


1-1926

Famous American Jury Speeches, by Frederick C. Hicks

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Recommended Citation

Batman, Ira C. (1926) "Famous American Jury Speeches, by Frederick C. Hicks," *Indiana Law Journal*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 6.
Available at: <http://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol1/iss2/6>

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Famous American Jury Speeches. By Frederick C. Hicks. St. Paul, West Publishing Company, 1915. Pp. 1180. Price \$5.00.

This publication consists of a book of 1180 pages with blue Fabrikoid binding. It is a compilation of 24 notable speeches by famous American lawyers, delivered between the years 1884 and 1924. The title is not an accurate indication of the character of the speeches, as a number of the were not made before juries, but before other fact-finding bodies or courts. This, however, should not be disappointing, as those of the latter character are fully as interesting and instructive as the former. The compiler has used good judgment in making his selections, both of men and subject matter. Unlike some publications of a similar kind, the book is not a mere compilation of speeches by so-called jury orators of former years in famous murder trials, wherein favorable verdicts were sought through eloquent appeals, designed to affect the emotions. The authors of a number of the speeches are still alive, and actively engaged in present-day affairs, which makes them nationally known, and contributes to the reader's interest. Among these we note the names of Borah, Darrow, Delmas, Crowe, Wellman, Dunne, Littleton and Hillquist. While a number of the speeches were made in murder trials, there is, on the whole, such a wide range of subject matter, much of which relates to questions of public concern, as to keep the reader's interest alive, and avoid the monotony which sometimes causes a book to be cast aside before the final chapter is reached. To illustrate: Socialism is discussed in its favorable and unfavorable light, by Hillquit and Conboy, respectively, in the proceedings to exclude certain members from seats in the New York Assembly. Personal responsibility for the commission of crime is presented by Darrow and answered by Crowe, in the Leopold-Loeb murder trial. Methods of political bosses are disclosed through the summations for the defendant by Benschoten and Bowers, in the Barnes-Roosevelt libel suit. The speeches of Osborne in the investigation of the charges against Senator Allds, and that of Brackett in the impeachment of Governor Sulzer, are logical, forceful and convincing. The discussion of the labor unions, by Borah in the Coeur d'Alene riot murder trial, and of the boycott by Merritt and Davenport in the Danbury Hatters' case, will hold the interest of the reader. In addition to these, many other questions are discussed, involving admiralty, clubs, conspiracy, corporations, finance, forgery, larceny and perjury.

But aside from any interest created by the reputation of the authors of the speeches, and the character of the subject matter discussed, the reader, whether he be layman or lawyer, will note the masterly skill exercised by the speakers in many instances, in meeting their opponents' arguments. This skill, as a rule, is not made manifest through flights of forensic eloquence, except in so far as forceful logic may be termed forensic eloquence. However, here and there throughout the book may be found well-rounded paragraphs of choice language, which, when uttered under the inspiration of the occasion, no doubt impressed the speaker's auditors as real eloquence. In this category may be classed Burnett's description of the ebb and flow of financial prosperity, and Wellman's characterization of the libertine.

The speeches appear to be in form as delivered, and hence there is to some extent a repetition of thought, which at times renders the reading a little tedious, through a desire to reach the author's treatment of other phases of the case. There is full compensation for this, however, in the feeling that they are genuine, and thus reflect the real forensic skill and ability of the speaker.

The publication, with a minimum of objectionable features, has much to commend it to the reading public, both as a source of instruction and a means of entertainment.

IRA C. BATMAN.