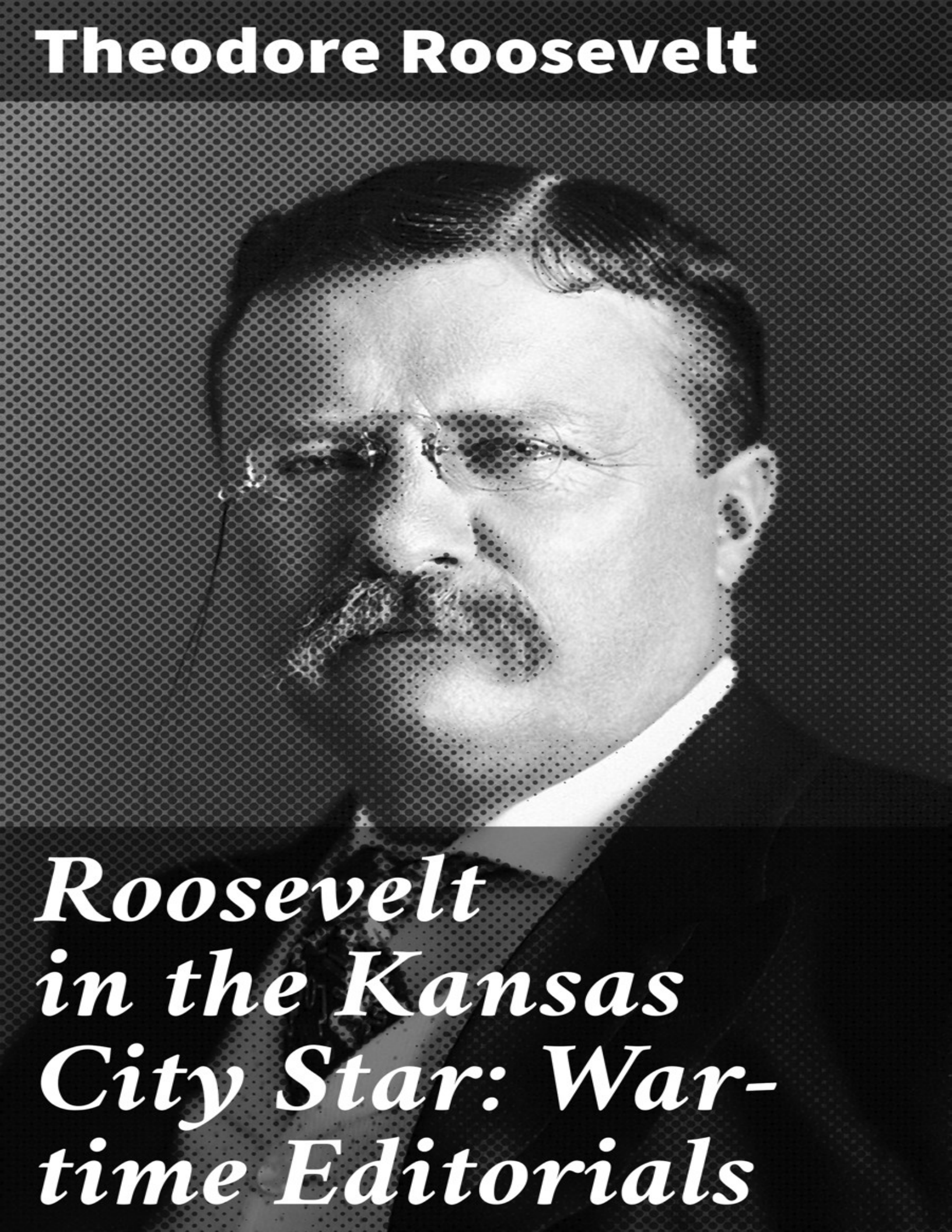
Theodore Roosevelt



Roosevelt in the Kansas City Star: War-time Editorials

Theodore Roosevelt

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INTRODUCTION

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The request, repeated and urgent, has come from many sources that the editorial articles, contributed by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt to The Kansas City Star during our country's participation in the World War, be preserved for the future. It is in response to this request that this volume is published.

