The Sun.

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A Sinister Spectacle.

We reprint parts of President ROOSEVELT's letters to WILLIAM DUDLEY FOULKE of Indiana, written in the earlier stages of the campaign. In the light of the spectacle now presented at Chicago we invite an attentive perusal by honest and self-respecting Republicans.

It is worth considering in order to determine whether or not the Republican party is a living lie.

Is it strange that the whole situation at Chicago is overclouded with sickening doubt when we behold a mob of officeholders, in utter derision of every decent principle and tradition of our political life, doing the bidding of an irresponsible, unscrupulous and dishonest autocrat?

Lafcadio Hearn.

Dr. GEORGE M. GOULD of Philadelphia has at last been goaded into lifting the veil which concealed the most unattractive aspects of LAFCADIO HEARN's private life. Now his admirers know the truth and have themselves to thank for it. Dr. GOULD maintains that HEARN was an unmoral man, possessing no character in the sense in which we understand the term, and that he was essentially incapable of gratitude or attachment. Moreover, he makes a showing that is really unanswerable.

About two years ago THE SUN ventured certain comments on perfectly well known aspects of Mr. HEARN's private life, chiefly with a view to emphasizing his undoubtedly remarkable literary achievements. This provoked a storm of protest from persons who knew HEARN by his works and were evidently ignorant of the facts behind that barrier. Delightful and accomplished persons of both sexes who had seen HEARN on parade, so to speak, and found his external eccentricities rather captivating than otherwise, rushed to the rescue with observations more or less intemperate and impertinent. From this small beginning has arisen the storm of ill omened gossip just now stilled by Dr. GOULD's authoritative utterance.

LAFCADIO HEARN was master of a peculiarly luminous and vivid style. It is true no doubt that his work consisted largely in the transposition into equivalent English of the products of other minds, especially those of GAUTIER, LOTI and MAUPASSANT, but no one can read his original story "Cheeta" without recognizing his tremendous descriptive skill and the profound and passionate genius that inspired it. That he was a wonderful man in many ways cannot be successfully denied, but it would have been better for him and his memory if his ill advised admirers had left unchallenged the comparatively unimportant details which had not been advanced in an unkind spirit and could not have been employed to his disparagement in any purely literary sense.

It is always unfortunate when controversy, no matter how provoked, leads up to revelations that disenchant us with our heroes. It should not be so, because the private lives of public men do not concern us in any proper way. The fact remains, however, and should be kept in mind by those likely to be unpleasantly affected by it. LAFCADIO HEARN was in some respects a genius. He left behind him fame enough for the delectation of the coterie of his worshippers had they been willing to leave well enough alone. It was only when they undertook to show that he was a desirable citizen, clean of life and orderly in respect of his daily walks, incidentally branding with infamy all who whispered otherwise, that they came to grief.

The Educational Drama.

History has an incurable habit of repeating itself, and for that reason no one need be astonished at the appearance of another project to establish an educational theatre. This one is intended to fill the mind of youth with high ideals and moral principles. Naturally every one will wish the project well, and at the same time will cherish a certain amount of scepticism as to its perfect fulfilment of the lofty mission with which it is charged, for the history of the strictly moral and religious drama has, to say the least, been discouraging.

The solemnity with which St. GREGORY of Nazianzen in the fourth century set about regenerating the Roman drama by constructing a play on the passion of CHRIST was soon succeeded by the lamentable attempt of the learned nun, HROSWITHA of Saxony, who set out to show that much better comedies than those of TERENCE might be written, and that, too, with a moral purpose. The excellent sister did not hesitate to introduce comedy of a most graphic order, for in one of her plays some nuns, finding themselves rudely wooed by a bold Roman soldiery, fell upon their knees and prayed with such effect that the legionaries suddenly turned about and addressed their ardent protestations to pots and kettles in the convent kitchen instead of to the holy women.

The success of the old religious plays led to their being performed in the open air, for the churches were too small to hold the audiences. It was not long before the spirit of frolic which accompanied the outdoor crowd permeated the plays, and buffooneries of many sorts were introduced. At one period it was the custom to have three stages rising in a perpendicular series. The lowest represented the infernal regions, the middle one the earth and the uppermost heaven. The devil was the low comedian of the play and was chased and beaten with bladders tied to the ends of sticks.

It was the growth and prevalence of these abuses that led to various reforms, one of which resulted in 1600 in the establishment of the musical form of the religious drama, known to us as the oratorio. For a century after its introduction the oratorio was in most instances acted just as the opera was. Finally it assumed the solemn and funereal aspect of dress suits and evening gowns which go with it now, so that we behold ELIJAH wearing kid gloves when he denounces the priests of BAAL.

