

SKETCHES from

THEODORE ROOSEVELT'S BUCKY LIFE.



26th PRESIDENT of the U.S.

Theodore Roosevelt's Father.

Theodore Roosevelt is the youngest American citizen who has ever been called to the head of our nation. He was born in New York City, October 27, 1858, his father, after whom he was named, being a prominent merchant, a patriot, a philanthropist, and a moving spirit in the Civil War. The elder Theodore Roosevelt went to Washington after the first Battle of Bull Run, and warned President Lincoln that he must get rid of Simon Cameron as Secretary of War, with the result that Mr. Stanton, the "organizer of victory," took his place. When the war was fairly under way, it was Theodore Roosevelt who organized the allotment plan, which saved the families of eighty thousand soldiers of New York State more than five million dollars of their pay; and when the war was over he protected the soldiers against the sharks that lay in wait for them, and saw to it that they got employment. Through his influence the New York newsboys' lodging-house system and many other institutions of public benefit and helpful charity were established. There were four children in the Roosevelt family, of whom Theodore was the second. There were two boys and two girls. A younger brother was killed in a railroad accident, and the hopes of the father were centered on Theodore. At the age of five or six, Theodore gave little promise of maintaining the prestige of the Roosevelt family line.

The President's Early Boyhood.

He was a puny, sickly, delicate boy. Some one who knew him in those days of the Civil War described him as a "weak-eyed, pig-chested boy, who was too frail to take part in the sports of lads of his age." When he arrived at the age of six, he was sent to the famous old McMullen School, where he remained for eight years. It was not, however, in New York that the boy Roosevelt spent with most profit the months to which he looks back with pleasure. The elder Roosevelt believed that children best thrive in the country. He selected a beautiful spot near the village of Oyster Bay, on the north shore of Long Island, and erected a country house which well deserves its title, "Tranquillity." Here it was among the hills which border the sound and the bay, that Theodore Roosevelt and his brother and sisters spent the long summer months. At fourteen Theodore was admitted to the Cutler School, a private academy in New York conducted by Arthur H. Cutler. Here he took the preparatory course for Harvard University, making rapid advancement under the careful tuition of Mr. Cutler, and graduating with honors.

Becomes an Athlete.

By careful attention and plenty of gymnasium exercise and out-of-door life his frame became more sturdy and his health vastly improved. It thus happened that when young Roosevelt entered on college life at Harvard, in 1875, he suffered little by comparison with boys of his age. While he did not stand in the front rank of athletics, he was well above the average, and had no reason to be ashamed of his physical prowess. Never for a waking moment was he idle. It was either study or exercise. In addition to his regular studies and special courses he took upon himself the editorship of the college paper, and made a success of it. He was democratic in his tastes and simple in his mode of living. Theodore Roosevelt was graduated from Harvard in 1880 with high honors. In spite of severe study, his health was but little impaired, and he at once started on a foreign journey in search of instruction, pleasure and adventure. He distinguished himself as a mountain climber, ascending the Jungfrau, the Matterhorn and many other peaks, and was made a member of the Alpine Club of London.

Begin Study of Law.

On his return to America he studied law, and in the fall of 1881 he was elected to the State Assembly from the Twenty-first District of New York, generally known as Jacob Hess's district. By re-election he continued in the body during the session of 1882 and 1884. He introduced important reform measures, and his entire legislative career was made conspicuous by the courage and zeal with which he assailed political abuses. As chairman of the Committee on Cities he introduced the measure which took from the Board of Aldermen the power to confirm or reject the appointments of the Mayor. He was chairman of the noted legislative investigating committee which bore his name. In 1884 he went to the Bad Lands in Dakota, near the "Pretty Buttes," where he built a log-cabin, and for several years mingled the life of a ranchman with that of a literary worker. From his front door he could shoot deer, and the mountains around him were full of big game. Amid such surroundings he wrote some of his most popular books. He became a daring horseman and a rival of the cowboys in feats of skill and strength. In 1886 Mr. Roosevelt was the Republican candidate for Mayor against Abram S. Hewitt, United Democracy, and Henry George, United Labor. Mr. Hewitt was elected by about twenty-two thousand plurality. In 1889 Roosevelt was appointed by President Harrison a member of the

United States Civil Service Commission.

