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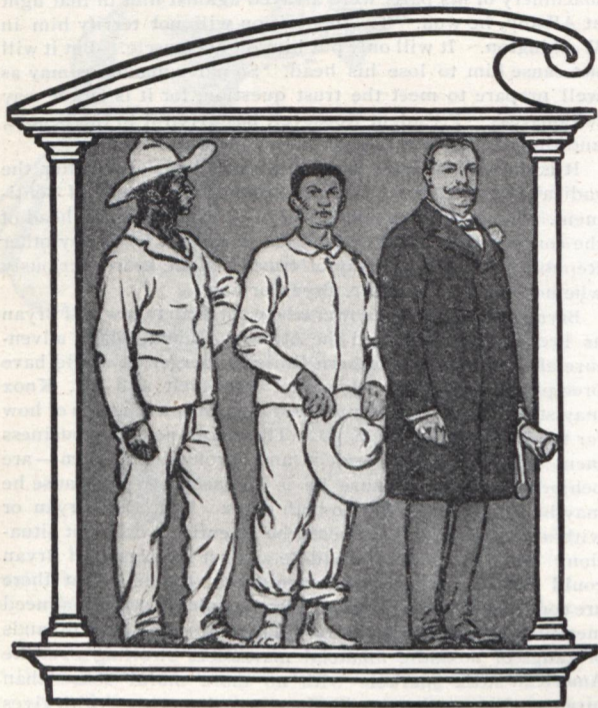
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One Year of Roosevelt

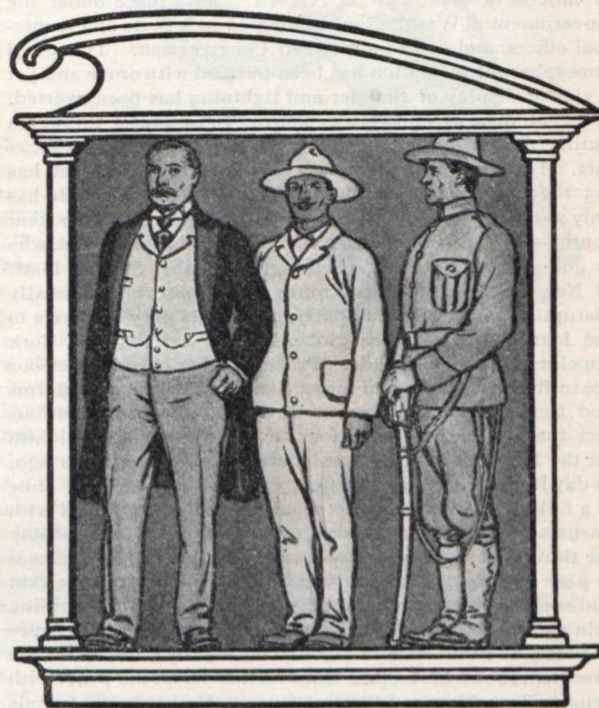
By William Allen White

THE RECORD OF A MAN WHO HAS TRIED TO RUN HIS OFFICE JUST ABOUT AS THE AVERAGE AMERICAN BELIEVES HE WOULD RUN IT

dangerous man, whose desire to do right might lead him into that fearful unknown land of the impolitic and the inexpedient.