It is a devious and rocky path that the moral and religious drama has travelled, and it would be well for the projectors of the new educational theatre to think several times lest they find themselves inevitably tending toward sleep dealing concert on the one hand, or sacred vaudeville on the other. Meanwhile, might it not be interesting to try the experiment of playing one of the really dramatic oratorios in operatic form?

MENDELSSOHN's "Elijah" almost clamors for such treatment. But possibly ELIJAH was too strenuous a character to be held up for the consideration of gentle youth.

SUSANNAH is also ruled out, and SAMSON must be laid aside. JEPHTHA and his daughter are tragic enough, but suggest no profound moral for youth. MASSENET's "Eve" cannot be considered even for an instant. But stop a moment. In Boston there is a man who has composed an oratorio on the subject of JOB. Here indeed is a moralizer of parts. Let the educational theatre management consider JOB. Great good might come therefrom to the young and also to the composer.

Will Theodore Roosevelt Repeat William McKinley's Fatal Mistake?

Mr. FRANK HITCHCOCK, as Grand Master of the Revels, has positively stated that the Republican convention will be permitted to select its own nominee for Vice-President. The convention should be so impressed with this act of royal condescension as to increase the incense which it will burn at the throne. The King, having named his successor, revised the address to the throne of the pliant LODGE and drafted its declaration of principles, has apparently consented that the Republican convention, lest it lose its former habit of independent thought, should exercise judgment in what to Mr. ROOSEVELT is a minor matter.

But is it a minor matter? History should teach Mr. ROOSEVELT that there is a possible peril to "my policies" in this concession. Mr. ROOSEVELT owed his nomination for the Vice-Presidency not to the choice or wish of WILLIAM MCKINLEY but to the kindly policy of conciliation which always characterized that peace loving President.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY had no illusions with respect to Mr. ROOSEVELT. No one knew better than MCKINLEY that Mr. ROOSEVELT was a cross between a harebrained fanatic and a conscienceless demagogue. Had not President MCKINLEY on the eve of the Spanish-American war heard with mingled surprise and amusement the extraordinary suggestion of his Assistant Secretary of the Navy that the United States, without any previous declaration of war, should open fire upon the unsuspecting Spanish fleet as it came hither on a presumed mission of peace, and sink its ships, officers and men to the bottom of the sea? WILLIAM MCKINLEY may have forgiven but he never forgot this piratical suggestion. Did not his peaceable disposition further impel President MCKINLEY to ignore the request of his Secretary of War that Lieutenant-Colonel ROOSEVELT be court-martialled for gross insubordination and unmilitary conduct in Cuba?

What, then, induced WILLIAM MCKINLEY to yield to the wish of those then potent politicians, QUAY and PLATT, that New York be relieved from the incubus of an erratic Governor by nominating him for Vice-President? MCKINLEY could have determined otherwise. His mastery of the Republican convention in 1900 was absolute and complete, not through the employment of Federal officeholders or other "steam roller" process, but because the Republican convention of that year, with a unanimity that was spontaneous, acclaimed MCKINLEY as the leader of the Republican party and not unnaturally sought his preference as to his running mate in the electoral contest to follow. MCKINLEY quietly counselled against the danger of ROOSEVELT's nomination, but his sense of delicacy was such that he did not wish to dictate to a Republican convention what its action should be in any manner. How strange a few passing years has made that delicacy seem!

This concession through considerations of delicacy was the fatal mistake of MCKINLEY's career. As a result the splendid prosperity which he built up was ruthlessly destroyed. The era of good feeling between sections and classes which had come to pass through his wise statecraft and gentle personality was brought to an untimely end. The conservative policies of WILLIAM MCKINLEY were speedily put to an open shame, notwithstanding the solemn assurance of THEODORE ROOSEVELT, as he stood by the open coffin of the dead President, that he would carry out the policies of his predecessor, under which the country had prospered beyond expectation or precedent.

Ought not THEODORE ROOSEVELT to take warning by the fate which through him has befallen MCKINLEY's policies? If he permits the Republican convention to deliberate about anything, may it not in the first surprise of intellectual freedom nominate a so-called "reactionary," otherwise a conservative Republican, who respects the Constitution, believes in vested rights and does not seek to inflame one class against another? Should this take place it is at least possible, in the strange mutations of life, that "my policies" may one day be abandoned, just as the sagacious policies of MCKINLEY were first destroyed and then outraged by a successor who in so doing shamelessly violated his promise, uttered in the solemnity of the death chamber, to carry out the policies of WILLIAM MCKINLEY.

It is probably unnecessary to remind the master politician of this possibility. THE SUN suspects that the President will only apparently leave the convention to select the Vice-President. To feed his insatiate vanity it is necessary that he should make it clear to all men that he and not the convention has nominated TAFT. But prudence requires that the public shall think that the convention is in some respects free to exercise its judgment. We confidently expect, however, that at the opportune moment the great Autocrat, with or without Mr. TAFT's consent, will name his running mate and the convention will obediently ratify the choice.

