

*To the Honorable Mayor of Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo.*

*Dear Sir: A Hibernian gentleman once closed an impassioned epistle to his sweetheart with the words: "If you fail to receive this letter, of course you will know it has miscarried," to which pleasing bit of philosophy I may add the consoling suggestion that you will never know the extent of your misfortune.*

*The whimsical fancies of the originators of the great ball held here to-night have led them to insist that I write this letter, and, as at this period of the world's history the mayor of a municipality is expected to be the servant of the public in all matters, from the care of public sewers to the entertainment of distinguished guests, it would doubtless be considered bad form in me to refuse a compliance with the requests aforesaid. Accordingly, I stretch my hand across the coming Century to clasp the shadowy fingers of the unborn mayor of 2007, indulging, at the same time, the thought that mayhap he will in turn reach his hand back across the chasm of the then dead twentieth century to clasp the unsubstantial fingers of my shade.*

*Standing upon the threshold of the new century, we look backward and survey 100 Years of the most wonderful progress of the world since time began. Between the birth and death of nineteenth century is compassed more of progress and achievement than in all the ages that have rolled over the earth.*

*Within its brief span the ox cart has given place to the locomotive, wooden sail vessels to steel leviathans, propelled by steam, that plow the waves of every sea; the telegraph and telephone have taken the place of mounted couriers, the daily paper has usurped the province of the weekly and monthly periodical; science has measured the universe and weighted and analyzed the remotest star that shines in space; the tide of civilization has swept from far east of the Mississippi to the coast of the Pacific ocean, transforming impenetrable forests and trackless prairies into happy homes, and dotting fruitful valleys with villages, towns, and mighty cities.*

*Typical of this wonderful advancement, typical of the century, most typical of its progress, energy, ceaseless and irresistible advance, to that city over which you shall have, upon the receipt of this epistle, the honor to preside. Within a period of three*

decades, it has been transformed from a struggling hamlet of cabins to a city of 165,000 souls and together with its twin sister, Kansas City, Kas., embraces a population of nearly a quarter of a million people. Its advance in industrial achievement has more than kept pace with the growth of population. It is the center of a network of railways, reaching into every state and territory of the union. Its future greatness is assured, so far as anything terrestrial may be regarded as certain. To-day Kansas City, Queen of the West and Southwest, dowered with youth and strength, belted with hope and ambition, wielding the scepter of supremacy over a territory vaster than the empire of Germany, richer than the valley of the Nile in the days of the Pharaohs, turns her beautiful face toward the sunrise of the twentieth century and sends Godspeed to her children of the twenty-first.

This letter is written at a great ball, attended by 10,000 of our citizens, to celebrate the morning of the new century—here, under a pe roof, are gathered the men who built and made Kansas City great. If, by any chance, this letter should reach your hand and be opened at a similar ball held 100 years from this date, it mayhap will reach the ears of a larger audience, in which will be gathered the wit and beauty of your day, but it will not be listened to by more handsome ladies than the women of Missouri, congregated here to-night—women with cheeks the mingled bloom of peach and rose, whose eyes have stolen their azure from the skies, or robbed the night of all its sabled charms; with brows and necks softer than satin, whiter than the lily's spotless bosom; with hair like floss of silk, spun into finest threads by Magic's wondrous looms, colored with sunshine's gold, or raven black or nut brown tints; with lips that can shame the cherries in their ripest blush, the bed of kisses, honeyed words and love; with forms that might wring tears of envy from the stony eyes of marble Juno; with hearts warmer than the breast of Venus when first pierced by Cupid's fiery dart—they move across the ballroom's polished floor in perfect accord with music's melodies, the embodiment of terrestrial grace and glory. In 2001 you may have greater concourse of people at your ball, but the flower of your womanhood will not exceed the congregated loveliness here to-night.

Concluding this somewhat remarkable epistle, allow me to express, for all the people of Kansas City, the hope that when the sun of the twenty-first century shall rise it will fall upon the spires and minarets of a mighty American city, and gild them till they glow

*with glory; and may it also light the homes of millions of happy, contented and prosperous people.*

*I have the honor, sir, to convey this message from the citizens of the present to the citizens of the future.*

*Sincerely Yours,*

*JAMES A. REED*

*Mayor of Kansas City.*