Newspaper publication is ephemeral. Newspaper files are short-lived. Anybody who has examined a newspaper of thirty years ago knows how flimsy it is, how it breaks and disintegrates to the touch. It lacks the enduring quality of the newspaper of sixty or seventy-five years ago when other elements entered into the composition of news-print paper. Newspaper publication is the thought of to-day; to-morrow, it is gone save for the impression left on the mind of the reader. That the recollection of Colonel Roosevelt's articles may have something to appeal to aside from crumbling newspaper files is the aim of this book. And so these expressions on the events in a crisis in our national history—from the mind of a man whose intense love of country was the admiration of all who knew him, expressions which at the time of their publication stirred many to greater sacrifice for country, some to anger, even to rage—are here presented in enduring form.

Colonel Roosevelt's contributions to The Star were his most frequent expressions on the war; they were the outpouring of a great soul deeply stirred by the country's situation. There were more than one hundred articles from his pen. They covered the vital time of our part in the war from October, 1917, until his death January 6, 1919.

The reason he chose The Star as his medium of reaching the people, in a period when a large section of the American people sought and was guided by what he said, was that Colonel Roosevelt and The Star had known and understood each other for a long, long time. Their acquaintance dated back to the period of his service in the New York legislature. The Star saw behind his conduct then the qualities and the spirit which it was continually seeking to place at a premium in offices of public trust.

Later, in 1889, when President Harrison appointed him a civil service commissioner, The Star said:

> The appointment of Theodore Roosevelt as one of the civil service commissioners is a hopeful sign that President Harrison desires to give civil service reform a fair representation in the government. Mr. Roosevelt is an accomplished gentleman, with sincere aspirations for reformed methods of administration, as shown by his career in the New York legislature when Grover Cleveland was governor. Mr. Roosevelt is too independent ever to serve as a party henchman, and his voice and influence will always be in favor of what he believes to be the most efficient and business-like administration of affairs.

Colonel Roosevelt and the founder and editor of The Star, the late William R. Nelson, had met, but they did not really know each other until after the war with Spain. In his canvass for the vice-presidency in 1900 Colonel Roosevelt was entertained at the Nelson home, Oak Hall, Kansas City. From this visit dated better acquaintance. They had much in common and were alike in many characteristics: frank, outspoken, impulsive, and passionately devoted to the same ideals of private life and public service.

I recall a story of an impulsive act of Colonel Roosevelt back in his ranchman days. A man of shady reputation had been appointed Indian Agent with the Sioux on a Dakota reservation. He put into effect many sharp practices with the Indians which would line his pockets with money. Roosevelt's ranch was not far away and ranch affairs took him to the agency. One day he went to the agency and sought the agent.

"You are Mr. ——?" the ranchman asked.

"Yes," was the reply.

"I have heard what you have been doing with the Indians. You are a thief! Good-day!"

The story, as told, was that the agent, aghast at the boldness of his visitor, turned and walked away.

The late Curtis Guild, Jr., of Boston, and Senator Beveridge, of Indiana, were with Colonel Roosevelt on the Oak Hall visit. They found delight in the paintings and books in Mr. Nelson's home and Colonel Roosevelt gave proof of his wide range of knowledge by his instant recognition of the work of painters of long-established reputation. In his inspection of the library he asked to see what Mr. Nelson

had on the Greek dramatists. “I always ask for them in a man’s library,” he remarked.

During this visit I was a listener at an argument between the two men on partisanship. Mr. Nelson had in his early days affiliated with the Democratic Party. In 1876 he was Mr. Tilden’s personal manager in Indiana. But with the party’s treatment of Tilden Mr. Nelson lost partisan zeal, and never after could he be considered a party man. He founded The Star in 1880 as an independent newspaper; it has remained an independent newspaper.

Colonel Roosevelt’s argument was, that to accomplish anything in public affairs a man or a newspaper had to belong to a party organization. He probably had in mind his experience in the Blaine campaign of 1884. His conclusion was that the American people were wedded to the two-party system and that one who aspired to do anything for the country could achieve only by working through a party organization.

Mr. Nelson granted what he said was true as to an individual, but not as to a newspaper of the right sort. It was perhaps true as to a newspaper which had as one of its aims the securing of political honor for its owner, but the newspaper sincerely devoted to the public interest could wield greater power by retaining its independence and in the end could accomplish more substantial achievements, a statement verified by his own conduct of The Star. Colonel Roosevelt saw the force of Mr. Nelson’s contention, but stuck to his point that, with an individual, accomplishment outside of party ranks was impossible.

