

seemed to come over their fishy dream. Their rejoicing became less and less strenuous. Their eyes became dull, their gills green. Gradually they turned over on their backs and lay floating in the presence of their Emperor, their gilded stomachs pathetically uppermost. They were dead. What a fascinating study is Nature!

I have composed the following ode, in love for its ostentation. It is the marvel of rich tourists from Scythia; but the Good Government Leaguers call it the Temple of Frenzy, and the sight of its gilded domes makes them so darn sore they'd like to give me what Phil Knox gave Zelaya—and they will, too, if they ever get a chance to elect their Senators by the Direct Primary Law.

You ought to see it when it's lit up—the Palace, I mean, not the Direct Primary Law. It glares and flashes and glitters, reminding one inevitably of the interior of a popular Broadway restaurant. It's so bright that I have to provide myself and guests with smoked goggles or we'd all die of sunstroke.

Maybe my solid-gold outfit isn't making a hit in the Smart Set! And yet it's queer. Gold is really quite unsuitable for furniture. It's so hard and metallic—and when you hit your elbow on a sharp-cut diamond every time you turn around, it's apt to bring some tall cuss word into our pure Latin vocabulary. Also, when a solid gold chair gets well chilled through it's about as soft to sit on as the marble lid of Grandpa's sarcophagus. But the servile Patricians of my court are crazy to have their apartments furnished with tables and chairs just like mine. I sometimes think that the early manner of Pindar, pointing the moral to this tragic situation. It is called "Moderation".

When Trouble is down and Joy's on top  
There's a time to Drink and a time to Stop.  
As the Flagon calls and the Bubbles wink,  
Then you sort of feel that its time to Drink.  
But the time to Stop-ah, Fish and Men,  
Ticks there a Clock that will tell you when?  
For the crazy old Clock in Pleasures tower,  
Never strikes at the Quitting Hour.  
But its hands beat time to our midnight glee  
Till its works run down-and so do we.

This Golden Pavilion of mine shines over the ruins of fire-swept Rome like a brass thimble on a niggers thumb. Rome is a jay town. I even noticed that the department stores are exhibiting what they call Nero-style furniture in their windows this week.



"WE HAVE JUST MOVED INTO THE GOLDEN"



"WITH A CERTAIN COLD SNEER, WHICH I HAVE BEEN USING A GREAT DEAL LATELY, I HANDED MY SWORD TO STRANGULARIUS!"

You remember old Cynicus Rubus, often called the Chauncy M. Depew of the Quirinal? He is no more. He never was much. Here's how it happened:

Cyrus dropped in to lunch yesterday and looked over my gilded luxury with the show-me expression peculiar to Romans of the old school.

"How like you my golden chairs?" I asked him, as I toyed with my latest table-delicacy—ostrich eggs stewed in cologne.

"Nothing more uncomfortable has been in-

vented since Mission oak went out, he replied."

With a certain cold sneer, which I am using a great deal lately, I handed my sword to Stranguarius, my executioner. Cynicus Rubus, of course, a deadly pallor mounting to the apex of his hairless head. He divined the meaning of my jaunty act.

"Brother of Apollo, he stuttered, "am I to be stabbed by the sword of the Emperor? I scarce deserve such an honor."

"The honor is being thrust upon you," I chuckled, as my faithful executioner delivered the fatal poke. This little quip of mine got quite an ovation from the assembled courtiers. I don't think Rome can be degenerated so long as her People continue to have such a wholesome sense of humor.

But how I rattle on!

Now hark you, dear friend, we are going to talk business with you. (By the way, why does a King usually refer to himself as "we"? Answer: Because he is usually leading a double life. Not poor for an Ancient Roman—eh, what?) We are going to discuss with you on the unpleasant subject of Accumulated Wealth. In your last letter you spoke of turning your province over bodily to the Water Power Trust, the Coal Combine and the Timber Monopoly, those three concerns being now masked under the name of the Pluto Improvement Company. You mention working the scheme on a 50 per cent basis, half of which swag you were to turn over to your beloved Sovereign. I like your spirit. You are learning to take things in a large way—a knowledge essential to either a philosopher or a Graft. But I must chide you in one respect. You are selling out too cheap. Remember, an official should be well paid for a Public Service—especially when he is rendering it to Private Interest. By all the Muses, you are too modest. Raise your divvy to 75 per cent and render unto Caesar the share that is Caesar's.

You ask me if what you do is wrong. My boy, my boy! In the bright lexicon of Graft there is no such word as Wrong. The only man who is Wrong is the man who is In Wrong. Go to the law, thou sluggard, consider his ways and get wise.

Speed, noble Roman! Borrow the wings of Mercury and beat it to the Land Office!