

President Roosevelt at Cincinnati

From a Staff Correspondent

September 20, 1902: Cincinnati: Fourth Street, Vine Street, other streets. At the edge of the sidewalks the avenues are roped. Behind the ropes stands and is squeezed a dense crowd, miles long. Never has Cincinnati seen so large a crowd—the populations of three valleys are represented: the Ohio, Miami, and Licking. In front of the ropes, every few feet, stands a policeman. Others, mounted, guard a landau rapidly approaching. It passes. There are two men on the box and four men behind. One of the men raises his hat. The crowd of street gamins, up-country farmers, Kentucky negroes, foreigners from “over the Rhine” (the muddy, some might think pestiferous, canal dividing Cincinnati) comments in such phrases as follow: “It’s ‘im.” “Teddy de terror.” “What’s thay mattuh wif Cinsnattuh, suh?” “Wal, neaow, he looks jest like his pictur.” “‘E’s a tippin’ of ‘is ‘at.” “Luk at d’ neck on ‘im.” “He’s the bye to soak them bosses.” This last statement may be said to reflect the general opinion out-of-doors in Cincinnati on this twentieth day of September.

The afternoon is hot, close, muggy, apparently as trying a day as we have experienced this summer. Like the interior of St. Peter’s during the heated season at Rome, so the temperature of the vast auditorium of the Cincinnati Music Hall is in grateful contrast to irritating conditions outside. The seating capacity of the auditorium proper, of over five thousand, is tested to the utmost; in addition there are a thousand men from the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and from the Cincinnati Business Men’s Club occupying seats back of the Presidential party on the great stage, and the aisles on the floor and in the galleries are packed with one to two thousand more of humanity. One sees at a glance that here are people really waiting to be instructed, though many a strong face gives evidence of opinions tenaciously held. Though representative of varying views in politics, it is a loyal crowd; there is a compelling

ring in the warmth of its reception to one who promptly declared himself “President of all the United States, without distinction of party.” Saturday afternoon is an appropriate time for such a talk as, judging from certain New England addresses, the audience instinctively feels may again be expected from the President. The week’s work has stopped with Saturday noon, and it seems now almost as if Sunday had begun—an impression deepened by the organ music in progress. Never has “America” sounded nobler than it does, pealed forth by the deep tones of the giant instrument which fills the end of this great hall.

The orator of the day arrives, accompanied by prominent political officials representing this region in the councils of State and Nation. The Lieutenant-Governor, in welcoming the President, indulges in much complacent glorification of the material prosperity and importance of Cincinnati. The President rises to respond. He pays a proper tribute to the material prosperity of Cincinnati and of the entire Ohio Valley, and declares that the improvement of the Ohio River will take place coincidentally with the work on the Isthmian Canal—a statement which provokes instant applause, especially from Senator Foraker, who has for many years labored toward this end. The approval of the audience thus gained, the President proceeds immediately to the real aim of his address. He says:

In speaking of your material prosperity, do not think that I forget for one moment the fundamental fact that it rests upon the intellectual and moral fiber of the men and women back of it. . . . This fiber remains the same, though methods change. . . . Thomas and Sheridan were differently armed from the men who followed Washington. Back of the material, and greater than the material, lies the moral. We have achieved the material success that has raised us so high through the development of the individual character of the individual citizen. Intellect is a good thing; bodily strength is a good thing; but what counts in the long run is character—character into which enter as the fundamental elements, honesty, courage, and common sense.

As the last phrase rang out—a phrase which is now familiar by reason of com-

mendable reiteration on Mr. Roosevelt's part—the audience broke into applause, not so boisterously as before, but more impressively. The power of the orator's spell was still on the people—his sturdy physique, his expressive gestures, his facial play, above all the brains and the pluck manifest in his every phrase; here was a man young in years, but, as one of the audience remarked, in character and force above the average of our Presidents, one who may even aspire to a possible place in that highest rank where are enshrined Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln. The day and the subject of the address were secular, yet the President's earnestness and the audience's receptiveness gave to the occasion a touch of the religious and the devotional.

This morning's papers were full of the account of the awful panic at Birmingham, Alabama, resulting in the suffocation and crushing to death of eighty persons. To-night Cincinnati narrowly escaped a similar and more fearful disaster. Adjoining the great Music Hall is another auditorium called Mechanical Hall. The sparks from an electric wire had set the curtain in this hall in a blaze, and the fire department had been hurriedly called out. The police and the personnel of the building put out the fire; but they had a harder task in controlling the alarmed throng of visitors, who, unable to get an entrance into Music Hall, were viewing the exhibits of the "Fall Festival" in the adjacent building. Fortunately, Captain Benson Foraker, Senator Foraker's son, headed off the fire department from entering the building, and ordered an orchestra outside Music Hall to play a lively tune. For a short time the President and his auditors were annoyed by the unaccountable performance of a band strangely close to Music Hall, but this feeling was changed to one of gratitude when the circumstances became known. The escape of the audience was due chiefly to the presence of mind and energy of one man. The panic of an ordinary audience would have been serious enough: in this case, seats, galleries, aisles, and exits were packed with people. It was not until the hall was cleared that the true condition of affairs became known.