It is interesting to look back over the growth of the mutual understanding and the fondness of the two men for each other dating from that visit in 1900. After leaving Kansas City, Colonel Roosevelt sent back a letter expressing his delight at the day spent at Oak Hall, closing with “How I do wish I could spend the week in your library instead of upon this infernal campaigning trip!”

When the assassin’s bullet struck down President McKinley, Mr. Nelson sent a telegram to Colonel Roosevelt expressing his horror at the deed and pledging the whole-hearted support of his newspaper in aiding him to carry the great burden which had been placed on his shoulders.

Mr. Nelson had no wish to be a distributor of federal patronage; he was concerned in higher things. When Colonel Roosevelt turned to him for advice on political matters, he was reluctant to give it, feeling his own lack of real knowledge of the politics of Kansas and Missouri and of the men who sought appointments. Late in 1901 Colonel Roosevelt, asking about conditions in Missouri, wrote, referring to St. Louis men, “I think they have been rather after the offices and not after success.... I should like to have some office-holder in Missouri to whom I could tie.”

Mr. Nelson asked the political writers of The Star to write their estimate of the men seeking office and leadership, and these were sent to the President with his endorsement. The President repeatedly followed the ideas of these letters, and it is a pleasure to record that in no instance was there subsequently cause for regret for any selection based on the letters.

In 1908 the President's appointment of the Farm Life Commission received Mr. Nelson's commendation, for he had long recognized the need of making farm life more attractive; indeed, he would have financed experiments along this line had he been younger. At the same time Mr. Nelson spoke approvingly of the President's recent comment on the courts, adding, "Courts need such criticism the worst kind. They steadily undermine confidence in law and legal justice."

"I am sick at heart," the President replied, "over the way in which the courts have been prostituting justice in the last few years. The greatest trouble will follow if they do not alter their present attitude. I suppose I shall 'pay' myself in some way for what I have said about the courts, but I have got to take the risk."

In 1909, in the closing days of the Roosevelt Administration the President issued an executive order looking to a quick settlement of a long-pending controversy over the channel of the Kaw River at Kansas City. It was unexpected; indeed, few in Kansas City knew that the President was considering the subject. The order cut straight to the heart of the controversy in true Roosevelt fashion. The same day Mr. Nelson sent this telegram to the President:

> It is quite worth while to have a real President of the United States.

The next day this reply came from the President:

It is even better worth while to have a real editor of just the right kind of paper.

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The Star supported Taft in the campaign of 1908 because it had faith that he would carry out the Roosevelt policies. Events early in the Taft Administration weakened that faith; the Winona speech withered it. Mr. Nelson had had no correspondence with Colonel Roosevelt while he was hunting in Africa. Two letters came from the ex-President, one March 12, 1910, from the White Nile saying he expected to return in June; another from Porto Maurizio, a month later, saying, “I know you will understand how delicate my position is,” and asking for an early conference with Mr. Nelson on his return to this country. Mr. Nelson’s final, open break with President Taft was “more in sorrow than in anger”; there was never bitterness of feeling, solely regret at a mistake in believing Mr. Taft stood for principles which events early in his administration showed convincingly he did not stand for.

Writing to Colonel Roosevelt, in 1910, after his return from Africa, Mr. Nelson referred to the Winona speech and the Ballinger case, concluding: “I have wondered whether sooner or later there would not have to be a new party of the Square Deal.”

The succeeding two years there were frequent conferences and interchange of letters between Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Nelson. The latter had absolute confidence and abiding faith in Roosevelt. Late in 1910 the

Colonel's enemies were seeking to torment him from many angles. Mr. Nelson wrote him:

