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PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT IN HIS RIDING COSTUME.

Theodore Roosevelt

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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the worst of all fears is the fear of living. There are many forms of success, many forms of triumph. But there is no other success that in any shape or way approaches that which is open to most of the many, many men and women who have the right ideals. These are the men and the women who see that it is the intimate and homely things that count most. They are the men and women who have the courage to strive for the happiness which comes only with labor and effort and self-sacrifice, and only to those whose joy in life springs in part from power of work and sense of duty.

CHAPTER X

THE PRESIDENCY; MAKING AN OLD PARTY PROGRESSIVE

ON September 6, 1901, President McKinley was shot by an Anarchist in the city of Buffalo. I went to Buffalo at once. The President's condition seemed to be improving, and after a day or two we were told that he was practically out of danger. I then joined my family, who were in the Adirondacks, near the foot of Mount Tahawus. A day or two afterwards we took a long tramp through the forest, and in the afternoon I climbed Mount Tahawus. After reaching the top I had descended a few hundred feet to a shelf of land where there was a little lake, when I saw a guide coming out of the woods on our trail from below. I felt at once that he had bad news, and, sure enough, he handed me a telegram saying that the President's condition was much worse and that I must come to Buffalo immediately. It was late in the afternoon, and darkness had fallen by the time I reached the clubhouse where we were staying. It was some time afterwards before I could get a wagon to drive me out to the nearest railway station, North Creek, some forty or fifty miles distant. The roads were the ordinary wilderness roads and the night was dark. But we changed horses two or three times — when I say "we" I mean the driver and I, as there was no one else with us — and reached the station just at dawn, to learn from Mr. Loeb, who had a special train waiting, that the President was dead. That evening I took the oath of office, in the house of Ansley Wilcox, at Buffalo. On three previous occasions the Vice-President had succeeded to the Presidency on the death of the President. In each case there had been a reversal of party policy, and a nearly immediate and nearly complete change in the personnel of the higher offices, especially the Cabinet. I

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From a painting by John S. Sargent. Photograph by Frances B. Johnson.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.

This portrait of Theodore Roosevelt, by John S. Sargent, is at the White House.

had never felt that this was wise from any standpoint. If a man is fit to be President, he will speedily so impress himself in the office that the policies pursued will be his anyhow, and he will not have to bother as to whether he is changing them or not; while as regards the offices under him, the important thing for him is that his subordinates shall make a success in handling their several departments. The subordinate is sure to desire to make a success of his department for his own sake, and if he is a fit man, whose views on public policy are sound, and whose abilities entitle him to his position, he will do excellently under almost any chief with the same purposes.

I at once announced that I would continue unchanged McKinley's policies for the honor and prosperity of the country, and I asked all the members of the Cabinet to stay. There were no changes made among them save as changes were made among their successors whom I myself appointed. I continued Mr. McKinley's policies, changing and developing them and adding new policies only as the questions before the public changed and as the needs of the public developed. Some of my friends shook their heads over this, telling me that the men I retained would not be "loyal to me," and that I would seem as if I were "a pale copy of McKinley." I told them that I was not nervous on this score, and that if the men I retained were loyal to their work they would be giving me the loyalty for which I most cared; and that if they were not, I would change them anyhow; and that as for being "a pale copy of McKinley," I was not primarily concerned with either following or not following in his footsteps, but in facing the new problems that arose; and that if I were competent I would find ample opportunity to show my competence by my deeds without worrying myself as to how to convince people of the fact.

