ROOSEVELT THEODORE

LETTERS TO HIS CHILDREN

Theodore Roosevelt
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Letters to His Children:

Содержание

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the letters in this volume were written by Theodore Roosevelt to his children during a period of more than twenty years. A few others are included that he wrote to friends or relatives about the children. He began to write to them in their early childhood, and continued to do so regularly till they reached maturity. Whenever he was separated from them, in the Spanish War, or on a hunting trip, or because they were at school, he sent them these messages of constant thought and love, for they were never for a moment out of his mind and heart. Long before they were able to read he sent them what they called "picture letters," with crude drawings of his own in illustration of the written text, drawings precisely adapted to the childish imagination and intelligence. That the little recipients cherished these delightful missives is shown by the tender care with which they preserved them from destruction. They are in good condition after many years of loving usage. A few of them are reproduced in these pages—written at different periods as each new child appeared in the household.

These early letters are marked by the same quality that

distinguishes all his letters to his children. From the youngest to the eldest, he wrote to them always as his equals. As they advanced in life the mental level of intercourse was raised as they grew in intelligence and knowledge, but it was always as equals that he addressed them. He was always their playmate and boon companion, whether they were toddling infants taking their first faltering steps, or growing schoolboys, or youths standing at the threshold of life. Their games were his games, their joys those of his own heart. He was ready to romp with them in the old barn at Sagamore Hill, play "tickley" at bedtime, join in their pillow fights, or play hide-and-seek with them, either at Sagamore Hill or in the White House. He was the same chosen and joyous companion always and everywhere. Occasionally he was disturbed for a moment about possible injury to his Presidential dignity. Describing a romp in the old barn at Sagamore Hill in the summer of 1903, he said in one of his letters that under the insistence of the children he had joined in it because: "I had not the heart to refuse, but really it seems, to put it mildly, rather odd for a stout, elderly President to be bouncing over hayricks in a wild effort to get to goal before an active midget of a competitor, aged nine years. However, it was really great fun."

It was because he at heart regarded it as "great fun" and was in complete accord with the children that they delighted in him as a playmate. In the same spirit, in January, 1905, he took a squad of nine boys, including three of his own, on what they called a "scramble" through Rock Creek Park, in Washington,

which meant traversing the most difficult places in it. The boys had permission to make the trip alone, but they insisted upon his company. "I am really touched," he wrote afterward to the parents of two of the visiting boys, "at the way in which your children as well as my own treat me as a friend and playmate. It has its comic side. They were all bent upon having me take them; they obviously felt that my presence was needed to give zest to the entertainment. I do not think that one of them saw anything incongruous in the President's getting as bedaubed with mud as they got, or in my wiggling and clambering around jutting rocks, through cracks, and up what were really small cliff faces, just like the rest of them; and whenever any one of them beat me at any point, he felt and expressed simple and whole-hearted delight, exactly as if it had been a triumph over a rival of his own age."

When the time came that he was no longer the children's chosen playmate, he recognized the fact with a twinge of sadness. Writing in January, 1905, to his daughter Ethel, who was at Sagamore Hill at the time, he said of a party of boys that Quentin had at the White House: "They played hard, and it made me realize how old I had grown and how very busy I had been the last few years to find that they had grown so that I was not needed in the play. Do you recollect how we all of us used to play hide and go seek in the White House, and have obstacle races down the hall when you brought in your friends?"

Deep and abiding love of children, of family and home, that was the dominating passion of his life. With that went love for

friends and fellow men, and for all living things, birds, animals, trees, flowers, and nature in all its moods and aspects. But love of children and family and home was above all. The children always had an old-fashioned Christmas in the White House. In several letters in these pages, descriptions of these festivals will be found. In closing one of them the eternal child's heart in the man cries out: "I wonder whether there ever can come in life a thrill of greater exaltation and rapture than that which comes to one between the ages of say six and fourteen, when the library door is thrown open and you walk in to see all the gifts, like a materialized fairy land, arrayed on your special table?"

His love for the home he had built and in which his beloved children had been born, was not even dimmed by his life in the White House. "After all," he wrote to Ethel in June, 1906, "fond as I am of the White House and much though I have appreciated these years in it, there isn't any place in the world like home —like Sagamore Hill where things are our own, with their own associations, and where it is real country."

Through all his letters runs his inexhaustible vein of delicious humor. All the quaint sayings of Quentin, that quaintest of small boys; all the antics of the household cats and dogs; all the comic aspects of the guinea-pigs and others of the large menagerie of pets that the children were always collecting; all the tricks and feats of the saddle-horses—these, together with every item of household news that would amuse and cheer and keep alive the love of home in the heart of the absent boys, was set forth in

letters which in gayety of spirit and charm of manner have few equals in literature and no superiors. No matter how great the pressure of public duties, or how severe the strain that the trials and burdens of office placed upon the nerves and spirits of the President of a great nation, this devoted father and whole-hearted companion found time to send every week a long letter of this delightful character to each of his absent children.

As the boys advanced toward manhood the letters, still on the basis of equality, contain much wise suggestion and occasional admonition, the latter always administered in a loving spirit accompanied by apology for writing in a "preaching" vein. The playmate of childhood became the sympathetic and keenly interested companion in all athletic contests, in the reading of books and the consideration of authors, and in the discussion of politics and public affairs. Many of these letters, notably those on the relative merits of civil and military careers, and the proper proportions of sport and study, are valuable guides for youth in all ranks of life. The strong, vigorous, exalted character of the writer stands revealed in these as in all the other letters, as well as the cheerful soul of the man which remained throughout his life as pure and gentle as the soul of a child. Only a short time before he died, he said to me, as we were going over the letters and planning this volume, which is arranged as he wished it to be: "I would rather have this book published than anything that has ever been written about me."

