

A LETTER FROM THEODORE ROOSEVELT
TO LADY DELAMERE

THE letter reproduced in facsimile on the following pages is in the possession of the Roosevelt Memorial Association, which has kindly permitted its use in this book. It is believed never to have been published before. Apart from its rare autobiographic interest, it has a history which should be related.

The recipient of this letter was the daughter of the Earl of Enniskillen, and the wife of Lord Delamere, a pioneer of colonization in British East Africa, with a large estate near Nairobi. She died in 1914.

After the sacking of a house in Ireland, in the course of the recent troubles there, a Scottish soldier, detailed some time later to the scene, found scattered on the lawn many of the effects of the family to whom the house belonged. Among other articles he came upon this letter which, with a realization that it might be worth having, he preserved. At a still later day, after his return to Scotland, he found himself in need of money and sold the letter to a dealer, in whose shop it was seen by an American, a college classmate of Roosevelt's biographer, Mr. Joseph Bucklin Bishop, whom he informed of the circumstances. Mr. Bishop called the attention of the Roosevelt Memorial Association to the letter, and the possibility of securing it. The Association promptly purchased it for its collection of manuscripts, of which the remarkable document is now a part.

to your
Cuthberts;
I wish I
could see
him. Both of
you were kind
than I ~~thought~~
can say
G. W.
Sincerely
yours
Hester
Rochester

SAGAMORE HILL. Mar 9th 1911

Dear Lady Delamere,

Warmest regards
with
love
from
me

I prized your
letter. Indeed I do know
that you and Delamere
have the large outlook,
that your own success
comes second to the
feeling that you have
taken the lead in adding
to the Empire the last
province that can be
added to the white man's
part of it. He has

rendered to East-Africa,
and therefore to the Queen
Britain, a literally
incalculable service, I only
wish that in England
itself there was a fuller
appreciation of the service.
But it must necessarily be
that the great services to
any empire are rendered by
men who are not over-
herded by those who stay
at home and who play,
not for the really great
stakes, but for primacy
where "vacuity is trimmed
with care" — to paraphrase.

I know just how you feel about
England now; there are real dangers
ahead. Yet I can not - but believe
that the salt is there (to save it,
though its greatness and its future)
depending upon its sons and
daughters who dare the Great Adventure,
and not upon those who care only
for easy pleasure and for its treatment
that is better, not - really (there is plenty
of excitement - that is healthy), but - the
sons as an incident - to careers of ^{bold} effort).

Well, whatever comes, you and Delamere
have played your parts well and
bravely, you have done well what was
well worth doing; and I could wish
nothing better to be said of those that
are dearest to me.

As for me, I have never been happier
than for the last four months. When I
reached home I was acclaimed with a
joy and expectation that were general
and unexampled and therefore sure to
bring reaction. On the afternoon of

my landing, when I had
been given a greeting to
which I was not in the
least entitled, a greeting
SAGAMORE HILL.
that would have been a
trifle per-fervid if extend-
ed to a Washington or a
Lincoln under such circum-
stances, I told one of my
sisters that I was like
Peary at the North Pole - I
had nowhere to walk except
north. The expectations were
great, were utterly vague, utter-
ly contradictory; I had not the
place, I had not the power or
the position to satisfy them in
the smallest degree; and yet
I did not feel at liberty

to draw off and refuse to
do what I regarded as the
plain duty of a citizen. As
for the attacks on me, the
wave of popular disappoint-
ment, I literally do not
care a rap. I am sorry
to disappoint good, foolish
people; but I am sorry
for their sake, not mine.
I was really uneasy and
concerned about the
over-praise, the over-admira-
tion and the impossible
expectations; but I do
not mind in the least
when they go to the opposite
extreme; and neither the
praise nor the blame makes

one particle of difference in my course, I
have worked hard; and now I have
revelled in staying quietly here in
my own home, with those for whom I care
most in the world, and with my own books,
and the things with which I have associations.

Twenty years ago, even ten years ago, this
would not have been so; I would have
felt that it spelled forty!; I have not
forced out of the contact while it was
still my business to fight. But now I
have fought. I am entirely ready to

take up any task which I ought to; but if no task comes, why I feel I have done enough to warrant my enjoying the rest without the braunting sense of having failed to strive my best - while it was still the day of action. With us on this side political power comes for shorter periods than with you, but is more intense while it lasts; Lincoln's career was for about eight years; Hamilton's was less; for the last century more of the men who reached the summit had careers that lasted longer - I mean careers in the intensity of their success.

a President has a great
chance; his position is about
that of a king and a
prime minister rolled into one;
once he has left office he
can not do so very much;
and he is a fool if he fails
to realize it all and to be
profoundly thankful for
having had the great chance.

No President ever enjoyed
himself in the Presidency as
much as I did; and no
President after leaving the
office took as much joy in
life as I am taking.

There! see what an
egotistical outburst - you
ought on yourself!

It was fine your
being able to be with your
boy. Ever since you showed
me his letter my heart
has warmed towards the
little fellow.

Lord Grey and his
daughter were out here the
other night, and he told
me of the death of poor
George Grey. I liked him
much; he was a game,
hard man in danger and
difficulty, and yet with
real kindness and
gentleness of character. He

had killed a bongo, a
bull, shortly after Kermit
killed his cow and calf,
and he gave it to us to
complete his the group,
Well, lions are "bad
medicine," as we used to
say in the cow country!
Especially if hunting them
is followed up long
enough, It's a marvel
your husband survived,
I hope Alfred Pease won't
get caught; poor fellow,
he was heart-broken over
the death of his wife.

By the way, I took a
great fancy to Edward
Bry; he's a trump.

Hermit is working well at Harvard, and is enjoying himself; altho he is not quite in such touch with his fellows as if he had not made his eighteen months trip to Africa and Europe - naturally enough - and altho of course he longs for Africa now and then. We are just starting for California, to see our eldest son and his wife; he is at work there; and we shall see one of our other boys who is in Arizona, at school.

How I do hope that we shall see you here some day! I want to show you all my family; I have told them much about you and how I prize your friendship.

The conclusion of the letter will be found in the margin of its first page