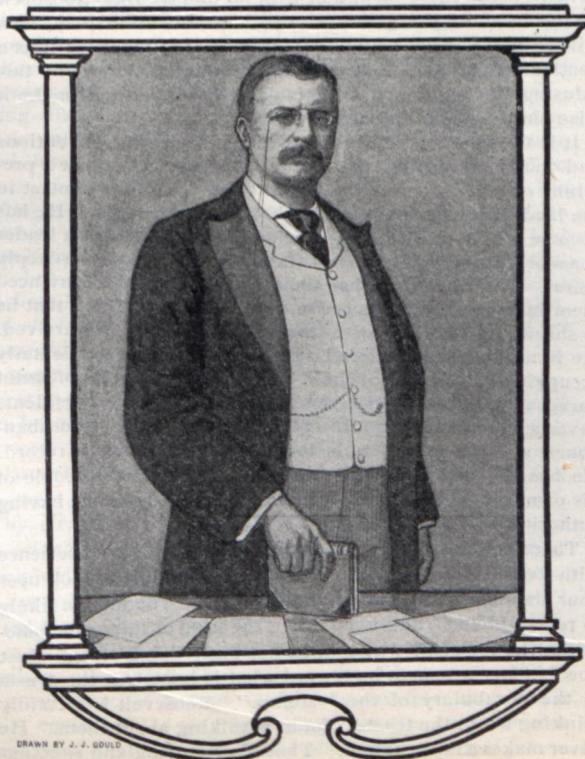
In the world of politics a year ago Roosevelt was held not in fear, but in the contempt of those sitting high in the consistory. Despite his kicks and protests he had been rudely, almost jocosely, pulled by the legs and arms from the gubernatorial chair at Albany and chucked into the Vice-Presidency—buried alive with a calm contumely that might have been almost dignified but for Tom Platt's occasional ghost-dances over the grave. Probably one of the few times in his life when Roosevelt had to swallow an insult to his intelligence, and smile, was at the Philadelphia National Republican Convention, when a sleek, boutonnièred Westerner, swollen up with his importance like a poisoned pup, came prancing into the Roosevelt headquarters at the head of a delegation of well-meaning dupes, and, in the fine polished periods of a side-show "barker," demanded that Roosevelt accept the Vice-Presidency. Roosevelt knew that the barker had value received in his breeches' pocket, and he suspected that the barker knew that Roosevelt knew, but the game went on and was played to the end. So when Roosevelt came to Washington he came as Joseph might have appeared among his brethren after he had been sold to the Ishmaelites.

Thus, with what the old-fashioned Populists used to call the "Money Power" afraid of Roosevelt, and the politicians dumb with consternation, the young man came to his power and his glory. One force outside himself was with him—a force which had been too much ignored by the politicians and one with which capital rarely reckons. That force was the people. Roosevelt is the hero of the average man. Roosevelt's strength and weakness are apparent—he is human in both. While Wall Street and the politicians, having their eyes on other things, did not see the greatness of Roosevelt, the



THERE is a story which may or may not be true, but which is nevertheless interesting, about the way the news of McKinley's assassination came to Wall Street. A reporter from an evening paper, bearing a telegram signed by the Associated Press, ran into the office of a man more or less good and great, who for several years has been in the world's eyes as the organizer of an unimaginably big combination of capital. They brought the great man out of his private office and the reporter presented his telegram. The Wall Street man read it and spat out a few incredulous damns. He whirled about once like a man who is shot but feels no pain. An instant later the shock of the news got into his leather-covered consciousness, his face flared red, and he staggered back to his desk where he sat ashen-gray, his head nodding and his jaw a-tremble. Personally he didn't know McKinley well. The two men were mere acquaintances. But the quaking hands controlled not merely millions but a billion dollars that were being hoisted into permanent organization by a thousand pulleys hanging to the crane of prosperity. McKinley was the man in the engine-room who steadied the crane, and if it wobbled the load fell. The terror of this Wall Street man at the thought of McKinley's death typified the fear of all capital; and the screw of horror took several extra turns whenever Wall Street thought of Theodore Roosevelt in the White House. There is no doubt of the fact that those economic forces known as capital, which had fled abjectly behind the skirts of the Republican party in 1896 to escape the bogey man, had regained their composure in 1900. Indeed, capital had a military swagger in 1901, and, if the cards were not actually out, every one felt that there was an understanding between the Republican party and capital, at least in the matter of the trusts, and no one else was making overture. But Roosevelt—and again Wall Street shuddered.