THE LETTERS

IN THE SPANISH WAR

At the outbreak of the war with Spain in the spring of 1898 Theodore Roosevelt, who was then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, in association with Leonard Wood, organized the Regiment of Rough Riders and went into camp with them at Tampa, Florida. Later he went with his regiment to Cuba.

Camp at Tampa, May 6th, '98.

BLESSED BUNNIES,

It has been a real holiday to have darling mother here. Yesterday I brought her out to the camp, and she saw it all—the men drilling, the tents in long company streets, the horses being taken to water, my little horse Texas, the colonel and the majors, and finally the mountain lion and the jolly little dog Cuba, who had several fights while she looked on. The mountain lion is not much more than a kitten as yet, but it is very cross and treacherous.

I was very much interested in Kermit's and Ethel's letters to-day.

We were all, horses and men, four days and four nights on the cars coming here from San Antonio, and were very tired and very dirty when we arrived. I was up almost all of each night, for it happened always to be at night when we took the horses out of the cars to feed and water them.

Mother stays at a big hotel about a mile from camp. There are nearly thirty thousand troops here now, besides the sailors from the war-ships in the bay. At night the corridors and piazzas are thronged with officers of the army and navy; the older ones fought in the great Civil War, a third of a century ago, and now they are all going to Cuba to war against the Spaniards. Most of them are in blue, but our rough-riders are in brown. Our camp is on a great flat, on sandy soil without a tree, though round about are pines and palmettos. It is very hot, indeed, but there are no mosquitoes. Marshall is very well, and he takes care of my things and of the two horses. A general was out to inspect us when we were drilling to-day.

Off Santiago, 1898.

DARLING ETHEL:

We are near shore now and everything is in a bustle, for we may have to disembark to-night, and I do not know when I shall have another chance to write to my three blessed children, whose little notes please me so. This is only a line to tell you all how much father loves you. The Pawnee Indian drew you the picture of the little dog, which runs everywhere round the ship, and now and then howls a little when the band plays.

Near Santiago, May 20, 1898.

DARLING ETHEL:

I loved your little letter. Here there are lots of funny little lizards that run about in the dusty roads very fast, and then stand still with their heads up. Beautiful red cardinal birds and tanagers

flit about in the woods, and the flowers are lovely. But you never saw such dust. Sometimes I lie on the ground outside and sometimes in the tent. I have a mosquito net because there are so many mosquitoes.

Camp near Santiago, July 15, 1898.

DARLING ETHEL:

When it rains here—and it's very apt to rain here every day—it comes down just as if it was a torrent of water. The other night I hung up my hammock in my tent and in the middle of the night there was a terrific storm, and my tent and hammock came down with a run. The water was running over the ground in a sheet, and the mud was knee-deep; so I was a drenched and muddy object when I got to a neighboring tent, where I was given a blanket, in which I rolled up and went to sleep.

There is a funny little lizard that comes into my tent and is quite tame now; he jumps about like a little frog and puffs his throat out. There are ground-doves no bigger than big sparrows, and cuckoos almost as large as crows.

YOUTHFUL BIBLE COMMENTATORS

(To Miss Emily T. Carow)

Oyster Bay, Dec. 8, 1900.

The other day I listened to a most amusing dialogue at the Bible lesson between Kermit and Ethel. The subject was Joseph, and just before reading it they had been reading Quentin's book containing the adventures of the Gollywogs. Joseph's conduct in repeating his dream to his brothers, whom it was certain

to irritate, had struck both of the children unfavorably, as conflicting both with the laws of common-sense and with the advice given them by their parents as to the proper method of dealing with their own brothers and sisters. Kermit said: "Well, I think that was very foolish of Joseph." Ethel chimed in with "So do I, very foolish, and I do not understand how he could have done it." Then, after a pause, Kermit added thoughtfully by way of explanation: "Well, I guess he was simple, like Jane in the Gollywogs": and Ethel nodded gravely in confirmation.

It is very cunning to see Kermit and Archie go to the Cove school together. They also come down and chop with me, Archie being armed with a hatchet blunt enough to be suitable for his six years. He is a most industrious small chopper, and the other day gnawed down, or as the children call it, "beavered" down, a misshapen tulip tree, which was about fifty feet high.

FINE NAMES FOR GUINEA PIGS

(To E. S. Martin)

Oyster Bay, Nov. 22, 1900.

Mrs. Roosevelt and I were more touched than I can well say at your sending us your book with its characteristic insertion and above all with the little extract from your boy's note about Ted. In what Form is your boy? As you have laid yourself open, I shall tell you that Ted sings in the choir and is captain of his dormitory football team. He was awfully homesick at first, but now he has won his place in his own little world and he is all right. In his last letter to his mother in response to a question about his clothes

he answered that they were in good condition, excepting "that one pair of pants was split up the middle and one jacket had lost a sleeve in a scuffle, and in another pair of pants he had sat down in a jam pie at a cellar spread." We have both missed him greatly in spite of the fact that we have five remaining. Did I ever tell you about my second small boy's names for his Guinea pigs? They included Bishop Doane; Dr. Johnson, my Dutch Reformed pastor; Father G. Grady, the local priest with whom the children had scraped a speaking acquaintance; Fighting Bob Evans, and Admiral Dewey. Some of my Republican supporters in West Virginia have just sent me a small bear which the children of their own accord christened Jonathan Edwards, partly out of compliment to their mother's ancestor, and partly because they thought they detected Calvinistic traits in the bear's character.

A COUGAR AND LYNX HUNT

Keystone Ranch, Colo., Jan. 14th, 1901.

