THEODORE ROOSEVELT

AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN ADDRESSES

Theodore Roosevelt

African and European Addresses

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Lawrence F. Abbott

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FOREWORD

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My original intention had been to return to the United States direct from Africa, by the same route I took when going out. I altered this intention because of receiving from the Chancellor of Oxford University, Lord Curzon, an invitation to deliver the Romanes Lecture at Oxford. The Romanes Foundation had always greatly interested me, and I had been much struck by the general character of the annual addresses, so that I was glad to accept. Immediately afterwards, I received and accepted invitations to speak at the Sorbonne in Paris, and at the University of Berlin. In Berlin and at Oxford, my addresses were of a scholastic character, designed especially for the learned bodies which I was addressing, and for men who shared their interests in scientific and historical matters. In Paris, after consultation with the French Ambassador, M. Jusserand, through whom the invitation was tendered, I decided to speak more generally, as the citizen of one republic addressing the citizens of another republic.

When, for these reasons, I had decided to stop in Europe on my way home, it of course became necessary that I

should speak to the Nobel Prize Committee in Christiania, in acknowledgment of the Committee's award of the peace prize, after the Peace of Portsmouth had closed the war between Japan and Russia.

While in Africa, I became greatly interested in the work of the Government officials and soldiers who were there upholding the cause of civilization. These men appealed to me; in the first place, because they reminded me so much of our own officials and soldiers who have reflected such credit on the American name in the Philippines, in Panama, in Cuba, in Porto Rico; and, in the next place, because I was really touched by the way in which they turned to me, with the certainty that I understood and believed in their work, and with the eagerly expressed hope that when I got the chance I would tell the people at home what they were doing and would urge that they be supported in doing it.

In my Egyptian address, my endeavor was to hold up the hands of these men, and at the same time to champion the cause of the missionaries, of the native Christians, and of the advanced and enlightened Mohammedans in Egypt. To do this it was necessary emphatically to discourage the anti-foreign movement, led, as it is, by a band of reckless, foolish, and sometimes murderous agitators. In other words, I spoke with the purpose of doing good to Egypt, and with the hope of deserving well of the Egyptian people of the future, unwilling to pursue the easy line of moral culpability which is implied in saying pleasant things of that noisy portion of the Egyptian people of to-day, who, if they could have their way, would irretrievably and utterly ruin Egypt's future. In the Guildhall address, I carried out the same idea.

I made a number of other addresses, some of which—those, for instance, at Budapest, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and the University of Christiania,—I would like to present here; but unfortunately they were made without preparation, and were not taken down in shorthand, so that with the exception of the address made at the dinner in Christiania and the address at the Cambridge Union these can not be included.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

SAGAMORE HILL,
July 15, 1910.

Introduction

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Mr. Roosevelt as an Orator

In the tumult, on the one hand of admiration and praise and on the other of denunciation and criticism, which Mr. Roosevelt's tour in Africa and Europe excited throughout the civilized world, there was one—and I am inclined to think only one—note of common agreement. Friends and foes united in recognizing the surprising versatility of talents and of ability which the activities of his tour displayed. Hunters and explorers, archæologists and ethnologists, soldiers and sailors, scientists and university doctors, statesmen and politicians, monarchs and diplomats, essayists and historians, athletes and horsemen, orators and occasional speakers, met him on equal terms. The purpose of the present volume is to give to American readers, by collecting

a group of his transatlantic addresses and by relating some incidents and effects of their delivery, some impression of one particular phase of Mr. Roosevelt's foreign journey,—an impression of the influence on public thought which he exerted as an orator.

No one would assert that Mr. Roosevelt possesses that persuasive grace of oratory which made Mr. Gladstone one of the greatest public speakers of modern times. For oratory as a fine art, he has no use whatever; he is neither a stylist nor an elocutionist; what he has to say he says with conviction and in the most direct and effective phraseology that he can find through which to bring his hearers to his way of thinking. Three passages from the Guildhall speech afford typical illustrations of the incisiveness of his English and of its effect on his audience.

