

## IX

### MANY ADVENTURES

ROOSEVELT, who, if he had an innocent taste for the limelight, did not take himself so seriously as his work, boasted chiefly about his Presidency that no man before had ever enjoyed himself in that office so much. And the happiness — and attendant sorrows — of a man who never "shrinks from the joy of life or the duty of life" were all but sure to be his still in whatever way they came. Twice again, during the strangely varied adventures of the ten years remaining to him, his prowess was fully tried in high political enterprise. Power was never again in his hands, nor did his later efforts meet with immediate success and general applause. Yet in the apparent failure — twice repeated — of his later public life he may well be thought to have consummated the work of his triumphant prime.

Barely a fortnight after the inauguration of Mr. Taft, the ex-President had cleared out of the way, sailing, with his second son, Mr. Kermit Roosevelt, and other naturalists, for East Africa, upon a mission to collect specimens for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. If there seems to be the

least incongruity in this somewhat abrupt change of employment, let it be remembered that Roosevelt was now, at last, entering upon the very work which he had vainly aspired to find when he was a student. And, during the eight exacting years past, neither the full use of his physical endowments, nor the delicate and intense delight in nature, nor the high-hearted zest in comradeship with rougher men on their own ground, had ever been allowed to rust. For part of the voyage out it was his good fortune to have as shipmate Mr. Selous, the gentlest and mightiest of hunters. Landing at Mombasa, before the end of April 1909, he worked his way by the railway, with long excursions right and left, to the Great Lakes, and then down by the White Nile to Khartum, where Mrs. Roosevelt met him in March 1910. The natural-history work, the toil of the journey, the demand for cool daring in tackling more dangerous game than any other land has to offer — all these were very real. His versatile vitality let him add to all this the writing (in the evenings of exhausting days) and the punctual dispatch, chapter by chapter, of the travel book which he had promised to his publisher. And all the way he studied "The Pigskin Library," that amazing selection of sixty volumes, suitably bound

for such a journey,<sup>1</sup> for which he had begged when his sister wanted to give him "a real present," and of which the list, ranging from Keats to Gregorovius, may be read and pondered in her book.

From Khartum he went to Cairo.

In that year's journey he had passed through almost every degree of barbarism and civilization, and witnessed in different forms and at different stages the work which Christian churches and Christian governments (when such they are) can do in strange lands. He could take just measure — and being a real historian who had seen some wild scenes, had long done so — of the cynicism and sentimentalism which lust for violent dominion, and the cynicism and sentimentalism which deride or defame real duties done on the confines where a trading civilization perforce encounters savagery or effete order. The quiet breed of English men of action met him, trusted him, and told him their difficulties. Whatever relapse may or may not have happened under a system overstrained and depleted of man-power by the war, an almost unexampled work had been done when the Egyptians as individuals were made free by Lord Cromer;

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<sup>1</sup> "I almost always had some volume with me, either in my saddle pocket or in the cartridge box. . . . The books were stained with blood, sweat, gun-oil, dust, and ash; ordinary bindings either vanished or became loathsome; whereas pigskin merely grew to look as a well-used saddle looks — T. R."

and in 1910 the aspiration, thus made possible, for the freeing of a political Egypt was showing itself in crude and dangerous forms. Roosevelt knew that he was taking his life into his hands when he told the inflamed Mohammedan students of Cairo that anarchy and murder were not their road to freedom. He was, to some extent, taking his reputation in his hands when, later, he told the normally slack, governing masses of England that they must discharge their responsibilities far away with a firmer hand. He was giving voice to the unregarded views of his friends, the Englishmen far from home along the Nile, the fellows of the men who had worked under him in the new dependencies of America. He justly drew no distinction between British work on the confines of civilization and the work, so far as it came within his vision, of French administrators in Northern Africa. And his real care was for "the cause of the missionaries, of the native Christians, and of the advanced and enlightened Mohammedans in Egypt," and for "the Egyptian people of the future," whose hope was then being placed in jeopardy.

