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Both Parties Have Broken With Tradition to the Extent of Picking Men of Positive Achievement Well Qualified for High Office

By CHARLES WILLIS THOMPSON.

HERE is a good deal more interest in Vice Presidential candidates this year than usual. Of course, you always hear more of a Vice Presidential candidate between nomination and election than you ever hear of him afterward, unless he happens to be a Garret A. Hobart, in which case you do not hear of him at all. But to find a parallel to the present-day interest in both Roosevelt and Coolidge, one would have to hark back to 1884, when Logan and Hendricks ran for the same office.

The reason is the same in both cases. It is that the two parties in 1920, as in 1884, have both nominated men of Presidential stature for Vice President. It is always possible to interest the country in the Vice Presidency if the parties take that office seriously enough. For years they have been conjured to do so, but as a general thing they ignore the incantations and go on in the bad old way, despite the fact that five Vice Presidents have succeeded to the Presidency by reason of a vacancy, and that only in one of these cases would the man have been elected Vice President if anybody had dreamed that he would become President.

Coolidge was a candidate for the Presidency before the convention and Franklin Roosevelt was not. That, however, has no bearing on the question of Presidential availability or Presidential stature. Roosevelt has been longer in the public eye than Coolidge, and in all the offices he has filled he has succeeded in winning public approval. He was a national figure long before Coolidge became one. Coolidge was luckier in that a sudden and sensational emergency focused public attention on him, while in national matters no such good luck has befallen Roosevelt. New Yorkers, however, remember that in State matters such an emergency confronted Roosevelt at the beginning of his career, and that he was as prompt and de-

termined in the way he grappled with it as Coolidge was later. That was when Roosevelt was still in his twenties and the question arose whether the United States Senatorship should be trafficked in between bosses.

Two Courageous Men.

Coolidge and Roosevelt have both proved themselves indomitable in a fight and full of the courage of their convictions. Roosevelt has had better opportunities to prove it than Coolidge, but they were more local in their nature. He has, however, made the impression of his personality on the American people, despite the fact that his national service has been in a subordinate capacity, that of Assistant Secretary of the Navy. It was in that capacity that his cousin Theodore refused to let his light shine under a bushel, and it has been even so with Cousin Franklin.

Each candidate will be of service to his ticket. Even if Senator Harding sticks to his intention of making a front-porch campaign à la McKinley, that does not bind his colleagues. McKinley stayed home in 1900 while the other Roosevelt, running for Vice President, galloped all over the place. Neither the present Roosevelt nor his adversary is anything like a great orator, but they are both effective speakers, Coolidge a little more mechanical in style and Roosevelt a little more natural and stirring.

If either should succeed to the Presidency, that office will be filled by a man of independent proclivities who thinks for himself. Coolidge showed that in Boston last year, and Roosevelt has a record older and longer than that. It is true he has not been fighting the machine since he entered upon Federal office, but there has been no anti-machine movement within the Democratic Party of the State for him to lead, as he led it in the Legislature.

Charles F. Murphy did not oppose his nomination for Vice President, though

it is not likely that Murphy could wholly forget the things Roosevelt said about him in the days when he was leading the legislative fight. Those things Roosevelt has never recanted. Furthermore, it was as a member of the Administration that Roosevelt was nominated, and Murphy does not love the Administration.

But the Administration had not had its own way with the Presidential nomination. There were no Cox men among the various members of it which went to San Francisco, either to get a nomination or to make one. One Administration man, Palmer, did finally turn his delegates over to Cox, or rather release them from instructions, with full knowledge that most of them would go to Cox, but that was to defeat McAdoo rather than to nominate the Governor of Ohio. "The Federal crowd," to borrow a term from Illinois politics, had suffered defeat at the hands of the "State crowd," headed by Murphy, Taggart and the evidently observable Brennan.

Murphy's Wise Surrender.

This being the case, it was simply good politics to nominate an Administration man for Vice President, just as in 1880 it was good politics to nominate a Grant man for Vice President after Grant had been defeated for President. Conkling, the Grant leader, would not play good politics and refused to acquiesce. Murphy was cooler-headed and did acquiesce. It is to Murphy's credit that he was able to do it. He is not always accused of playing good national politics; in fact, it is more the custom to jeer at him. But he played the game well this time from the beginning, perhaps because this time he got better advice.