> Fortunately you have now in the Governor of East Africa, Sir Percy Girouard, a man admirably fitted to deal wisely and firmly with the many problems before him. He is on the ground and knows the needs of the country and is zealously devoted to its interests. All that is necessary is to follow his lead and to give him cordial support and backing. The principle upon which I think it is wise to act in dealing with far-away possessions is this: choose your man, change him if you become discontented with him, but while you keep him, back him up.

> I have met people who had some doubt whether the Sudan would pay. Personally, I think it probably

will. But I may add that, in my judgment, this does not alter the duty of England to stay there. It is not worth while belonging to a big nation unless the big nation is willing, when the necessity arises, to undertake a big task. I feel about you in the Sudan just as I felt about us in Panama. When we acquired the right to build the Panama Canal, and entered on the task, there were worthy people who came to me and said they wondered whether it would pay. I always answered that it was one of the great world-works that had to be done; that it was our business as a nation to do it, if we were ready to make good our claim to be treated as a great World Power; and that as we were unwilling to abandon the claim, no American worth his salt ought to hesitate about performing the task. I feel just the same way about you in the Sudan.

It was with this primary object of establishing order that you went into Egypt twenty-eight years ago; and the chief and ample justification for your presence in Egypt was this absolute necessity of order being established from without, coupled with your ability and willingness to establish it. Now, either you have the right to be in Egypt, or you have not; either it is, or it is not your duty to establish and keep order. If you feel that you have not the right to be in Egypt, if you do not wish to establish and keep order there, why then by all means get out of Egypt. If, as I hope, you feel that your duty to civilized

> mankind and your fealty to your own great traditions alike bid you to stay, then make the fact and the name agree, and show that you are ready to meet in very deed the responsibility which is yours.

There may be little Ciceronian grace about these passages, but there is unmistakable verbal power. So many words of one syllable and of Saxon derivation are used as to warrant the opinion that the speaker possesses a distinctive style. That it is an effective style was proved by the response of the audience, which greeted these particular passages (although they contain by implication frank criticisms of the British people) with cheers and cries of "Hear, hear!" It should be remembered, too, that the audience, a distinguished one, while neither hostile nor antipathetic, came in a distinctly critical frame of mind. Like the man from Missouri, they were determined "to be shown" the value of Mr. Roosevelt's personality and views before they accepted them. That they did accept them, that the British people accepted them, I shall endeavor to show a little later.

There are people who entertain the notion that it is characteristic of Mr. Roosevelt to speak on the spur of the moment, trusting to the occasion to furnish him with both his ideas and his inspiration. Nothing could be more contrary to the facts. It is true that in his European journey he developed a facility in extemporaneous after-dinner speaking or occasional addresses, that was a surprise even to his intimate friends. At such times, what he said was full of apt allusions, witty comment (sometimes at his own expense), and bubbling good humor. The address to the

undergraduates at the Cambridge Union, and his remarks at the supper of the Institute of British Journalists in Stationers' Hall, are good examples of this kind of public speaking. But his important speeches are carefully and painstakingly prepared. It is his habit to dictate the first draft to a stenographer. He then takes the typewritten original and works over it, sometimes sleeps over it, and edits it with the greatest care. In doing this, he usually calls upon his friends, or upon experts in the subject he is dealing with, for advice and suggestion.

Of the addresses collected in this volume, three—the lectures at the Sorbonne, at the University of Berlin, and at Oxford—were written during the winter of 1909, before Mr. Roosevelt left the Presidency; a fourth, the Nobel Prize speech, was composed during the hunting trip in Africa, and the original copy, written with indelible pencil on sheets of varying size and texture, and covered with interlineations and corrections, bears all the marks of life in the wilderness. The Cairo and Guildhall addresses were written and rewritten with great care beforehand. The remaining three, "Peace and Justice in the Sudan," "The Colonial Policy of the United States," and the speech at the University of Cambridge were extemporaneous. The Cairo and Guildhall speeches are on the same subject, and sprang from the same sources, and although one was delivered at the beginning, and the other at the close of a three months' journey, they should, in order to be properly understood, be read as one would read two chapters of one work.