BLESSED TED,

From the railroad we drove fifty miles to the little frontier town of Meeker. There we were met by the hunter Goff, a fine, quiet, hardy fellow, who knows his business thoroughly. Next morning we started on horseback, while our luggage went by wagon to Goff's ranch. We started soon after sunrise, and made our way, hunting as we went, across the high, exceedingly rugged hills, until sunset. We were hunting cougar and lynx or, as they are called out here, "lion" and "cat." The first cat we put up gave the dogs a two hours' chase, and got away among

some high cliffs. In the afternoon we put up another, and had a very good hour's run, the dogs baying until the glens rang again to the echoes, as they worked hither and thither through the ravines. We walked our ponies up and down steep, rock-strewn, and tree-clad slopes, where it did not seem possible a horse could climb, and on the level places we got one or two smart gallops. At last the lynx went up a tree. Then I saw a really funny sight. Seven hounds had been doing the trailing, while a large brindled bloodhound and two half-breeds between collie and bull stayed behind Goff, running so close to his horse's heels that they continually bumped into them, which he accepted with philosophic composure. Then the dogs proceeded literally to *climb the tree*, which was a many-forked pinon; one of the half-breeds, named Tony, got up certainly sixteen feet, until the lynx, which looked like a huge and exceedingly malevolent pussy-cat, made vicious dabs at him. I shot the lynx low, so as not to hurt his skin.

Yesterday we were in the saddle for ten hours. The dogs ran one lynx down and killed it among the rocks after a vigorous scuffle. It was in a hole and only two of them could get at it.

This morning, soon after starting out, we struck the cold trail of a mountain lion. The hounds puzzled about for nearly two hours, going up and down the great gorges, until we sometimes absolutely lost even the sound of the baying. Then they struck the fresh trail, where the cougar had killed a deer over night. In half an hour a clamorous yelling told us they had overtaken

the quarry; for we had been riding up the slopes and along the crests, wherever it was possible for the horses to get footing. As we plunged and scrambled down towards the noise, one of my companions, Phil Stewart, stopped us while he took a kodak of a rabbit which sat unconcernedly right beside our path. Soon we saw the lion in a treetop, with two of the dogs so high up among the branches that he was striking at them. He was more afraid of us than of the dogs, and as soon as he saw us he took a great flying leap and was off, the pack close behind. In a few hundred yards they had him up another tree. Here I could have shot him (Tony climbed almost up to him, and then fell twenty feet out of the tree), but waited for Stewart to get a photo; and he jumped again. This time, after a couple of hundred yards, the dogs caught him, and a great fight followed. They could have killed him by themselves, but he bit or clawed four of them, and for fear he might kill one I ran in and stabbed him behind the shoulder, thrusting the knife you loaned me right into his heart. I have always wished to kill a cougar as I did this one, with dogs and the knife.

DOGS THAT CLIMB TREES

Keystone Ranch, Jan. 18, 1901.

DARLING LITTLE ETHEL:

I have had great fun. Most of the trip neither you nor Mother nor Sister would enjoy; but you would all of you be immensely amused with the dogs. There are eleven all told, but really only eight do very much hunting. These eight are all scarred with the

wounds they have received this very week in battling with the cougars and lynxes, and they are always threatening to fight one another; but they are as affectionate toward men (and especially toward me, as I pet them) as our own home dogs. At this moment a large hound and a small half-breed bull-dog, both of whom were quite badly wounded this morning by a cougar, are shoving their noses into my lap to be petted, and humming defiance to one another. They are on excellent terms with the ranch cat and kittens. The three chief fighting dogs, who do not follow the trail, are the most affectionate of all, and, moreover, they climb trees! Yesterday we got a big lynx in the top of a pinon tree—a low, spreading kind of pine—about thirty feet tall. Turk, the bloodhound, followed him up, and after much sprawling actually got to the very top, within a couple of feet of him. Then, when the lynx was shot out of the tree, Turk, after a short scramble, took a header down through the branches, landing with a bounce on his back. Tony, one of the half-breed bull-dogs, takes such headers on an average at least once for every animal we put up a tree. We have nice little horses which climb the most extraordinary places you can imagine. Get Mother to show you some of Gustave Dore's trees; the trees on these mountains look just like them.

THE PIG NAMED MAUDE

Keystone Ranch, Jan. 29, 1901

DARLING LITTLE ETHEL:

You would be much amused with the animals round the ranch. The most thoroughly independent and self-possessed of them is

a large white pig which we have christened Maude. She goes everywhere at her own will; she picks up scraps from the dogs, who bay dismally at her, but know they have no right to kill her; and then she eats the green alfalfa hay from the two milch cows who live in the big corral with the horses. One of the dogs has just had a litter of puppies; you would love them, with their little wrinkled noses and squeaky voices.

ADVICE AND NEWS

Oyster Bay, May 7th, 1901

BLESSED TED:

It was the greatest fun seeing you, and I really had a satisfactory time with you, and came away feeling that you were doing well. I am entirely satisfied with your standing, both in your studies and in athletics. I want you to do well in your sports, and I want even more to have you do well with your books; but I do not expect you to stand first in either, if so to stand could cause you overwork and hurt your health. I always believe in going hard at everything, whether it is Latin or mathematics, boxing or football, but at the same time I want to keep the sense of proportion. It is never worth while to absolutely exhaust one's self or to take big chances unless for an adequate object. I want you to keep in training the faculties which would make you, if the need arose, able to put your last ounce of pluck and strength into a contest. But I do not want you to squander these qualities. To have you play football as well as you do, and make a good name in boxing and wrestling, and be cox of your second crew,

and stand second or third in your class in the studies, is all right. I should be rather sorry to see you drop too near the middle of your class, because, as you cannot enter college until you are nineteen, and will therefore be a year later in entering life, I want you to be prepared in the best possible way, so as to make up for the delay. But I know that all you can do you will do to keep substantially the position in the class that you have so far kept, and I have entire trust in you, for you have always deserved it.