> It has occurred to me that the opposition will constantly be prodding you and lying about you with the evident purpose of getting you angry and so putting you to a disadvantage. That is the only hope on earth they have of stopping you.
>
> Your comment on Wm. Barnes was fine. It recalled to me an incident connected with Governor Tilden, who was the wisest politician I ever knew. As a young man I was his manager in Indiana. After the defeat of Lucius Robinson, whom he was backing for Governor of New York, I went East at his invitation to confer with him. He asked me to see Kelly, Clarkson, Potter, Dorsheimer, and Sam Cox, and some of the other men who had been fighting him, to get their views. "What shall I tell them about your position if they ask me?" I said. "Oh, tell them," he said, "that I am very amiable." In my adventures since that time I have often had occasion to remember that as sound advice. Amiability is a great weapon at times.
>
> But my point is that you never need to defend yourself at all. The people will take care of your defense. Besides, it is always a bad policy, in my opinion, to get to talking about the past. You are a Progressive. Your nose is to the front. The past doesn't interest you. So I hope you will ignore the critics, no matter how exasperating they may be. And if you can't ignore them, laugh at them!

To this the Colonel replied:

I guess you are right; but it does make me flame with indignation when men who pretend to be especially the custodians of morals, and who sit in judgment from an Olympian height of virtue on the deeds of other men, themselves offend in a way that puts them on a level with the most corrupt scoundrel in a city government....

But this does not alter the fact that, as you say, my business is to pay no heed to the slanders of the past, but to keep my face steadily turned toward the future. Here in New York the outlook is rather dark. There are a great multitude of men, some of them nominally respectable, but timid or misled, who do certainly, although rather feebly, object to the domination of Barnes and his fellow bosses; but who do sincerely, but rather feebly, prefer clean politics to corrupt politics; but who, nevertheless, dread any interference with what they regard as the rights of big business, any assault on what I regard as an improperly arranged tariff, any effort to work for the betterment of social conditions in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln; who regard all assaults and efforts of this nature as being worse than the rule of small bosses and the petty corruption of local politicians.

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As the presidential campaign of 1912 developed, there were frequent exchanges of views. In May Colonel Roosevelt wrote that he was confident of victory in the Republican Convention in spite of all that was being done against him by the men in control of the party. Only those who were in the thick of the Republican Convention in Chicago in June realize how the fighting blood of the men on the progressive side, from the leader down, was aroused. Mr. Nelson was at Chicago during the Republican Convention. Colonel Roosevelt sought his advice throughout. The course which was ultimately followed had Mr. Nelson's full approval. In a telegram to Colonel Roosevelt after the break from the Republican Party, Mr. Nelson said: "I am with you tooth and nail, to the limit and to the finish."

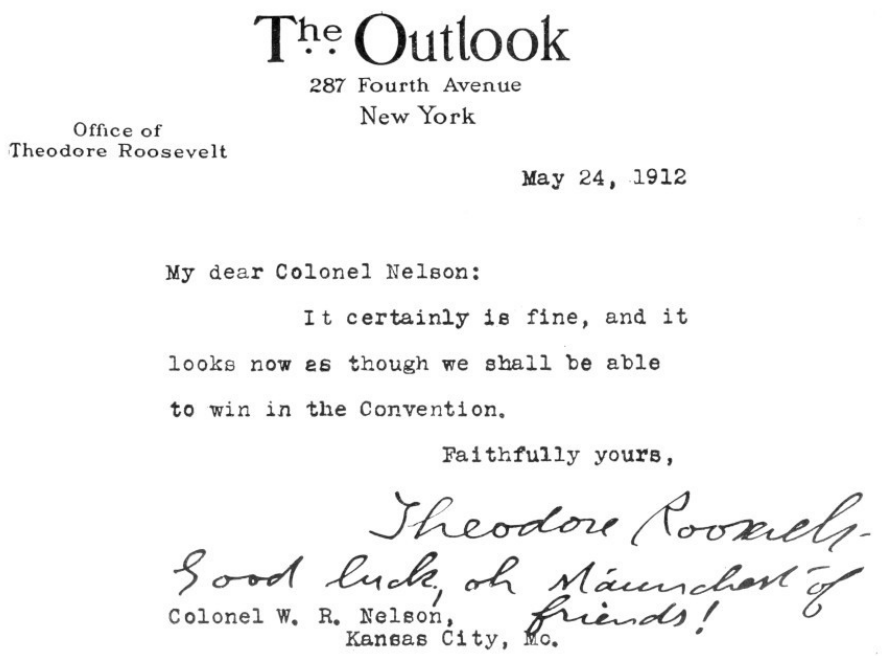
Following those vivid days and nights of the Republican Convention—a period no active participant can ever erase from his memory—came the Orchestra Hall meeting, the first definite step to organize the Progressive Party, the National Progressive Party Convention in August, and then the memorable three-party campaign.

