

The World as Playground

A Book-Lover's Holidays in the Open, by Theodore Roosevelt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.00.

WHEN you speak of Mr. Roosevelt's "new" book you have to be specific. This season the distinguished author has had twins. The other book, "Fear God and Take Your Own Part," was a political production. This is a personal production, or as nearly personal as is likely to happen. Here we have Mr. Roosevelt among the moose and the cougars and the Hopi Indians, among the rogue elephants and the semipalmated sandpipers. It is a collection of diverse articles, most of them dealing with fauna, combining in their entirety to give one a strong draught of Mr. Roosevelt the man.

It is a commonplace to speak of Mr. Roosevelt's vitality, his self-confidence, his naturalness. In political situations these qualities can be variously interpreted. It is a wise man who knows how they are to be judged. As they are made manifest in this book, however, they give one an indisputable sense of an extraordinarily liberated personality. This makes "Holidays in the Open" like the saga of a hero of old.

Somewhere in "The Freudian Wish," by Edwin B. Holt, there is an analysis of the frustrated man. "The man with suppressions is capable of no act which some part of his own nature does not oppose, and none which this now suppressed part will not probably some day in overt act undo. There is no course of action into which he can throw his whole energy, nothing which he can 'wish' to do which he does not wish, to some extent and at the same time, not to do. Thus he can never do the good unreservedly, never without secret rebellion 'in his heart.' And such a man is not good. In the same way he is never free, for all that he would do is hindered, and usually, in fact, frustrated by his own other self." And the generalization is offered: "Only the sane man is good and only the sane man is free."

What strikes one about Mr. Roosevelt's personality in these papers is the complete absence of the impediments that make a man other than free. His ability to throw his whole energy into life appears not so much as an endowment as the outcome of "a self-contained and internal" freedom. This healthy freedom is a real joy to behold. It does not follow, to borrow Mr. Roosevelt's own way of putting things, that a man who is free and good in one set of circumstances will be equally free and equally good in another set of circumstances. A bull that sees green may be magnificently energetic, with consequences entirely different from the same bull seeing red. What seems "self-contained and internal" freedom among the Somalis may not pan out among the poltroons. But the circumstances detailed in this book are in truth very varied. They challenged almost everything in Mr. Roosevelt except his political wisdom and ambition, and they exhibited him uniformly as a man wonderfully at home on this planet, a man with a genius for action, a man with wide and contagious sympathies, a man without "secret rebellion 'in his heart.'" This unity of temperament is one of the rarest things on earth. It is intensely inspiring. To miss its inspiration here is to be emotionally dense.

It is not that Mr. Roosevelt is an artist. If one had never heard of him, much of this book would be flat. But under the sun many a flat landscape is enlivened, and the light of Mr. Roosevelt's spirit plays even through his ap-

pendices at the end. He has practically no sense of form. He halts his description of the Hopi snake-dance to speak of "the further development and adaptation" of Indian culture as "an important constituent element in our national cultural development"—just so much sand served free with a narrative salad. He pauses in the middle of Argentina to deliver encomiums on the "good and fertile mothers in all classes of society," and somewhere northwest of Quebec he again raises the finger of Doctor Munyon to arrest us in our eager pursuit of bull moose while he holds forth on "a moral change which threatens complete loss of race supremacy because of sheer dwindling in the birth-rate." The "atrophy of the healthy sexual instinct" is undoubtedly a most terrible thing. There are sermons in rabbits, if one is so disposed. But when Mr. Roosevelt sharpens our appetite for "A Curious Experience" his spiel on race-suicide is dismaying. And it is impossible not to be moved to laughter when he passes on from praising two "fine, healthy, manly young fellows" who harpooned flounders to shaking his fist at certain base "guardians of cultivation, philanthropy, and religion" who "deliberately make a cult of pacificism, poltroonery, sentimentality, and neurotic emotionalism," and never harpoon a flounder till it is fried.

But if Mr. Roosevelt jumbles up his stories and his sermons, if he leaves his jewels in the matrix, if he takes space to say gravely that one Herschel was "a man of knowledge and experience" and the half-hour he spent with him was most pleasant, the net result is spontaneous and thrilling. A lack of a need for suppression very largely makes him what he is. He can be banal. He painstakingly notes "a wonderfully beautiful little lake of lovely green water." But by virtue of this very unconsciousness, this healthy "I say so," he is enabled to release unrestricted a stream rich with impressions and observations worth while. "Faithful black followers, hawk-eyed and steel-thewed," come into the picture, "men of the deep woods, as stealthy and wary as any of the woodland creatures." Cattle of the Chilean rodeo swing by—"these were not longhorns, staring, vicious creatures, shy and fleet as deer," his quick eye detects, "they were graded stock, domestic in their ways, and rather reluctant to run." He delights unfeignedly in the frigate-birds soaring in circles above the storm. Low islands that appear in the Gulf under the "splendid and pitiless" sun are magic for him with their thousands of tern. Beaver, jaguar, warthog, ant-eater, hartebeest, impalla, roan antelope, caribou—all of them characterized and realized, and the eye that measured the angry lion or the poisonous snakes creeping in the Hopi hut about his feet can also give us the tragedy of a greenhead insect battling with a sheriff-fly for his life.