The weather has been lovely here. The cherry trees are in full bloom, the peach trees just opening, while the apples will not be out for ten days. The May flowers and bloodroot have gone, the anemonies and bellwort have come and the violets are coming. All the birds are here, pretty much, and the warblers troop through the woods.

To my delight, yesterday Kermit, when I tried him on Diamond, did excellently. He has evidently turned the corner in his riding, and was just as much at home as possible, although he was on my saddle with his feet thrust in the leathers above the stirrup. Poor mother has had a hard time with Yagenka, for she rubbed her back, and as she sadly needs exercise and I could not have a saddle put upon her, I took her out bareback yesterday. Her gaits are so easy that it is really more comfortable to ride her without a saddle than to ride Texas with one, and I gave her three miles sharp cantering and trotting.

Dewey Jr. is a very cunning white guinea pig. I wish you could see Kermit taking out Dewey Sr. and Bob Evans to spend the day

on the grass. Archie is the sweetest little fellow imaginable. He is always thinking of you. He has now struck up a great friendship with Nicholas, rather to Mame's (the nurse's) regret, as Mame would like to keep him purely for Quentin. The last-named small boisterous person was in fearful disgrace this morning, having flung a block at his mother's head. It was done in sheer playfulness, but of course could not be passed over lightly, and after the enormity of the crime had been brought fully home to him, he fled with howls of anguish to me and lay in an abandon of yellow-headed grief in my arms. Ethel is earning money for the purchase of the Art Magazine by industriously hoeing up the weeds in the walk. Alice is going to ride Yagenka bareback this afternoon, while I try to teach Ethel on Diamond, after Kermit has had his ride.

Yesterday at dinner we were talking of how badly poor Mrs. Blank looked, and Kermit suddenly observed in an aside to Ethel, entirely unconscious that we were listening: "Oh, Effel, I'll tell you what Mrs. Blank looks like: Like Davis' hen dat died—you know, de one dat couldn't hop up on de perch." Naturally, this is purely a private anecdote.

ARCHIE AND QUENTIN

Oyster Bay, May 7, 1901.

BLESSED TED:

Recently I have gone in to play with Archie and Quentin after they have gone to bed, and they have grown to expect me, jumping up, very soft and warm in their tommies, expecting me

to roll them over on the bed and tickle and "grabble" in them. However, it has proved rather too exciting, and an edict has gone forth that hereafter I must play bear with them before supper, and give up the play when they have gone to bed. To-day was Archie's birthday, and Quentin resented Archie's having presents while he (Quentin) had none. With the appalling frankness of three years old, he remarked with great sincerity that "it made him miserable," and when taken to task for his lack of altruistic spirit he expressed an obviously perfunctory repentance and said: "Well, boys must lend boys things, at any rate!"

INCIDENTS OF HOME-COMING

Oyster Bay, May 31st, 1901.

BLESSED TED:

I enclose some Filipino Revolutionary postage stamps. Maybe some of the boys would like them.

Have you made up your mind whether you would like to try shooting the third week in August or the last week in July, or would you rather wait until you come back when I can find out something more definite from Mr. Post?

We very much wished for you while we were at the (Buffalo) Exposition. By night it was especially beautiful. Alice and I also wished that you could have been with us when we were out riding at Geneseo. Major Wadsworth put me on a splendid big horse called Triton, and sister on a thoroughbred mare. They would jump anything. It was sister's first experience, but she did splendidly and rode at any fence at which I would first put Triton.

I did not try anything very high, but still some of the posts and rails were about four feet high, and it was enough to test sister's seat. Of course, all we had to do was to stick on as the horses jumped perfectly and enjoyed it quite as much as we did. The first four or five fences that I went over I should be ashamed to say how far I bounced out of the saddle, but after a while I began to get into my seat again. It has been a good many years since I have jumped a fence.

Mother stopped off at Albany while sister went on to Boston, and I came on here alone Tuesday afternoon. St. Gaudens, the sculptor, and Dunne (Mr. Dooley) were on the train and took lunch with us. It was great fun meeting them and I liked them both. Kermit met me in high feather, although I did not reach the house until ten o'clock, and he sat by me and we exchanged anecdotes while I took my supper. Ethel had put an alarm clock under her head so as to be sure and wake up, but although it went off she continued to slumber profoundly, as did Quentin. Archie waked up sufficiently to tell me that he had found another turtle just as small as the already existing treasure of the same kind. This morning Quentin and Black Jack have neither of them been willing to leave me for any length of time. Black Jack simply lies curled up in a chair, but as Quentin is most conversational, he has added an element of harassing difficulty to my effort to answer my accumulated correspondence.

Archie announced that he had seen "the Baltimore orioles catching fish!" This seemed to warrant investigation; but it

turned out he meant barn swallows skimming the water.

The President not only sent "picture letters" to his own children, but an especial one to Miss Sarah Schuyler Butler, daughter of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, who had written to him a little note of congratulation on his first birthday in the White House.

White House, Nov. 3d, 1901.

DEAR LITTLE MISS SARAH,

I liked your birthday note *very* much; and my children say I should draw you two pictures in return.

We have a large blue macaw—Quentin calls him a polly-parrot—who lives in the greenhouse, and is very friendly, but makes queer noises. He eats bread, potatoes, and coffee grains.

The children have a very cunning pony. He is a little pet, like a dog, but he plays tricks on them when they ride him.

He bucked Ethel over his head the other day.

Your father will tell you that these are pictures of the UNPOLISHED STONE PERIOD.

Give my love to your mother.

Your father's friend,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT. UNCLE REMUS AND WHITE HOUSE PETS

(To Joel Chandler Harris)

White House, June 9, 1902.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS:

Your letter was a great relief to Kermit, who always becomes

personally interested in his favorite author, and who has been much worried by your sickness. He would be more than delighted with a copy of "Daddy Jake." Alice has it already, but Kermit eagerly wishes it.

