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The Republican Duel

Presidential Characteristics and Differences

FOR the past two months, Canadians have been noting the spectacle of the President and an ex-President of the Republic abusing each other up and down the country from New York to Kansas. The campaign of Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Taft for the Presidential nomination of the Republican party has been rather warm, personalities having such local significance that Canada has been referred to as having been a possible "adjunct" of the United States. The Roosevelt and Taft forces have finished the last round. They have been in Chicago in convention assembled. The interest was intense. One thousand newspapermen, including the illustrious William Jennings Bryan, who was "doing" the Convention for a Chicago daily, tramped the streets, their noses keen for news. The situation is dramatic and it is historic. In the hotel lobbies and the environs of the convention hall followers of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft snarled at each other. Four short years ago these same disputants locked arms and went to the polls like brothers.

Since that time economic, social and political causes have been at work making cataclysmic changes in that section of the American people which calls itself Republican. A Republican of yesterday may to-day be a Progressive or a Conservative. The party has split and its two chief sections are typified by the careers and personalities of their leaders, Roosevelt and Taft.

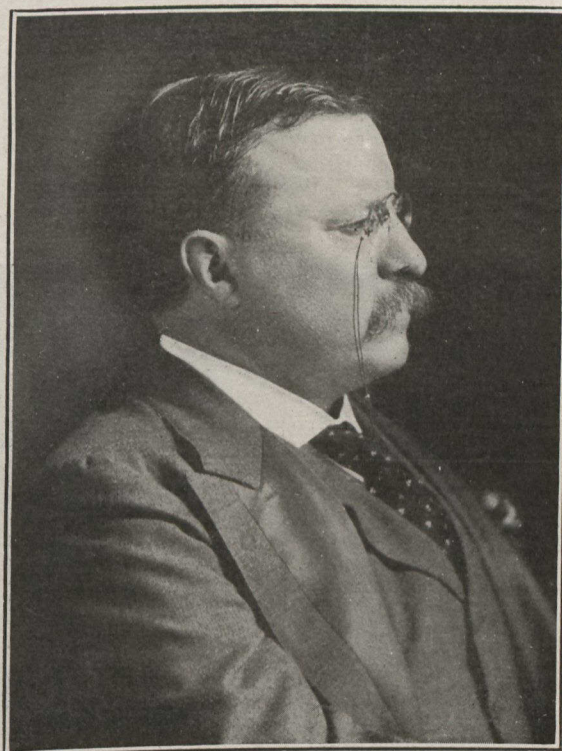
In 1908, when the Colonel closed his two terms of office as president, he appointed Mr. Taft the heir of his policies and scepter. His influence elected Mr. Taft President. Mr. Roosevelt went away lion hunting in Africa. He returned in a year and began to roar because he claimed that Mr. Taft had become retrogressive and was not furthering what the Colonel calls affectionately "my policies." He had allied himself with the old guard of Republicans and endorsed the Payne-Aldrich tariff, which action, critics claimed, was playing into the hands of the "Interests" Roosevelt had lashed with the "big stick." Roosevelt and Taft disagreed; they became political enemies. Hence the excitement in Chicago. Mr. Roosevelt went into the field for a third term as President. He wants to upset the traditional custom which precludes a man occupying more than twice the White House, that he may depose Mr. Taft. Ambitious autocrat, king-maker, or reformer—which is Roosevelt? On the other hand, everybody knows Mr. Taft's position. The big President is fighting for his political existence. While its leaders have made of the Republican party a divided house, the Democrats, who will soon be in session at Baltimore, have a chance of a lifetime to get their man elected President.

THE to-do between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Taft is not, as might be expected, mainly one of measures. It is a duel between two men brought up in the same political faith, but as far apart as the poles in their grasp of that faith, because of different training and outlook. The battle of the Republicans in New York and Cincinnati is the same as it is of the American people at large—the grapple of privilege, entrenched in the trusts, with the American democracy awakening to the clear consciousness that the evils of the feudal orders of the old world are being duplicated in the new under the guise of financial magnates and industrial barons. The American voters have risen in revolt against economic conditions which made millionaires