For the reasons I have already given in my chapter on the Governorship of New York, the Republican party, which in the days of Abraham Lincoln was founded as the radical progressive party of the Nation, had been obliged during the last decade of the nineteenth century to uphold the interests of popular government against a foolish and illjudged mock-

*McKinley was
shot while making
a speech in
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- J. R. never
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this "policy."*

radicalism. It remained the Nationalist as against the particularist or State's rights party, and in so far it remained absolutely sound; for little permanent good can be done by any party which worships the State's rights fetish or which fails to regard the State, like the county or the municipality, as merely a convenient unit for local self-government, while in all National matters, of importance to the whole people, the Nation is to be supreme over State, county, and town alike. But the State's rights fetish, although still effectively used at certain times by both courts and Congress to block needed National legislation directed against the huge corporations or in the interests of workingmen, was not a prime issue at the time of which I speak. In 1896, 1898, and 1900 the campaigns were waged on two great moral issues: (1) the imperative need of a sound and honest currency; (2) the need, after 1898, of meeting in manful and straightforward fashion the extraterritorial problems arising from the Spanish War. On these great moral issues the Republican party was right, and the men who were opposed to it, and who claimed to be the radicals, and their allies among the sentimentalists, were utterly and hopelessly wrong. This had, regrettably but perhaps inevitably, tended to throw the party into the hands not merely of the conservatives but of the reactionaries; of men who, sometimes for personal and improper reasons, but more often with entire sincerity and uprightness of purpose, distrusted anything that was progressive and dreaded radicalism. These men still from force of habit applauded what Lincoln had done in the way of radical dealing with the abuses of his day; but they did not apply the spirit in which Lincoln worked to the abuses of their own day. Both houses of Congress were controlled by these men. Their leaders in the Senate were Messrs. Aldrich and Hale. The Speaker of the House when I became President was Mr. Henderson, but in a little over a year he was succeeded by Mr. Cannon, who, although widely differing from Senator Aldrich in matters of detail, represented the same type of public sentiment. There were many points on which I agreed with Mr. Cannon and Mr. Aldrich, and some points on which I agreed with Mr. Hale.

I made a resolute effort to get on with all three and with their followers, and I have no question that they made an equally resolute effort to get on with me. We succeeded in working together, although with increasing friction, for some years, I pushing forward and they hanging back. Gradually, however, I was forced to abandon the effort to persuade them to come my way, and then I achieved results only by appealing over the heads of the Senate and House leaders to the people, who were the masters of both of us. I continued in this way to get results until almost the close of my term; and the Republican party became once more the progressive and indeed the fairly radical progressive party of the Nation. When my successor was chosen, however, the leaders of the House and Senate, or most of them, felt that it was safe to come to a break with me, and the last or short session of Congress, held between the election of my successor and his inauguration four months later, saw a series of contests between the majorities in the two houses of Congress and the President,—myself,—quite as bitter as if they and I had belonged to opposite political parties. However, I held my own. I was not able to push through the legislation I desired during these four months, but I was able to prevent them doing anything I did not desire, or undoing anything that I had already succeeded in getting done.

There were, of course, many Senators and members of the lower house with whom up to the very last I continued to work in hearty accord, and with a growing understanding. I have not the space to enumerate, as I would like to, these men. For many years Senator Lodge had been my close personal and political friend, with whom I discussed all public questions, that arose, usually with agreement; and our intimately close relations were of course unchanged by my entry into the White House. He was of all our public men the man who had made the closest and wisest study of our foreign relations, and more clearly than almost any other man he understood the vital fact that the efficiency of our navy conditioned our national efficiency in foreign affairs. Anything relating to our international relations, from Panama and the navy to the Alaskan boundary question,

the Algeciras negotiations, or the peace of Portsmouth, I was certain to discuss with Senator Lodge and also with certain other members of Congress, such as Senator Turner of Washington and Representative Hitt of Illinois. Anything relating to labor legislation and to measures for controlling big business or efficiently regulating the giant railway systems, I was certain to discuss with Senator Dolliver or Congressman Hepburn or Congressman Cooper. With men like Senator Beveridge, Congressman (afterwards Senator) Dixon, and Congressman Murdock, I was apt to discuss pretty nearly everything relating to either our internal or our external affairs. There were many, many others. The present President of the Senate, Senator Clark, of Arkansas, was as fearless and high-minded a representative of the people of the United States as I ever dealt with. He was one of the men who combined loyalty to his own State with an equally keen loyalty to the people of all the United States. He was politically opposed to me; but when the interests of the country were at stake, he was incapable of considering party differences; and this was especially his attitude in international matters — including certain treaties which most of his party colleagues, with narrow lack of patriotism, and complete subordination of National to factional interest, opposed. I have never anywhere met finer, more faithful, more disinterested, and more loyal public servants than Senator O. H. Platt, a Republican, from Connecticut, and Senator Cockrell, a Democrat, from Missouri. They were already old men when I came to the Presidency; and doubtless there were points on which I seemed to them to be extreme and radical; but eventually they found that our motives and beliefs were the same, and they did all in their power to help any movement that was for the interest of our people as a whole. I had met them when I was Civil Service Commissioner and Assistant Secretary of the Navy. All I ever had to do with either was to convince him that a given measure I championed was right, and he then at once did all he could to have it put into effect. If I could not convince them, why! that was my fault, or my misfortune; but if I could convince them, I never had to think again as

