

## ROOSEVELT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEMOCRACY.

In the Hibbert Journal last October there was an article by Mr. Roosevelt on the Progressive Party. The article contained nothing that was new in regard to the policies of the party, but it presented the present mind of its author and of the party in a rather captivating way, and was therefore well worth reading. Its tone was in most parts surprisingly irenic. But when we read the article carefully and with the light of other statements, we see how radically different, in spite of phrases, Mr. Roosevelt's mind is from the really democratic mind. Brushing aside all phrases and explanations, we shall find that the Roosevelt mind runs to the ideal of control, whereas the democratic mind runs to the ideal of freedom. The Roosevelt mind still harbors the ancient and honorable aristocratic idea of beneficent protection. The democratic mind looks forward to the oncoming ideas of justice and equality, which would abolish the need of protection.

In reading this pronouncement of the father of the new party we ought to take stock of one fact. We ought to realize that the people, the plain folks, those who ought to rule, those whom Lincoln and all real democrats have trusted and whom real demonecrats will trust to the end,—that the plain people, in spite of the trust in them, are always in danger of being misled by words. This is natural and inevitable. We are human; we are not expecting to be fooled, and so we are the more easily fooled. As Lincoln said, we do not stay fooled, but we can be fooled for a time.

Now, there has not appeared in public life in a long while any man more adapted for fooling the people by words than Mr. Roosevelt. Not that he means wrong or harm. On the contrary, we may surely believe that he means well. The trouble with Mr. Roosevelt's leadership appears to me to be that he is so much more a man of words than a man of thought. His most faithful admirers could hardly maintain that he is a man of original thought. Throughout his career he seems to have been more an echo, an echo louder, to be sure, than the original voice, still an echo of the suggestions and initiative of others. During his administration he fathered many good movements, conservation, child-saving and numerous schemes advocated by sociological students, but all of these movements came at bottom from others who used his ready influence. It is to his credit that he could thus be used, but the point is that these movements, to which his name became attached,

were not really from him. He was always ready to take a hand in anything which the men and women of so-called advanced thought wished to push forward, but he never originated any momentous social or economic question.

No, Mr. Roosevelt is not an independent thinker. His present conglomerate "policies" show this. There is much that is good, but the lurking spirit is, from the democratic viewpoint, inherently wrong. The danger lies in the fact that while Mr. Roosevelt sounds democratic he is not so, however much he may think that he is so. He uses phrases beautifully. Some one has said that he has risen on proverbs. Certainly he knows how to use the commonplace generalities of popular rights in a most effective way. But as to having thought out or felt the essential and inherent principles of democracy, it simply is not in his nature. He may talk of the "square deal," but he has given no evidence that he knows what it means. He is by birth and training aristocratic, by nature imperialistic, and he has not worked away from either of these characteristics. The democratic mind does not believe in "strong" government, even if it seems to come from the people themselves. It believes in interfering as little as possible with local self-government, and, further, as little as possible with individual and personal activities. The democratic ideal is not to boss and regulate activities by external control, but to adjust things so that external control will not be needed. The two ideals are radically opposed. In words, in the superficial appearance of the ends in view, there may be much similarity, so that even the elect might be deceived, but at the bottom there is a world-wide difference. Roosevelt represents, under modern and alluring guise, it is true, but still represents the old feudal ideas of control and protection. The democratic mind has for its ideals, first, justice, with its safeguarding of equal opportunity, and then freedom. The democratic mind pleads that this program be tried, this simple program of justice and freedom, which never has been tried. If real democracy is ever to triumph it must be tried, and it can be tried only by our acceptance of the teachings of Thomas Jefferson and Henry George.

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Small boy's biography of Elijah: There was a man named Elijah. He had some bears and he lived in a cave. Some boys tormented him. He said: "If you keep on throwing stones at me, I'll turn the bears on you and they'll eat you up. And they did and he did and the bears did.—Everybody's Magazine.