Last night Mrs. Roosevelt and I were sitting out on the porch at the back of the White House, and were talking of you and wishing you could be sitting there with us. It is delightful at all times, but I think especially so after dark. The monument stands up distinct but not quite earthly in the night, and at this season the air is sweet with the jasmine and honeysuckle.

All of the younger children are at present absorbed in various pets, perhaps the foremost of which is a puppy of the most orthodox puppy type. Then there is Jack, the terrier, and Sailor Boy, the Chesapeake Bay dog; and Eli, the most gorgeous macaw, with a bill that I think could bite through boiler plate, who crawls all over Ted, and whom I view with dark suspicion; and Jonathan, the piebald rat, of most friendly and affectionate nature, who also crawls all over everybody; and the flying squirrel, and two kangaroo rats; not to speak of Archie's pony, Algonquin, who is the most absolute pet of them all.

Mrs. Roosevelt and I have, I think, read all your stories to the children, and some of them over and over again.

THE DOG "GEM"

White House, Oct. 13, 1902.

BLESSED KERMIT:

I am delighted at all the accounts I receive of how you are

doing at Groton. You seem to be enjoying yourself and are getting on well. I need not tell you to do your best to cultivate ability for concentrating your thought on whatever work you are given to do—you will need it in Latin especially. Who plays opposite you at end? Do you find you can get down well under the ball to tackle the full-back? How are you tackling?

Mother is going to present Gem to Uncle Will. She told him she did not think he was a good dog for the city; and therefore she gives him to Uncle Will to keep in the city. Uncle Will's emotion at such self-denying generosity almost overcame him. Gem is really a very nice small bow-wow, but Mother found that in this case possession was less attractive than pursuit. When she takes him out walking he carries her along as if she was a Roman chariot. She thinks that Uncle Will or Eda can anchor him. Yesterday she and Ethel held him and got burrs out of his hair. It was a lively time for all three.

PRESIDENTIAL NURSE FOR GUINEA PIGS

(To Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward)

White House, Oct. 20, 1902.

At this moment, my small daughter being out, I am acting as nurse to two wee guinea pigs, which she feels would not be safe save in the room with me—and if I can prevent it I do not intend to have wanton suffering inflicted on any creature.

THANKSGIVING IN THE WHITE HOUSE

White House, Nov. 28, 1902.

DARLING KERMIT:

Yesterday was Thanksgiving, and we all went out riding, looking as we started a good deal like the Cumberbach family. Archie on his beloved pony, and Ethel on Yagenka went off with Mr. Proctor to the hunt. Mother rode Jocko Root, Ted a first-class cavalry horse, I rode Renown, and with us went Senator Lodge, Uncle Douglas, Cousin John Elliott, Mr. Bob Fergie, and General Wood. We had a three hours' scamper which was really great fun.

Yesterday I met Bozie for the first time since he came to Washington, and he almost wiggled himself into a fit, he was so overjoyed at renewing acquaintance. To see Jack and Tom Quartz play together is as amusing as it can be. We have never had a more cunning kitten than Tom Quartz. I have just had to descend with severity upon Quentin because he put the unfortunate Tom into the bathtub and then turned on the water. He didn't really mean harm.

Last evening, besides our own entire family party, all the Lodges, and their connections, came to dinner. We dined in the new State Dining-room and we drank the health of you and all the rest of both families that were absent. After dinner we cleared away the table and danced. Mother looked just as pretty as a picture and I had a lovely waltz with her. Mrs. Lodge and I danced the Virginia Reel.

A WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS

(To Master James A. Garfield, Washington)

White House, Dec. 26, 1902.

JIMMIKINS:

Among all the presents I got I don't think there was one I appreciated more than yours; for I was brought up to admire and respect your grandfather, and I have a very great fondness and esteem for your father. It always seems to me as if you children were being brought up the way that mine are. Yesterday Archie got among his presents a small rifle from me and a pair of riding-boots from his mother. He won't be able to use the rifle until next summer, but he has gone off very happy in the riding boots for a ride on the calico pony Algonquin, the one you rode the other day. Yesterday morning at a quarter of seven all the children were up and dressed and began to hammer at the door of their mother's and my room, in which their six stockings, all bulging out with queer angles and rotundities, were hanging from the fireplace. So their mother and I got up, shut the window, lit the fire, taking down the stockings, of course, put on our wrappers and prepared to admit the children. But first there was a surprise for me, also for their good mother, for Archie had a little Christmas tree of his own which he had rigged up with the help of one of the carpenters in a big closet; and we all had to look at the tree and each of us got a present off of it. There was also one present each for Jack the dog, Tom Quartz the kitten, and Algonquin the pony, whom Archie would no more think of neglecting than I would neglect his brothers and sisters. Then all the children came into our bed and there they opened their stockings. Afterwards we got dressed and took breakfast, and then all went into the library,

where each child had a table set for his bigger presents. Quentin had a perfectly delightful electric railroad, which had been rigged up for him by one of his friends, the White House electrician, who has been very good to all the children. Then Ted and I, with General Wood and Mr. Bob Ferguson, who was a lieutenant in my regiment, went for a three hours' ride; and all of us, including all the children, took lunch at the house with the children's aunt, Mrs. Captain Cowles—Archie and Quentin having their lunch at a little table with their cousin Sheffield. Late in the afternoon I played at single stick with General Wood and Mr. Ferguson. I am going to get your father to come on and try it soon. We have to try to hit as light as possible, but sometimes we hit hard, and to-day I have a bump over one eye and a swollen wrist. Then all our family and kinsfolk and Senator and Mrs. Lodge's family and kinsfolk had our Christmas dinner at the White House, and afterwards danced in the East Room, closing up with the Virginia Reel.

