

## 'Poems of Gun and Rod'

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE CRITIC':—

It is always pleasant to come across anything by an outdoor writer who has himself really observed and taken note of that concerning which he writes; and it is especially pleasant to find an American author who knows the sights and sounds of our fields, woods, marshes and prairies so well that he speaks of them simply and naturally, evidently without temptation to say he has seen when he has merely read, and therefore incapable of falling into the error of transferring old-world birds and flowers to our own literary landscape.

Mr. Ernest McGaffey, in his "Poems of Gun and Rod," shows that he has this first-hand knowledge, and in addition the capacity to tell what he has seen. He dwells on old Grip, the rabbit hound, lying beside the rocking-chair, in front of the hearth where the hickory back-log glows, because the dog is his friend and companion. The long-drawn chattering cry of the flicker, and his dipping flight, the call of an upland plover over the prairie—these are in his ears and before his eyes as he writes. He knows the brown marshes and the purple lines of heavy timber; he has seen the duck-hawk strike the flying teal; his eyes have lightened as they fell on the red beauty of the sumach in fall; his pulse has quickened, as he lay behind the rough blind, and the howling of the wild geese smote on his ear. He has speared pickerel, and struck bass and trout, and seen the great muscallonge rise to the spoon.

Mr. McGaffey is a young writer, and of course an unequal one; he occasionally strikes a note that jars, as when he utters some rather trite sentiment about woman's inconstancy; but there is genuine poetry in the author of "Pan," "The Deserted Boat," "Sumach," and many other poems in this volume.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 17, 1893.