to whether they would or would not support me. There were many other men of mark in both houses with whom I could work on some points, whereas on others we had to differ. There was one powerful leader — a burly, forceful man, of admirable traits — who had, however, been trained in the post-bellum school of business and politics, so that his attitude towards life, quite unconsciously, reminded me a little of Artemus Ward's view of the Tower of London — "If I like it, I'll buy it." There was a big governmental job in which this leader was much interested, and in reference to which he always wished me to consult a man whom he trusted, whom I will call Pitt Rodney. One day I answered him, "The trouble with Rodney is that he misestimates his relations to cosmos"; to which he responded, "Cosmos — Cosmos? Never heard of him. You stick to Rodney. He's your man!" Outside of the public servants there were multitudes of men, in newspaper offices, in magazine offices, in business or the professions or on farms or in shops, who actively supported the policies for which I stood and did work of genuine leadership which was quite as effective as any work done by men in public office. Without the active support of these men I would have been powerless. In particular, the leading newspaper correspondents at Washington were as a whole a singularly able, trustworthy, and public-spirited body of men, and the most useful of all agents in the fight for efficient and decent government.

As for the men under me in executive office, I could not overstate the debt of gratitude I owe them. From the heads of the departments, the Cabinet officers, down, the most striking feature of the Administration was the devoted, zealous, and efficient work that was done as soon as it became understood that the one bond of interest among all of us was the desire to make the Government the most effective instrument in advancing the interests of the people as a whole, the interests of the average men and women of the United States and of their children. I do not think I overstate the case when I say that most of the men who did the best work under me felt that ours was a partnership, that we all stood on the same level of purpose and service, and

that it mattered not what position any one of us held so long as in that position he gave the very best that was in him. We worked very hard; but I made a point of getting a couple of hours off each day for equally vigorous play. The men with whom I then played, whom we laughingly grew to call the "Tennis Cabinet," have been mentioned in a previous chapter of this book in connection with the gift they gave me at the last breakfast which they took at the White House. There were many others in the public service under me with whom I happened not to play, but who did their share of our common work just as effectively as it was done by us who did play. Of course nothing could have been done in my Administration if it had not been for the zeal, intelligence, masterful ability, and downright hard labor of these men in countless positions under me. I was helpless to do anything except as my thoughts and orders were translated into action by them; and, moreover, each of them, as he grew specially fit for his job, used to suggest to me the right thought to have, and the right order to give, concerning that job. It is of course hard for me to speak with cold and dispassionate partiality of these men, who were as close to me as were the men of my regiment. But the outside observers best fitted to pass judgment about them felt as I did. At the end of my Administration Mr. Bryce, the British Ambassador, told me that in a long life, during which he had studied intimately the government of many different countries, he had never in any country seen a more eager, high-minded, and efficient set of public servants, men more useful and more creditable to their country, than the men then doing the work of the American Government in Washington and in the field. I repeat this statement with the permission of Mr. Bryce.

At about the same time, or a little before, in the spring of 1908, there appeared in the English *Fortnightly Review* an article, evidently by a competent eye witness, setting forth more in detail the same views to which the British Ambassador thus privately gave expression. It was in part as follows:

"Mr. Roosevelt has gathered around him a body of public servants who are nowhere surpassed, I question whether



From a painting by F. Hopkinson Smith.