The President's address to-night again discusses trusts; but it is the most nota-

ble of all his trust speeches so far, because, for the first time, he mentions the tariff in this connection. The section concerning the tariff was received in comparative silence. It was a significant change from the applause which greeted the President's acute definition of the evils in the trust, and, later, which greeted his courageous announcement of what he himself proposed as a remedy. During the tariff section it seemed as if the audience had become too much interested in what may have been a new consideration of the subject to applaud. The universal opinion was that this part of the speech was of greater political significance than any pronouncement yet made by the President. The phrase, "If in any case the tariff is found to foster a monopoly which does ill, why, of course, no protectionist would object to a modification of the tariff sufficient to remedy the evil," was variously received—by some with a smile of relief and satisfaction, first as paraphrasing Republican declarations in the West, notably in Iowa, favoring "any modifications of the tariff's schedules that may be required to prevent their affording shelter to monopoly," and, secondly, as affording an advance copy of the Administration's attitude during the next Presidential campaign; by others with an apparent indifference which in some cases seemed slightly studied; at all events, it was interesting to watch Senator Foraker's fine face during this section, and later, when the orator turned squarely around and faced him at this sentence: "Experience has taught us . . . that it has sometimes been difficult for Congress to forecast the action of the courts upon its legislation." The opinions of those in power on the subject of the tariff were reflected in their remarks on Mr. Roosevelt's attitude. Speaking for Cincinnati, the Mayor, a handsome, smooth-shaven man, who evidently has a solid following in local politics, said: "We don't want any changes here. We're all right." Speaking for the Nation, a Cincinnati Congressman queried: "Heard about losin' our Speaker? . . . Ain't that just awful? . . . Littlefield? No; wouldn't get ten votes. Cannon." But, whether Littlefield or Cannon, the schedules must be kept sacrosanct from the slightest touch! The self-satisfied citizens of Cincinnati partic-

ularly welcomed the President's acute distinction that, while there may be necessity for tariff revision, it cannot be considered as any remedy for the evils in the trust.

Though ringing applause greeted such sentiments as "We do not wish to destroy corporations; we wish to make them subserve the public good," and others of an epigrammatic character, the greatest hits, so far as popular approval was concerned, lay in the local comments and general applications not included in the type-written copy to which the President con-

stantly referred—such as, "Look back nine years ago. In 1893, here in Cincinnati, you were not concerned in fighting the trusts which have been formed since then; you were trying to win back prosperity." In these asides Mr. Roosevelt seemed "to let himself go"—to confide to his impulses of the moment. Unconventional as seemed some of the impulses, much as they apparently violate what we are pleased to call tradition, in general we may term them inspired imprudences. They form his peculiar strength with the people.

The Trusts and the Tariff

President Roosevelt's Speech at Cincinnati

This report of the most important passages in the President's speech at Cincinnati on September 20 is published with the President's authorization

ALL individuals, rich or poor, private or corporate, must be subject to the law of the land; and the Government will hold them to a rigid obedience thereto. The biggest corporation, like the humblest private citizen, must be held to strict compliance with the will of the people as expressed in the fundamental law. The rich man who does not see that this is in his interests is indeed short-sighted. When we make him obey the law, we insure for him the absolute protection of the law. . . .

A remedy [for the evils in the trusts] much advocated at the moment is to take off the tariff from all articles which are made by trusts. To do this it will be necessary first to define trusts. The language commonly used by the advocates of this method implies that they mean all articles made by large corporations, and that the changes in the tariff are to be made with punitive intent towards these large corporations. Of course, if the tariff is to be changed in order to punish them, it should be changed so as to punish those that do ill, not merely those that are prosperous. . . . Now, some corporations do well, and others do ill. If in any case the tariff is found to foster a monopoly which does ill, why, of course, no protectionist would object to a modification of the tariff suffi-

cient to remedy the evil. But in very few cases does the so-called trust really monopolize the market. Take any very big corporation, which controls, say, something over half the products of a given industry; surely, in rearranging the schedules affecting such a big corporation it would be necessary to consider the interests of the smaller competitors, which control the remaining part, and which, being weaker, would suffer most from any tariff designed to punish all the producers; for, of course, the tariff must be made light or heavy for big and little producers alike. Moreover, such corporations employ very many thousands of workmen, and the minute we proceeded from denunciation to action it would be necessary to consider the interests of these workmen. Furthermore, the products of many trusts are unprotected, and would be entirely unaffected by any changes in the tariff, or, at most, very slightly. The Standard Oil Company offers a case in point; and the corporations which control the anthracite coal output offer another—for there is no duty whatever on anthracite coal.

I am not now discussing the question of the tariff as such, whether from the standpoint of the fundamental differences between those who believe in a protective tariff and those who believe in free trade,