From Egypt he would have gone home had not Lord Curzon, as Chancellor of Oxford, already engaged him to give the "Romanes Lecture" of

1910. The honor bestowed on him by the Nobel Prize Committee in Christiania drew him also to Norway, which, by the measure with which he measured human things, must be reckoned beside the really great countries. Then the courteous visit which he had to pay to one monarch set up a curious competition for like compliments. So the naturalist's African expedition was followed by a wandering of no less vivid interest through almost every European country between Russia and Spain, and almost every court. The tale of all this is to be found in the private letter, perhaps the longest extant, which Sir George Trevelyan exacted from him as a record of their talk in Trevelyan's Warwickshire home. As to the courts — being an ex-President, he was the only man brought up like the rest of us who has ever mixed quite on that footing with the strange class apart, not without its charm and real dignity, nor shut out from public usefulness when it chose, which the then numerous princes of Central Europe constituted. His letter contains a strangely interesting memorial of that vanished order, and of potentates now dead or fallen — the aged Emperor of Austria, victim and author of much calamity, and the German Emperor, whose ever surprising and foundationless character he read perhaps better than anyone else,

and with equitable kindness. He also met men of higher eminence; made friends with Dr. Nansen; saw gladly from Count Apponyi that, in Hungary at least, a zealous Catholic can be a Christian Liberal; discovered no less gladly what was new to him, the solid strength of French men of affairs and men of thought, with their "unique, attractive qualities," making the best of an unhappy system arising from "the combination of the French national character and the English Parliamentary system."

While he received, he did his best to give. Hungarians rejoiced to meet for the first time a foreign visitor who knew all about the Arpád Dynasty and the Golden Bull; and it may safely be guessed that his Parisian audience at the Sorbonne appreciated the direct and homely counsels and the racy illustrations of his address to them, better than his slightly superfine critics in America supposed. His keen glance took stock pretty rapidly of the distinctive features of the popular movement in different countries. (Of Russia — unvisited — he had already prophesied that the Revolution when it came would make the red of the French Revolution look pale.) Everywhere he was happy enough, even when he had a taste of the ways of the Vatican, save only that in Prussia he was aware of a

want of human kindness in the civil welcome accorded him, and keenly sensitive of coming evil. I have indicated already that he was not in the least drawn either to indiscriminate admiration of things English, or to any idea of an exclusive political friendship with England. The true state of his international sympathies at this time is thus expressed: "Germany has the arrogance of a very strong power, as yet almost untouched by that feeble aspiration towards international equity which one or two other strong powers, notably England and America, do at least begin to feel." Words of more exact justice could hardly have been chosen.

Among the lesser of its unhappy consequences, the death of Edward VII had the effect of turning Roosevelt's visit to England too much into an affair of state pageantry and public exhibition — for President Taft made him his representative at the funeral. Perhaps he enjoyed being constantly on parade, with William II as a twin stage-figure; doubtless he enjoyed the moment, if it is true, that the latter potentate, having craved an audience with him, was granted precisely twenty minutes because Roosevelt had an appointment with Mrs. Humphry Ward. But perhaps the glare of the footlights was never quite the thing for his complexion. He met or made true friends in abun-

dance; and when Dr. Goudy at Oxford compared Lincoln and him, "quorum alter servitudinem, alter corruptionem vicit," he spoke the thoughts, if not the language, of the man in the street; but the man in the street and Roosevelt had a bad chance of getting better acquainted. It may be, perhaps, that when a man utters such thoughts as the occasion demands very simply, very loud, and with immense emphasis, he creates a quite illusory sense of platitude; but, at any rate, kindly and unaffected men at Oxford spoke of his Romanes Lecture there in unappreciative terms, which they would alter if they read it again now and considered their own lectures — though it is doubtful whether that particular kind of discourse ever can be really good. But that was a little thing. His speech at the Guildhall about Egypt, to which I have already referred, was the brave, wise, dignified speech of an honest friend — deserving, if it be calmly considered now, his friend Mr. Kipling's judgment that it was "from certain points of view the biggest thing he had ever done." It is a jarring recollection that it was treated far and wide and has since been remembered as an impertinence, for of course it was quoted everywhere while the Foreign Secretary's manful espousal of his cause next day went unnoticed; and, considering how