When Mr. Roosevelt reached Egypt, he found the country in one of those periods of political unrest and religious

fanaticism which have during the last twenty-five years given all Europe many bad quarters of an hour. Technically a part of the Ottoman Empire and a province of the Sultan of Turkey, Egypt is practically an English protectorate. During the quarter of a century since the tragic death of General Gordon at Khartum, Egypt has made astonishing progress in prosperity, in the administration of justice, and in political stability. All Europe recognizes this progress to be the fruit of English control and administration. At the time of Mr. Roosevelt's visit, a faction, or party, of native Egyptians, calling themselves Nationalists, had come into somewhat unsavory prominence; they openly urged the expulsion of the English, giving feverish utterance to the cry "Egypt for the Egyptians!" In Egypt, this cry means more than a political antagonism; it means the revival of the ancient and bitter feud between Mohammedanism and Christianity. It is in effect a cry of "Egypt for the Moslem!" The Nationalist party had by no means succeeded in affecting the entire Moslem population, but it had succeeded in attracting to itself all the adventurers, and lovers of darkness and disorder who cultivate for their own personal gain such movements of national unrest. The non-Moslem population, European and native, whose ability and intelligence is indicated by the fact that, while they form less than ten per cent. of the inhabitants, they own more than fifty per cent. of the property, were staunch supporters of the English control which the Nationalists wished to overthrow. The Nationalists, however, appeared to be the only people who were not afraid to talk openly and to take definite steps. Just before Mr. Roosevelt's arrival, Boutros Pasha, the Prime

Minister, a native Egyptian Christian, and one of the ablest administrative officers that Egypt has ever produced, had been brutally assassinated by a Nationalist. The murder was discussed everywhere with many shakings of the head, but in quiet corners, and low tones of voice. Military and civil officers complained in private that the home government was paying little heed to the assassination and to the spirit of disorder which brought it about. English residents, who are commonly courageous and outspoken in great crises, gave one the impression of speaking in whispers in the hope that if it were ignored, the agitation might die away instead of developing into riot and bloodshed.

Now this way of dealing with a law-breaker and political agitator is totally foreign to Mr. Roosevelt; even his critics admit that he both talks and fights in the open. In two speeches in Khartum, one at a dinner given in his honor by British military and civil officers, and one at a reception arranged by native Egyptian military men and officials, he pointed out in vigorous language the dangers of religious fanaticism and the kind of "Nationalism" that condones assassination. Newspaper organs of the Nationalists attacked him for these speeches when he arrived in Cairo. This made him all the more determined to say the same things in Cairo when the proper opportunity came, especially as officials, both military and civil, of high rank and responsibility, had persistently urged him to do what he properly could to arouse the attention of the British Government to the Egyptian situation. The opportunity came in an invitation to address the University of Cairo. His speech was carefully thought out and was written with equal

care; some of his friends, both Egyptian, and English, whom he consulted, were in the uncertain frame of mind of hoping that he would mention the assassination of Boutros, but wondering whether he really ought to do so. Mr. Roosevelt spoke with all his characteristic effectiveness of enunciation and gesture. He was listened to with earnest attention and vigorous applause by a representative audience of Egyptians and Europeans, of Moslems and Christians. The address was delivered on the morning of March 28th; in the afternoon the comment everywhere was, "Why haven't these things been said in public before?" Of course the criticisms of the extreme Nationalists were very bitter. Their newspapers, printed in Arabic, devoted whole pages to denunciations of the speech. They protested to the university authorities against the presentation of the honorary degree which was conferred upon Mr. Roosevelt; they called him "a traitor to the principles of George Washington," and "an advocate of despotism"; an orator at a Nationalist mass meeting explained that Mr. Roosevelt's "opposition to political liberty" was due to his Dutch origin, "for the Dutch, as every one knows, have treated their colonies more cruelly than any other civilized nation"; one paper announced that the United States Senate had recorded its disapproval of the speech by taking away Mr. Roosevelt's pension of five thousand dollars, in amusing ignorance of the fact that Mr. Roosevelt never had any pension of any kind whatsoever. On the other hand, government officers of authority united with private citizens of distinction (including missionaries, native Christians, and many progressive Moslems) in expressing, personally and