So intense is Mr. Roosevelt's interest in the phenomena of the moment that one thinks of him as busy eyes and ears. Yet there is hardly a page of this book that does not indicate a mind with thronged perspectives. He has, as his chapter on "Primeval Man" shows, a large inclusive vision of the human drama, and one feels that life does really mean to him a remarkably keen "joy of the mind." More than anything else this joy gives depth and significance to the apparently heterogeneous episodes of his book. "As a man steams into the Mediterranean between the African coast and the 'purple, painted headlands,' of Spain, it is well for him if he can bring before his vision the galleys of the Greek and Carthaginian mercantile adventurers, and of the conquering Romans; the boats of the

wolf-hearted Arabs; the long 'snakes' of the Norse pirates, Odin's darlings; the stately and gorgeous war craft of Don John, the square-sailed ships of the fighting Dutch admirals, and the lofty three-deckers of Nelson, the greatest of all the masters of the sea." That is a grand and characteristic passage, imaginative, pictorial, dynamic. It sees life as a guerdon flung to the adventurer, the conqueror, the pirate, the fighter, the master. It thrills at the memory of dynamic peoples in the past, and looks with flashing eyes over a pathway that hides such a memory in its heart. It is a sublimation of the warrior in the man who speaks.

The temperament that seems so unified on the basis of fertility and virility is incalculable on many topics. There is a chapter on "books for holidays." A glint of Mr. Roosevelt's humor appears in this section. "I like apples, pears, oranges, pineapples, and peaches. I dislike bananas, alligator-pears, and prunes. The first fact is certainly not to my credit, although it is to my advantage; and the second at least does not show moral turpitude." Among the plays of Shakespeare "Macbeth" and "Othello" are among the peaches, "King Lear" and "Hamlet" among the prunes. Mr. Roosevelt is worth following through all his confessions of taste. "When I lived much in cow camps I often carried a volume of Swinburne, as a kind of antiseptic to alkali dust, tepid, muddy water, frying-pan bread, sow-belly bacon, and the too-infrequent washing of sweat-drenched clothing." "It is only a very exceptional novel I will read if He does not marry Her."

A tireless passion for life is not common, especially one that is so wise as to be whetted rather than slaked by experience. That passion Mr. Roosevelt possesses, and celebrates in this book. It is the book of one who has slain and risked being slain. It is not the work of a Hamlet. It is not as a Hamlet that Mr. Roosevelt faced the bull moose that so "wantonly," "deliberately," waylaid him in Canada. But even Hamlets ought to remember how kind Mr. Roosevelt was to try to avoid slaying that "vicious," "menacing" man-killing, most evil bull moose.

F. H.

Charles Francis Adams

Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915, an Autobiography.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.

"MY observation in life," says Mr. Adams, "leads me to believe most nearly every human being has an aptitude; that is, there is something he or she can do better than all other things. One in a hundred, again, has a remarkable aptitude; and, in one in a thousand, this aptitude is developed into something extraordinary." With his usual good sense Mr. Adams picked out a turn for literary expression as his own aptitude. With his usual injustice to himself he rated his aptitude far too low. He could not write anything, a book, a Phi Beta Kappa oration, a paper for the Massachusetts Historical Society, a private letter, without making it sound like his voice and taste of his character.

The Adamses are the nearest thing to aristocrats that we have in the North. From generation to generation the family has produced men of high character and intellectual force. To be in contact with great affairs and to lead other men are Adams traditions. Another family trait is a kind of loneliness in busy life, a curt unexpansiveness that keeps people at a distance. Charles Francis Adams had the family traits and traditions, the habit which

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he calls introspective, the industry, the nonconformity, the inability to play. To read his autobiography is to feel that you have been in the same room with these things. It is an extraordinarily interesting book, candid, self-condemnatory, self-respecting, filled with a pungent valor, with a humility that stands on its own legs.

All his life Charles Francis Adams sought self-knowledge. He did not stalk himself in the hope of gaining self-knowledge by surprise. His method was the frontal attack. He examined the things he had done, believing he could learn what he was like by making a list of debits and credits. He was fond of putting his failures and successes down in black and white. Being a straight natural person he got more satisfaction out of his successes than out of his failures, but this book testifies to the pleasure he took in setting his failures down. In his own opinion his education was a series of mistakes. If he had revolted openly against the kind of life forced on him by his father he would have respected himself more. At college a mistake was made when he just missed learning to read Greek for amusement. He made a mistake when he decided to be a lawyer, when he waited for several months after the Civil War broke out before volunteering, when he refused a desirable place on General Humphreys's staff, when he kept the presidency of the Union Pacific eighteen months too long.

The autobiography records these and other mistakes, and regrets them with such emphatic sincerity that at length one becomes sorry for Mr. Adams, and gives a very eager welcome to passages where his self-respect appears,