And this is the party of LINCOLN, GRANT, GARFIELD, HARRISON and MCKINLEY!

The Hon. Seth Low at Chicago.

It appears that the Hon. SETH LOW of this town has accepted the consideration of himself at Chicago for membership of the committee on resolutions. An admirable choice. It would be difficult to conceive of a man of more remarkable adaptability. The committee is the one which is looked to to provide a vehicle whereby the convention may load the Republican party with the responsibility for the movement to limit the powers of the courts, legalize boycotting and exempt labor unions from the operations of existing laws. Mr. LOW ought to be a member at once. He is a practised boycotter himself. Indeed, we doubt if a more conscienceless boycotter and political blackmailer is anywhere to be found.

There is no more edifying spectacle than Mr. LOW at his congenial task, so great is the effect of his respectability, and his piety and his transcendental accomplishments, to say nothing of the costliness and admirable taste of his raiment.

Mr. LOW ought to be chairman of the committee on resolutions.

The Freedom of the Press.

The press, THE SUN alone excepted, is enrolled in the powerful and wealthy trust familiar to all as the Associated Press. It is not disputed that this great aggregation of newspapers is contrary to law or that it explicitly violates the Sherman law.

It has been made aware of its susceptibility to disaster at the hands of the Attorney-General. It knows that there is no corporation so strong that it can escape Mr. ROOSEVELT's attention or fail to be dealt with according to its availability for his purposes. The press is a noble engine to have to one's hand in a great political campaign, but never in its history did any man have his will of it as Mr. ROOSEVELT has his now.

The piano dealers recently in conference here have uttered a comforting prediction as to the future effect upon their trade of the mechanical piano playing devices. It appears from their statements that the sale of these appliances has grown steadily larger, while the teachers of piano report simultaneously that the number of their pupils has so far shown no decrease. The sale of the regular instruments has not diminished and the demand for pianos supplied with the new appliances is ever increasing. Thus it appears that the machines have tended to multiply the demand for pianos from players as well as from those whose lack of early training compels them to take their enjoyment on the mechanical instruments.

Experience has shown that the mechanical players do not discourage those who are anxious to learn the art of playing the piano. The new method of making music does not divert them from the effort to learn in the old fashioned way.

So here is one case in which the triumph of a mechanical process has not eliminated the art which suggested it.

The disagreement of the jury in the fourth trial of CALEB POWERS for complicity in the assassination of Governor GOEBEL, ten of the jurors standing for acquittal, would have justified a Democratic Governor in pardoning POWERS, but would a Democratic Governor in politics cursed Kentucky have had the moral courage to pardon him? The history of the notorious case precludes the idea.

It is a sinister commentary upon the state of public feeling in Kentucky that the freedom of CALEB POWERS depended upon the inauguration of a Republican Governor, although the world believed the prisoner of eight years, three times tried and once sentenced to death, to be as innocent as any juror or Judge who tried him and the victim of a foul wrong. Doubtless there are many people in Kentucky, such is the spell of political hate, who will always believe in the guilt of CALEB POWERS, but Governor WILLSON cannot be charged with precipitancy. He has taken almost two months to pass upon the application for pardon, and his reputation for legal ability and fairness is so high that there is no reason to doubt that his decision of the case was strictly upon its merits, and not made, as will be charged by political opponents, in a spirit of Republican partisanship.

For Obtrusive Letter Boxes.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I quarrel with your conclusion on "Paint on the Letter Boxes" when you ask: "But what sane person wants to make the letter boxes a conspicuous and unavoidable incident of the landscape, anyway?"

It may denote the taint of insanity in me, but as the most difficult part of the job of letter writing for me is the posting, I want, in addition to red paint and the suggested bell and electric light attachment, an automatic iron arm that will reach for me as I pass. ABSENTMINDED BEGGAR.

NEW YORK, June 12.

Everywhere.

Knicker—The trail of the big stick is over everything.

Bocker—Yes, even Panama has received an intimation: "Somebody or Me."

Placed.

Knicker—Are they a bridal couple?

Bocker—No, by his devotion I should judge she is a cook he is taking out to the suburbs.

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.

