PAUNCEFOTE AN IMITATOR ONLY.

Minister Merry, in 1804, Even More Exacting Than He.

HIS WIFE FELT AGGRIEVED.

The President, Ignoring Her Claim to the Honor, Escorted Mrs. Madison to Dinner.

POET TOM MOORE HER CHAMPION.

British Foreign Office Would Have Sought an Apology Had Not Minister Monroe Checkmated the Diplomats.

The Pauncefote precedence incident, relative to Grant day ceremonies, caused a flutter here and among the diplomatic set in Washington, but it proves to be only one of history's ever recurring incidents. Nearly one hundred years ago one of the British Ambassador's predecessors raised a similar question, unfortunately after the event, instead of before. For a long time the feeling was intensely disagreeable, and at one time bade fair to become serious.

A literary interest is added to the occurrence by the fact that Tom Moore, the poet, then visiting America, seized upon it as the theme for one of the slanderous and vindictive letters that he wrote to his friends in England. He was an intimate associate of the English Minister and his wife, and his condolences with the latter on the "affront" to which she had been subjected did much to fan the flame of the lady's fury.

Jefferson the Offender.

President Jefferson was the offender. Minister Merry and his wife were the complainants in the diplomatic cause celebre of 1804. They were at the White House, having accepted the President's invitation to dinner. Mr. Jefferson happened, when dinner was announced, to be conversing with Mrs. Madison, the wife of his Secretary of State. He accompanied her to the table. Mrs. Merry was at some distance from the President at the time of the announcement, but this fact she regarded as in no way palliative of what she considered the insult to which she had been subjected. The President of the youthful Republic had given to the wife of his Minister precedence over the wife of old England's representative!

Mrs. Merry was furious. A vain, faultfinding woman, imbued with a native contempt for free institutions, she seized upon the incident as a means possibly of fomenting a petty diplomatic fuss, of which she would be the centre. By her flattery she had so completely won the little poet that he saw America and Americans through her eyes only, and when little Moore—then, by-the-bye, a man of only about five-and-twenty—wrote of the "monstrous" occurrence to his mother from Baltimore on June 13, 1804, he used this language:

I stopped at Washington with Mr. and Mrs. Merry for near a week; they have been treated with the most pointed incivility by the present Democratic President, Mr. Jefferson, and it is only the precarious situation of Great Britain which could possibly induce it to overlook such indecent, though at the same time petty, hostility.

Sympathy for the Merrys.

The Merrys did not lack sympathy in Washington, where the Federalists readily aided Mrs. Merry in her endeavors to have a British Minister show that an insult to his wife was a mighty serious international affair. Mr. Merry, being a dutiful husband as well as a zealous representative, waxed frantic, and before long the tempest in the teapot had become so very tumultuous that Secretary Madison communicated with Mr. Monroe—then Minister to England—on the subject. It seemed at the time possible that the American Minister might be called upon to explain the "incivility" to Mrs. Merry, and Mr. Madison thought it wise to inform the Minister as to the facts.

Mr. Monroe was promptly equal to the occasion. No attempt was made by the British Foreign Office to call his attention officially to the lamented incident, but a British under secretaary, acting under instructions probably, did bring the subject up to Mr. Monroe, at the same time intimating that an official communication would follow.

Though a grave man, Mr. Monroe could not keep treating the matter in a spirit of fun. He gave his informant to understand that he considered the affair too absurd for serious consideration. At the same time, while dilating with unwonted merriment of the humorous features of the case, he slyly called the under secretary's attention to the fact that should the affair reach diplomatic importance, he had a "tu quoque" ready in the shape of a countercharge of incivility. In fact, not long before, the wife of an English under secretary, at a state dinner in England had been accorded precedence over Mr. Monroe!

That Settled It.

The Merry affront incident was closed and the excitement attending it soon passed, away, as far as concerned all but the Merrys. They continued to pose as monstrously offended persons. Mr. Merry never visited the White House save on official business. Mrs. Merry refused to go there at all. President Jefferson, desiring to establish a more agreeable state of affairs, inquired through a diplomatic medium whether Mr. and Mrs. Merry would honor him to a family dinner. On Mr. Merry's assent he sent the invitation in his own hand-writing. Mr. Merry, doubtless under conjugal duress, formally addressed Secretary of State Madison asking whether he was invited in his personal or official capacity. If the former he must obtain the permission of his sovereign before accepting; if the latter, he must beassured of treatment becoming his exhalted position.

