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THEODORE ROOSEVELT HOUSE: WHAT IT WAS,
WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT MAY BECOME

BY: HERMANN HAGEDORN

Theodore Roosevelt
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THEODORE ROOSEVELT HOUSE

What it was, what it is, what it ^{was before,} ~~means~~

by

three who were born there, two who played
there, and one who, almost a century later,
occasionally hears their footsteps on the
stairs.

Note

The quotations, that make up the body of this book, are from Theodore Roosevelt's Autobiography, from "My Brother, Theodore Roosevelt", by (Mrs. Douglas Robinson), in the ^{Spring issue, 1924, of the} Roosevelt House Bulletin, ~~both by~~ and an article from the unpublished reminiscences of Anna Roosevelt Cowles (Mrs. William Sheffield Cowles), from notes by Mrs. Alexander Lambert of a conversation with Mrs. Cowles in 1924, on the life in the East Twentieth Street House and from "Perchance Someday", the privately printed memoirs of Frances Theodora Parsons (Mrs. James Russell Parsons). Thanks are due the Honorable W. Sheffield Cowles, ^{formerly} Speaker of the Connecticut Assembly, for the privilege of first publication of his mother's revealing accounts of the early days, and to Mr. James Russell Parsons for permission to quote from his mother's book.

H.H.

[Hermann Hagedorn]

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I. Theodore Roosevelt House

Theodore Roosevelt House was built by a group of patriotic New York women, who, three days after Mr. Roosevelt's death, organized the Woman's Roosevelt Memorial Association, with the purpose of purchasing and restoring his birthplace. In the northward movement of the city's population the house had degenerated into a habitat of petty manufacturing plants, and proved beyond repair. The ladies, undismayed, purchased the building nevertheless, and with it the house at No. 26, once owned and occupied by Theodore Roosevelt's able and intelligent uncle, Robert Barnwell Roosevelt and his eccentric wife, establishing the two as a historic house and museum and a place of inspiration for New York's school-children.

The Roosevelt Memorial Association (now the Theodore Roosevelt Association) contributed substantial funds to the completion of the building and was granted a 999-year lease on its western half, with the understanding that the Association would establish its headquarters there and share in the maintenance of the House. "The Men's Association" as the ladies dubbed it (though there were women on its Board from the start) thereupon installed its extensive collections of Rooseveltiana in the library and the exhibition rooms.

The cornerstone of the House was laid on January 6, 1921, the second anniversary of Mr. Roosevelt's death, by his intimate friend, Major General Leonard Wood. General Wood had been the Rough Riders' first colonel, later Governor General of Cuba and, in 1920,

a leading candidate for the Republican nomination for the Presidency. The House was half completed when, on November 19th of the same year, the great Marshal Foch, supreme commander of the Allied Forces in World War I, visited it to pay tribute to the man who had done more than any other American to ^{create the conditions that made possible the arrival,} ~~assure that the vital American~~ ^{in time, at the battle front in France, of the vital American re-enforcements.} ~~re-enforcements should arrive in time.~~

On Theodore Roosevelt's 65th birthday, October 27, 1923, Roosevelt House was dedicated in the presence of an audience which included former Cabinet members, judges, financiers, ecclesiastical and philanthropic leaders and eminent representatives of science, literature and the arts. In the auditorium where the ceremonies were held, James R. Garfield, who had been Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, spoke, as well as Gifford Pinchot, governor of Pennsylvania, who had been Chief Forester under President Roosevelt and the initiator of the conservation movement. President Calvin Coolidge sent a warm and stirring message. In the street two thousand people paid silent tribute to the man who had been more widely beloved than any other American of his time.

2 ^{memorial}

The Women's Theodore Roosevelt Association early developed a relationship with the New York school system which has brought thousands of children annually to the House to learn through the exhibits and the motion pictures shown them in the auditorium something of Theodore Roosevelt's actions in behalf of effective citizenship.

Roosevelt medallions, awarded every year to the winners of an essay contest in the schools have been deeply cherished by their

recipients. In one family, a grandfather, father and son who each won one of the medallions, testify to the continuity of a tradition of loyalty to the memory of Theodore Roosevelt that speaks eloquently of his hold on the American imagination and on the value of these awards.