THE WHITE HOUSE FROM THE GARDEN.

they are anywhere equaled, for efficiency, self-sacrifice, and an absolute devotion to their country's interests. Many of them are poor men, without private means, who have voluntarily abandoned high professional ambitions and turned their backs on the rewards of business to serve their country on salaries that are not merely inadequate, but indecently so. There is not one of them who is not constantly assailed by offers of positions in the world of commerce, finance, and the law that would satisfy every material ambition with which he began life. There is not one of them who could not, if he chose, earn outside Washington from ten to twenty times the income on which he economizes as a State official. But these men are as indifferent to money and to the power that money brings as to the allurements of Newport and New York, or to merely personal distinctions, or to the commercialized ideals which the great bulk of their fellow-countrymen accept without question. They are content, and more than content, to sink themselves in the National service without a thought of private advancement, and often at a heavy sacrifice of worldly honors, and to toil on . . . sustained by their own native impulse to make of patriotism an efficient instrument of public betterment."

The American public rarely appreciate the high quality of the work done by some of our diplomats — work, usually entirely unnoticed and unrewarded, which redounds to the interest and the honor of all of us. The most useful man in the entire diplomatic service, during my presidency, and for many years before, was Henry White; and I say this having in mind the high quality of work done by such admirable ambassadors and ministers as Bacon, Meyer, Straus, O'Brien, Rockhill, and Egan, to name only a few among many. When I left the presidency White was Ambassador to France; shortly afterwards he was removed by Mr. Taft, for reasons unconnected with the good of the service.

The most important factor in getting the right spirit in my Administration, next to the insistence upon courage, honesty, and a genuine democracy of desire to serve the plain people, was my insistence upon the theory that the executive power was limited only by specific restrictions and

prohibitions appearing in the Constitution or imposed by the Congress under its Constitutional powers. My view was that every executive officer, and above all every executive officer in high position, was a steward of the people bound actively and affirmatively to do all he could for the people, and not to content himself with the negative merit of keeping his talents undamaged in a napkin. I declined to adopt the view that what was imperatively necessary for the Nation could not be done by the President unless he could find some specific authorization to do it. My belief was that it was not only his right but his duty to do anything that the needs of the Nation demanded unless such action was forbidden by the Constitution or by the laws. Under this interpretation of executive power I did and caused to be done many things not previously done by the President and the heads of the departments. I did not usurp power, but I did greatly broaden the use of executive power. In other words, I acted for the public welfare, I acted for the common well-being of all our people, whenever and in whatever manner was necessary, unless prevented by direct constitutional or legislative prohibition. I did not care a rap for the mere form and show of power; I cared immensely for the use that could be made of the substance. The Senate at one time objected to my communicating with them in printing, preferring the expensive, foolish, and laborious practice of writing out the messages by hand. It was not possible to return to the outworn archaism of hand writing; but we endeavored to have the printing made as pretty as possible. Whether I communicated with the Congress in writing or by word of mouth, and whether the writing was by a machine, or a pen, were equally, and absolutely, unimportant matters. The importance lay in what I said and in the heed paid to what I said. So as to my meeting and consulting Senators, Congressmen, politicians, financiers, and labor men. I consulted all who wished to see me; and if I wished to see any one, I sent for him; and where the consultation took place was a matter of supreme unimportance. I consulted every man with the sincere hope that I could profit by and follow his advice; I consulted

every member of Congress who wished to be consulted, hoping to be able to come to an agreement of action with him; and I always finally acted as my conscience and common sense bade me act.

About appointments I was obliged by the Constitution to consult the Senate; and the long-established custom of the Senate meant that in practice this consultation was with individual Senators and even with big politicians who stood behind the Senators. I was only one-half the appointing power; I nominated; but the Senate confirmed. In practice, by what was called "the courtesy of the Senate," the Senate normally refused to confirm any appointment if the Senator from the State objected to it. In exceptional cases, where I could arouse public attention, I could force through the appointment in spite of the opposition of the Senators; in all ordinary cases this was impossible. On the other hand, the Senator could of course do nothing for any man unless I chose to nominate him. In consequence the Constitution itself forced the President and the Senators from each State to come to a working agreement on the appointments in and from that State.