by letter, approval of the speech as one that would have a wide influence in Egypt in supporting the efforts of those who are working for the development of a stable, just, and enlightened form of government. In connection with the more widely-known Guildhall address on the same subject it unquestionably has such an influence.

Between the delivery of the Cairo speech and that of the next fixed address, the lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris on April 23d, there were a number of extemporaneous and occasional addresses of which no permanent record has been, or can be made. Some of these were responses to speeches of welcome made by municipal officials on railway platforms, or were replies to toasts at luncheons and dinners. In Rome, Mayor Nathan gave a dinner in his honor in the Campidoglio, or City Hall, which was attended by a group of about fifty men prominent in Italian official or private life. On this occasion the Mayor read an address of welcome in French, to which Mr. Roosevelt made a reply touching upon the history of Italy and some of the social problems with which the Italian people have to deal in common with the other civilized nations of the earth. He began his reply in French, but soon broke off, and continued in English, asking the Mayor to translate it, sentence by sentence, into Italian for the assembled guests, most of whom did not speak English. Both the speech itself and the personality of the speaker made a marked impression upon his hearers; and after his retirement from the hall in which the dinner was held, what he said furnished almost the sole subject of animated conversation, until the party separated. In Budapest, under the dome of the beautiful House of

Parliament, Count Apponyi, one of the great political leaders of modern Hungary, on behalf of the Hungarian delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union presented to Mr. Roosevelt an illuminated address in which was recorded the latter's achievements in behalf of human rights, human liberty, and international justice. Mr. Roosevelt in his reply showed an intimate familiarity with the Hungarian history such as, Count Apponyi afterwards said, he had never met in any other public man outside of Hungary. Although entirely extemporaneous, this reply may be taken as a fair exemplification of the spirit of all his speeches during his foreign journey. Briefly, in referring to some allusions in Count Apponyi's speech to the great leaders of liberty in the United States and in Hungary, he asserted that the principles for which he had endeavored to struggle during his political career were principles older than those of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln; older, indeed, than the principles of Kossuth, the great Hungarian leader; they were the principles enunciated in the Decalogue and the Golden Rule. One of the significant things about these sermons by Mr. Roosevelt—I call them sermons because he frequently himself uses the phrase, "I preach"—is that nobody spoke, or apparently thought the word cant in connection with them. They were accepted as the genuine and spontaneous expression of a man who believes that the highest moral principles are quite compatible with all the best social joys of life, and with dealing knockout blows when it is necessary to fight in order to redress wrongs or to maintain justice.

The people of Paris are perhaps as quick to detect and to laugh at cant or moral platitudes as anybody of the modern world. And yet the Sorbonne lecture, delivered by invitation of the officials of the University of Paris, on April 23d, saturated as it was with moral ideas and moral exhortation, was a complete success. The occasion furnished an illustration of the power of moral ideas to interest and to inspire. The streets surrounding the hall were filled with an enormous crowd long before the hour announced for the opening of the doors; and even ticket-holders had great difficulty in gaining admission. The spacious amphitheatre of the Sorbonne was filled with a representative audience, numbering probably three thousand people. Around the hall, were statues of the great masters of French intellectual life —Pascal, Descartes, Lavoisier, and others. On the wall was one of the Puvis de Chavannes's most beautiful mural paintings. The group of university officials and academicians on the dais, from which Mr. Roosevelt spoke, lent to the occasion an appropriate university atmosphere. The simple but perfect arrangement of the French and American flags back of the speaker suggested its international character.