English writers from Dickens downwards have favored America with their admonitions, I do not enjoy recording the fact. It should be known how far it was from impertinence. Roosevelt would not have yielded to suggestions made in Egypt that he should so speak. With real hesitation he yielded to the strong persuasion of some of the very foremost English statesmen; and obtained the full approval of the responsible Minister concerned with Egypt, before he said what could hardly have been better said, if it was to be said, and what was inspired by real courage and the fullest spirit of neighborly goodwill.

But the treasured and memorable hours of his time in England were the intimate hours with the folk who knew him best. There was that visit to Warwickshire which was to cause that enormous letter. There were Lord and Lady Lee with many a recollection to share with him; and many others whose names recall the truth that the great test of the man who happens to have traveled is the friendships that he has made abroad. Above all there was that June day's walk, whereof he and his guide, Lord Grey, have both written with loving hands, through Hampshire water-meadows and woodlands and by the incomparable clear stream of the Itchen, while his eye noted every bird, and

Grey could demonstrate Wordsworth's truth to nature, and his keen ear caught notes new to him but told him the family connections of the singer, and he gave, as Shakespeare it would seem did too, a due primacy amongst songsters to

The ouzel-cock so black of hue  
With orange-tawny bill.

On June 18, 1910, the guns of ships and forts, the civic dignitaries at the landing-stage, and crowds innumerable in every street through which he passed, gave him such a welcome back to New York as had never before been the lot of an American citizen returning home. It was, he knew, a genuine tribute to one who had achieved a position in his own country seldom accorded to any man in any country. But a renewed demonstration next day, by a crowd suddenly collected, threw him into unusual dejection. There was an ungentle, hysterical quality about it which set him brooding upon the crowd-mind, and gave him a presentiment, never perhaps quite fulfilled, of the unpopularity awaiting him. He had, as became him, already refused a huge salary offered to him in the business world, and accepted a much smaller one on the editorial staff of the *Outlook*. He was not exactly attracted to politics, but, as he said, "the rôle

of sage had no attractions for him"; there were special causes, such as conservation of national resources and, above all, industrial reform, which he wanted to serve; and he speedily announced that he was "ready and eager to serve" in terms which no schemer after place would have used. As President he had proved his great powers and gained great experience; and he came back with powers refreshed and with widened experience. He was only fifty-two, and, to use a simile of his own, which was to become cruelly hackneyed, "as strong as a bull moose." He had always lived a life of errant, high adventure. Thus far a succession of very definite tasks had come his way. Was his next enterprise undertaken unadvisedly, or through rash ambition, or at the call of a duty more painful but quite as clear? An Englishman may handle the question ill, but I had better state decidedly the irresistible impressions made upon me.

From the day, before the end of that June when Governor Hughes, the great statesman now well known to the world, pressed the reluctant ex-President into active service, in a good cause, in his own New York State, to the day in February 1912, when seven other Governors pressed him to compete with Mr. Taft for renomination to the Presidency, — "not considering his personal interests but the

interests of the people at large," telling him that "if he were to decline he would show himself unresponsive to a plain public duty," — Roosevelt, with his record and known convictions, could not with honor have acted substantially otherwise than as he did. Already when reformers in New York State had gone further than Mr. Hughes, and begged him to do for them a peculiarly thankless chore, he had said that he would not for one moment think of hesitating about answering the call from men who were fighting for decent government and wanted his assistance. He could hesitate as little to lend his plain, emphatic speaking, upon repeated calls from men thus fighting, far and wide over the country. And when the seven Governors peremptorily summoned him, the appeal of such calls to him had grown stronger. His thoughts are on record. He felt sadly that all his old friends would be against him; acknowledged calmly that his conduct towards his successor would be blamed; faced the probability of defeat; was deaf to considerations about his own future. "The most important questions to-day are the humanitarian and economic problems," and, as to these, in various ways the will of the people was constantly being thwarted; such were the actual influences to which senators and other legislators owed their