My course was to insist on absolute fitness, including honesty, as a prerequisite to every appointment; and to remove only for good cause, and, where there was such cause, to refuse even to discuss with the Senator in interest the unfit servant's retention. Subject to these considerations, I normally accepted each Senator's recommendations for offices of a routine kind, such as most post-offices and the like, but insisted on myself choosing the men for the more important positions. I was willing to take any good man for postmaster; but in the case of a Judge or District Attorney or Canal Commissioner or Ambassador, I was apt to insist either on a given man or else on any man with a given class of qualifications. If the Senator deceived me, I took care that he had no opportunity to repeat the deception.

I can perhaps best illustrate my theory of action by two specific examples. In New York Governor Odell and Senator Platt sometimes worked in agreement and sometimes were at swords' points, and both wished to be con-

sulted. To a friendly Congressman, who was also their friend, I wrote as follows on July 22, 1903:

"I want to work with Platt. I want to work with Odell. I want to support both and take the advice of both. But of course ultimately I must be the judge as to acting on the advice given. When, as in the case of the judgeship, I am convinced that the advice of both is wrong, I shall act as I did when I appointed Holt. When I can find a friend of Odell's like Cooley, who is thoroughly fit for the position I desire to fill, it gives me the greatest pleasure to appoint him. When Platt proposes to me a man like Hamilton Fish, it is equally a pleasure to appoint him."

This was written in connection with events which led up to my refusing to accept Senator Platt's or Governor Odell's suggestions as to a Federal Judgeship and a Federal District Attorneyship, and insisting on the appointment, first of Judge Hough and later of District Attorney Stimson; because in each case I felt that the work to be done was of so high an order that I could not take an ordinary man.

The other case was that of Senator Fulton, of Oregon. Through Francis Heney I was prosecuting men who were implicated in a vast network of conspiracy against the law in connection with the theft of public land in Oregon. I had been acting on Senator Fulton's recommendations for office, in the usual manner. Heney had been insisting that Fulton was in league with the men we were prosecuting, and that he had recommended unfit men. Fulton had been protesting against my following Heney's advice, particularly as regards appointing Judge Wolverton as United States Judge. Finally Heney laid before me a report which convinced me of the truth of his statements. I then wrote to Fulton as follows, on November 20, 1905: "My dear Senator Fulton: I inclose you herewith a copy of the report made to me by Mr. Heney. I have seen the originals of the letters from you and Senator Mitchell quoted therein. I do not at this time desire to discuss the report itself, which of course I must submit to the Attorney-General. But I have been obliged to reach the painful conclusion that your own letters as therein quoted tend to show that you recom-

mended for the position of District Attorney B when you had good reason to believe that he had himself been guilty



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From a painting by Theobald Chartau.

MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

of fraudulent conduct; that you recommended C for the same position simply because it was for B's interest that he

should be so recommended, and, as there is reason to believe, because he had agreed to divide the fees with B if he were appointed; and that you finally recommended the reappointment of H with the knowledge that if H were appointed he would abstain from prosecuting B for criminal misconduct, this being why B advocated H's claims for reappointment. If you care to make any statement in the matter, I shall of course be glad to hear it. As the District Judge of Oregon I shall appoint Judge Wolverton." In the letter I of course gave in full the names indicated above by initials. Senator Fulton gave no explanation. I therefore ceased to consult him about appointments under the Department of Justice and the Interior, the two departments in which the crookedness had occurred — there was no question of crookedness in the other offices in the State, and they could be handled in the ordinary manner. Legal proceedings were undertaken against his colleague in the Senate, and one of his colleagues in the lower house, and the former was convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary.