Here is what Mr. Madison replied:

The President instructs me to say that Mr. and Mrs. Merry are at liberty to act as they please in a matter of such small moment.

This ended the correspondence. Whether or not the Merry's temper improved, that of their poet friend didn't. He continued to write savagely of the land and people whose honored guest he was. Of Norfolk, Va., he wrote:

Affront to American Women.

Nothing is to be seen in the streets but dogs and negroes; and the few ladies that pass for white are the most unlovel spieces of crockery I ever set my eyes upon. * * * Poor Mrs. Merry has been as ill-treated by the mosquitoes as she has been by every one else. They have bit her into a fever.

In a poem he alluded by innuendo to Jefferson as—

That inglorious soul
Which creeps and winds beneath a mob's control,
Which courts the rabble's smile, the rabble's nod,
And makes, like Egypt, every beast its god.

In the same poem he describes Washington as a misguided person,

Who lost the rebel's in the hero's name,
And stept o'er prostrate royalty to fame,
Beneath whose sword Columbia's patriot train,
Cut off their monarch that the mob might reign.

He winds up this effort with the following invitation to Dr. Thomas Hume, to whom it was addressed:

Then let us meet and mingle converse dear
By Thames at home, or by Potomac here!
O'er lake and marsh, through fevers and through fogs,
'Midst bears and Yankees, Democrats and frogs,
Thy foot shall follow me, thy heart and eyes
With me shall wander and with me despise.

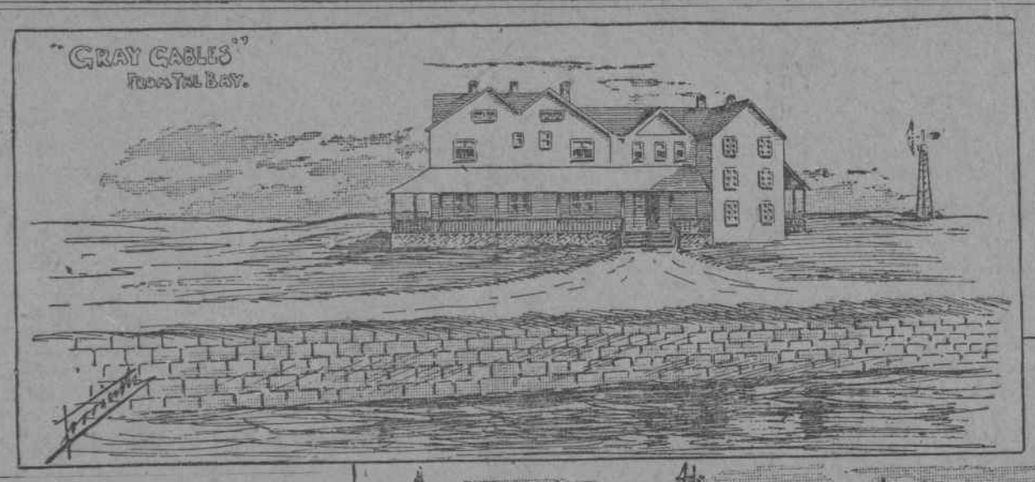
But Moore was not exact in his knowledge when he wrote of America. If he had been he would not have described the alligator as loving

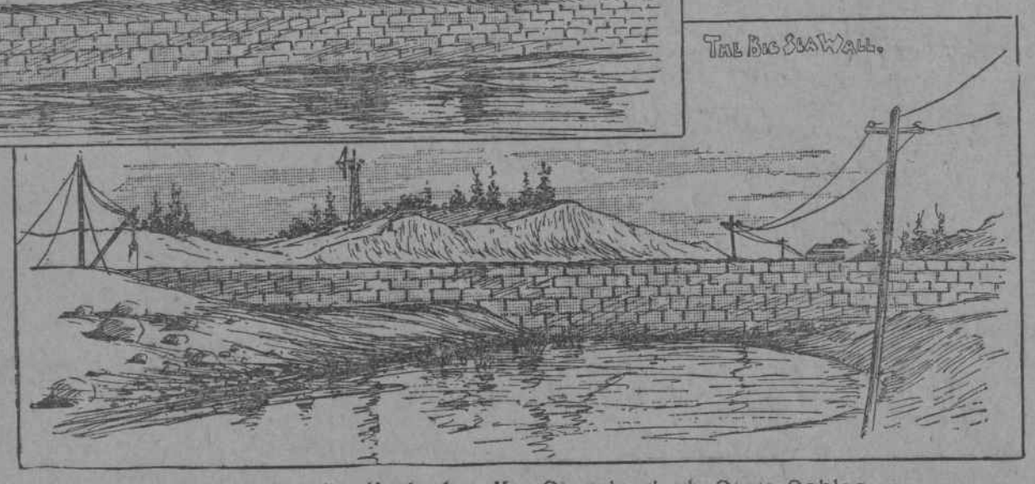
To creep
Torpid to his Winter's sleep
In the rivers that the poet crossed while passing through the woods between Batavia and Buffalo in this State.