While he was Governor of New York, Wall Street had become familiar with Roosevelt. He was regarded with that natural suspicion with which certain men surround a man who may not be "handled." That is to say, rising above considerations of party obligation, and above consideration of personal popularity, Roosevelt was liable at any inopportune moment to do any improbable thing that he regarded as right. Such a man is ever held in low esteem by gentlemen who desire every to-morrow to be a copy of every yesterday. Progress to them means crime, and they do not draw the line between the man who is pushing forward honestly and cautiously and prayerfully, and the man who holds the pike and the torch. So Theodore Roosevelt, who as Governor of New York had insisted that franchises should be taxed, and had accomplished this purpose with pluck and grit somewhat dramatically, the Bourbons of Wall Street saw going to the White House merely as a firebrand. Roosevelt's promise to follow McKinley's policies was the anæsthetic which kept the market from throwing spasms during the first two weeks of the young President's Administration. Certainly a year ago the world of business looked upon Theodore Roosevelt as a



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people, being in a sane and observant mood, saw him, understood him, loved him, and believed in him. It is certainly a triumph for democracy that the American people universally comprehended and appreciated this man who has never taken the trouble to truckle to them, who has not been ashamed of being a scholar and a gentleman, and who has been democratic from principle first and practice afterward. But the people did understand him, and they accepted him not as a dignitary, but as a comrade. Roosevelt is the first President of the United States since the Civil War who has conducted his office and has done things about as the average man believes he would run them if he had a chance. Reading the newspaper accounts of Presidential doings to-day is to the average American something like having his dreams come true. As he reads, it seems to him that he has seen all that happen somewhere before.

To understand what Roosevelt has done during the year past it is necessary to get these things down clearly in black and white, for he has not carved his success with the keen aseptic language of diplomacy nor won it with the poisoned shafts of duplicity. He has not handled the politicians and the politicians have not handled him. Yet they all have "got along" fairly well. But in following the story of the year the reader must bear in mind the fact that wherever there has been a contest it has been the people and Roosevelt, on the one hand, and some interests backed by some politicians opposing.

There has been friction—plenty of it. Naturally the first two months of the Roosevelt Administration were devoted by the statesmen and the President to getting used to one another. The statesmen had one way of doing things—Roosevelt another. There was a little giving in on both sides. During the first three months of the Administration much feeling was developed by the President's insisting on being a party to minor appointments. He refused to let Senators and Congressmen assume the responsibility for bad appointments. He made them withdraw the names of bad men and substitute the names of good men for all offices. This was more or less humiliating. Statesmen began to rebel. In Congress a cabal was formed of men who thought they had been turned down at the White House. It gave gentlemen of the cabal some comfort to refer to Roosevelt as "His Accidency," which was not original, but was nevertheless soothing. Roosevelt stood pat. The cabal plotted. A crisis was imminent in January when Congress assembled after the holiday recess. A dozen Senators and a score of Members of the House were mad all the way through. They had pledged their word to give certain offices to certain bad men, perhaps for crooked work. If these men were turned down, naturally they would think that their Congressional sponsors were playing double and would say things that would look nasty in print. If Roosevelt had forced things to an issue he would have made a serious break in the Republican party. There are those who say that the President took counsel; others believe he saw this situation himself. He

tacked. He permitted a number of particularly vicious candidates to "hang up." The statesmen, being thoroughly scared, presented for other appointments only clean men. These were quickly and cheerfully named. But the bones of contention were not revived. As the winter drifted into spring, statesmen, seeing that the President was firm, frequently withdrew their offensive candidates for Federal appointments, got them placed comfortably either in State offices or in business jobs, and before haying time nearly all the friction was over.