TOM QUARTZ AND JACK

White House, Jan. 6, 1903.

DEAR KERMIT:

We felt very melancholy after you and Ted left and the house seemed empty and lonely. But it was the greatest possible comfort to feel that you both really have enjoyed school and are both doing well there.

Tom Quartz is certainly the cunningest kitten I have ever seen. He is always playing pranks on Jack and I get very nervous lest Jack should grow too irritated. The other evening they were

both in the library—Jack sleeping before the fire—Tom Quartz scampering about, an exceedingly playful little wild creature—which is about what he is. He would race across the floor, then jump upon the curtain or play with the tassel. Suddenly he spied Jack and galloped up to him. Jack, looking exceedingly sullen and shame-faced, jumped out of the way and got upon the sofa, where Tom Quartz instantly jumped upon him again. Jack suddenly shifted to the other sofa, where Tom Quartz again went after him. Then Jack started for the door, while Tom made a rapid turn under the sofa and around the table, and just as Jack reached the door leaped on his hind-quarters. Jack bounded forward and away and the two went tandem out of the room—Jack not reappearing at all; and after about five minutes Tom Quartz stalked solemnly back.

Another evening the next Speaker of the House, Mr. Cannon, an exceedingly solemn, elderly gentleman with chin whiskers, who certainly does not look to be of playful nature, came to call upon me. He is a great friend of mine, and we sat talking over what our policies for the session should be until about eleven o'clock; and when he went away I accompanied him to the head of the stairs. He had gone about half-way down when Tom Quartz strolled by, his tail erect and very fluffy. He spied Mr. Cannon going down the stairs, jumped to the conclusion that he was a playmate escaping, and raced after him, suddenly grasping him by the leg the way he does Archie and Quentin when they play hide and seek with him; then loosening his hold he tore

down-stairs ahead of Mr. Cannon, who eyed him with iron calm and not one particle of surprise.

Ethel has reluctantly gone back to boarding-school. It is just after lunch and Dulany is cutting my hair while I dictate this to Mr. Loeb. I left Mother lying on the sofa and reading aloud to Quentin, who as usual has hung himself over the back of the sofa in what I should personally regard as an exceedingly uncomfortable attitude to listen to literature. Archie we shall not see until this evening, when he will suddenly challenge me either to a race or a bear play, and if neither invitation is accepted will then propose that I tell a pig story or else read aloud from the Norse folk tales.

A FAR WESTERN TRIP

In April, 1903, President Roosevelt made a trip to the Pacific Coast, visiting Yellowstone Park and the Grand Canyon of Arizona.

TAME WILD CREATURES

Yellowstone Park, Wyoming, April 16, 1903.

DARLING ETHEL:

I wish you could be here and see how tame all the wild creatures are. As I write a dozen of deer have come down to the parade grounds, right in front of the house, to get the hay; they are all looking at the bugler, who has begun to play the "retreat."

WESTERN CUSTOMS AND SCENERY

Del Monte, Cal., May 10, 1903.

DARLING ETHEL:

I have thought it very good of you to write me so much. Of course I am feeling rather fagged, and the next four days, which will include San Francisco, will be tiresome; but I am very well. This is a beautiful hotel in which we are spending Sunday, with gardens and a long seventeen-mile drive beside the beach and the rocks and among the pines and cypresses. I went on horseback. My horse was a little beauty, spirited, swift, sure-footed and enduring. As is usually the case here they had a great deal of silver on the bridle and headstall, and much carving on the saddle. We had some splendid gallops. By the way, tell mother that everywhere out here, from the Mississippi to the Pacific, I have seen most of the girls riding astride, and most of the grown-up women. I must say I think it very much better for the horses' backs. I think by the time that you are an old lady the side-saddle will almost have vanished—I am sure I hope so. I have forgotten whether you like the side-saddle or not.

It was very interesting going through New Mexico and seeing the strange old civilization of the desert, and next day the Grand Canyon of Arizona, wonderful and beautiful beyond description. I could have sat and looked at it for days. It is a tremendous chasm, a mile deep and several miles wide, the cliffs carved into battlements, amphitheatres, towers and pinnacles, and the coloring wonderful, red and yellow and gray and green. Then we went through the desert, passed across the Sierras and came into this semi-tropical country of southern California, with palms and orange groves and olive orchards and immense quantities of

flowers.

TREASURES FOR THE CHILDREN

Del Monte, Cal., May 10, 1903.

BLESSED KERMIT:

The last weeks' travel I have really enjoyed. Last Sunday and to-day (Sunday) and also on Wednesday at the Grand Canyon I had long rides, and the country has been strange and beautiful. I have collected a variety of treasures, which I shall have to try to divide up equally among you children. One treasure, by the way, is a very small badger, which I named Josiah, and he is now called Josh for short. He is very cunning and I hold him in my arms and pet him. I hope he will grow up friendly—that is if the poor little fellow lives to grow up at all. Dulany is taking excellent care of him, and we feed him on milk and potatoes.

I have enjoyed meeting an old classmate of mine at Harvard. He was heavyweight boxing champion when I was in college.

I was much interested in your seeing the wild deer. That was quite remarkable. To-day, by the way, as I rode along the beach I saw seals, cormorants, gulls and ducks, all astonishingly tame.

MORE TREASURES

Del Monte, Cal., May 10, 1903.

BLESSED ARCHIE:

I think it was very cunning for you and Quentin to write me that letter together. I wish you could have been with me to-day on Algonquin, for we had a perfectly lovely ride. Dr. Rixey and I were on two very handsome horses, with Mexican saddles and

bridles; the reins of very slender leather with silver rings. The road led through pine and cypress forests and along the beach. The surf was beating on the rocks in one place and right between two of the rocks where I really did not see how anything could swim a seal appeared and stood up on his tail half out of the foaming water and flapped his flippers, and was as much at home as anything could be. Beautiful gulls flew close to us all around, and cormorants swam along the breakers or walked along the beach.