His ability and rugged honesty in the administration of the affairs of that office greatly helped to strengthen his hold on popular regard.

Police Commissioner in New York.

Roosevelt continued in that office until May 1, 1895, when he resigned to accept the office of Police Commissioner from Mayor Strong. He found the administration of affairs in a demoralized condition, but he soon brought order out of chaos. Says James A. Rilis, who is an intimate friend of President Roosevelt:

"We had been trying for forty years to achieve a system of dealing decently with our homeless poor. Two score years before, the surgeons of the police department had pointed out that herding them in the cellars or over the prisons of police stations in festering heaps, and turning them out hungry at daybreak to beg their way from door to door, was indecent and inhuman. Since then grand juries, academies of medicine, committees on philanthropic citizens, had attacked the foul disgrace, but to no purpose. Pestilence ravaged the prison lodgings, but still they stayed. I know what that fight meant, for I was one of a committee that waged it year after year, and suffered defeat every time, until Theodore Roosevelt came and destroyed the nuisance in a night. I remember the caricatures of tramps shivering in the cold with which the yellow newspapers pursued him at the time, labelling him the "poor man's foe." And I remember being just a little uneasy lest they would him, and perhaps make him think he had been hasty. But not he. It was only those who did not know him who charged him with being hasty. He thought a thing out quickly—yes, that is his way; but he thought it out, and having thought it out, suited action to his judgment. Of the consequences he didn't think at all. He made sure he was right, and then went ahead with perfect confidence that things would come out right."

His Advice to Organized Labor.

Mr. Rilis says he never saw Roosevelt to better advantage than when he once confronted the labor men at their meeting-place, Clarendon Hall:

"The police were all the time having trouble with strikers and their 'pickets.' Roosevelt saw that it was because neither party understood fully the position of the other, and, with his usual directness of word to the labor organizations that he would like to talk it over with them. At his request I went with him to the meeting. It developed almost immediately that the labor men had taken a wrong measure of the man. They met him as a politician playing for points, and hinted at trouble unless their demands were met. Mr. Roosevelt broke them off short: 'Gentlemen!' he said—with that snap of the jaw that always made people listen. 'I asked to meet you, hoping that we might come to understand one another. Remember, please, before we go further, that the worst injury anyone of you can do to the cause of labor is to counsel violence. It will also be worse for himself. Understand distinctly that order will be kept. The police will keep it. Now we can proceed.'"

"I was never so proud and pleased as when they applauded him to the echo. He said the kind of man they had to be the best in them had come out on top, as he expected it would."

Attacked by "Yellow" Newspapers.

It was of this incident that a handle was first made by Mr. Roosevelt's enemies in and out of the police board—and he had many—to attack him: "It happened that there was a music-hall in the building in which the labor men met. The yellow newspapers circulated the lie that he went there on purpose to see the show, and the ridiculous story was repeated until actually the liars persuaded themselves that it was so. They would not have been able to understand the kind of man they had to be had they tried. Accordingly they fell into their own trap. It is a tradition of Mulberry Street that the notorious Beeley dinner raid was planned by his enemies in the department of which he was the head, in the belief that they would catch Mr. Roosevelt there. The dinners were supposed to be his 'act.'"

Some time after that, Mr. Rilis was in Roosevelt's office when a police official of superior rank came in, and requested a private audience with him:

"They stepped aside and the policeman spoke in an undertone, urging something strongly. Mr. Roosevelt listened. Suddenly I saw him straighten up as a man recoils from something unclean, and didn't fight that way." The policeman went out crestfallen. Roosevelt took two or three turns about the floor, struggling evidently with strong disgust. He told

me afterward that the man had come to him with what he said was certain knowledge that his enemy could that night be found in a known evil house uptown, which it was his alleged habit to visit. His proposition was to raid it then and so "get square." To the policeman it must have seemed like throwing a good chance away. But it was not Roosevelt's way; he struck no blow below the belt. In the governor's chair afterward he gave the politicians whom he fought, and who fought him, the same terms. They tried their best to upset him, for they had nothing to expect from him. But they knew and owned that he fought fair. Their backs were secure. He never tricked them to gain an advantage. A promise given by him was always kept to the letter."