To-day every statesman in Washington knows better than to indorse a man with a "record" for a place under the Government at Washington. Bad men seek State and municipal offices, and don't bother their Congressmen. The moral atmosphere of the nation has been purified with ozone and yet a violent display of thunder and lightning has been averted. It was all done as smoothly as pouring goose-grease through a quill. And still there are those who say that Roosevelt lacks tact. Perhaps they are right. Certainly the President has not the oleaginous gentility of a confidence man. He has only so much tact as becomes a straightforward, blunt-spoken, courageous gentleman with a soft heart and a hard head, who is going to do right or do nothing. Probably Senator Platt, of New York, for instance, thinks that Roosevelt is literally disrupting the Republican party, casting its gory members to the four quarters of the globe, because certain New York appointments are not made. Probably other offended persons see in Roosevelt a kind of masculine shrew who merely storms and frets without purpose or direction. But it is a curious fact that while there were four or five prominent candidates for the Republican party Presidential nomination a year ago, to-day Roosevelt stands practically without opposition. If he is a bull in a china shop he seems to be well equipped with pneumatic cushions at the dangerous points. And probably the thing that has saved Roosevelt is his laugh. He refuses to play tragedy. Time and again he has punctured the cant and sophistry of an argumentative statesman with a twinkling grin and a gurgling, "Oh, come now, Senator!" Only once or twice, as in the case of Senator Burton, of Kansas, has the President shown his teeth. Roosevelt has kept the peace with Senator Tom Platt and Senator Quay. He has made friends with Senator Hanna, and though there have been contentions and differences during the year last past, the two men are too much alike and have too much twitch in the corners of their mouths and too much curvature of the vest to quarrel seriously. After a man fills up a forty-two waistband a number of things in the world lose their relative importance and honorable peace seems more and more desirable.

What the President Has Already Done

Peace was the more easily obtained between Roosevelt and Hanna because of the scrupulous exactness with which Roosevelt has kept his pledge to follow McKinley's lead and keep McKinley's word in matters of national policy. McKinley was Hanna's idol. And so devoutly has Roosevelt held to his promise at the beginning of his year's work that he has done practically nothing in the way of forming new policies. He has been clearing up the work that McKinley left unfinished. The Panama Canal left over from the McKinley Administration was finished under Roosevelt; so was the establishment of civil government in the Philippines. Reciprocity, particularly Cuban reciprocity, originated with McKinley, and there is no doubt that Roosevelt is following McKinley's intention to the letter in this matter; for in recent American politics no more pathetic spectacle has been witnessed than McKinley pleading through the lips of Hanna with the insurgent Senators in the last reciprocity conference. When the insurgent Senators refused to listen and decided to discipline the President, they trod on Hanna's softest corn and made Roosevelt's ally the one man in the Senate who might have helped them in their fight. But men on the wrong side may always be trusted to do the wrong thing.

Although Roosevelt has been cleaning up unfinished work he has not done it servilely. He has put his own personality into the work, and the Administration, working on policies that he did not originate, has been distinctively Rooseveltian. This has been particularly true in matters of the President's personal appointments. The first one was that of William Foulke, Civil Service Commissioner. He is a man whose recognition by the President was an advertisement that all that Theodore Roosevelt the man had written and spoken and theorized about Civil Service is to go into force and effect in his Administration. It may be said in passing that in all the last year's work there is nothing that puts to shame the preaching of Roosevelt for twenty years, and he has been rather a voluble man. But with all his talking he has never promised an impractical thing, and since he came to live his real life his ideals are in no way lowered. This is a most important phase of Roosevelt's character.

In selecting the three members of his Cabinet who have come in since McKinley's death Roosevelt has been characteristically fortunate. The men are clean, efficient American citizens who have succeeded in a practical way outside of politics. In addition to this, Mr. Payne, of the Post-Office Department, is a practical politician. He is so practical and so honest that he had the indorsement of Senator Hanna. The more the country knows Roosevelt the surer it will see that,