Through visits of the school-children, the essay and art contests, the exhibits and motion pictures, thousands of lives have experienced something of the personality and the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt and of the home that helped to make him what he was.

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For thirty-three years, under the leadership, for a quarter century, of Mrs. John Henry Hammond ^{succeeding} ~~and subsequently~~ of Mrs. William Curtis Demorest, ^{and succeeded by} Mrs. Randolph E. Chandler, Mrs. Frederick W. Longfellow, Mrs. Reginald R. Belknap, and finally of Mrs. Sherman Post Haight, the Woman's Association (subsequently called the Women's Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Association) maintained the House and carried on the work for responsible citizenship which gives the House meaning to succeeding generations.

In 1956, this Association merged with the Theodore Roosevelt Association, bringing to the Board of Trustees of that organization, an inspiring tradition as well as a rich legacy of conscientious stewardship and unwavering devotion to the idea that the House shall, through its civic activities, vitally serve the city and the nation.

II. The Home on East Twentieth Street

Let Anna Roosevelt (later Mrs. W. Sheffield Cowles) have the
FIRST WORD REGARDING the house in which she and her sister and
their two brothers were born:

"My grandfather, as his sons married, gave them houses in 20th Street - as far up town as seemed possible - two between Broadway and Fifth Avenue, and two between Broadway and 4th. One of the latter, #28, originally called #33, is the house where we were born and brought up. My father and mother must have moved into the house about 1854, and left there the spring of 1871.

~~The early years it was furnished in the regular style belonging to the horsehair period, but somewhere along, I should say, in the middle 60's, the house was altered, and was entirely or partly refurnished by Marcotte, the then most fashionable upholsterer and decorator in New York. But it was, after all, a plain house of the ordinary type of the middle nineteenth century."~~

No. 28 is just a few steps off Broadway. At Twentieth Street turn east, half a block, look for the trees (struggling to survive in spite of the trucks that keep backing into them), note the flag, and there you are. That was a sedate neighborhood in the Eighteen Fifties, Sixties and Seventies. Fashion rolled up and down Fifth Avenue in landaus, victorias, broughams and drags, drawn by long-tailed horses. But East Twentieth ^{with its plain brownstone fronts,} knew scarcely more of the self-conscious magnificence of the Age of Innocence than it knew of the office buildings, laundries and eating-joints that line it today. ~~East Twentieth was a street of rather plain brownstone fronts.~~

Any pleasant day in spring ninety years ago you might have seen three or four or even half a dozen children playing in the vicinity of No. 28. "Teedie", the Theodore Roosevelts' second child and elder son, might have been among them. If the windows at No. 26, the home of his ~~Uncle, Robert, ^{the} ~~Baranville House~~~~, were open, you might have seen a monkey poking its head up over the sill and then surreptitiously climbing out. Uncle Robert's house was a veritable menagerie. The museums, library and offices that fill the western part of Theodore Roosevelt House today occupy the space where ~~Uncle Robert's~~ house stood, and, if you went there at midnight, you would, no doubt, encounter the monkey's ghost jumping and gyrating there. He was quite a fellow, that monkey, as you will hear.

In 28 East 20th Street there are five rooms that look today just as they looked during those far-off years when the Roosevelts lived in them.

The Drawing-Room

The drawing-room, one flight up from the lobby, has the "elegance" that New York's "upper class" cherished in the mid-century. Decorated in sky-blue satin, hung with impressive mirrors that to the eye extend its dimensions, its heavy carpet patterned after one of the more notable designs of the period, it was both comfortable and stately.

Let Theodore Roosevelt give his picture: "The front room, the parlor, seemed to us children to be a room of much splendor, but was open for general use only on Sunday evening or on rare

occasions when there were parties. The Sunday-evening family gathering was the redeeming feature in a day which otherwise we children did not enjoy - chiefly because we were all of us made to wear clean clothes and keep neat." The gas chandelier with its many cut-glass prisms struck him as possessing "peculiar magnificence." One of the prisms fell off one day, and he "hastily grabbed it and stowed it away, passing several days of furtive delight in the treasure, a delight always alloyed with fear that I would be found out and convicted of larceny."

