

Ingersoll Lecture May 18th

CUS417/100.84

cf.

May 16th ~~Write address of University Club New York, N.Y.~~

INGERSOLL LECTURES.

was in state for him
complexion's wrong, because the spring of '905
had not clearly accepted
I little realize what ~~the following~~ ~~you was to say~~ ~~Osler at this time~~ ~~because to~~
~~was a first class with some misprints and reluctance~~ ~~an~~ ~~invitation to give one of the series of lectures~~

As I recall it, the story of his reading the Ingersoll Lecture ~~at~~ ~~at Howard University.~~
was somewhat as follows:

President Eliot had long ~~wished to get~~ ~~some medical men to give~~ *desired that* *wished that a physician might participate*
one of the lectures on this Foundation, and in 1900 (?) had approached ~~William H. Welch~~
Dr. Welch on the subject, ~~and the following correspondence ensued.~~ *was even asked on exchange plates to the effect - from his place: from*

From Dr. Welch: that so far as he could see Science had nothing to do with Immortality - *from*

From Mr. Eliot: That was just what he wanted him to say. - *from*

From Dr. Welch: that it would not be possible to fill an hour in saying so.

Whether ^{a man} Mr. Eliot had forgotten this episode ~~or not~~, I am not sure, *does not appear but the next summer*

but he approached him again the following summer, at Bar Harbor I believe, *he approached Dr. Welch again with no better result.* and it led to the same series of replies. Mr. Eliot then said *intended to*

that he would continue to pester Dr. Welch ~~until he gave the lectures~~ *persist until* unless he would get someone else to give ~~them in his place~~, *give in y* and Welch suggested Osler, ~~and told Mr. Eliot if he would write to Osler and let~~ *the lecture* *thereupon*

him know at the time, that he had done so, he would see what he could do *be* himself toward urging him to accept. ~~This was done~~, *conspicuous was active upon* and a day or two after the invitation had been sent from Cambridge Dr. Welch dropped in *this secret* at 1 West Franklin St., and Osler said: *the following conversation took place.*

Q. "Welch; what do you think? They have asked me to give the Ingersoll Lecture."

X ^{W.H.W.} Welch: "How splendid; you're going to accept of course."

Osler was written to and refused eventually, a Mr. Eliot says recalls. A conspiracy on their behalf upon so it is said, that Mr. Eliot was to write again and was to advise Welch of the time before done so.

Osler replied: "Of course not. ^{W.C. Splendid!} I wouldn't think of talking before a Boston audience on such a ^{on immortality} subject as Immortality. ^{and have already refused me.} It would be impossible."

Welch ^{W.H.W.} said: "Why you're a perfect coward. You must do it of course. No one ever refuses an invitation to give an Ingersoll Lecture."

Osler ^{W.C.} replied: "Do you really mean it?" ^{frankly} and the long and short of it was ^{he finally} that he was persuaded to accept. ^{ultimately he}

equivocal
impetuous

It must have been in the Fall of 1903, and the next Spring was a very hectic time, with preparations for a trip to England possibly with the fore-knowledge that he was to be approached regarding the Regius Professorship; with the preparation of many other promised papers; with a revision of the Textbook (?); and in despair a few days before May 18th the day of the Lecture approached, he fled to New York, ^{reluctantly} took a room in the University Club over night, and the next morning wrote the entire Lecture in the library of the club. He came back that afternoon and read the Lecture to a few of us in what must have been nearly its final form, so full of allusions and quotations from ^{Holy writ} the Bible, from "In Memoriam" and other sources, that one needs to read it with the Bible in one hand and a copy of Tennyson in the other. The only real preparation that he had been able to make for it was to get the head nurses in the hospital to give him some exact transcriptions of the last words of dying patients, and the sum total of it was that most people die quietly and comfortably without last messages, and those that are attributed to great men who have passed are usually apochryphal. Though a charming essay, ^{is was?} and evidently written in some haste, for a careful checking up of the references shows that he

Do not really want to give the lecture. He is only trying to get out of a predicament.

has misquoted his sources in several places even in the volume containing the essay as corrected for publication.

Mr. Eliot, perhaps most of all, was disappointed, and admits the fact.

(In C.W.E's letter of April 8, 1920, he says that he asked W.O. twice, and that the first time he refused energetically. It is possible that he may be recalling Welch's refusals. Dr. Welch must check up this story.)

cf. the note on Melville's death factors, Mrs. Roosevelt (copy)

After the lecture before Walter Pease - Mr. Eliot said Mrs. Ollie has a great reluctance to come down among his relations. We had replied jokingly that Mrs. O objected to living near her relations.