The speech was an appeal for moral rather than for intellectual or material greatness. It was received with marked interest and approval; the passage ending with a reference to "cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat," was delivered with real eloquence, and aroused a long-continued storm of applause. With characteristic courage, Mr. Roosevelt attacked race suicide when speaking to a race whose population is diminishing, and was loudly applauded. Occasionally with quizzical humor he interjected

an extemporaneous sentence in French, to the great satisfaction of his audience. A passage of peculiar interest was the statement of his creed regarding the relation of property-rights to human rights; it was not in his original manuscript but was written on the morning of the lecture as the result of a discussion of the subject of vested interests with one or two distinguished French publicists. He first pronounced this passage in English, and then repeated it in French, enforced by gestures which so clearly indicated his desire to have his hearers unmistakably understand him in spite of defective pronunciation of a foreign tongue that the manifest approval of the audience was expressed in a curious mingling of sympathetic laughter and prolonged and serious applause.

A fortnight after the Sorbonne address, I received from a friend, an American military officer living in Paris who knows well its general habit of mind, a letter from which I venture to quote here, because it so strikingly portrays the influence that Mr. Roosevelt exerted as an orator during his European journey:

> I find that Paris is still everywhere talking of Mr. Roosevelt. It was a thing almost without precedent that this *blasé* city kept up its interest in him without abatement for eight days; but that a week after his departure should still find him the main topic of conversation is a fact which has undoubtedly entered into Paris history. The *Temps* [one of the foremost daily newspapers of Paris] has had fifty-seven thousand copies of his Sorbonne address printed and distributed free to every

> schoolteacher in France and to many other persons. The Socialist or revolutionary groups and press had made preparations for a monster demonstration on May first. Walls were placarded with incendiary appeals and their press was full of calls to arms. Monsieur Briand [the Prime Minister] flatly refused to allow the demonstration, and gave orders accordingly to Monsieur Lépine [the Chief of Police]. For the first time since present influences have governed France, certainly in fifteen years, the police and the troops were authorized to *use their arms in self-defence*. The result of this firmness was that the leaders countermanded the demonstration, and there can be no doubt that many lives were saved and a new point gained in the possibility of governing Paris as a free city, yet one where order must be preserved, votes or no votes. Now this stiff attitude of M. Briand and the Conseil is freely attributed in intelligent quarters to Mr. Roosevelt. French people say it is a repercussion of his visit, of his Sorbonne lecture, and that going away he left in the minds of these people some of that intangible spirit of his—in other words, they felt what he would have felt in a similar emergency, and for the first time in their lives showed a disregard of voters when they were bent upon mischief. It is rather an extraordinary verdict, but it has seized the Parisian imagination, and I, for one, believe it is correct.

Some of the English newspapers, while generally approving of the Sorbonne address, expressed the feeling

that it contained some platitudes. Of course it did; for the laws of social and moral health, like the laws of hygiene, are platitudes. It was interesting to have a French engineer and mathematician of distinguished achievements, who discussed with me the character and effect of the Sorbonne address, rather hotly denounce those who affected to regard Mr. Roosevelt's restatement of obvious, but too often forgotten truth, as platitudinous. "The finest and most beautiful things in life," said this scientist, "the most abstruse scientific discoveries, are based upon platitudes. It is a platitude to say that the whole is greater than a part, or that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, and yet it is upon such platitudes that astronomy, by aid of which we have penetrated some of the far-off mysteries of the universe, is based. The greatest cathedrals are built of single blocks of stone, and a single block of stone is a platitude. Tear the architectural structure to pieces, and you have nothing left but the single, common, platitudinous brick; but for that reason do you say that your architectural structure is platitudinous? The effect of Mr. Roosevelt's career and personality, which rest upon the secure foundation of simple and obvious truths, is like that of a fine architectural structure, and if a man can see only the single bricks or stones of which it is composed, so much the worse for him."

Of the addresses included in this volume the next in chronological order was that on "International Peace," officially delivered before the Nobel Prize Committee, but actually a public oration spoken in the National Theatre of Christiania, before an audience of two or three thousand