places, that popular representative government did not exist in America. When his friends answered him "that the public ought to be reined in and disciplined instead of being encouraged to be more lawless and self-willed," they unconsciously proved the full need of such a revival as he desired. "I wish," he said further, "to draw into one dominant stream all the intelligent and patriotic elements, in order to prepare against the social upheaval which will otherwise overwhelm us." "But," said Judge Grant to him, "the situation is complex, I suppose? You would like to be President?" "You are right," he answered, "it is complex. I like power; but I care nothing to be President as President. I am interested in these ideas of mine, and want to carry them through, and feel that I am the one to carry them through."

The next morning, February 16, 1912, his decision to oppose Mr. Taft was made public.

He was accepting an invidious part. Moreover, in the fight now beginning, he showed what some of those who loved him best imputed to him, a certain "ruthlessness." But it was fired by no petty malice and it issued in no lingering rancor; it was just the Berserker's entire determination that the antagonist present to him should go down. His was no selfish ambition,

and he erred on the generous side, if he did err. President Taft had been a dear friend, and was Roosevelt's own choice for his successor. I shall not dwell upon any point in which the President may not have fulfilled Roosevelt's expectations — not even upon the dismissal from the Chairmanship of the Conservation Board, by one of the new Cabinet, of Roosevelt's close companion, Mr. Pinchot. No minor or personal matter counted much. A new political situation had arisen with Roosevelt's departure, and he and his successor would in any case have viewed it differently. Roosevelt as President had ended in constant strife, in which he was generally master, with a powerful section of his party, ranging from conservatives of stainless honor, through an intermediate crowd of mere "items," to the dirty gang who liked intrigue and loved plunder. They controlled the Machine, and controlled on the whole both branches of Congress. From the moment that Roosevelt's successor was elected, they had, good and bad together, been reinvigorated. Meantime, among the rank and file of the party, a widespread, clamative, and boldly experimental spirit of reform had been gathering force for some years, and had made striking new departures in State legislation. In Congress too a group of Republicans, for the most part much

younger than Roosevelt and unknown when he became President, had since 1908 been doing battle with the established powers, and — coöperating upon occasion with the Democrats — had won notable victories. The reforming spirit tended to favor some proposals which the most liberal statesmen might eye critically. The history of the time has never, I believe, been written from the point of view of the then President; but the present Chief Justice of the United States is known on both sides of the water, and it need not be explained that he was not really, as Progressive eloquence a little later might suggest, the Beast of Revelation. All that now matters is that he did not regard the "old gang" with that horrified alarm or the young "insurgents" with that sympathy, which were Roosevelt's deepest political feelings.

What young blood among the Republicans generally desired may be best judged from the rather vast programme of National and State legislation which it was very soon to put forward under Roosevelt. This included a number of proposals to secure to voters the real choice of those whom they elected, and to the people the real control of legislation and administration. The outcome of most of these proposals may be found in that vigorous product, all but the last, of Bryce's long and

undefeated life, *Modern Democracies*. They were, anyway, straightforward and promising attempts to deal with instantly pressing evils. Roosevelt himself would have added a proposal that judicial decisions upon Constitutional questions should be subject to reversal by a popular vote. This was the outcome of judicial decisions frustrating beneficial legislation, of which an instance while he was in the New York Assembly has been mentioned, and fresh instances had recently happened. An English layman who has studied our judges' decisions in Trades-Union cases of that time may sympathize a little with his distrust of the courts; but this point is an instance of a temper in his policy which might well have provoked Mr. Taft. The programme included further the principle, already mentioned, of control of great corporations by an executive commission, and that, which Mr. Taft himself favored, of a standing expert body for the revision of the tariff. There were proposals, too, very welcome to Roosevelt, for helping the rural population in ways which suggest the counsel of his friend Sir Horace Plunkett. Not to attempt exhaustive treatment of so broad a scheme of policy, let it be briefly and emphatically said that the rest of it largely consisted in proposals of factory and social legislation, which to the average English Tory of the



time would have seemed overdue by many years.

