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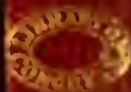
Theodore Roosevelt

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THEODORE
ROOSEVELT

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Norman Hapgood



NORMAN HAPGOOD'S editorials fit The National Weekly. They are national, international, human, suggestive. They do not preach, they vivify the world's events with their suggestions. If you disagree with them—and you must sometimes—you disagree good-naturedly. But you will read them; and you will not read them without having some new light thrown on some subject that will interest you as a thinking man or woman.



THEODORE ROOSEVELT



THE Roosevelt Legend is rapidly taking shape. The President is a complex but not mysterious appearance. When he concludes his present work in 1908, his outlines will be distinct for a statesman so young and so fertile in inconsistency.

No clearer folly was ever perpetrated than the attempt of a few conspicuous organs of the silk stocking and Wall Street ingredients in the last campaign to befuddle voters into the belief that Mr. Roosevelt was an autocrat menacing free institutions and pointing the way to Roman autocracy. The people knew that Mr. Roosevelt was a democrat in every way except inherited party affiliation, and that Mr. Parker was a democrat mainly in appellation. The people know a democrat when they see one. Cynics may observe that the masses, if unrestricted, would choose leaders who look like the majority and smell like the majority. That snobbery is no better than any other. The masses have a good deal more political sense than anybody else.

THE PRESIDENT SHOULD BE "IT"

When Mr. Roosevelt was painted as a tyrant and a law-breaker, they smiled or jeered. The only weapon to which he would have been vulnerable was humor, and profound and well-directed humor is scarce. Cartoonists who made him look like the Emperor William or Mr. Hyde only made fools of their newspapers. Those who showed him swinging on a bellowing elephant down the Pike, roaring, grinning, and firing a revolver, struck a reality, but it did not matter. The people like a megaphone. They can hear it. Nothing is more exasperating than a back seat and an actor whose voice only carries ten rows. Mr. Roosevelt's personal assertiveness begets confidence. He does not imbibe his principles with ear attentive on the ground. The machinery inside himself is too audible for him to listen, as McKinley did, or to hear the smaller voices in the earth if he did listen. His own internal rumblings drown almost any other sound. What difference does it make if the President uses "I" ten times to the sentence, and, if made self-conscious, merely changes "I" to "We"? What matter if he is It? The people want him to be It. He is theirs. "It is a pity," said Lord Acton of Mr. Gladstone, "that he believes in his

own immaculate conception." It didn't hurt Mr. Gladstone's popularity, even if it was true.

The great English Prime Minister had much in common with our President. There were differences. Mr. Gladstone had more intellect. Mr. Roosevelt is instinctive as a woman. Mr. Gladstone could prove the entire consistency in any contradiction. Mr. Roosevelt emits the contradictions, but lets them lie, knowing they will be no more important than last year's paper. A friend of mine, gentle as a lamb, has in his office a placard reading, "Look every man in the eye;—and tell him to go to hell." Independence and friendliness are fused in Mr. Roosevelt. He is a warmer character than Mr. Gladstone, though a less distinguished mind. He represents democracy in America better than any man since Lincoln, and much more thoroughly than Gladstone represented democracy in Great Britain.

McKinley's popularity, like his leadership, was more negative than Roosevelt's. His was the frock-suit school, which is passing now, with gesture like a statesman, and other trappings which spell dignity. One of the strongest traits of Roosevelt is that he has none of the postures of an institution. What egotism he has is free from pride. He does no swelling on his monument. His mood, tone, and manner are those



“ Here we are again! ”

By C. G. Bush, in the New York "World"

of the great Central West. He is what we love to print in capitals as a Man. Since the noble Lincoln showed his sovereign mind and tempered character in easiest undress, no American President has caught so accurately the zest of informality. It will be long before we have another Lincoln; for such apparitions visit the world but now and then—but we have in Roosevelt a master of the democratic bearing.

He gives any side of himself to anybody. "A lot of fellows," remarked a philosopher on Broadway, "impose upon the President. He is a great hand to talk. A little joking, and he will write an inspired letter containing what the impulse of conversation has struck out of him. When you get the Rough Rider in an inspired mood, he is a great man to be inspired, but on the other hand, when he thinks it over calmly and deliberately, his inspiration cools, and he is not so badly inspired as he was. All these moods we see. Psychologically, McKinley had no private life. He was a statue in a park. Roosevelt has no public life. He is constantly parading around in his pajamas, which are becoming enough in their place, but which give some persons a shock."

The people like pajamas. They are an evidence of good faith. I like pajamas, too, and like the President, as nearly everybody does, who has met him, or who has not. There are in him a warm reality and truth which extenuate his most untruthful words or deeds.

His instincts guide him. They shape his ends. If some one bandies in his presence words which appeal to his literary sense, he seizes them, and apparently is influenced by their sound; but they really only lucubrate a tendency waiting for a path. "A square deal,"

when it crossed his ear, gave him acutest satisfaction. So, when he was Police Commissioner, did "Enforce the law because it is the law."