In the midst of the campaign Mr. Nelson and the Colonel had the time and inclination to carry on a correspondence on things not directly touching the issues on which the fight was made. In a letter from his summer home at Magnolia, Massachusetts, Mr. Nelson dropped into a discussion of what he called his two hobbies—to drive money out of the voting booth and out of the courthouse. His idea was that all legitimate expenses of candidates for office should be paid by the State, and that there should be a reform of the voting system which would avoid the necessity of party

organization to get out the vote. Having the vote taken by letter carriers was one way that appealed to him. He would make justice free, “not for sale as it is to-day when the rich man gets the best lawyers.” Lawyers should be officers of the court in fact as well as in theory, and should be compensated for their work by the State, not by the litigants.

Replying to this letter late in July, Colonel Roosevelt said:

> I am with you in principle on both the points you raise. I am with you on the question of the State paying the election expenses right away now. I have always stood for that course as the only one to give the poor man a fair chance in politics.
>
> Your other idea is new, but I have long been feeling my way to the same conclusion. A lawyer is not like a doctor. No real good for the community comes from the development of legalism, from the development of that kind of ability shown by the great corporation lawyers who lead our bar; whereas good does come from medical development. The high-priced lawyer means, when reduced to his simplest expression, that justice tends to go to the man with the longest purse. But the proposal is such a radical one that I do not know how it would be greeted, and it is something we will have to fight for later.
>
> THEODORE ROOSEVELT



The Outlook
287 Fourth Avenue
New York

Office of
Theodore Roosevelt

May 24, 1912

My dear Colonel Nelson:

It certainly is fine, and it looks now as though we shall be able to win in the Convention.

Faithfully yours,

Theodore Roosevelt

Good luck, oh Launcher of friends!

Colonel W. R. Nelson,
Kansas City, Mo.

Late in September, during a campaign tour of the West, Colonel Roosevelt spent a Sunday evening at Oak Hall. The subject of campaign contributions came up, and the candidate became reminiscent, recounting his first experience as governor of New York with campaign contributions. It was an incident, he said, that might readily be misconstrued and so he had not discussed it publicly.

Soon after he was elected governor of New York, he had discovered that the street railways were paying almost no taxes. Accordingly he took steps to introduce a franchise tax bill into the legislature. Mr. Odell at once came to him and told him that he was following in the footsteps of Bryan and “Potato” Pingree, which was the most severe condemnation at that time. That warning having no effect, Mr. Platt came to him and said, “Governor, you can’t do this. Don’t you know that the Whitney-Ryan combination was one of the heaviest contributors to your campaign fund?”

“The deuce they were,” said Roosevelt; “I supposed they made their contributions to Tammany.”

“Of course,” Platt returned, “they contributed to Tammany, but they gave us just half as much as they did Tammany. If they hadn’t expected fair treatment from us they would have given it all to Tammany.”

“I told Platt they would get fair treatment from us,” Roosevelt said, in telling the story, “but if they expected immunity from taxation they were going to be left.”

At that time the Whitney-Ryan combination owned the New York street railways and so were going to be hard hit by the franchise tax. Mr. Roosevelt added that the franchise tax bill went through and created quite a scandal in high finance at that time. “Everybody was talking about it,” he said, “and all the big financiers knew about it. So I never could have any sympathy with the view that Harriman or the Standard Oil people—if they really contributed to my campaign fund—or any other interest of that sort gave any money for campaign purposes under a misapprehension. They knew from my deeds as well as my words that they could not buy immunity from me, and that the best they could expect was a square deal. I said one time to Bacon, ‘Bob, why is it that Morgan and all his crowd are against me? Don’t they know that they would get justice from me?’ Bacon smiled, hesitated, and then said, ‘Yes, I suppose they do.’”