Roosevelt came back from Europe, having taken note of the force and direction of the social movement in foreign countries, and with revived keenness to observe the like at home. His own earlier experience and his appreciation of the different elements out of which the composite American nation is ever making itself made him quite exceptionally awake to the actualities of life among the laboring mass in great cities. He must have learned lately, if he did not know long before, that in legislation for their needs every highly industrial and every progressive country of Europe was far ahead of America at that time. Men and women really working for social good had always stirred his sympathy. The "lunatic fringe" of the Progressive throng, freely as he denounced it, did not scare him. For all his genial, romping abuse of cranks he had a lurking kindness for them — save when they let their malady take a homicidal or an obscene turn. Their abundance only made him the more anxious that visions of progress should not be the monopoly of such Socialists as are blind to the community's need of vigorously directed industry, and blind to the primary moral needs of the individual man and woman. Then too, the driving-power of the Progressive movement came largely

from Western people of that sort to whose fresh outlook and clean, vigorous instincts his own mind was sensitively responsive. If, besides cheer and bold leadership, such a movement needed also to be steadied and controlled, was there anybody to do it better than he? In one way or another he was bound to respond to the call of men, generally younger and always less experienced than himself, with whom he, a statesman getting elderly, could not hope to be always quite in touch, but in whose ears it was he that had first sounded the trumpet.

When the Republican Convention met in June, the controllers of the Machine had been given a long start, and had been contending for dear life. There seems to be no way of denying that the process of electing delegates to that Convention had revealed a decided preference for Roosevelt among the rank and file of Republicans, or that sharp practice went to the constituting of that Convention in a manner which ensured a majority for President Taft. The secession of Roosevelt's friends before the actual nomination, their holding of a new, Progressive Convention, which nominated Roosevelt, and his acceptance in a clear, sensible speech, — even if the closing phrase, "We stand at Armageddon and we battle for the Lord," was a trifle ecstatic, — all this cannot be called in ques-

tion. The genuine choice of Blaine by misguided Republicans, to which Roosevelt had bowed, had not been an analogous case. The truth of his allegation that representative government was being turned into a mockery had been flagrantly demonstrated, and, having once said that he would accept nomination, it was plain duty now to take up such a challenge.

A brisk interchange of fighting speeches between him and the successor whom he now wished to replace soon followed, and was considerably distasteful to ordinary quiet folk. It ended with a speech delivered by Roosevelt when, on his way to make it, a crazy fellow had shot him in the chest, "as a warning that men must not try to have more than two terms as President." He refused to go to hospital till he had made that speech, with the bullet in him. "It was nothing. When I stretched out my arms, it made me gasp a little, but that was all"; but the enthusiasts, who after his speech would shake hands with him, did try his temper a bit. Replying to a question in a letter from Lord Grey, he wrote, "I can answer with absolute certainty. Your nerve would not have been affected in the least. You would have made the speech as a matter of course. Modern civilization is undoubtedly somewhat soft, and the

average political orator, or party leader, the average broker, or banker, or factory-owner, at least when he is past middle-age, is apt to be soft — I mean both mentally and physically; and such a man accepts being shot as an unheard-of calamity and feels very sorry for himself, and thinks only of himself and not of the work on which he is engaged. . . . But a good soldier or sailor, or a deep-sea fisherman, or railway man, or cow-boy, or lumber-jack, or miner, would normally act as I acted without thinking anything about it." The speech slightly aggravated the wound and the bullet was never extracted; but he recovered quickly.

Meanwhile the Democratic candidate had been presented with a victory. The American people had inflicted a severe rebuff on Mr. Taft, and (it seems) soon began — here lies the fundamental difference of temper between the derided King Demos and most monarchs — to regard him with a special kind of favor. Some years later, at the height of the Great War, the two chief antagonists met by chance in a hotel. What passed may be guessed from Roosevelt's exclamation to a friend after it: "I was never so happy in my life. It was splendid of Taft." The Progressive party did not survive long. Roosevelt himself, in 1914, reflected that it had had little real coherence. Younger Progressives have said

that it perished because the mighty issues raised by the Great War overshadowed its cause. However that may be, it impressed its main principles upon the nation before it died.