I have a number of treasures to divide among you children when I get back. One of the treasures is Bill the Lizard. He is a little live lizard, called a horned frog, very cunning, who lives in a small box. The little badger, Josh, is very well and eats milk and potatoes. We took him out and gave him a run in the sand to-day. So far he seems as friendly as possible. When he feels hungry he squeals and the colored porters insist that he says "Du-la-ny, Du-la-ny," because Dulany is very good to him and takes care of him.

A HOMESICK PRESIDENT

Del Monte, Cal., May 10, 1903.

DEAREST QUENTY-QUEE

I loved your letter. I am very homesick for mother and for you children; but I have enjoyed this week's travel. I have been among the orange groves, where the trees have oranges growing thick upon them, and there are more flowers than you have ever seen. I have a gold top which I shall give you if mother thinks you

can take care of it. Perhaps I shall give you a silver bell instead. Whenever I see a little boy being brought up by his father or mother to look at the procession as we pass by, I think of you and Archie and feel very homesick. Sometimes little boys ride in the procession on their ponies, just like Archie on Algonquin.

JOSIAH'S PASSIONATE DAY

Writing Senator Lodge on June 6, 1903, describing his return to the White House from his western trip, the President said:

"Josiah, the young badger, is hailed with the wildest enthusiasm by the children, and has passed an affectionate but passionate day with us. Fortunately his temper seems proof."

LOVES AND SPORTS OF THE CHILDREN

(To Miss Emily T. Carow)

Oyster Bay, Aug. 6, 1903.

To-day is Edith's birthday, and the children have been too cunning in celebrating it. Ethel had hemstitched a little handkerchief herself, and she had taken her gift and the gifts of all the other children into her room and neatly wrapped them up in white paper and tied with ribbons. They were for the most part taken down-stairs and put at her plate at breakfast time. Then at lunch in marched Kermit and Ethel with a cake, burning forty-two candles, and each candle with a piece of paper tied to it purporting to show the animal or inanimate object from which the candle came. All the dogs and horses—Renown, Bleistein, Yagenka, Algonquin, Sailor Boy, Brier, Hector, etc., as well as Tom Quartz, the cat, the extraordinarily named hens—such as

Baron Speckle and Fierce, and finally even the boats and that pomegranate which Edith gave Kermit and which has always been known as Santiago, had each his or her or its tag on a special candle.

Edith is very well this summer and looks so young and pretty. She rides with us a great deal and loves Yagenka as much as ever. We also go out rowing together, taking our lunch and a book or two with us. The children fairly worship her, as they ought to, for a more devoted mother never was known. The children themselves are as cunning and good as possible. Ted is nearly as tall as I am and as tough and wiry as you can imagine. He is a really good rider and can hold his own in walking, running, swimming, shooting, wrestling, and boxing. Kermit is as cunning as ever and has developed greatly. He and his inseparable Philip started out for a night's camping in their best the other day. A driving storm came up and they had to put back, really showing both pluck, skill and judgment. They reached home, after having been out twelve hours, at nine in the evening. Archie continues devoted to Algonquin and to Nicholas. Ted's playmates are George and Jack, Aleck Russell, who is in Princeton, and Ensign Hamner of the *Sylph*. They wrestle, shoot, swim, play tennis, and go off on long expeditions in the boats. Quenty-quee has cast off the trammels of the nursery and become a most active and fearless though very good-tempered little boy. Really the children do have an ideal time out here, and it is an ideal place for them. The three sets of cousins are always together. I am

rather disconcerted by the fact that they persist in regarding me as a playmate. This afternoon, for instance, was rainy, and all of them from George, Ted, Lorraine and Ethel down to Archibald, Nicholas and Quentin, with the addition of Aleck Russell and Ensign Hamner, came to get me to play with them in the old barn. They plead so hard that I finally gave in, but upon my word, I hardly knew whether it was quite right for the President to be engaged in such wild romping as the next two hours saw. The barn is filled with hay, and of course meets every requirement for the most active species of hide-and-seek and the like. Quentin enjoyed the game as much as any one, and would jump down from one hay level to another fifteen feet below with complete abandon.

I took Kermit and Archie, with Philip, Oliver and Nicholas out for a night's camping in the two rowboats last week. They enjoyed themselves heartily, as usual, each sleeping rolled up in his blanket, and all getting up at an unearthly hour. Also, as usual, they displayed a touching and firm conviction that my cooking is unequalled. It was of a simple character, consisting of frying beefsteak first and then potatoes in bacon fat, over the camp fire; but they certainly ate in a way that showed their words were not uttered in a spirit of empty compliment.

A PRESIDENT AT PLAY

(To Miss Emily T. Carow)

Oyster Bay, Aug. 16, 1903.

Archie and Nick continue inseparable. I wish you could have

seen them the other day, after one of the picnics, walking solemnly up, jointly carrying a basket, and each with a captured turtle in his disengaged hand. Archie is a most warm-hearted, loving, cunning little goose. Quentin, a merry soul, has now become entirely one of the children, and joins heartily in all their plays, including the romps in the old barn. When Ethel had her birthday, the one entertainment for which she stipulated was that I should take part in and supervise a romp in the old barn, to which all the Roosevelt children, Ensign Hamner of the *Sylph*, Bob Ferguson and Aleck Russell were to come. Of course I had not the heart to refuse; but really it seems, to put it mildly, rather odd for a stout, elderly President to be bouncing over hayricks in a wild effort to get to goal before an active midget of a competitor, aged nine years. However, it was really great fun.