Assistant Secretary of Navy.

Early in 1897 he was called by President McKinley to give up his New York office to become Assistant-Secretary of the Navy. His energy and quick mastery of detail had much to do with the speedy equipment of the navy for its brilliant feats in the war with Spain. It was he who suggested Admiral Dewey for commander of the Asiatic station.

Dewey was sometimes spoken of in those days as if he were a kind of fashion-plate. Roosevelt, however, had faith in him, and while walking up Connecticut avenue one day said to Mr. Rilis: "Dewey is all right. He has a lion heart. He is the man for the place." No one now doubts the wisdom of his selection, and naval officers agree that the remarkable skill in marksmanship displayed by the American gunners was due to his foresight. He saw the necessity of practice, and he thought it the best kind of economy to burn up ammunition in acquiring skill.

A characteristic story is told regarding Roosevelt's insistence on practice in the navy.

Shortly after his appointment he asked for an appropriation of \$800,000 for ammunition, powder, and shot for the navy. The appropriation was made, and a few months later he asked for another appropriation, this time of \$500,000. When asked by the proper authorities what had become of the first appropriation, he replied: "Every cent of it was spent for powder and shot, and every bit of powder and shot has been fired." When he was asked what he was going to do with the \$500,000, he replied: "Use every ounce of that, too, within the next thirty days in practice shooting."

His Cuban War Record.

Soon after the outbreak of the war, however, his patriotism and love of active life led him to leave the comparative quiet of his government office for service in the field. As a lieutenant-colonel of volunteers he recruited the First Volunteer Cavalry, popularly known as the "Rough Riders." The men were gathered largely from the cowboys of the west and southwest, but also numbered many college-bred men of the east. In the beginning he was second in command, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, Dr. Leonard Wood being colonel. But at the close of the war the latter was a brigadier-general and Roosevelt was colonel in command. Since no horses were transported to Cuba, this regiment, together with the rest of the cavalry, was obliged to serve on foot. The regiment distinguished itself in the Santiago campaign, and Colonel Roosevelt became famous for his bravery in leading the charge up San Juan Hill on July 1st. He was an efficient officer, and won the love and admiration of his men. His care for them was shown by the circulation of the famous round-shoulder which he wrote protesting against keeping the army longer in Cuba.

As Governor of New York.

Upon Roosevelt's return to New York there was a popular demand for his nomination for governor. Previous to the state convention he was nominated by the Citizens' Union, but he declined, replying that he was a Republican. The Democrats tried to frustrate his nomination by attempting to prove that he had lost his legal residence in that state. That plan failed

and he was nominated in the convention by a vote of 753 to 218 for Governor Black. The campaign throughout the state was spirited. Roosevelt took the stump and delivered many speeches. His plurality was 18,079.

As the campaign of 1900 drew near, the popular demand that Roosevelt's name should be on the National Republican ticket grew too imperative to be ignored by the leaders. The honor of the nomination for Vice-President was refused time and time again by Roosevelt, who felt that he had a great duty to perform as governor of New York state.

Says Cal O'Laughlin, apropos of the Republican National Convention, which was held in Philadelphia on June 19, 20 and 21, 1900:

Nomination at Philadelphia.

On the evening of the first day of the convention, Roosevelt saw Platt. "My name must not be presented to the convention," he told him. Platt was mad, and mad clean through; but he acquiesced and Roosevelt returned to his apartment to run into the arms of the Kansas delegation. "We do not request you to accept the nomination," said State Senator Burton; "we do not urge you to accept the nomination, but we propose to issue orders to you, and we expect you to obey them." Throughout the delivery of Mr. Burton's remarks, Roosevelt stood, with shoulders square and feet at right angles, his chin occasionally shooting forward, as if he were on the point of objecting to the argument that he alone could rescue "bleeding Kansas" from demagogism and populism. But he waited patiently until the address was ended, and then appealed to the Kansans to take his words at their face value, and vote for some one of the candidates. But his appeal was useless. 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