

# ROOSEVELT

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON

WHEN Daniel Webster died, Charles Graham Halpine wrote a poem, the last verse of which is:

"Gone! We are like old men whose infant eyes  
Familiar grew with some vast pyramid;  
Even as we gaze, earth yawns, and it is hid--  
A long, wide desert mocks the empty skies."

There has not been precisely that feeling from the time of Webster's death to the time of Roosevelt's.

Voluminously as he spoke and wrote, the power of his words was amazing. I mean their practical power, their power to do work. He knew this power, as he knew all his powers. Example:

In 1912, when he was the Progressive candidate for President, he went on a month-long swing around the circle. His special train was crossing Illinois when it was boarded by some Progressive leaders, whose mission was to get the Colonel to come to Chicago and make a speech. The Colonel refused; his itinerary was made up, the whole weight of the campaign rested on his single personality, he could not personally cover the whole country and had to go where he could do the most good. Illinois was safe.

The Progressive leaders explained the situation in Illinois. It was safe for Roosevelt, but unsafe for the Progressive candidate for Governor, Frank Funk. The Republicans had spread the story that Funk had been a supporter of Senator Lorimer, whose name was anathema among the liberal element in the State. The story was doing Funk so much harm that his chances were growing slimmer all the time, and despite the most vigorous counterpropaganda the truth did not seem to be making any headway. The Colonel was immovable. "But," he said, "without going to Chicago I will fix that matter all right for Funk."

The next stop was a "rear-end" stop; that is, a stop at a little hamlet, where the Colonel would come out on the rear platform and talk for three or four minutes to the villagers. There were perhaps a hundred or two. The Colonel had time to speak only a few sentences before the train started. He spoke in generalities, and then, just as the whistle blew, he added as if it were an afterthought:

"And while you're voting for me, don't forget to vote for Frank Funk, the most vigorous, honest, and relentless opponent that Lorimer ever had."

That was all. The train pulled out, the little crowd cheering the Colonel, who waved his sombrero till they were out of sight. "Now," said he, turning to the crest-fallen Progressives, "you'll find that not another word will be said from any source about Funk being a Lorimer man." Naturally, they could not believe it. But it was true. The offhand sentence, tossed to a handful of people by the wayside, did what columns of argument and speeches without number from other men had failed to do. This is what



© Brown Brothers.

Theodore Roosevelt Driving Home a Point in a Speech.

I mean by the practical power of his words, the power to do work.

Many people imagined that the Colonel was rash in his talk, given to reckless statements. No man ever counted the effect of his words more closely or knew more exactly the weight of each one of them. As his slightest word was sure to be pounced upon, dissected, and, if possible, distorted, he could not be reckless and be safe. He spoke with heat and violence, to be sure, but that is not the

same thing as rashness or recklessness. A man may be violently accurate.

Anyway, he was; and this laid pitfalls for many commentators on him, who kept falling into them with regularity as long as he lived. They saw the violence and assumed the rashness, and had fully committed themselves to the assertion that he was wrong or mendacious before they found out that he had been exactly right. Example:

In the heat of a campaign the Colonel

made some remarks on certain features of the law. He was not a lawyer, and the first response was a chorus of derision at the expense of this would-be expert in matters beyond his knowledge. Then came a settler. Simeon E. Baldwin, the Chief Judge of the highest court in Connecticut, a lawyer of national reputation, issued a statement, calm and judicial in tone, declaring that Colonel Roosevelt's statement of the law was entirely wrong.

Then what a chorus of jubilation over the rash meddler who hung his mouth on a hair trigger and let it go off by itself. The Colonel repeated, with somewhat more emphasis, his original statement about the law. More jeers; here was an amateur actually entering the lists on a question of law with one of the most eminent Judges in America. The laughter was Homeric. But within a few days Judge Baldwin voluntarily issued another statement, saying that on further examination of the point of law in question he had found that he was wrong and Colonel Roosevelt was right. It was an awful moment. The only thing to do was to bury Judge Baldwin's confession in the inside pages, but the chorus of jeers stopped so dead that one could have heard a pin drop in the dense, opaque silence.

