

A GOOD MAN. A good man will more easily grow better, than a bad man good. For a rare frame of good qualities, high built and of highest need to the public welfare, admirable in the abstract and vitalized by a striking personality, the present time has hardly the superior to show of Theodore Roosevelt. It is our prayer and adjuration that he grow still better, as he steadily grows larger.

First of all, he carries everywhere the refreshing certainty, that what he says or does he means; his own mind will be in his words, his own spirit in his acts; the one will be truth, the other honesty, so far as motive is concerned. No power in high places or in low, no interest or party, no threat or bribe, can reach his integrity. His concerns appear to be all for the public, and his restless activity ensures their taking effect. His magnificent courage, principles, leadership and pugnacity, seem to call in question the Providence that did not raise him up in time for the Great War; before the time of the Little War we used to remark that he was one of the few men of whom we could be quite certain without trial that he would be a military success. He attacks the enemies of good order, good government and good public morals as if they were so many armed foemen in the breach; and they have little resource but nicknames and showing his teeth in cartoon, as if they had felt them. His achievements are already of importance; and they convey the constant suggestion, in their steady increase, of greater things to come. That such doing should find words to match, is nothing strange; but it is extraordinary, if not unique, that a life of such action should spare time and means for such literary work as he has accomplished, histories that are the delight of historians as well as the general American reader, monuments of research which would seem a marvel at his age if his days had been given to nothing else, and lit up by the style of all his energy and freshness. A finish like this is as the capital to a splendid column. His familiar old habit, we might add, of informing the public from week to week that he is a "republican," may be taken as index of the difficulties that beset a character which must be true to itself, in party associations at the present time.

There is an elevation of the spirit in following the career and utterance of such a citizen; thence, we feel it the more if we miss in any such utterance the notes of veracity and sense. "Faults of one's quality," defects that go with any excellence as its shadow-side, we are used to expect; but here is plain question of truth and right. We are at present engaged in a war, one remarkable feature of which is that our people have had nothing to do with ordaining it; another, that its whole execution

is a glaring departure from our principles and practices hitherto; another, that most of those whom we would have picked out before as competent guides of public opinion seem to disapprove it. Governor Roosevelt has had much to say of this proceeding; and hardly a word, so far as we have yet been able to observe, conceived in the spirit of reason, or controlled by regard to fact. All objection to this war is branded as sheer cowardice and disgrace to the country; those who remonstrate are "puny," and anything else which may stir up mere contempt.

Justin McCarthy says of the English that, for a really brave people, they are rather given to calling others cowards; and Governor Roosevelt mars his own brave record by this headlong abuse. We find nothing in all his "Philippinics" but a "rushing" of the whole subject, as one which would not bear rational discussion; a hooting as of urchins on the street; moral level—not perceptible. Thus men gather mobs, thus they lynch prisoners, thus they get drunk. We lose all sight of the guide to all good work in the world: the spirit of truth which puts facts as they are, the spirit of right which puts acts as they ought to be.

We are painfully reminded that in all the books and speeches we have followed so admiringly, we can hardly recall a single expression implying other than that war is a good thing in itself. Once indeed he said to our mid-dies that we were a peace-loving nation; which might be a commendation, or it might rise from sloth, or cowardice, or money-love. In his late triumphal march through the West, he gives out the welcome announcement that "We desire above all things peace;" which in its context sounds a little like Napoleon in the later days of his empire, such a lover of peace that he bitterly censured his minister for writing a paper to prove it—as if it needed proving.

A moment's reflection, if it be possible to reflect a moment in this martial hurricane, must show even the speaker himself what public morals he is teaching. Not only all personal judgment and conscience as applied to national affairs are at once discarded by the fact of a foreign squabble, mere adherence written in their place, but a special premium is offered on all misgovernment and wickedness in high places. The suggestion to rulers is, "Do your will, never mind if you break all pledges and commit every crime; if you fear anything from the people, you need nothing then but make a war, however wanton, on some feeble foe or victim; all must forget every scruple and stand by you thick and thin." And when this inevitable natural consequence of the doctrine thus presents itself, we are a little startled to remember how close it comes to the reality—a government bankrupt

in the purposes of its election, plunging into a war which might blind the people to its betrayal of their interests. The still, small voice which must consider of such things, may be lost in the roar of public throngs, when their applause begins to sweeten in the ear; but it is the voice which will be heard in the distance, when these are still. Our history and all history is proof of that.

The pendulum swings to its extremes, but it averages plumb. In our early experience all tended to individualism and disintegration; a stern experience was needed to evince a strong government and an integral nation. Now the reaction runs so far as practically to deny all right of private judgment, and to make serfs, not indeed of American bodies, but of American souls. We have not found either the idea or its enforcement so lovely as to part with our freedom yet.

It is for the good reputation of this gifted man, growing now to be a national possession, that we feel concerned. The various expressions that come to him in the course of his crusade, have a wild and distracted sound, if we stop to listen soberly, as of a man working off his balance. When we hear him talk of our people "huddling within their own borders," we wonder what conception this American historian has of our four million square miles, only half occupied and far from half developed; but united by the finer bonds with all the world, and in the best position to do all good by the nobler means. When he extols our struggle with "the savagery in the islands" of the Philippines, and we consider the performance thus far of that remarkable people, we have to question his competence for true picturing of human affairs. While we absorb his golden promises of perfect honor and equity to be observed with these natives once their arms are down, we think how wise it is to base our record of these virtues on the future rather than on the past; since, within a year, we had the Spaniards precisely thus unarmed, and gave them flat dishonesty, expressly pledging the subject of these very islands as reserved for discussion under treaty, and at the opening of the treaty assuming their possession absolutely without discussion. The protestations of the good we are going to do the conquered, are little else than those of tyranny and aggression always. The hymns to all the energetic impulses drawn forth by war appear a strange inversion, since very clearly such impulses, generally out of bounds, are the cause of war, rather than war of them, till it exhausts them, ending with peace at almost any price, and the carnival of vice that follows far into its era.—But when we hear once more from those accomplished lips the old fustian, of the Flag never to come down, we—only rest.