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EDITORIAL

The Bryan-Roosevelt Debate.

"When a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented, it provokes him—at least I find it so myself; but when misrepresentation becomes very gross and palpable, it is more apt to amuse him." This comment might appropriately be made by William J. Bryan upon the personal parts of President Roosevelt's letters. But it was first made by Abraham Lincoln a little over fifty years ago, and with reference to Senator Douglas. Mr. Lincoln and Senator Douglas were debating "on the stump," as Mr. Bryan and President Roosevelt are now debating through open letters. Senator Douglas was then in office as one of the leaders of a party long in power and enthralled by the slavery interests, as President Roosevelt is now in office as one of the leaders of a party long in power and enthralled by plutocratic interests. Senator Douglas was then trying to check aggressions of the slavery interests without offending them, as President Roosevelt is now trying to check aggressions of plutocratic interests without losing their support. Conversely, Mr. Lincoln was then a private citizen, of no official experience except a term in the legislature and one in Congress, but of wide study of the public questions of that time, as Mr. Bryan is now a private citizen of no official experience except two terms in Congress, but of wide study of the public questions of this time. Nor does the parallel end there. Senator Douglas was arrogant, ill-natured,

vituperative, brutal, and given to misrepresentation, in that famous debate with Mr. Lincoln, as President Roosevelt is arrogant, ill-natured, vituperative, brutal and given to misrepresentation in this famous debate with Bryan. But Mr. Lincoln was simple, self-contained, respectful and fair then in debating with Senator Douglas, as Mr. Bryan is in debating with President Roosevelt now. Although Mr. Bryan has not yet quoted Lincoln literally in reply to President Roosevelt's misrepresentations, he might truly do so. President Roosevelt has laid himself as widely open as Douglas did to the retort that "when a man hears himself somewhat misrepresented it provokes him, but when misrepresentation becomes very gross and palpable it is more apt to amuse him." In the case of Roosevelt and Bryan perhaps "pain" would be a better word than "amuse"; for Douglas flavored his misrepresentations with humor, whereas Roosevelt is only malignant.

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The Miraculous Bryan.

An Indiana man gives notice that if Bryan is elected he will close his factory, whereas if Taft is elected he will build a larger one. As he manufactures surgical instruments, he apparently expects that Bryan's election would lessen accidents. Happy thought! Why not organize Taft clubs of surgical instrument makers, doctors and undertakers with some such motto as, "Save us from Bryan and the abolition of wounds, disease and death!"

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The Haskell Episode.

Whatever may be Governor Haskell's record, which is now in dispute, and whatever his essential character as a man, he has done the honorable thing in resigning his high office in the Democratic national committee. It was an honorable act if his record had in fact been bad; it was all the more honorable if through falsehood he had been made a victim of partisan malignity. The whole affair being personal to himself, fair dealing demanded that he divorce the personal controversy from a political campaign in which his associates, and he himself if sincere, are making a fight for fundamental democracy. Especially is this so of a campaign against such tremendous odds of money and political patronage and party narrowness and corporate power and newspaper malice and aristocratic paternalism and arrogance. Regarding the merits of the controversy, it is only just to say that in so far as the facts have been disclosed, the case is with Governor Haskell and not with his accusers. Not a particle of evidence

has yet been published upon which, if the accusations be simply denied, any fair man would venture to conclude that Governor Haskell is unfit for the official position he holds as Governor of a State. The accusations would unfit him for decent companionship if true, but they are only accusations. They are not proved to the extent even of reasonable probability, and this much at least should be required before pronouncing the Oklahoma Governor guilty.

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President Roosevelt's part in this affair has been simply despicable. A hard epithet that, to apply to a President of the United States; but it is the mildest appropriate one in the language, unless we are ready in this country to accept the dictum that "the king can do no wrong." It is a milder epithet, too, than those which this particular President is himself accustomed to using, and with utter disregard of personal reputations. Let fair-minded men consider his behavior in this instance. Gov. Haskell had been accused of attempted bribery and had denied it. He could do no more, for the circumstances of the accusation did not admit of the possibility of proving a negative. The burden of proof—not merely upon the principles of evidence in law, but according to ordinary perceptions of morality and common sense, if there be any difference, as President Roosevelt seems to think there is—the burden of proof was morally and rationally as well as legally upon the accuser. This was true at any rate up to the point of refusal by Governor Haskell to submit himself to cross-examination, and he had not refused. So far from refusing, he had done everything in his power, to all appearances at least, to bring himself to cross-examination; and not only now, but from the time when the accusation was first made, some ten years ago. Yet President Roosevelt publicly declared Governor Haskell's guilt, and upon being called to account, brushed his declaration aside as if it had never been made. He neither justified the accusation, as he was properly called upon to do; nor explained the facts which had seemed to him suspicious, as he might have done; nor withdrew his hasty censure, as he was in honor bound to do if he could neither justify nor give grounds for suspicion. This is not according to the code of men, whether in private or official station, who mean to be right and try to be fair.

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Mr. Monnett and Mr. Taft.

So much of billingsgate has been flying about in the campaign since Hearst got himself back