He was called impulsive, and I have no doubt that by nature he was; but he had this trait, if it was indeed his, so well under control that he never did a public act or said a public word from impulse. I say this deliberately after searching a memory of Roosevelt that goes back many years. To understand him one must bear in mind the fact that he had made himself over; he was, in an entirely new sense, a self-made man. He was a weak, puny boy and youth. He resolved to make himself not merely a strong, big man, but a man surpassing most others in size, strength, and the ability to use this strength in a great variety of directions; and he did this. Similarly he resolved to bend his mind in the direction in which it ought to go, and he did that, too. He could not make for himself a new mind, as he virtually made for himself a new body, but he planned out coolly for himself the limitations and the expansions which that mind should manifest in action, and he accomplished that feat as he accomplished the other. He could not cut impulsiveness out of his nature, but he could so control it that it should never influence his actions; and in the same way he organized his mind in every direction, just as he organized his once weak body.

If one reflects that Roosevelt could not have been over 21 when he thus set about the reorganization of his mind and body, one must be astonished at the concentration of will and energy which such a decision and its inveterate fulfillment show.

There were, no doubt, times when Roosevelt's action in a given case seemed impulsive, but that was because of the startling suddenness with which the thing was done; it had been carefully weighed and calculated before he sprang it on the public. We all know now that

Photographs of Ex-President Roosevelt in Scores of Characteristic Attitudes Will Be Found on Pages 8 and 9 of This Section.

(Continued on Page 6)

# RECOLLECTIONS OF ROOSEVELT.

(Continued from Page 1)

that was the case with the "grabbing," as his opponents called it, of the Panama Canal Zone, which on its face appeared at the moment the sudden outbreak of an enraged child. Well, if we know it in that case we can assume it in others; but, as a matter of fact, we do not need to assume it. It is simply a fact.

If this is misunderstood to mean that Roosevelt staged his plays in advance for mere dramatic effect, the misunderstanding must be willful. We praise Wilson for thinking out his moves in advance, assuming that he does so. It is, therefore, no discredit to Roosevelt that he thought out his moves in advance; and he certainly did so. The difference is that whether Wilson thinks out his moves in advance or not, and there are certainly some occasions when he does not, he always seems to do it, while Roosevelt, by his dashing way of doing the thing, generally seemed not to have thought it out.

Have you noticed that Roosevelt never was interviewed in any proper sense? If you have, it will give an idea of how thoroughly his governed mind controlled his warmth of temperament. He gave out many statements, some of them in the form of interviews, and sometimes, too, he was actually interviewed, but in such cases he always controlled the form the interview should take. Now, a real interview is an unpremeditated thing, in which the reporter asks what questions he pleases, and takes the answers with merciless accuracy. The best type of the real interview is the colloquy between reporter and public man in a railroad station as the public man gets off his train. It may be short, but it is spontaneous and revealing. Search your memory; did you ever hear of an interview given by Roosevelt as he got off a train or entered a hotel corridor?

Editors seemed never to learn of this peculiarity, and continually sent reporters to interview him. The Colonel never responded unless he had thought out what he wanted to say and really wanted it published. He could not be badgered or worried into an interview; he had himself under an iron control, no matter how exasperating or exciting the state of affairs might be. Impulsive? The thousand reporters who have tried to catch Roosevelt off his guard and make him say something he did not expect to say will laugh at that idea. Yet no doubt his naturally impulsive nature was all the time beating vainly against the stone wall of his will.

Furthermore, he would not talk freely, even under the seal of secrecy, to reporters he did not know. The extent of the acquaintance might be short, for among the qualities the determined youth had forced to full growth in the character of the man was a powerful faculty of appraisal. He could size a man up very quickly. There was something psychic about the way in which he could tell, on almost no acquaintance, whether a new reporter would fit in with what he called "the Oyster Bay atmosphere." That atmosphere was a very real thing—almost tangible. It consisted in mutual respect and mutual confidence and mutual friendliness.