In the Progressive campaign Mr. Nelson violated a personal rule of many years’ standing which forbade his personal participation in politics. Into this campaign he went with his whole soul. Then past seventy years of age, he was abundantly able to direct but not to give of his physical

strength. He assumed responsibility for organizing the party in Missouri and lent his newspaper organization to that end. He thought day and night for the party's candidate and the party's principles, and at the end of the campaign he had left undone nothing which he could have done for the candidate who had his absolute and unqualified confidence. After the election Colonel Roosevelt wrote Mr. Nelson:

> I can never overstate how much I appreciate all that you have done and been throughout this fight. My dear Sir, I am very grateful and I know that the only way I can show my gratitude is so to bear myself that you will feel no cause for regret at having stood by me.

After the campaign of 1912, which showed the remarkable strength of Colonel Roosevelt with the people and demonstrated that he was still a factor in American public life to be reckoned with, the tormenting by his political enemies continued. From many quarters darts had been hurled at "the old lion." In July, 1914, after a libel suit for fifty thousand dollars had been started, Mr. Nelson telegraphed the Colonel at Oyster Bay:

> Too bad so much of the burden should fall on you. *Would gladly share it with you.*

In a few days the message brought this letter:

> When a man is under constant fire and begins to feel, now and then, as if he did not have very many friends, and as if the forces against him were perfectly

> overwhelming, then, even though he is prepared to battle alone absolutely to the end, he is profoundly appreciative of the support of those whose support is best worth having. Your telegram not only gave me real comfort, but touched and moved me profoundly.
>
> THEODORE ROOSEVELT

That was the end of the recorded correspondence between Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Nelson. The former came West on a speaking tour in the fall of 1914 and during his stay in Kansas City was a guest again at Oak Hall. Mr. Nelson accompanied him to a campaign meeting in a skating rink packed with people in Kansas City, Kansas, where he spoke in a sweltering atmosphere for more than an hour preaching with all his old vigor and enthusiasm the doctrines of the Progressive Party.

There was the same display from great crowds of people, along the streets around the hall and everywhere he went, of the keen interest and personal admiration which Colonel Roosevelt's presence in Kansas City territory always brought out. Kansas City and its vicinity had been Roosevelt ground since Kansas and Western Missouri became acquainted with him; indeed, any appearance by him was sufficient to fill Convention Hall in Kansas City to its capacity of fifteen thousand people.

Following Mr. Nelson's death in April, 1915, there came from Colonel Roosevelt a sincere appreciation of his sorrow, ending, "We have lost literally one of the foremost citizens of the United States, one of the men whom our Republic could least afford to spare."

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In the 1916 campaign Colonel Roosevelt and The Star were of the same mind. Deeply attached to the principles on which the battle of 1912 had been conducted by the Progressive Party, they were conscious of the futility of continuing the fight for those principles in a third party. The American devotion to the two-party system had been convincingly demonstrated again. The World War had been in progress two years, the Lusitania had been sunk without stirring the Administration to more than impotent words. Both thought that the Republican Party presented the only hope of accomplishment. Colonel Roosevelt was The Star's choice for the nomination, but his nomination was too much to expect after the break of 1912, and it gave its support to Mr. Hughes.

Early in June, 1917, Mr. Irwin Kirkwood, Mr. Nelson's son-in-law, on his way West from New York, chanced to meet Colonel Roosevelt on the train. A visit in the Colonel's stateroom followed. The conversation turned to the seeming impossibility of a Roosevelt division for France, a subject in which Mr. Kirkwood was personally interested, for he had been assured service in France if the Colonel's ambition were realized. The Colonel was discouraged over his failure to get active service and restless at the Administration's slow preparation for war. Of the Nation's whole-hearted support of the war he was certain, and the high thought with him at the time was to bring influences to bear on the Administration to speed up.

At this time Colonel Roosevelt was contributing a monthly article for The Metropolitan Magazine written long in advance of its publication. Daily, momentous problems of the war were coming up. Mr. Kirkwood felt strongly that the American people were eager to know what Theodore Roosevelt thought on these questions. If he could reach the public quickly, great good would result to this country's cause. Recalling that Mr. Nelson had said, when there was criticism of the ex-President's purpose to write for The Outlook, when it was first announced, he would be mighty glad to have him write for The Star, Mr. Kirkwood said:

"Colonel Roosevelt, wouldn't it be fine if you could get your ideas on the war to the people before they were twenty-four hours old? The only way that could be done is through a newspaper."