despite the fact that he sometimes writes pieces for the magazines and reads books written by college professors, and knows the precession of the equinoxes from the Malthusian theory, he also knows a thing or two, perhaps three, about the people now on earth, and about the back of the switchboard that connects with hard, real, working life. Persons who have tried to fool the President during the year last past have found themselves on the front steps of the White House with nothing more tangible than the worst of it to show for their trouble. For Roosevelt is canny. His disposal of the matter of Pension Commissioner proves that. Certain Western politicians desired the removal of Commissioner Evans. Evans had done no wrong. The politicians were powerful. Evans was promoted to a \$25,000 place and Eugene Ware appointed as successor to Evans without consulting the clamoring politicians. Ware is following Evans' policy in the main—only he isn't saying much about it. In selecting a man for a place on the Supreme Court of the United States the President picked Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes. It was not a political appointment. Yet the time may be near at hand when Judge Holmes' vote in some case involving the rights of labor unions may throw the labor vote of America with the Republican party for years. For Justice Holmes is said to be friendly to labor unions, and a friendly judge makes friendly laws—that is human nature. And the presence of a Justice in the Supreme Court who believes in organized labor will throw the weight of such influence to labor in the settlement of strikes.

A Power for Decency and Honesty

And this brings us to the core of the matter. It is not for what he has done or left undone during the year last past that the country owes gratitude to Roosevelt. It is for his influence. That has been tremendous. The laws that have been passed have been for the most part of McKinley's suggesting; the appointments that have been made have been good average men. The men whom the President really leans on were in his Cabinet when he came to the White House. They were men of McKinley's choice. But the difference between the two Presidents is in their attitude toward the people. McKinley went to the people. He was a great follower. The people influenced him. Roosevelt influences the people. They follow him. He is a leader. He gets his moral sustenance from within, not from without. Popular clamor cannot move him; he loves the people, and believes in their ultimate sanity and morality, but he is the final judge of the right or wrong of a question. He gives out moral strength; he does not absorb it. Witness the Cuban reciprocity matter. His firm stand for that principle as a moral obligation of this nation was worth more to the nation in a fight temporarily lost than the winning of the fight. For the immense influence of a President holding his ground, refusing to compromise on a moral question, accepting defeat calmly rather than a smirched victory, is the strongest moral tonic the country has had in a generation. In a dozen States where there have been differences over the patronage between the President and Congressmen, the clearly decent stand of the President has emboldened men of all parties to stand squarely for clean politics in their little home squabbles, and the result has been far-reaching and permanent. In public life there are two kinds of men: men who are there for what there is in it, men who have no other solace or satisfaction than winning the game of politics; and men who are in politics from a sense of duty. To men of this latter class Roosevelt has given much encouragement, and the class is likely to increase. American politics needs these men, and with an umpire like Roosevelt at the head of the game, who will establish fair play, men will go into politics who heretofore have not regarded it as a gentleman's game. Roosevelt has made it such, and by this infusing of clean blood into his party Roosevelt will make it wise and brave and strong.

It is the ignorant fellows who dodge issues in conventions and make straddling platforms. Roosevelt has put a premium on efficient intelligence in every post-office contest in the land, bringing his influence home to the people. He has become a battery of moral force and his strength as a leader is a moral strength. At heart the American people are deeply moral. And Roosevelt has their hearts. He has convinced them in a year that he is brave, that he is honest, and that he is shrewd and wise. As a statesman Roosevelt has arrived. He is no longer considered as a Vice-President accidentally occupying a Presidential chair. One no longer meets pleasant paragraphs in the newspapers showing how Vice-Presidents never succeed at elections. Such parallels have been abandoned and the man stands for himself on his own record. He has his own following and represents clearly people of his own sort in America. When he speaks it is as one having authority.

Therefore, looking into the mirror of a year's experience with Roosevelt as President, it may be possible to look over your shoulder a little way into the future. The man is likely to repeat himself, and keep doing the kind of things in something like the same way that he has been doing them. Just now his face seems to be toward what is known as the trusts in the vocabulary of the "stump." Roosevelt is certainly thinking about the trusts—for he is talking about them. He never makes a false motion. That his New England speeches

met with favor among the masses of the people is indisputable. Roosevelt was not cock-sure. That pleased the people. They are tired of Bryan's infallibility. Roosevelt's uncertainty merely reflects the unsureness of the popular mind about the trust question. That something should be done all admit. But that nothing is better than a great many things that might be done is also a part of the people's creed just now. That Roosevelt is going into the question, that he means business, his record as Governor seems to show. He is acting about the trust question as he acted about the franchise tax question. And though all the money in Wall Street and all the machinery of his party were arrayed against him in that fight at Albany, he won. The opposition will not terrify him in Washington. It will only put him on his muscle. But it will not cause him to lose his head. So party managers may as well prepare to meet the trust question, for it is on the way to Congress. President Roosevelt has given it to the people, and they will give it back to their representatives.