Religious conversion and its psychology have furnished the world's library with many volumes. Perfectly understood in the ages of faith, the subject is for modern thinkers seemingly as susceptible of explanation. Only we pave the way now by a psychological course instead of the ancient doctrine of grace abounding. Nor do we confound the irresistible desire of certain temperaments to spill their innermost thoughts with what is called conversion. There was Rousseau, who confessed things that the world would be better without having heard. He was not converted. Tolstoi, believing that primitive Christianity is almost lost to his fellow beings, preaches what he thinks is the real faith, and squanders his soul on paper in the operation. Yet he was converted. He had been, he said, a terrible transgressor. The grace of God gave sight to his sin saturated eyeballs. Is there the slightest analogy between his case and that of Cardinal Newman? John Henry Newman had led a spotless life before he left the Anglican fold. Nevertheless he was a convert. And Saint Augustine, the pattern of all self-confessors, the classic case, may be compared to John Bunyan or to Saint Paul! Professor William James, who with his admirable impartiality has scrutinized the psychological topsyturvy we name conversion, has not missed the commonplace fact that every man as to details varies, but at base the psychical machinery is controlled by the same motor impulses. *A chacun son infini!*

Some natures reveal a mania for confession. Dostoievsky's novels are, as Turgenieff says, "psychological mole runs," a fidgety burrowing into the subliminal self. Dostoievsky's men and women continually tell what they have thought, what crimes they have committed. It was an epileptic obsession with this unhappy Russian writer Edgar Poe declared that no man could tell the truth about himself without the paper being consumed; yet Paul Verlaine blithely sang of his ghastly life, and Baudelaire did not spare himself. So it would seem that the inability of certain natures to keep their most precious secrets is also the keynote of religious confessions. But let us not muddle this with the sincerity or insincerity of the change. Leslie Stephen has said that it did not matter much whether Pascal was sincere, and instanced the Pascal wager (*le pari de Pascal*) as evidence of the great thinker's casuistry. It is better to believe and be on the safe side than be damned if you do not believe; for if there is no hereafter your believing that there is will not matter one way or the other. This is the substance of Pascal's wager, and it must be admitted that the ardent upholder of Jansenism and the opponent of the Jesuits proved himself an excellent pupil of the latter when he framed his famous proposition.

Among the converts who have become almost notorious in France during the last two decades are Ferdinand Brunetière, François Coppée, Paul Verlaine and Joris Karl Huysmans—the greatest *prosateur* since Flaubert. But it must not be forgotten that if the four trod the Road to Damascus they were all returning to their early city of faith. They had been baptized Roman Catholics. All four had strayed. And widely different reasons brought them back to their mother Church. We need not dwell now on the case of Villiers de l'Isle Adam, as his was a deathbed repentance; nor with Paul Bourget, a Catholic born and on the side of his faith since the publication of "Cosmopolis." As for Maurice Barrès, he may be a Mohammedan for all we care. He will always stand on his head.

The stir in literary and religious circles over Huysmans's trilogy, "En Route," "La Cathédrale" and "L'Oblat," must have influenced the succeeding generation of French writers. Of a sudden sad young rakes who spouted verse in the æsthetic taverns of the Left Bank fell to writing religious verse. Mary Queen of Heaven became their shibboleth. They invented new sins so that they might repent in a novel fashion. They lacked the delicious lyric gift of Verlaine and the tremendous and enfolding moral earnestness of Huysmans to make thmselves believed. One, however, has emerged from the rest, and his book, "Du Diable à Dieu" ("From the Devil to God"), has crossed the twenty-fifth thousandth; perhaps it is further by this time. The author is an authentic poet, his name, Adolphe Retté. For his confessions the lately deceased François Coppée wrote a dignified and sympathetic preface. Retté's place in contemporary poetry is high. Since Verlaine we hardly dare to think of another poet of such charm, verve, originality. An anarchist with Sebastien Faure and Jean Grave, a Socialist of all brands, a lighted lyric torch among the insurrectionists, a symbolist, a writer of the "free verse" (which is hedged in by more rules, though unformulated and unwritten, than the stiffest academic production of Boileau) Adolphe Retté led the life of an individualist poet; precisely the sort of life at which pulpit pounders would point and cry: "There, there is your æsthetic poet, your man of feeling, of finer feelings than his neighbors! Behold to what base uses he has put this gift! See him wallowing with the swine!" And, practically, these words Retté has employed in speaking of himself. He insulted religion in the boulevard journals; he hailed with joy the separation of Church and State. He wrote not too decent novels; though his verse is feathered with the purest pinions. He treated his wife badly, neglecting her for the inevitable Other Woman. (What a banal example this is, after all.) He once, so he tells us to his horror, maltreated the poor woman because of her piety. Typical, you will say, all this. Yes. Then why confess it in several hundred pages of chiselled prose, why rehearse for gaping, indifferent Paris the threadbare, sordid tale? Paris, too, so cynical on the subject of conversions, and also very suspicious of such spiritual *bouleversement* as Retté's! "No, it won't do, Huysmans is to blame," exclaimed many.