Altgeld's Enemies.

[Washington Post.]

Ex-Governor Altgeld has been compelled to sacrifice valuable property in order to meet his obligations, and he has done this in a manly fashion. Is it not about time for Altgeld's enemies to substantiate some of their insinuations?





Improvements Made by Mr. Cleveland at Gray Gables.

Buzzard's Bay, May 8.—Ex-President Cleveland, like his neighbor, Joe Jefferson, has continued to make improvements at his Summer home, until the Gray Gables of to-day does not in the least resemble the place when it was called Tudor Haven, less than ten years ago. Mr. Cleveland made many improvements; he built an addition to the cottage, erected a house for the man who had charge of the estate, enlarged the barn and constructed a new driveway from the railroad station, which the company had built for his accommodation at a point about half a mile distant from the "Gables." Gray Gables is situated on a neck of land which stretches out into the waters of Buzzard's Bay, and around this land a big stone wall was built.

Last year Mr. Cleveland decided that he would stop the waters of the bay from inundating his land, and he contracted for the construction of a wall to be built around the land and across the shallow waters of the creek, through which the sea had rushed and caused so much damage in the past. Work was begun after Mr. Cleveland left here last Fall, and with a big force of men a large section of the wall was completed before the Winter season came on. Hardly had that portion of the wall which crosses the creek been built before there was an exceptionally high tide, which would have wrought great destruction if the wall had not kept the waters from inundating the lands. All the stone used in the construction of the wall was taken from the ledges on the Gray Gables estate, and is of superior quality. Beyond the wall is a high hill, from which hundreds of tons of sand has been taken and used to fill the swamp holes back of the wall. The wall varies in thickness from three to ten feet and in height from five to fifteen feet.

The sea wall in front of the Gables is not as high as the one just completed, but it is of sufficient height to keep back the inrushing tides which in the Winter months are driven against its solid front. While Mr. Cleveland has spent a vast sum of money in making these improvements, he has greatly increased the value of his property. The big sea wall closely resembles the wall of a fortress as one approaches from the bay or views it from Gray Gables.

The wall was built in a most thorough manner, and a tide of sufficient force and height to inundate the land beyond it would surely compel the Buzzard's Bay villagers to flee to the hills for safety. The improvements are being rapidly pushed to completion, and it is expected that the workmen will have taken their departure and everything be in readiness on the arrival of Mr. Cleveland and his family, who are expected about June 1.

G. A. R. ATTACK IS NOT RELISHED.

School Histories, It Is Urged, Should Not Be Bitter Toward the South.

THIS IS AN ERA OF PEACE.

"Traitor," "Secession," "Rebel," Are Words That Should Be Tabooed.

The criticism, by a committee of the G. A. R., of the histories in use in the schools of this State, because in the committee's opinion they do not fairly nor fully state the cause of the conflict between the North and the South, created a stir in educational and military circles in this city. The general opinion seemed to be that the committee's criticism was unreasonable and that the only result of its action would be to arouse ill feeling.

Up to two years ago the books for the public schools were selected by the Committee on Course of Study and Instruction of the Board of Education. Then by resolution of the Board the selection of the books was turned over to the Board of School Superintendents. The plan now is for the matter to be referred by the Board of Superintendents to its Committee on School Books, which makes up a list which is submitted to the Board of Education's Committee on Instruction. This latter committee adds to or takes from the list and then reports it to the full Board for adoption or rejection.

Books Used in Schools.

The American histories now in use in the public schools are Anderson's Junior Class United States and New Grammar School, Barnes's Brief History of the United States, Eggleston's First Book in American History and History of the United States, Fiske's History of the United States, Higginson's Young Folks' History of the United States, Hunter's Narrative History of the United States, Montgomery's Beginners' American History and Leading Facts of American History, Scudder's History and Short History of the United States, Studies in American History by Mary Sheldon Barnes, Swinton's First Lessons in Our Country's History and School History of the United States and Thomas's History of the United States.