In a number of instances the legality of executive acts of my Administration was brought before the courts. They were uniformly sustained. For example, prior to 1907 statutes relating to the disposition of coal lands had been construed as fixing the flat price at \$10 to \$20 per acre. The result was that valuable coal lands were sold for wholly inadequate prices, chiefly to big corporations. By executive order the coal lands were withdrawn and not opened for entry until proper classification was placed thereon by Government agents. There was a great clamor that I was usurping legislative power; but the acts were not assailed in court until we brought suits to set aside entries made by persons and associations to obtain larger areas than the statutes authorized. This position was opposed on the ground that the restrictions imposed were illegal; that the executive orders were illegal. The Supreme Court sustained the Government. In the same way our attitude in the water power question was sustained, the Supreme Court holding that the Federal Government had the rights we claimed over streams that are or may be declared navigable by Congress.

Again, when Oklahoma became a State we were obliged to use the executive power to protect Indian rights and property, for there had been an enormous amount of fraud in the obtaining of Indian lands by white men. Here we were denounced as usurping power over a State as well as usurping power that did not belong to the executive. The Supreme Court sustained our action.

In connection with the Indians, by the way, it was again and again necessary to assert the position of the President as steward of the whole people. I had a capital Indian Commissioner, Francis E. Leupp. I found that I could rely on his judgment not to get me into fights that were unnecessary, and therefore I always backed him to the limit when he told me that a fight was necessary. On one occasion, for example, Congress passed a bill to sell to settlers about half a million acres of Indian land in Oklahoma at one and a half dollars an acre. I refused to sign it, and turned the matter over to Leupp. The bill was accordingly withdrawn, amended so as to safeguard the welfare of the Indians, and the minimum price raised to five dollars an acre. Then I signed the bill. We sold that land under sealed bids, and realized for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians more than four million dollars — three millions and a quarter more than they would have obtained if I had signed the bill in its original form. In another case, where there had been a division among the Sac and Fox Indians, part of the tribe removing to Iowa, the Iowa delegation in Congress, backed by two Iowans who were members of my Cabinet, passed a bill awarding a sum of nearly a half million dollars to the Iowa seceders. They had not consulted the Indian Bureau. Leupp protested against the bill, and I vetoed it. A subsequent bill was passed on the lines laid down by the Indian Bureau, referring the whole controversy to the courts, and the Supreme Court in the end justified our position by deciding against the Iowa seceders and awarding the money to the Oklahoma stay-at-homes.

As to all action of this kind there have long been two schools of political thought, upheld with equal sincerity. The division has not normally been along political, but

temperamental, lines. The course I followed, of regarding the executive as subject only to the people, and, under the Constitution, bound to serve the people affirmatively in cases where the Constitution does not explicitly forbid him to render the service, was substantially the course followed by both Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. Other honorable and well-meaning Presidents, such as James Buchanan, took the opposite and, as it seems to me, narrowly legalistic view that the President is the servant of Congress rather than of the people, and can do nothing, no matter how necessary it be to act, unless the Constitution explicitly commands the action. Most able lawyers who are past middle age take this view, and so do large numbers of well-meaning, respectable citizens. My successor in office took this, the Buchanan, view of the President's powers and duties.

For example, under my Administration we found that one of the favorite methods adopted by the men desirous of stealing the public domain was to carry the decision of the Secretary of the Interior into court. By vigorously opposing such action, and only by so doing, we were able to carry out the policy of properly protecting the public domain. My successor not only took the opposite view, but recommended to Congress the passage of a bill which would have given the courts direct appellate power over the Secretary of the Interior in these land matters. This bill was reported favorably by Mr. Mondell, Chairman of the House Committee on public lands, a Congressman who took the lead in every measure to prevent the conservation of our natural resources and the preservation of the National domain for the use of home-seekers. Fortunately, Congress declined to pass the bill. Its passage would have been a veritable calamity.

I acted on the theory that the President could at any time in his discretion withdraw from entry any of the public lands of the United States and reserve the same for forestry, for water-power sites, for irrigation, and other public purposes. Without such action it would have been impossible to stop the activity of the land thieves. No one ventured to test its legality by lawsuit. My successor, however,

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