One of our recent picnics was an innovation, due to Edith. We went in carriages or on horseback to Jane's Hill, some eight miles distant. The view was lovely, and there was a delightful old farmhouse half a mile away, where we left our horses. Speck (German Ambassador, Count Speck von Sternberg) rode with Edith and me, looking more like Hans Christian Andersen's little tin soldier than ever. His papers as Ambassador had finally come, and so he had turned up at Oyster Bay, together with the Acting Secretary of State, to present them. He appeared in what was really a very striking costume, that of a hussar. As soon as the ceremony was over, I told him to put on civilized raiment, which he did, and he spent a couple of days with me. We chopped, and

shot, and rode together. He was delighted with Wyoming, and, as always, was extremely nice to the children.

The other day all the children gave amusing amateur theatricals, gotten up by Lorraine and Ted. The acting was upon Laura Roosevelt's tennis court. All the children were most cunning, especially Quentin as Cupid, in the scantiest of pink muslin tights and bodice. Ted and Lorraine, who were respectively George Washington and Cleopatra, really carried off the play. At the end all the cast joined hands in a song and dance, the final verse being devoted especially to me. I love all these children and have great fun with them, and I am touched by the way in which they feel that I am their special friend, champion, and companion.

To-day all, young and old, from the three houses went with us to Service on the great battleship *Kearsarge*—for the fleet is here to be inspected by me to-morrow. It was an impressive sight, one which I think the children will not soon forget. Most of the boys afterward went to lunch with the wretched Secretary Moody on the *Dolphin*. Ted had the younger ones very much on his mind, and when he got back said they had been altogether too much like a March Hare tea-party, as Archie, Nicholas and Oliver were not alive to the dignity of the occasion.

TO TED ON A HUNTING TRIP

Oyster Bay, Aug. 25, 1903.

DEAR TED:

We have thought of you a good deal, of course. I am glad

you have my rifle with you—you scamp, does it still have "those associations" which you alleged as the reason why you would value it so much when in the near future I became unable longer to use it? I do not have very much hope of your getting a great deal of sport on this trip, and anything you do get in the way of furred or feathered game and fishing I shall count as so much extra thrown in; but I feel the trip will teach you a lot in the way of handling yourself in a wild country, as well as of managing horses and camp outfits—of dealing with frontiersmen, etc. It will therefore fit you to go on a regular camping trip next time.

I have sternly refused to allow mother to ride Wyoming, on the ground that I would not have her make a martyr of herself in the shape of riding a horse with a single-foot gait, which she so openly detests. Accordingly, I have had some long and delightful rides with her, she on Yagenka and I on Bleistein, while Ethel and Kermit have begun to ride Wyoming. Kermit was with us this morning and got along beautifully till we galloped, whereupon Wyoming made up his mind that it was a race, and Kermit, for a moment or two, found him a handful.

On Sunday, after we came back from church and bathed, I rowed mother out to the end of Lloyds Neck, near your favorite camping ground. There we took lunch and spent a couple of hours with our books, reading a little and looking out over the beautiful Sound and at the headlands and white beaches of the coast. We rowed back through a strange, shimmering sunset.

I have played a little tennis since you left. Winty Chandler

beat me two sets, but I beat him one. Alex. Russell beat me a long deuce set, 10 to 8. To-day the smaller children held their championship. Nick won a long deuce set from Archie, and to my surprise Oliver and Ethel beat Kermit and Philip in two straight sets. I officiated as umpire and furnished the prizes, which were penknives.

END OF SUMMER AT OYSTER BAY

Oyster Bay, Sept. 23, 1903.

BLESSED KERMIT:

The house seems very empty without you and Ted, although I cannot conscientiously say that it is quiet—Archie and Quentin attend to that. Archie, barefooted, bareheaded, and with his usual faded blue overalls, much torn and patched, has just returned from a morning with his beloved Nick. Quentin has passed the morning in sports and pastimes with the long-suffering secret service men. Allan has been associating closely with mother and me. Yesterday Ethel went off riding with Lorraine. She rode Wyoming, who is really turning out a very good family horse. This evening I expect Grant La Farge and Owen Wister, who are coming to spend the night. Mother is as busy as possible putting up the house, and Ethel and I insist that she now eyes us both with a purely professional gaze, and secretly wishes she could wrap us up in a neatly pinned sheet with camphor balls inside. Good-bye, blessed fellow!

"VALUABLEST" KIND OF RABBITS

(To his sister, Mrs. W. S. Cowles)

White House, Oct. 2, 1903.

Tell Sheffield that Quentin is now going to the public school. As yet he has preserved an attitude of dignified reserve concerning his feelings on the subject. He has just been presented with two white rabbits, which he brought in while we were at lunch yesterday, explaining that they were "the valuablest kind with pink eyes."

A PREACHING LETTER

White House, Oct. 2, 1903.

DEAR KERMIT:

I was very glad to get your letter. Am glad you are playing football. I should be very sorry to see either you or Ted devoting most of your attention to athletics, and I haven't got any special ambition to see you shine overmuch in athletics at college, at least (if you go there), because I think it tends to take up too much time; but I do like to feel that you are manly and able to hold your own in rough, hardy sports. I would rather have a boy of mine stand high in his studies than high in athletics, but I could a great deal rather have him show true manliness of character than show either intellectual or physical prowess; and I believe you and Ted both bid fair to develop just such character.

There! you will think this a dreadfully preaching letter! I suppose I have a natural tendency to preach just at present because I am overwhelmed with my work. I enjoy being President, and I like to do the work and have my hand on the lever. But it is very worrying and puzzling, and I have to make up

my mind to accept every kind of attack and misrepresentation. It is a great comfort to me to read the life and letters of Abraham Lincoln. I am more and more impressed every day, not only with the man's wonderful power and sagacity, but with his literally endless patience, and at the same time his unflinching resolution.

PROPER PLACE FOR SPORTS

White House, Oct. 4, 1903.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.