~~A half century later, he remembered "a Swiss wood-carving representing a very big hunter on one side of an exceedingly small mountain, and a herd of chamois, disproportionately small for the hunter and large for the mountain, just across the ridge. This always fascinated us; but there was a small chamois kid for which we felt agonies lest the hunter might come on it and kill it."~~

Beneath an engraving of a party at the George Washingtons, that hangs opposite the carved white marble mantel-piece stands an old four-legged black Chickering piano with a stool like a gigantic mushroom. "My father," Anna remembered,

~~Here Anna speaks: "I remember that my father"~~ used to sit at the piano and play waltzes and polkas for us children to dance to on rare occasions when there were parties.

~~"When our mother was at home, or entertaining in the evening, the parlor and library were thrown open with the door open into the dining-room, making the entire floor attractive."~~

The Library

~~The library, needed all the light that the wide doors into the drawing-room and dining-room could give it, for it had no windows of its own. The ~~was~~ upholstered chair to the left of the fireplace, ~~the one~~ with epaulets like a musical comedy general, used to be a favorite with the younger Theodore, and he was once photographed in it. Tall, walnut book-cases, ^{flanked the fireplace.} ~~that framed in "gloomy respectability"~~ ~~the phrase was Theodore's~~ ~~flanked the fireplace.~~ The old sofa opposite, with its rough horsehair, chafed unmercifully the children's small bare legs.~~ Over ^{it} ~~the mantel-~~ ~~piece~~ hangs an engraving which was the occasion for what was probably the first anecdote told of a man who subsequently inspired more stories than any other American except Abraham Lincoln.

Anna tells the story: "It was in this dark, middle room on the first floor, which was cheerfully called the library, [—] though no mortal could by daylight read a word in it, owing to the lack of light [—] that Corinne was christened." Corinne was her younger sister. ^{The minister,} ~~Theodore decided to entertain~~ dear old Dr. Adams, who arrived before my mother had come downstairs. Theodore, in a soft little white dress with ~~what we called a 'top-knot', which was a golden knot of hair on the top of his head,~~ led Dr. Adams by the hand and showed him the print of Raphael's 'Transfiguration' over the mantelpiece, explaining very carefully that it was 'Jesus Christ flew in' up to heaven with his coat-tails after him.' Dr. Adams, who was a very serious-minded Presbyterian clergyman, was perfectly overcome with the description, and told Mother and Father as soon as they came down."

Theodore didn't think much of the "middle room" but Anna loved it. "A rich room of delightful associations," she called it, "with the red table-spread glowing in harmony with the rich, red embers in the wide fireplace, though it was dark in the day-time. There were tapestries and pictures around the walls and a lovely English rug on the floor. We four children would sit on the long sofa with our father when he read to us.

"Theodore was too young, when he lived in this house to read the books which filled the cases in the library, but he early formed an attachment for the pictures in two books, a 'Life of Livingston' and J. G. Wood's 'Natural History.' He carried these volumes about with him for days, thrilling to the illustrations and pleading with his elders to read more of the contents to him."

The Dining-Room

The fine high windows of the dining-room, which today look into loft buildings and sweat-shops, ^{overlooked} in the old days, ~~looked over~~ the property of the Robert Goelet family, ~~which had~~ ^{the} a big house that Anna remembered as "very melancholy," on the east corner of Broadway and Nineteenth Street. ~~But there was something else - a~~
^{but the} garden that ~~extended~~ ^{with} the whole length of the block to Fourth Avenue. ~~The green of the garden and~~ the strange birds and animals that the Goellets kept in it, ^{was a delight to look at and} gave life to the dining-room that embraced them in its view.

Corinne's childhood friend, Fanny Smith, later Mrs. James Russell Parsons, never forgot one meal she had in that dining-room. "I was seated next to the beautiful lady who was Mrs. Roosevelt.