I wish to emphasize that word "friendliness," for it bears hard on another quality of Roosevelt's. He was the most democratic of men, as everybody knows, and many were shocked by what they considered the undignified demonstration of this democracy, as in slang phrases, or shaking hands with the engineer and telling him that he had made a bully run. But the Colonel had his own notion of dignity, and any one who crossed the boundary of that dignity did so at his peril. People who thought his democracy meant that he had no care for what he considered his dignity never made the mistake twice, for they never had the chance. He never forgot that

he had been for seven years the head of the nation, and he never did or permitted an act that conflicted in his opinion with that fact. Example:

A new reporter was added to the Oyster Bay contingent, just as the Presidential campaign of 1912 was closing, and went with the rest to Sagamore Hill to see the Colonel on the eve of election. The Colonel, as he came into the room, looked at the new man with a glance which meant nothing to the latter, but was full of meaning to the rest of us. It was the appraising look, and the first report it brought back to the Colonel's mind was unfavorable. That much was evident from the way the Colonel spoke, which had a certain restraint about it.

The new arrival did not take long

pose of covering our retreat, got a pleasant answer, and we all bade him good-night and went out. There was a taxicab outside, and in it was the newcomer's wife. He had brought her up so that after he had got acquainted with the Colonel he might bring her in and introduce her. It was really a sad and tragic thing. "What did I do to offend him?" he kept saying over and over.

Later on two or three of us went back to Sagamore Hill and were received by the Colonel with open arms. "But that new fellow won't do," he said. "I felt creepy as soon as I saw him. I knew he didn't have the Oyster Bay atmosphere and couldn't get it." Then he unfolded all the news to us, and we went back and gave it to the rest, including, of course,

"Not if the advances are to come from me," he said.

Perhaps I lay too much emphasis on the Colonel's idea of his dignity. If so, it is only because the idea of his democracy as comprising a rough-and-ready, slap-on-the-back carelessness of what was due him has been so widely spread. It was the crowds that called him "Teddy"—not even his relatives called him anything but "Theodore." In the days of his intimacy with Taft it was "Will" (not Bill) on his part and "Theodore" on Taft's; although I do remember one occasion in the White House when Taft, then Secretary of War, started to enter the room and then, seeing others present, drew back. "Come in, Big Bill," cried the President, stepping forward and drawing Taft's arm through his own. But this was a novelty, such a novelty that it surprised Taft, who gave a shout of laughter at hearing the President echo the nickname which the newspapers had already given him.

No, his democracy was the true sort. It was not indiscriminate, and there was an aristocracy to which he paid tribute in his own mind—the aristocracy of Worth. Where he did not find it he was never at ease; he could use unworthy men (not for unworthy purposes, however) in the vast continental game of politics he played, as a party leader must, but never without contempt, and he always felt happy when he could get rid of them. A President or the leader of a national party must work with such instruments as the people choose to give him in Senate, House, and party machine, and the people do not always pick out saints.

It was his keenest joy to find this aristocracy of Worth in what to most people would be unexpected quarters. When he found it, he recognized an equal, whether the man having it was a wolf-killer, a ranchman, or a statesman. Neither did he care if public opinion were set against the man's worth, so long as he himself had found it. He did not care, as a rule, for bosses; but he never ceased, in defiance of the universal opinion, to tell of the fine qualities of Matthew Stanley Quay, the incarnation of bossism and machine government. A point to be noticed is that he did this years after Quay's death, when there was nothing whatever to be gained by it and something to lose.

It was always strange to me to see how the solemn profundities and the unco' guid among our varied population used to regard this trait of his as something discreditable to him. He received visits from John L. Sullivan at the White House! He entertained Booker Washington there! He was a friend of boxers and actors! With what a sneer would they pronounce the words "Jack Abernathy, a wolf-killer," and "Bill Sewall, a guide," in listing Roosevelt's friends. Mean minds, incapable of imagining that a man would do anything except for advantage, cast about for Roosevelt's motive. It must be that he had a motive; by which they meant a selfish one. They hit on it—it was spectacular drama to impress the crowd, or demagogic ostensible democracy to get votes. It was not possible to suppose that he actually liked these boxers and wolf-killers and reporters and wanted to be with them.

They would have been still more scandalized if they had heard what he said to me, and to other people, too, I suppose, at a time when a steady stream of corporation magnates was flowing in at the White House doors.