Yet this conversion—literally one, for he was educated in a Protestant college—is sincere. He means every word he writes; and if he is copiously rhetorical, set it all down to the literary temperament. He wrote not only with the approval of his spiritual counsellor, but also for the same reason as Saint Augustine or Bunyan. Newman's confession was an Apologia, an answer to Kingsley's challenge. With Huysmans, he is such a consummate artist that we could imagine him plotting ahead his cycle of novels (if novels they are); from "Là-Bas" to "Lourdes" the spiritual modulation is harmonious. Now, M. Retté (he was born in 1863 in Paris of an Ardennaise family), while he has sung in his melodious voice many alluring songs, while he has shown the impressions wrought upon his spirit by Walt Whitman and Richard Wagner, there is little in the rich extravagance of his love for nature or the occasional Vergilian silver calm of his verse—he can sound more than one chord on his poetic keyboard—to prepare us for the great plunge into the healing waters of faith. A pagan nature is his in his early work, apart from the hatred and contempt he later displayed toward religion. How did it all come about? He has related it in this book, and we are free to confess that though we must not challenge the author's sincerity his manner is far from reassuring. He is of the brood of Baudelaire.

Huysmans frankly gave up the riddle in his own case. No epileptic seizure, no voices from the void, no electric bolt from the blue, none of the well known "phenomena" could he adduce as testimony. He awoke one morning a believer. The cup had overflowed. He admits that his love of art led him to the Church, an art as purely external as that in Goncourt's "Madame Gervaisais." Atavism may have had its way; he had relatives who were in convents; a pessimism that drove him from the world also contributed its share in the change. Personally Huysmans prefers to set it down to the mercy and grace of God—which is the simplest definition after all. When we are through with these self-accusing men; when professional psychology is tired of inventing new terminologies, then let us do as did Huysmans—go back to the profoundest of all the psychologists, the pioneers of the moderns;—Saint Theresa—what virile munificence is in her "Castle of the Soul," Saint John of the Cross, and Ruysbroeck—the latter that Flemish mystic who taught Ernest Hello his first lessons and later gave to Maurice Maeterlinck a storehouse of ideas. They are mystics possessing a fierce faith; and without faith a mystic is like a moon without the sun. Adolphe Retté knows the great Spanish mystics and quotes them almost as liberally as Huysmans. But with a difference. He has read Huysmans too closely; books breed books, ideas and moods beget moods and ideas. We are quite safe in saying that if "En Route" had not been written, Retté's "Du Diable à Dieu" could not have appeared in its present shape. The similarity is both external and internal. John of the Cross had his "Night Obscure," so has M. Retté; Huysmans, however, showed him the way. Retté holds an obstinate dialogue with the Devil (who is a capitalized creature). Consult the wonderful fifth chapter in "En Route"! Naturally there must be a certain resemblance in these spiritual adventures when the Evil One captures the outposts of the soul and makes sudden savage dashes into its depths. Retté's style is not in the least like Huysmans. It is more fluent, swifter, and more staccato. You skim his pages; in Huysmans you recognize the distilled remorse; you move as in a penitential procession, the rhythms grave, the eyes dazzled by the vision divine, the voice lowly chanting. Not so Retté, who glibly discourses in sacred territory, who is terribly at ease in Zion.

Almost gayly he recounts his misdeeds. He pelts his former associates with hard names. He pities Anatole France for his socialistic affinities. All that formerly attracted him is anathema. Even the mysterious lady with the dark eyes is castigated. She is not a truth teller. She does not understand the protean soul of her poet. *Retro me Sathanas!* It is very exhilarating, even amusing. The Gallic soul in its most resilient humor is on view. See it rebound! Watch it ascend on high, ballooned by delicious phrase, asking sweet pardon; then it falls to earth abusing its satanic adversary with sinister energy. At times we overhear the honeyed accents, the silky tones of Renan. It is he, not Retté, who exclaims: "*Mais quelles douces larmes!*" Ah! Renan—also a cork soul! The "Imitation" is much dwelt upon—the influence of Huysmans has been incalculable in this. And we forgive M. Retté his theatricalism for the lovely French paraphrase he has made of "Salve Regina." But on the whole we prefer "En Route." It is already a classic of its kind. The starting point of Retté's change was reading some verse in the "Purgatory" of the "Divine Comedy." A literary conversion? Possibly, yet none the less complete. All roads lead to Rome, and the Road to Damascus may be achieved from many devious side paths. But in writing with such engaging frankness the memoirs of his soul we wish that Retté had more carefully followed the closing sentence of his brilliant little book: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam!*

PIFCAFILLIANA.

McGubbinsky's Apologies.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I regret exceedingly that Miss Gwendolyn Vere de Vere (first row, fifth from the o. p. end) should have been made the target of Pisistratus Pifcafilly's clumsy verbal arrows, but I am not surprised. There is no knowing to what depths a name like that will drag a man. I can hardly blame him for his lack of common courtesy, for his nature must naturally be sadly warped with the effort to carry his absurd appellation through life. But does Mr. Pifcafilly fondly imagine that he has a monopoly of—well, let us say, curious names? My own *nom de guerre*, as he assumes it to be, is a trifle out of the ordinary, and as he rightly conjectures, is Greek-Irish, with a little dash of the Polish to give it flavor. It is not a *nom de guerre*, however, but honestly acquired through a long and distinguished line of ancestors, and is a veritable *nom de baptême*, as his may be.