It is the conservative party that reaps legislation after the radical party has harrowed the ground for the seed of sentiment. Roosevelt is a conservative by nature, at the head of the conservative party of America, and what he or any other Republican leader may say of trusts may be heard seriously whether one listens to Mr. Bryan or not.

Bryan was merely the sower who went forth to sow. If Bryan as President had started the Attorney-General on an adventure after the Great Northern Railway merger, it would have precipitated a panic. President Roosevelt and Mr. Knox may start on the same errand and raise only a question of how far the law will let them go. The whole people—business men, laboring men, farmers and professional men—are behind Roosevelt, because he is a conservative, because he may be trusted to be fair to both sides. With Mr. Bryan or with any other radical it would be an entirely different situation. Only the masses would be against the classes if Bryan could start on a real crusade against the trusts. That there are conditions arising from what are known as trusts that need mending no one can gainsay. There are well-known bands or gangs of nomadic financial marauders strolling over the American stock markets with no more moral sense than pirates; they are drunk with the power that crass wealth gives them over American civilization, and they have put industrial enterprise into a state of terror. New laws are required to bring these brutes to the halter. Where Robin Hood or Jack Sheppard killed his tens these industrial pirates rob and plunder and literally kill by the industrial machine their hundreds. But to smash that machine because wicked men have run it viciously would kill thousands and tens of thousands and would work immeasurable iniquity. Roosevelt's position is that of the protector of the machine. He would guard the machine with law, and protect it from the mob as well as from the marauders.

The Living Example in the White House

Roosevelt is looming up as the great national leader, bigger than any party, the epitome of his times, the great American. If he is the Republican candidate in 1904 there will be new life in the party. The National Committee will have a smaller fund to work with than it has had for twenty years. There will be no contributions from gentlemen who expect value received in the shape of Governmental favors. Roosevelt is a book protectionist—not a political protectionist. He does not believe in frying the fat. When there is a tariff revision, which is inevitable in a few years, if Roosevelt is President, those concerns that contribute to the campaign fund will stand no better show than those who contributed nothing. The revision will be square. The understanding between what is called "Commercialism" and Republicanism will be broken; for Roosevelt is unconsciously taking the nation back to the simpler life, to the days of the Adamses. There are too many complications in American life to-day, too many luxuries everywhere. It is easy for the politician to run his organization when the lubrication comes from the seller of political privileges. But the ease is too high priced. It is easy to make a tariff law when the contribution books of the organization are before the members of the Committee on Ways and Means, but the complication comes too high.

What is true of politics is true of society, is true of religion, is true of every department of human activity. In his New England speeches this August, Roosevelt spoke often of the humble virtues of family and civil life. There is no doubt that he sees the need in America for the return, in so far as civilization to-day allows it, to the simple life which made America sturdy and sane and brave a generation ago. His life as a father, as a husband, as a citizen, as a politician, and as a President has been simple in the extreme. And if he accomplishes no legislative reform, if he fails in every endeavor to set the world aright, the country cannot be cheated of that which is rather to be chosen than any law or any policy—the moving example of a plain, strong man, living, working wholesomely, in unpretentious, old-fashioned democratic simplicity.

The mind cannot comprehend the power of this example in these times. If in addition to the strength of a good influence Roosevelt adds also the weight of successful political organization and efficiency in making good things come to pass, he must rise above his times to a more than passing fame.