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.....Roosevelt's Great Opportunity.....

President Roosevelt has now an opportunity such as comes to but few men in a generation. His nomination for the vice presidency was due to his enemies as much as to his friends. The New York leaders thought that he could give them less trouble as president of the senate than as governor of the state. He himself was reported as hesitating about accepting the position. He was in doubt—so the correspondents said—whether it would aid him in his ambition to reach the presidency. He accepted and by the act of an assassin the responsibilities of the presidency were suddenly imposed upon him.

Then he began to plan to succeed himself. No candidate for the presidency ever used the power of the office more openly or notoriously to secure a presidential nomination. His altered position on the trust question could not be construed otherwise than as a surrender to the trusts, and from the time he ceased to urge anti-trust legislation he had the support of the great trusts. He and the members of his cabinet have virtually admitted the receipt of trust contributions; they have simply denied with emphasis that these contributions were received upon either an express or an implied promise of partiality toward the trusts.

In the election just past the president received an unprecedented plurality. It will require an analysis of the complete returns to determine just to what extent it was a personal victory and to what extent he profited by the resentment felt by democrats toward the leaders at present in control of their party organization. But whether the president's great victory was due to admiration for his own qualities or to dissatisfaction among democrats, he now has an opportunity that will not return. He has announced that he will not be a candidate for re-election and this announcement not only relieves him of anxiety, but it removes from him the blinding influence of selfish ambition. Unless he is restrained by obligations consciously or unconsciously incurred he can devote himself to the duties of his office with an eye singly to his position in history.

He is too much of a student of public affairs not to be aware of the growing issue between democracy on the one side and plutocracy on the other—between the masses, interested in good government and in equal opportunity, and the privileged classes, fattening upon governmental favoritism. Being aware of this struggle he must take his stand upon one side or the other. He must contribute to the triumph that must ultimately come to the people or stand as the champion of organized wealth. The settlement of this issue will have a large bearing upon the future of the country. Except insofar as he is influenced by gratitude or by a desire to repay those who have contributed to his campaign fund, his conduct will be determined by his sympathies. If his sympathies are with the struggling masses he will view every question from their standpoint and use the influence of the executive to further their interests. If his sympathies are with the

"well-to-do" and the "thrifty" he will naturally look at questions from their standpoint and throw the influence of the administration upon their side. His writings have raised the suspicion that he is Hamiltonian rather than Jeffersonian in his ideas and bias. Hamilton believed that the well-born were born to rule and that the not too well-born were born to be ruled—that the well-born must conduct the government in their own interest and also, of course, in the interest of those born to be governed. He also believed that the government ought to be strong and centralized. Hamilton had a great deal more faith in the wisdom and patriotism of the wealthy than in the wisdom and patriotism of the poorer classes. Jefferson, on the other hand, believed in the people, trusted the people and defended the people. He did not object to a man's having wealth, but he insisted that a man must be measured not by his worldly goods but by his character, and that his influence in government should depend upon his inalienable rights and not upon the number of dollars that he had accumulated.

Men seldom change their sympathies. Opinions may change, but sympathies are more permanent and when one's sympathies do change the change is usually—though not always—due to a change in his financial condition. For instance, a poor man may become rich, and when he becomes rich he may view questions from the standpoint of the rich rather than from the standpoint of the poor, and this is especially true if he acquires his wealth by questionable means. The man who has grown rich by floating fictitious capital or by watering stock is likely to manifest a violent dislike for the people who object to the exploitation of the public. The man who has grown rich by usurious interest and by the methods of the Shylock is not apt to have a good opinion of those who would limit interest rates and protect the needy from imposition and injustice. On the other hand, those who have been made aristocratic by wealth are sometimes made democratic by adversity. Sometimes, however, men cross the line through thought and reflection rather than because of prosperity or financial loss. Insofar as his executive acts furnish an indication as to his sympathies, President Roosevelt seems to incline toward the plutocratic side of the controversy. His refusal to enforce the criminal law against the trust magnates shows that the large criminal who plunders on a gigantic scale does not seem to him so heinous an offender as the small criminal, for in no other way can his inaction be explained, unless his friends say that it was due to fear of the political influence of the trusts. If the law providing a penalty for conspiracies in restraint of trade is an unjust one it ought to be repealed; if it is a just law it ought to be enforced. Will he enforce it now when he is no longer terrorized by the fear of what the trusts may do? Or has he compromised himself by accepting their financial support? If he is free to act and his sympathies are on the side of the

people we may expect a vigorous prosecution of the private monopolies which are now preying upon the people.

Will he recommend more strict regulation of the railroads?

No one can doubt that he is a believer in the gold standard, but does he carry his reverence for the opinions of the financiers and his desire to favor them to the point of continuing the enormous advantage which the government has been granting to the banks? Will he continue to use the treasury department as if it were a business asset of the Wall street financiers, or will he administer it in behalf of the people?

Labor is demanding remedial legislation. Will he become the champion of the wage-earners to the extent of recommending legislation to which they are entitled? He demonstrated the value of arbitration when he arbitrated the anthracite coal strike; will he now insist upon legislation creating a permanent arbitration board which can be called into activity whenever there is a difference between the interstate employers and their employees? Will he recommend legislation which will remove from the courts the power to employ the writ of injunction as they have been using it in the interest of employers in their contests with labor? Will he insist upon the enforcement of the eight-hour day on public works? The republican national platform was silent upon these questions while the democratic platform spoke out upon them. What will the president do, now that he has a chance to act unembarrassed by a desire for re-election? He refused to make any promise or outline any plan in regard to the Philippine question. Will he direct his efforts toward the establishment of self-government there, or will he yield to the commercial demands for a colonial policy? Will he make his administration memorable by establishing a republic in the Orient, or will he sow the seeds of imperialism on American soil? If he is not willing to encourage the doctrine of self-government among the Filipinos, is he willing to help bring our own government nearer to the people? Will he use the influence of his office to secure the election of senators by the people and thus make the senate responsive to the will of the people? Here is one reform which alone would add more fame to his name than a whole life-time spent in the service of predatory wealth.

He owes his first elevation to the presidency to an unexpected event—the murder of a president. He owes his recent great victory largely to the error of democratic leaders. Others have therefore given him the opportunity which he coveted; how will he employ it? His place in history will depend not upon what others have done for him but upon what he does for the country. Let him read again the history of his country and note the difference between those presidents who have befriended the masses and those who have espoused the cause of the privileged few.

The financiers and monopolists can make