I say "may be" because I have a sort of sneaking idea that Pisistratus Pifcafilly deliberately adopted that name in the vain hope that it might win him some measure of fame. He is very thirsty for fame, or else why does he make such strenuous efforts to butt in to the Chorus Ladies' Pisistratus Club? Let him be content with having pet billy goats and fighting cocks named after him, and if it will add to his joy I will gladly name a bull pup after him, but he must be made to realize that there are limits to his ambition.

One of the limits is the outer door (stage) of the Chorus Ladies' Pisistratus Club, but I could mention about forty thousand others.

XENOPHON MCGUBBINSKY.

NEW YORK, June 13.

The Mrs. Hemans of Broadway.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Through the kindly but mistaken zeal of my gentleman friend Mr. Xenophon McGubbinsky, the verses I dashed off the other night in my dressing room between the acts about one Pisistratus Pifcafilly were published and have called forth an indignant protest from their victim. He may well be a monomaniac on the subject of his foolish name, but I am not one on the subject of my verse writing, and so I cheerfully acknowledge that they were "bad," "execrable" and "ridiculous." But think of their theme! Do you wonder that Pegasus shied at that name? I believe in the Gilbertian plan of letting the punishment fit the crime. My verses were written as a punishment for the crime of that silly cognomen. I didn't write them for publication, but I am glad to see that Mr. P. Pifcafilly writhed under their flagellation, even if he was so ungallant as to attack me, a perfect lady, under the thin disguise of berating Mr. McGubbinsky, who was the mere medium through which my verses reached THE SUN. Let me merely add that I showed the verses to all the ladies of our Pisistratus Club and they all expressed the opinion that my poetry was just grand.

GWENDOLYN VERE DE VERE.

NEW YORK, June 12.

Pifcafilanthropy.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Pisistratus Pifcafilly should rejoice in having his cacophanous appellation inscribed on THE SUN's roll of honor in such good company as Dithyramb Dick, Pod Dismukes, the Hon. Dink Botts and Colonel Abe Slupsky, and bear in mind the consolatory thought that he lacks only the discerning eye and talent of a George Eliot as his spiritual biographer to embody in a lasting form the glories and lustre of a uniquely named and illustrious race. J. F. F.

NEW YORK, June 11.

Dog Day Poetry.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It may be the effects of the silly season, or mayhap 'tis my natural aversion to the canine tribe in general, but every time I see the sign "No Dogs Allowed at Large" I feel constrained to put it thusly:

No dogs allowed at Large,
No dogs allowed, though Small,
No dogs allowed, in Short,
No dogs allowed a (T) all.

NEW YORK, June 13. IN A HURRY.

Suggestion.

Knicker—Would you muzzle all dogs? [illegible]

Bocker—Yes, and their owners too. [illegible]

HANDS OFF THE COURTS!

Mr. Roosevelt and the Judiciary.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* A chronic faultfinder, we all agree, is a nuisance. It is a far greater pleasure to praise President Roosevelt than to criticise him adversely. But so persistent is his habit of violating the fitness of things that it becomes somebody's duty to comment upon these several acts. If the criticism is fair and the motive is that of a sincere regard for the public welfare there is no reason why censure should be withheld.

Just at this hour, when the public mind is directed to the need of inserting a plank in the Republican platform that shall signify the profound respect that the party entertains for our Federal judiciary, President Roosevelt takes occasion to let the country see again how little regard he has for orderly procedure before a court of justice.

An apartment house in the process of building here collapsed on Tuesday last, resulting in the death of two poor fellows and the serious injury of others. Before the Coroner's jury had time to render a verdict and while the District Attorney was engaged in investigating the facts, the President, utterly ignoring his Attorney-General, writes through Secretary Loeb a letter to District Attorney Baker, beginning "*My dear Mr. District Attorney*"—saying that he wishes special attention paid, a thorough investigation made and a prosecution to the utmost limit of the law. "The President particularly wishes to prevent such outrages as this in connection with the erection of buildings in the District and to penalize as heavily as possible all persons responsible for the accident."

The District Attorney replies in a dignified letter which, read between the lines, means that whereas he had already started in the work of investigation he is doing his duty without prodding from the White House.

This intermeddling, based upon an assumption that unless the President takes a hand justice will not be meted out, is eminently characteristic of Mr. Roosevelt.

Only a short time ago Robert N. Harper, president of a national bank here, was indicted for an alleged violation of the pure food law. The President wrote a letter in violent terms and gave it to the public press while the cause was pending, creating a widespread sympathy for Harper.

Such precipitate and wholly unnecessary action on the part of the Chief Magistrate does an amount of harm not easily to be estimated. For the President of the United States to denounce the parties in a local prosecution before a hearing and to proceed as if to prejudice the community against them is not only grossly unfair but a blunder.