"It tires me to talk to rich men. You expect a man of millions, the head of a great industry, to be a man worth hearing; but as a rule they don't know anything outside their own businesses. You would be astonished to know how small their range is and how little they can



Theodore Roosevelt as a Hunter in the West.

about fixing the Colonel's opinion. Throwing one leg over the other, for he had read much of Roosevelt's democracy and knew from his reading how much he would enjoy a free-and-easy, hail-fellow-well-met salutation, the misguided new arrival said:

"Going to vote the Democratic ticket on election day, Colonel?"

There was a short blaze behind the Colonel's glasses. After a moment he requested, in his grimmest voice, that the question be repeated. The newcomer repeated it, with a little less confidence.

"I have come here to answer any sensible questions that may be put to me," said the Colonel, in a tone like a hammer, "but I have not come here to answer any idiotic questions."

That was the end of the interview. We all knew that there was not a word to be got out of the Colonel while the newcomer was there. Arthur Curtis of The Associated Press asked the Colonel a formal, genial question for the pur-

pose of covering our retreat, got a pleasant answer, and we all bade him good-night and went out. There was a taxicab outside, and in it was the newcomer's wife. He had brought her up so that after he had got acquainted with the Colonel he might bring her in and introduce her. It was really a sad and tragic thing. "What did I do to offend him?" he kept saying over and over.

Similarly, when the Colonel sued the Michigan editor, Newett, for libel, Newett having charged him with drunkenness, Newett threw up the sponge as soon as the Colonel's witnesses had finished, offered none of his own, retracted the libel and apologized in court. I went over to where the Colonel was receiving congratulations, added mine, and said, "Are you and Newett going to meet?"

The Colonel looked me over with a surprised look, in which there was some humor and a little haughtiness.

(Continued on Page 11)

# Recollections of Roosevelt

(Continued from Page 6)

talk about that an intelligent person wants to hear.

"They're not all of that kind, of course. There's —, and —, and —," (he mentioned the names of three railroad Presidents,) "who are well-read men and have studied life besides. But take the run of them, and they're just about what I have described. I have to see them, but I don't enjoy their company."

And he turned from it with relief to Jacob Riis and Bill Sewall, who had studied life in their different ways and could tell him things.

Therefore I wondered much at the mean-minded who could find fault with this side of his nature. But I noticed long ago that the men who hated him for any cause were generally petty, and their real grievance, if they had known it, was that they were not capable of

understanding him. That, indeed, is the chief reason why he was continually surprising them. He was "always doing something unexpected," which meant that he was always doing something unexpected by those who had charted his course for him by the mean motives they supposed were actuating him. They reasoned that in his place they would do so and-so. He did exactly the opposite, because he was not actuated by the motives that would have actuated them had they been in his place; and that, of course, surprised them.

Thus and not otherwise did he acquire his power of frightening the Republican leaders into believing that he could do miracles; that he had an uncanny power. It ought, for instance, to have been as plain as the nose on one's face that he could not be nominated in the Republican Convention of 1916; that he could not even muster a respectable vote

there. But he allowed—he no doubt secretly instigated—the use of his name as a candidate, and instantly the politicians were thrown into fits of panic. They never had understood the source of his miracles, but they were sure he had done them and could do them; therefore, the impossibility, a "Roosevelt stampede," seemed possible to them.

That was because they never doubted that he was actually a candidate. But he was not. His purpose was simply to frighten the bosses into saving the good name of the Republican Party by coming out for "preparedness and Americanism." He wanted to accomplish that feat because he loved his country. And, casting about in their lesser minds for a motive, they never hit on love of country as a possible one. If they had they would not have been scared. So you see they never understood Roosevelt, even up to the end.

The people did, I think. There have been many to say, "I can't stand for Roosevelt's carping at the Administration." They did not know his belief that he could only force the Administration into action by the most violent criticism, or the belief of many sober men that, but for that intentional violence of his, the Administration would never have taken any of the steps to which he forced it. But even those who talked in this way did not fail to recognize the true-heartedness of the great man who is now dead. He had had the people's love as no other man has had it in our day. He had had the love of those who knew him personally as surely no other man, great or small, has had it in our day. There is something mighty that is gone from us; but we have lost mighty men before. The lost might we can only regret; but there is also gone from us a great loveliness for which we grieve.