That being so, can one now regret what Roosevelt did? He incurred the reproach of sacrificing, to his personal ambition, the ties of party allegiance and of friendship to the high-minded statesman whom he himself had made his successor; and thereby he shook his own authority with the people at large. It is certain that he did this with his eyes open, knowing that he was injuring his own selfish interests, valuing as a condition of his future influence that very confidence in his disinterestedness which he was in part sacrificing, but judging upon the whole that loyalty to the causes which he had made his own required him to take this course at this crisis. Friends, who at the time thought his judgment most mistaken, were conscious none the less of his singular moral elevation. Whether his judgment was mistaken depends upon this further question: In his Presidency he had striven mightily to make America a Liberal country — one of those in which alert interest in social questions is deemed essential to sound statesmanship; and the work which he began has gone forward. Would it have gone forward, if in 1912 he had

walked in the paths of prudence? An Englishman can only answer this with diffidence. But, I may be permitted to say, I trust that, if I had been an American, I should have been an item in the Progressive crowd which followed him.

As was fitting, he turned not very long after to his second line of interest in life, and went again upon a naturalist's travel — this time in South America. Even that most manly of rich men's indulgences, great-game shooting, was no mere play with him. This was the travel of the earnest naturalist, geographer, and social observer. Nor was his a rich man's indulgence at all. It was made to pay its way, like St. Paul's travels, by unremitting work at his craft as a writer — work of which no one who has not tried it during rough travel can guess the severity. It began with lectures which he had been invited to give in Brazil, Uruguay, the Argentine, and Chile; seemingly these republics cared little about the "rape of Panama." The Brazilian government suggested to him the exploration of the River of Doubt, of which the course was unknown, and which they renamed the River Theodore when he and his comrades had traced it fifteen hundred miles to its confluence with the chief tributary of the Amazon.

Every English boy who knows his Kingsley has

sometimes longed to travel amid the overpowering luxuriance of the forests of South America, with all their hidden terrors, and along its giant streams. To me there is delight in a travel book like Roosevelt's about this journey, though there would be no delight in my abridgment of it. But Mr. Kermit Roosevelt has told for him what he himself could not — the tale of his comradeship, of his sickness and dire suffering, of his courage and invincible unselfishness; and a son who was a worthy comrade to a father who was a comrade to his sons could tell the tale with grace and authority. "Sick as he was, he gave no one any trouble. He would walk slowly over the portages (where till the sickness came he had worked with the youngest), resting every little while, and when the fever was not too severe, we would, when we reached the farther end with the canoes, find him sitting propped against a tree, reading a volume of Gibbon, or perhaps the *Oxford Book of Verse*. There was one particularly black night. The fever was high and father was out of his head. The scene is vivid before me. The black-rushing river with the great trees towering high above along the bank; the sodden earth under foot; for a few moments the stars would be shining, and then the sky would cloud over and the rain would fall in torrents,

shutting out sky and trees and river. Father first began with poetry. Over and over again he repeated, 'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure-dome decree,' then he started talking at random, but gradually he centred down to the question of supplies, which was, of course, occupying everyone's mind. Part of the time he knew that I was there, and he would then ask me if I thought Cherric had had enough to eat to keep going. Then he would forget my presence and keep saying to himself: 'I can't work now, so I don't need much food, but he and Cherric have worked all day with the canoes, they must have part of mine.'"

Such he was even in delirium. He was of the spiritual company of Captain Oates, and the comrades who watched him guessed the resolve that he had formed. If he could no longer drag himself forward, he would no longer be a burden on that party in sore peril, or a consumer of their nigh depleted stores. He would slip away into the woods and die.

He returned home in May 1914, bearing within him, it is likely, the seeds of mortal sickness, and found the Progressive policy being largely carried into effect by the skillful hand of President Woodrow Wilson.