Within his range of modulation he can be swung by such welcome phrase, but in his larger tendencies he goes by instinct, as a carrier pigeon or a woman goes, and these larger tendencies coincide with public spirit in America. There are no two Roosevelts, and have never been, any more than there are two women in the lady who overrules to-day what she declared with passion yesterday. Logic is a small part of intelligence, and a smaller part of the worth of human life. Mr. Roosevelt has no logic and needs none. He is headed fast and hard for certain ends, and he will reach them. He does not lie awake nights thinking about breaches of consistency or order in the relation of deeds to explanations or descriptions. He does not lie awake at night from any cause. He sleeps. And his perfect functioning is the country's gain. He works much and well, and it takes a person of many activities to represent this land. In reaffirming the decalogue; in celebrating some commonplace volume like "The Simple Life"; in attacking race suicide, snob-bishness, wife-beaters, weaklings, or cowards; in preaching at a hemisphere; in talking about

his Irish blood, his Southern ancestry, his catholic sympathy, or his appreciation of the town of Dog Run, Indiana; in all this caldron of aggressive living and expression, the President satisfies the popular mood, not by intention, but by miscellaneous vigor, as in his strictly executive functions he satisfies the general conscience by being the most constant, daring, and successful purifier of public life who has risen to meet the political methods which have developed since the war.

THE KEYNOTE OF THE NEW POLITICS

Roosevelt is a pioneer. The people are with him, but he has given the cue more than he has taken it. He began his career at twenty-four as a reformer. His public life has stood unswervingly for ethics. Even if he is appointing a corruptionist, or arguing in favor of war as a mode of exercise, he will give his view in moral propositions. He will exude an atmosphere of principle. The central note of American politics to-day, the note of the future, the mark of the new, is ethics. The old appeal to buncombe, to partisan emotion, to crude slogans of combat, is doomed, and along with it the old methods of organization, barter, and neglect of spiritual appeal. The issues used victoriously by La Follette and Folk are what the American

people want. They want a moral reality and a moral tone; and Theodore Roosevelt is the only statesman, alive or dead, in reading whose speeches you will find the exact note struck which is the note of to-day toward reform, the note which other politicians, all over the country, are beginning to use. He struck it, not from profundity of insight, but because it was himself, and because the instinctive demon which leads him on has told him always to trust the stirrings of his soul and body. In matters of strict intellectual analysis, like the details of tariff schedules, or the intricacies of commerce, he sees dimly and proceeds with caution. In pervading moral tone, in the naked confidence with which he follows his intimate beliefs, he is strong with the forces of the masses and the time. To be moral in politics means to be for the people, whether it leads against bosses, corporations, Senators, or newspapers; and the people know themselves to be Mr. Roosevelt's chief interest and his last reliance. It is no wonder that they love him. His fight has been their fight. He has done more, with the constant aid of Providence, than any ten other men, between 1888 and 1905, to free the people's voice and give expression to ideals of to-day's American democracy. Only three Presidencies since the war



"He's good enough for me"

By Homer Davenport, in the New York "Evening Mail"

have left a striking mark upon the country. McKinley, in his tact and gentleness, embodied one of Lincoln's many sides. He helped to heal old wounds and diplomatically secured some virtuous laws. Grover Cleveland's stubborn courage has already been built into an ideal remembrance, one of those idealized facts which guide and befriend the nations. History may allow Mr. Cleveland to loom largest of our recent Presidents. It depends on Roosevelt and his destiny. Fate swept McKinley and Hanna from his path, even as Generals January and February win their victories in war. She has been his friend also in gentler mood. If he continues to receive her help, and to deserve it; if for four years he speaks with the people's better voice, he will look a taller President to posterity than any since the fatal shot of Booth. He is committed to retirement in 1908. Bowing with manly taste to a disputable convention, he avoids a seeming lack of loyalty to the people. On 1912 are no such fetters. To be nominated in 1908 he might rely on politicians. To be recalled in 1912, or any time in two decades would mean that the people had spoken, and only they. And that glory is the possible reward of brave and powerful leadership.

THE PRESIDENT'S QUALITIES

The President will not remake himself for anything that I or a thousand other onlooking men may say. We can only hope that in his instinct-guided and useful race through life he will do each year more of good and less of evil. The evil is trivial, but it lowers the personality which is to remain in story. Success is a great and beneficent, but not an only, god. Great also, and beneficent, are self-respect and sturdy honesty, and the power to sacrifice one's self. Doing Things is the chief end of an Executive. But Being Things is something. It is part of the man as he is remembered. We are jealous of those on whom we place a value. These passing notes concern one who is probably the most useful public servant since the war. A true republican, a true democrat, a loud noise for righteousness, a fighter for the people's just enfranchisement, he is the strongest single safeguard—out of the million safeguards which our people are—against wildcat discontent and snakelike leaders of the type of Hearst. If wrongs of money are cured under leadership of calm and justice, brands will be taken from the forces of destruction. Young Richard II, when one of his followers had stabbed Wat Tyler, rode to the head of Tyler's frightened

but threatening mob, and said, " *I* will be your leader."

Mr. Roosevelt is as busy as Buster Brown. He thinks that doing everything is doing good. In his case, and, on the whole, it is. The present writer, although rather less than half Republican, would have voted for Mr. Roosevelt against any Democrat extant. He seeks the right and backs nimbly away from wrong. His watchword is the feasible, and he fights to win. He is surefooted, despite his prancing, and heedful, with all his clangor. He is right side up when he strikes earth. He is a little more than forty-six. Will he wear old age as accordantly as youth and middle life? We hold no secrets of the Sisters Three; but we fervently hope our hero's credit may increase in volume, like a ball of rolling snow.



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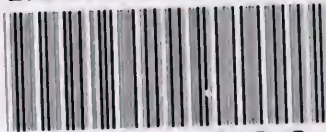
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