"It is impossible to satisfy everybody," said Superintendent Jasper. "If these critics don't like the histories in use, why don't they prepare one themselves?"

Assistant Superintendent Edward D. Farrell, who is one of the Committee on School Books of the Board of Superintendents, said that he did not consider the G. A. R. criticism wise or in keeping with the sentiment of the times. "Let us have peace." No good was to be gained by introducing the words "traitor," "treason" and "rebel" into our histories. Years ago histories of the war were noted for their bitterness. As time elapsed this bitterness gave way to a kindly feeling, and it was on the recommendation of brave Union officers themselves that the word "secession" was dropped from the histories and the title Confederate was substituted for "rebel" and "traitor."

A Great Change.

Another great change was brought about by the publication of Green's "History of the English People," which attached more importance to the masses than to princes and kings. This work had a decided influence on American writers, and histories of our own people were constructed on similar lines. It was time that the old war feeling was allowed to die out. How would it do to go to one of the public schools in this city and refer to the Southern people as rebels and to see the tears start in some child's eyes and to hear that his father had lost his life fighting on the Confederate side?

"The G. A. R. committee," said C. B. Rouss, who fought in the Twelfth Virginia Cavalry, "seems to think that the school histories are incomplete and in error because they do not make the Confederate side sufficiently odious, and because they do not define the Southern man both as rebel and traitor. If that committee would carry its investigation further or to the bottom it would find the reason why these histories do not contain what it would like them to contain. Lincoln and Grant, the committee would find, granted such liberal terms to the South because they had learned from the highest judicial authority, including Mr. Chase, that upon constitutional grounds the South was right, and that in their estimation there was no place for treason, gibbet or guillotine.

"These critics would also find that Grant's magnanimity came of an assurance upon his part that justice demanded it, and that he knew full well from his own dearly bought experience that Southern valor entitled the Confederates to the most generous treatment. The future historian, who will go into an elaborate discussion of the late war, will surprise prejudiced enthusiasts of this sort."

AIR MOTOR PLANT READY.

Tests on the Elevated Railroad Likely to Be Made Any Day Within the Next Week.

Everything is in readiness for the test of the air motor by the Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company. It may be made any day within the next week.

The first big plant for supplying compressed air motors with power has just been completed. It was built under the direction of ex-Mayor Sanders, of Plainfield, N. J., a well-known mechanical engineer, and is in the nature of an experimental plant.

The plant is located in lower Greenwich street. It compresses air to a pressure of 2,500 pounds to the square inch. This air is conveyed to strong steel cylinders, which will serve as feeders to the motor. The motor has been built in Schenectady, and is now on its way to New York.

The tests will be made on the Sixth avenue elevated structure, between Fifty-eighth and Rector streets. The motor will be run every day until its efficiency and economy are thoroughly tried. It resembles an ordinary elevated locomotive, without a smokestack. In place of the boiler are the steel cylinders, which are covered with sheathing.

The motor works quietly, and there are no clouds of steam vapor or showers of cinders. The only noise is that made by the rumble of the wheels. It will require only a few days' practice for any locomotive engineer to run the air motor. Mechanical engineers say that there is an economy of fuel in the new force of from 40 to 50 per cent.

"I cannot give the exact date when the tests will be begun," said General Manager Fransioli, of the Manhattan Elevated Railroad Company, yesterday. "We expected them to take place before this. They may be made at any time now. I cannot express any opinion as to how long it will take to arrive at a decision in regard to the success of the experiment."

A Hot Heat.

[Detroit Tribune.]

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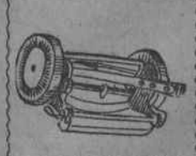

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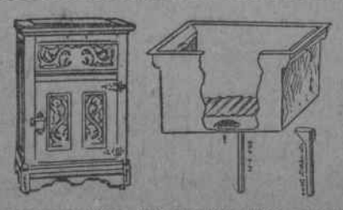

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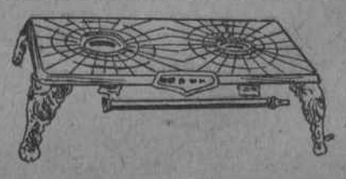

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