This incident, though it may seem of no great moment, does in truth serve to illustrate once more how unfit Mr. Roosevelt is to be trusted with bringing before the public matters with which the courts have to do. He himself is probably unaware that he has at any time made an assault upon the judiciary; and the more's the pity!

By all means let us have the proposed plank in the Republican platform.

WASHINGTON, June 12. ABSQUE HOC.

Correspondence Only Four Months Old.

William Dudley Foulke to Theodore Roosevelt, January 17, 1908.

No man can be a more unqualified supporter of Mr. Taft than I, yet I realize that any use of the patronage to aid him, especially if coercion can be implied, is likely to injure you very seriously. The use of any public office for this purpose is fraught with great danger and subject to unanswerable criticism.

Theodore Roosevelt to William Dudley Foulke, January 19, 1908.

Will you produce the name of a single man whom I have coerced or influenced; will you give me the name of any official who has been controlled by threat of dismissal or implied threat of dismissal or from whom I have demanded support for Taft? In short, will you give me one particle of justification for the fears you expressed? Name the man whom I have removed because he was not for Taft or threatened to remove because he was not for Taft. You cannot do so.

Theodore Roosevelt to William Dudley Foulke, February 7, 1908.

The statement that I have used the offices in the effort to nominate any Presidential candidate is both false and malicious. It is the usual imaginative invention which flows from a desire to say something injurious. Remember that those now making this accusation were busily engaged two months ago in asserting that I was using the offices to secure my own renomination. It is the kind of accusation which for the next few months will be rife. This particular slander will be used until exploded, and when exploded those who have used it will promptly invent another. Such being the case, I almost question whether it is worth while answering, but as it is you who asks why, the answer you shall have.

In my letter to the Civil Service Commission of June 12, 1902, which now holds good, and will be enforced, officers are warned not to use their places to control political movements, nor to coerce their subordinates, nor to neglect their public duties for political work, nor to cause any public scandal by their political activity; but outside of the classified service they are not otherwise limited in political activity. No officer will be permitted to violate the above injunction with my knowledge, no matter for what candidate he may be working; and I may add that the only officers as to whom any question of violation of this injunction has hitherto arisen have been men who are not working for Mr. Taft.

Not an appointment has been made that would not have been made if there had been no Presidential contest impending, and in no case has there been a deviation from the course that I would have pursued had none of those who actually are candidates for the nomination been candidates; nor has a single officeholder been removed or threatened with removal, or coerced in any way to secure his support for any Presidential candidate. In fact, the only coercion that I have attempted to exercise was to forbid the officeholders from pushing my own renomination.

The State of Florida.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you let me have some information as to the State of Florida? I learn from a reliable source that it and other States have just formed a compact and have seceded from the Union and are trying to induce other States to follow. R. H. BONNELL.

NEWARK, N. J., June 13.

Careful investigation convinces us that this report is without foundation.

Beasts, Skiddoo!

List to me, Hyrcanian beast,
Lurking 'neath the tropic vine,
Something will be trailing you
After March fourth, nineteen nine.

Greatest Nimrod ever known
'Bout that time will pack his grip,
Bound for darkest Afric glades—
Jungle dwellers, take this tip.

Nubian lion, mind your eye;
Hide your cubs in deepest lair;
Howling jackal of Sudan,
Watch out or you're gone for fair.

Lordly elephantine herd,
Careful—do not tramp so hard.
Members of the Bandar Log,
Put some keen baboon on guard.

Live wild beasts of Zanzibar,
Congo, Berber, Timbuktu,
Niger, Khartum, Kordofan,
Cheese it, he'll be after you.

He and Kermit, both with guns,
Will be on the firing line,
Waiting for a shot at you,
After March fourth, nineteen nine.

OSCAR H. LEAR.

ROMAN HOLIDAYS.

A Few Villas.

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ROME, May 25.—It was but a few minutes walk from the hotel to the Porta Pinciana, and if you took this short walk you found yourself almost before you knew it in the Villa Borghese. You might then, on your first Sunday in Rome, have fancied yourself in Central Park, for all difference in the easily satisfied Sunday afternoon crowd. But with me a difference began in the grove of stone pines, and their desultory stretch toward the Casino, where in the simple young times which are now the old we had hurried with our Kugler in our hands and other reading in our heads to see Titian's "Sacred and Profane Love" (it has got another name now), and Canova's "Pauline Bonaparte-Borghese," and all the rest of the precious gallery. However, if I had any purpose of visiting the Casino now I put it aside, and contented myself with the gentle scene, the gentle shade and the sweet air, which might have had less dust in it, breathing over the grass as green in late January as in early June. I did not care so much for a mounted corporal who was jumping his horse over a two foot barrier in the circular path rounding between the Villa Borghese and the Pincian Hill, though his admirers hung in rows on the rail beside it so thickly that I could hardly get a place to see him if I had tried. It was a good place to see them, as fathers and mothers who had brought their children, and as young lovers who had brought each other for the afternoon's outing, just as the crowd in Central Park does, and no doubt, just as any Sunday crowd must do in the planet Mars, if the inhabitants are human. There was a *vacherie* nearby where not many people were drinking milk or even coffee; it is never the notion of the Italians that amusement can be had only through the purchase of refreshments.

