting the speech, reprinted in *The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, 1909]