

**LITTLE JOURNEYS TO
THE HOMES OF EMINENT
ORATORS, PP. 23-59**

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Little Journeys to the Homes of Eminent Orators, pp. 23-59 by Samuel Warner & Elbert Hubbard

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SAMUEL WARNER & ELBERT HUBBARD

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Robert Ingersoll


ROBERT INGERSOLL



**Little *Boys*
Journeys**
To the Homes of
**EMINENT
ORATORS**
Ingersoll

Written by Elbert
Hubbard and done
into a Book by the
Roycrofters at the
Shop, which is in
East Aurora, New
York, N. Y. 1903

LOVE is the only bow on life's dark cloud. It is the morning and the evening star. It shines upon the babe, and sheds its radiance on the quiet tomb. It is the Mother of Art, inspirer of poet, patriot and philosopher. It is the air and light to tired souls—builder of every home, kindler of every fire on every hearth. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody—for music is the voice of love. Love is the magician, the enchanter that changes worthless things to joy, and makes right royal kings and queens of common clay. It is the perfume of that wondrous flower, the heart, and without that sacred passion, that divine swoon, we are less than beasts; but with it, earth is heaven and we are gods.



HE was three years old, was Robert Ingersoll. There was a baby boy one year old, Ebon by name, then there was John, five years, and two elder sisters. **Q** Little Robert wore a red linsey-woolsey dress, and was a restless, active youngster with a big head, a round face and a pug nose. No one ever asked, "What is it?"—there was "boy" written large in every baby action, and every feature from chubby bare feet to the two crowns of his close-cropped tow head.

It was a morning in January, and the snow lay smooth and white over all those York State hills. The winter sun sent long gleams of light through the frost covered panes upon which the children were trying to draw pictures. Visitors began to arrive—visitors in stiff Sunday clothes, altho it was n't Sunday. There were aunts, and uncles, and cousins, and then just neighbors. They filled the little house full. Some of the men went out and split wood and brought in big armfuls and piled it in the corner. They moved on tiptoe and talked in whispers. And now and then they would walk softly into the little parlor by twos

and threes and close the door after them. ¶ This parlor was always a forbidden place to the children—on Sunday afternoons only were they allowed to go in there, or on prayer meeting night.

In this parlor were six hair-cloth chairs and a sofa to match. In the center was a little marble-top table, and on it were two red books and a blue one. On the mantel was a plaster-of-Paris cat at one end and a bunch of crystallized flowers at the other. There was a "what-not" in the corner covered with little shells and filled with strange and wonderful things. There was a "store" carpet, bright red. It was a very beautiful room, and to look into it was a great privilege. ¶ Little Robert had tried several times to enter the parlor this cold winter morning, but each time he had been thrust back. Finally he clung to the leg of a tall man, and was safely inside. It was very cold—one of the windows was open! He looked about with wondering baby eyes to see what the people wanted to go in there for!

On two of the hair-cloth chairs rested a coffin. The baby hands clutched the side—he drew himself up on tiptoe and looked down at the still, white face—the face of his mother. Her hands were crossed just so, and in her fingers was a spray of flowers—he recognized them as the flowers she had always worn on her Sunday bonnet—a rusty black bonnet—not real flowers, just "made" flowers.

But why was she so quiet? He had never seen her

hands that way before—those hands were always busy: knitting, sewing, cooking, weaving, scrubbing, washing!

“Mamma! Mamma!” called the boy.

“Hush, little boy, hush! Your Mamma is dead,” said the tall man, and he lifted the boy in his arms and carried him from the room.

Out in the kitchen, in a crib in the corner, lay the “Other Baby,” and thither little Robert made his way. He patted the sleeping baby brother, and called aloud in lisping words, “Wake up, Baby, your Mamma is dead!”

And the baby in the crib knew quite as much about it as the toddler in the linsey-woolsey dress, and the toddler knew as much about death as we do to-day. This wee youngster kept thinking how good it was that Mamma could have such a nice rest—the first rest she had ever known—and just lie there in the beautiful room and hold her flowers!

Fifty years passes. These children, grown to manhood, are again together. One, his work done, is at rest. Standing by his bier, the other voices these deathless words:

“Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We call aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in