I did not get as far as the Casino till the last Sunday of our Roman stay, though we came again and again to the park (as we should call it rather than villa) sometimes to walk, sometimes to drive and always to rejoice in its loveliness. It was not now a very guarded, if once a very studied loveliness; not quite a neglect, but a forgottenness to which it took kindly, had fallen upon it; the drives seemed largely left to take care of themselves, the walks were such as the frequenters chose to make over the grass or through the woods; the buildings—the aviary, the conservatory, the dairy, the stables—which formed part of the old pleasance, stood about, as if in an absent minded indifference to their rôles. The weather had grown a little more wintry, or at least autumnal, as the season advanced toward spring, and one day at the end of February when we were passing a woody hollow, the fallen leaves stirred crisply with a sound like that of late October at home. We had been at some pains and expense to put home 4,000 miles away, but this sound seemed the sweetest and dearest we had heard in Rome, and it attuned our spirits to the enjoyment of the fake antiquities, the broken arches, pediments, columns, statues, which, in a region glutted with ruin, the landscape architect of the Villa Borghese had fancied putting about in pleasing stages of artificial dilapidation. But there was nothing faked in the dishevelled grass of the little stadium, with its gradines around the sides, and the game of tennis which some young girls were playing in it. Neither was there anything ungenuine in the rapture of the boy whom we saw racing through the dead leaves of that woody hollow in chase of the wild fancies that fly before boyhood; and I hope that the charm of the plinths and statues in the careless grounds behind the old soft yellow Casino was a real charm. At any rate these things all consoled, and the turf under the pines, now thickly starred with daisies, gave every assurance of being original.

When we came last the daisies were mingled with clustering anemones, which seem a greatly overrated sort of flower, crude and harsh in color, like cheap calico. If it were not for their pretty name I do not see how people could like them; yet the children that day were pouncing upon them, and pulling them by handfuls; for the Villa Borghese is now State property and is free to the children of the people in a measure quite beyond Central Park. They can apparently pull anything they want, except mushrooms; there are signs advising people that the State draws the line at mushrooms.

It was once more a Sunday and it was a free day in the Casino. The trodden earth sent up its homely, kindly smell from many feet on their way to the galleries, which we found full of people looking greater intelligence than the frequenters of such places commonly betray. They might have been such more cultivated sightseers as could not afford to come on the pay days, and if they had not crowded the rooms so, one might have been glad as well as proud to be of their number. They did not really keep one from older friends, from the statues and the pictures which were as familiarly there in 1908 as in 1864. In a world of vicissitudes, such things do not change; the "Sacred and Profane Love" of Titian, though it had changed its name had not changed its nature, and was as divinely serene, as richly beautiful as before. The Veroneses still glowed from the walls, dimming with their Venetian effulgence all the other pictures but the Botticellis and the Francias, and comforting one with the hope that if one had always felt their beauty so much one might, without suspecting it, have always had some little sense of art. But it was probably only a literary sense of art, such as moves the observer when he finds himself again in the presence of Canova's "Pauline Bonaparte-Borghese." That is there, on the terms which were those no less of her character than of her time, in the lasting enjoyment of a publicity which her husband denied it in his lifetime; but it had no more to say now than it had so many, many years ago. As a piece of personal history it is amusing enough, no doubt, and as a sermon in stone it preaches whatever moral you choose to read into it. But as the masterpiece of the sculptor it testifies to an ideal of his art for which the world has reason to be grateful. Criticism does not now put Canova on the height where we once looked up to him; but criticism is a fickle thing, especially in its final judgments; and one cannot remember the behavior of the virtues in some of the baroque churches without paying homage to the portrait of a lady who, whatever she was, was not a virtue, but who yet helped the sculptor to realize in her statue a Venus of exceptional propriety. Tame, yes, we may now safely declare Canova to have been, but sane we must allow; and we must never forget that he has been the inspiration in modern sculpture of the eternal Greek truth of repose from which the art had so wildly wandered. He, more than any other, stayed it in the mad career on which Michelangelo, however remotely, started it; and we owe it to him that the best marbles now no longer strut, or swagger, or bully.

It was by one of those accidents which are the best fortunes of travel that I visited the Villa Papa Giulio, when I thought I was merely going to the Piazza del Popolo, to which one cannot go too often. A chance