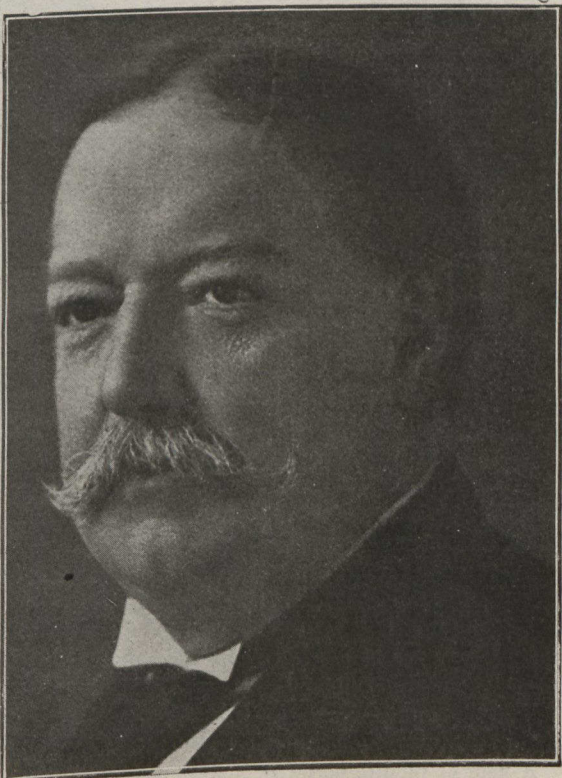
of a few and placed the many in their power. They have laid reforming hands on a constitution which in 1912 has outgrown the primitive days of Hamilton and Jefferson.

Something has to be done. The question is, who is going to do it? Those who shout Roosevelt

claim that he is the man at this crisis. Roosevelt appeals to those who want quick action. It is claimed that he more than any other American knows the American people, understands them, and can secure them relief. If he should not do the right thing, he would at least do something, is the thought of many of his supporters. Roosevelt has had long lease of the imagination of the American people. They have spoken of him in the same breath with Caesar and Napoleon, though his greatest military exploit was a charge up San Juan Hill to oust some Spanish musketeers. Roosevelt is revered because he personifies those qualities of aggressiveness, alertness, assertiveness, and resource, which have made the United States a first rate power. He is typically American in his mental make-up. His writings are inclined to be superficially clever. His set speeches contain such slang as "square deal." The important thing to remember about his career at the present time is its varied character. He has been President of the United States; head of the police board in New York; commander of a cavalry troop on active service; author of a score of books, and been a journalist and scientific investigator. These activities have helped him to understand the American people.



Theodore Roosevelt, the Radical.



William Howard Taft, the Conservative.

THE difference between Roosevelt, the Progressive, and Taft, the Conservative, is in their very training. Roosevelt's life has run in many channels; Taft, the lawyer and judge, has worked his way up to distinction in one of the most conservative of professions. His one groove has been the law since he left Yale. Compared with Roosevelt's, Taft's training has been narrow. He has not had the same opportunity to meet the people, except as their judge, as Roosevelt has had. Moreover his training has not been the kind which is essential to a high executive office like the Presidency. An executive officer must act by instinct and think afterwards. The judicial mind such as Mr. Taft's weighs carefully beforehand and then acts. The strenuous arena of politics is not the same place as the serene chamber of the judge. The difference in atmosphere has bothered Mr. Taft. Mr. Roosevelt, on the other hand, has proceeded from one executive office to another in his career. His genius is executive work. But while it may be conceded that Mr. Roosevelt is the better executive, there are a great many Republicans who think big Mr. Taft safer than he and will resist the Colonel's attempt to usurp the Cincinnati man's second term.

The whole Taft-Roosevelt episode is extremely interesting no matter how you look at it. It presents so many phases, which appeal to different people in different ways. A great many people in the United States watch the struggle between the Republican stalwarts anxiously, because they are concerned as to how the outcome will affect the prospect of relief from corporate tyranny and oppression. Some of the people see in the battle great political principles at stake. Britishers, Germans, and French read the accounts of the Presidential duel because it is of diplomatic importance whether a radical like Roosevelt or a conservative like Taft is elected President. But everybody on this continent and the world over with red blood in them who follow the strife of Roosevelt and Taft do so because they scent a battle. It is "Terrible Teddy" with the flashing eyes and panther tread, against "Big Bill" Taft, slow, unruffled, perpetually smiling when hit hardest.

D. B. S.