The nomination of Coolidge was brought about differently. The Senatorial bosses had it all their own way with the Presidential nomination at Chicago, and meant to repeat the performance with the Vice Presidency. Their

slated candidate was Senator Lenroot of Wisconsin, a curious example of how the Senatorial mind works. It does not concern itself nearly so much with elections as with nominations. It likes to nominate a member of the club, without the slightest regard to November, as it proved in 1908, when it named Representative Sherman, a good fellow who spoke the language of the tribe, but who was a dead weight on the ticket. President Roosevelt would rather have had the convention name Dolliver or Beveridge.

It was at this point that the convention ran away from the Senatorial clique, and gave Coolidge a landslide. From the Senatorial standpoint there was another reason for nominating Lenroot than that he was a member of the club. It was that he was in difficulties over his reelection to the Senate from Wisconsin, and that it was only good-fellowship to lend him a hand. It was a case of "when a feller needs a friend." The delegates would not see it. They did see that November was coming, and that an all-Senatorial ticket from the Middle West was not likely to be a vote getter. So they looked around for a Yankee, and without the slightest regard for the feelings of the United States Senate they picked Coolidge.

In San Francisco the delegates, with similar desires, wanted not only an Easterner but a New Yorker, provided he was not a member of Tammany Hall. The Tammany men themselves accepted that view, if, indeed, they were not the first to suggest it. Roosevelt filled the bill, because he had been actually the anti-Tammany leader when there was such a thing as a fight against Tammany within the State organization. And that was so long ago that rank-and-file Tammany men had had time to get over any bitterness they may have felt. Indeed, Roosevelt's chief success in those days was to defeat William F. Sheehan for United States Senator, and, while Sheehan was the Tammany candidate, it is doubtful if the rank and file were

bound up in his ambitions. He came from Buffalo, it will be remembered, and the Tammany rank and file are never really heartsick over the defeat of an up-State Democrat. Besides, it pulled O'Gorman out of the wreck of the Sheehan-Murphy combination.

Compliments Are Not Empty.

There may have been a little merriment over the compliments that have passed between the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. Of course, they always have to bow and scrape to each other after the nominations. But in this case it is probable that Harding really is pleased to have Coolidge on the ticket and that Cox feels the same way about Roosevelt. Each of them wants to be elected and knows that the Vice Presidential candidate this year will be a help.

While Roosevelt was put on the ticket as an Administration man, he enjoys a peculiar distinction among the various gentlemen who can be so described. He has not shared in any of the animosities that have been aroused against the Administration. This is not because he has been a minor light, for he has been active and prominent, has been as much the spokesman for the navy as Daniels himself, has shirked no issue and has made an infinite number of speeches that have attracted wide attention. He has taken his share in grappling with many other issues besides those affecting the navy. But from the querulous and captious fault-finding which has been the lot of other Administration spokesmen Roosevelt has been free. He has been listened to respectfully even by his opponents.

There has been no carping against Coolidge either. He will not be a pleasing candidate for extreme labor men and radicals, but the Republicans threw that vote to the winds in both nominations; it is probable that the feeling against Harding among people of that mode of thought is stronger than against

Coolidge, in spite of Coolidge's stand in the case of the Boston police strike and the fact that Harding has sometimes voted for a labor bill.

But which will wear better? The present writer thinks that Roosevelt will. As has been said before, neither is an orator as Brutus was. Coolidge has what looks and sounds like a thoughtful way of putting things, and in a sober sort of way he is epigrammatic. He frequently says things that stimulate thought in others. His manner is more that of the old-style political orator than Roosevelt's is. His speeches have a good deal of tact, so far as the effect on the audience is concerned.

But though Roosevelt's style is more direct and downright, he manages to give a peculiar impression of knowing all that he is talking about and more, too, that is extremely effective. This is true of his writings as well as his speeches, except that, of course, when a man writes a thing he may be suspected of cramming his subject. In Roosevelt's case that suspicion has never arisen yet; his writings sound too much like his speeches. It is one reason why not even his adversaries are disrespectful toward what he says; he sounds like a man who knows his whole subject and could say a lot more if he had time. With all this there goes an ease and directness that saves the driest subject from seeming heavy.

The country, at any rate, is to be congratulated on the fact that for once the two great parties have really paid some attention to the Vice Presidency. There have been times when one of them has done so, but not the other. This time both have acted as if it might really happen that the man they named might become President. Of course, both nominations were made in the scurry of vanishing delegations bolting for their trains, but those who did the picking thought about what they were doing, and however hurried and scrambling may have appeared their manner of doing the thing, they did nothing accidental.