"By George!" said the Colonel, with emphasis, "I never thought of that: it sounds like a good idea."

Mr. Kirkwood said if he would consider the suggestion, The Star would certainly welcome him.

"Such a proposition would not tempt me from many newspapers," Colonel Roosevelt continued. "In fact I know of no others except The Kansas City Star and The Philadelphia North American from which I would consider it. The Star particularly appeals to me as being printed in the heart of the great progressive Middle Western country, and because, too, of my love and affection for Colonel Nelson."

Colonel Roosevelt remarked that he would like to discuss the proposal with Mrs. Roosevelt and his daughter, Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, for he had great confidence in the judgment of both. On Mr. Kirkwood's return to New York a

fortnight later, Colonel Roosevelt said he was still “filled up” with the idea and asked Mr. and Mrs. Kirkwood out to dinner at Oyster Bay with Mrs. Roosevelt and himself. Mrs. Kirkwood was unable to go. Mr. Kirkwood again discussed the proposal. Colonel Roosevelt’s position was that if The Star was still unafraid, he was willing to start. The next time the Colonel came to New York he had tea with Mr. and Mrs. Kirkwood, and there was a further full and frank discussion.

“You, of course, know what you are doing,” Colonel Roosevelt said. “Many people do not like my ideas and probably many of your subscribers will be perfectly furious at The Star for printing my editorials.”

Both Mr. and Mrs. Kirkwood assured him full consideration had been given to that phase, and while it was possible he and The Star might not always agree, that fact would not stand in the way of the arrangement.

So the agreement was there entered into. Colonel Roosevelt suggested that as 1920 was a presidential year the connection be for two years or until October, 1919, to which Mr. and Mrs. Kirkwood assented.

Colonel Roosevelt said he never pretended to be much of a business man, but a formal contract was the usual thing; he had one with The Metropolitan. Anyhow he would gladly sign it. He was asked if he desired a contract and answered he did not.

“You understand and we do—” said Mr. Kirkwood.

Without waiting for the sentence to be finished, Colonel Roosevelt said quickly, “That’s all I want to know. Let’s don’t bother with a contract.”

And on that basis the Colonel wrote for The Star until his death.

Early in September I was delegated to go to New York, as Managing Editor of The Star, to discuss with the Colonel the details of his work for the paper. I met him at a hotel in Fifty-Seventh Street where he went on the days he came in from Oyster Bay. Mrs. Roosevelt was with him. Roosevelt was in high spirits, which was no uncommon thing. I recall vividly my introduction to Mrs. Roosevelt.

“Edith,” he said, leading me into the room where Mrs. Roosevelt was, “*here is my new boss*!”

I didn’t say it, but the thought came to me that I would prefer the task of “bossing” a tornado.

The talk that followed was that The Star had no desire to guide what he wrote; that it desired him to write whatever was in him, and it would print it. The Colonel said that was exactly what he wanted; he could do nothing else. We discussed the distribution over the country of his writings, which he left entirely to The Star, with the request that they be not offered to certain newspapers which had long shown a spirit of personal animosity to him and of habitual hostility toward his principles, a suggestion which was wholly agreeable to The Star. He asked about the length and frequency of the articles he was to write. It was agreed that an editorial of around five hundred words was ideal, and at the start there would be two contributions a week. Later they were more frequent. The Colonel said he would probably find it difficult to keep down to five hundred words, but he recognized the limitations of newspaper space and would do his best.

“Now,” he said, “if I get too highbrow, don’t hesitate to tell me. I’m no tender flower; I can stand criticism.”

His secretary had come into the room to receive dictation from accumulated correspondence. I arose to go. “Stay with us,” the Colonel said, “until I finish this; you are a member of the family now.”

Short, crisp sentences came from him as he dictated, each with the animation of a face-to-face conversation with the writers of the letters.

It was arranged that the Colonel was to take up his duties the first of October, and a few days after this meeting announcement was made the country over that Theodore Roosevelt was to write for The Kansas City Star. Immediately applications for the right to print the articles poured in from newspapers throughout the country.

Colonel Roosevelt came West in September on a speaking tour which included Kansas City. So he came into the office of The Star on the morning of September 22, 1917, and went to a desk which had been assigned him, with the remark, “The cub reporter will now begin work.” He was fond of that designation and often in conversation referred to himself as “The Star’s cub reporter.” With pencil he wrote out on newspaper copy-paper, with much scratching and interlining, the editorial, “Blood, Iron, and Gold,” which appeared the following day. His first editorial, however, was, a short time before, written on suggestion of Mr. Kirkwood, a brief piece on the death of Dr. W. S. Fitzsimons, of Kansas City, who was killed by a bomb in an airplane attack on a hospital in France—the first American officer to fall in the war.

The same day Colonel Roosevelt wrote another editorial for later publication. He was good nature itself that Saturday morning in the office, joked and chatted with members of the staff, and seemed to be enjoying the novelty of his new connection.

The following Sunday there was a luncheon of The Star family at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kirkwood, at which the “new cub reporter” made himself thoroughly at home. Editors, reporters, and men of the mechanical and circulation departments were there and had luncheon with the Colonel. He mingled with all and took delight in chatting with them of their work. During the afternoon he made an informal talk to “the family” out on the lawn, in which he commended the spirit of working together shown in the expression “The Star family.” He spoke, too, of his long acquaintance with the aims and purposes of Mr. Nelson which were the aims and purposes of The Star, and said, as he had said before, that The Star was one of two daily newspapers with which he would be proud of a connection.

The arrangement was that Colonel Roosevelt was to telegraph his editorials to The Star from Oyster Bay or wherever he was when he wrote them. They were put in type in The Star office and sent out from there for simultaneous publication in a selected list of about fifty newspapers. These included the best-known newspapers in the country and represented every section. The service was without charge beyond telegraph tolls, it being The Star’s wish to give the widest diffusion possible to Colonel Roosevelt’s ideas on the conduct of the war through the best channel in each city.

Frequently there were suggestions from The Star to the Colonel. Always he was gracious in his treatment of those suggestions, invariably writing along the lines indicated and often amplifying and bettering them. On the other hand—except in two instances—the Colonel's editorials were printed just as they were written, and if any change in copy were considered advisable it was made only after he had been consulted by wire and had approved it.

From the start the country was much interested in the expressions from the Colonel. The newspapers which received them printed them faithfully and conspicuously. However, the service had been in operation not more than a fortnight before there came rumbles of disapproval and doubt, almost altogether from newspapers published south of Mason and Dixon's Line.

One of the early editorials, entitled "Sam Weller and Mr. Snodgrass," presented Uncle Sam, "eight months after Germany went to war with us, and we severed relations with Germany as the first move in our sixty days' stern foremost drift into, not going to, war," as the boastful Mr. Snodgrass, still taking off his coat and announcing in a loud voice what he was about to do. This drew from the mayor of Abilene, Texas, the following letter to The Star-Telegram, of Fort Worth, Texas, which was publishing the Roosevelt articles:

> ABILENE, TEXAS, October 3, 1917. Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Fort Worth, Tex. The Roosevelt article appearing in your paper of this date is nothing short of the expression of the thoughts of a seditious conspirator who should be shot dead, and, the Editor-in-Chief of your paper should be tarred and feathered

for publishing it, and your paper should be excluded from the mails of the United States. You may publish this if you wish, and stop my paper.

E. N. Kirby
Mayor of Abilene

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram promptly published Mayor Kirby's letter, under the caption "The Retort Courteous," adding the following:

The Editor-in-Chief presents his compliments to the Mayor of Abilene and begs to say that should he conclude personally to conduct a tar and feather expedition in our direction, he will experience no great difficulty in locating the said Editor-in-Chief. Meanwhile we can assure him that his reception will not be lacking in hospitality or warmth.

The mayor of Abilene and the editor did not meet. Later, in an editorial devoted to apologists for the delay in making war who were saying, "Why cry over spilt milk?" Colonel Roosevelt referred to the incident, saying:

Recently the mayor of Abilene, Texas, expressed his disapproval of my pointing out that we, as a Nation, had wholly failed to prepare, by saying that I was "a seditious conspirator who ought to be shot dead," and that the editor of the newspaper publishing the article "should be tarred and feathered." Although differing in method of expression, this slight homicidal bleat of the gentle-