On my other side sat a little girl with long wavy hair - Edith Carow, in later years the mistress of the White House. In shamefaced anguish I saw that I had spilled a great blob of cranberry sauce on the spotless tablecloth. 'What can I do?' I whispered entreatingly to Edith. 'Put your handkerchief on top of it,' she advised. I obeyed. It succeeded. The incident was closed."

The Birth Room

Theodore Roosevelt was born in the front bedroom on the second floor. The big double-bed, facing the portrait of the beautiful Martha Bulloch Roosevelt, the washstand, ewer and flowered soap-dish, the mirror, the wardrobe, the sturdy yellow bureau - were all returned by Mr. Roosevelt's sister, Corinne, to the room that was her father's and mother's when the elder Theodore Roosevelt brought his bride up from Georgia, in December 1853.

The Nursery

Anna writes that when young Theodore was born, he did not stay long in the front room but was promptly whisked into the room behind it. "Mittie" Bulloch's sister, Annie, was the tutelary spirit of the nursery through the children's early years, and her portrait, painted after she married James K. Gracie, rightly presides over it still. "The nursery," Corinne writes, "consisted of my brother Theodore, my brother Elliott, a year and a half younger than Theodore, and myself, still a year and a half younger than Elliott. . . In those days, we were 'Teedie', 'Ellie'

and 'Conie'. My sister, Anna, though only four years older than Theodore, was always mysteriously classed with the "grown people."
 No^H It was not as mysterious as Corinne imagined. Anna, known as 'Bamie' or 'Bye', was an exceptionally competent young woman who, by the time she was eleven or so, largely ran the household for her beautiful and charming, but not too practical mother. ^{of the nursery} At the far window, a small step indicates where the children climbed out to the piazza, the "outdoor" play-room and gymnasium that was so large a factor in their happy childhood, and especially in young Theodore's physical development.

The Piazza

Here ~~let~~ Anna take up the story: "My father was far ahead of the people of his period in his ideas concerning the health of his children, and felt that, though the climate of New York was severe, ^{still} ~~still that we~~ must have a great deal of life in the open air. The 20th Street house was built at the fatal period when all houses of about its size possessed a middle, dark room. He decided that to sleep in such a room was most unhygienic, and had the second story back bedroom made into a piazza, with ^a railings about nine feet high, and otherwise entirely open on the south. Every day we were allowed to put on our so-called 'piazza clothes' and were turned loose out there for practically the whole morning. As the piazza was twenty-five feet by about twenty feet it gave us a large space, and we had a heavenly time. The porch was particularly agreeable in springtime when the wisteria vine which clambered up to it from the ~~yard~~ yard began to show signs of new life, ~~and the warm sun made the southern exposure seem real."~~

Here Anna is interrupted by Edith Carow: ~~Corinne's little playmate who, long after, became the wife of the frail little boy who struggled for health on that porch.~~ "I remember how Corinne and I would climb up the wisteria vine from the yard below on to the porch and hide from the other children on top of the wardrobe."

Now it is Corinne speaking: "When my father realized the struggle the younger Theodore, my brother, would have to make for his health, he was determined to give him every tool in his power. And so the broad outdoor room was equipped with every imaginable horizontal and vertical bar, swing and see-saw. When it was all done, my father called his delicate little son, who was about ten years old, and said: 'Theodore, you have the mind, but you haven't got the body. To do all that you can do with your mind, you must make a body to match it. It is drudgery and dull, hard work to make a body. Will you do it?'

"The frail, ~~delicate~~ boy looked his father in the eyes, and with a flash of the white teeth destined to be so well known later, he said: 'I'll make my body!' All America knows the wonderful and vigorous body he made, and the making of that body was his first conquest. The piazza which played so large a part in the restoration of Theodore Roosevelt's health became the happy meeting place of all the boys and girls of the neighborhood. Every afternoon a medley of noisy youngsters swung and leaped and turned somersaults there to their hearts' content."

"My mother, coming one afternoon to look at the gymnastics, saved a very dangerous situation. For the adventurous Theodore and a favorite cousin, West Roosevelt, by herculean efforts had managed

to place the see-saw over the high balustrade which protected the piazza, and Theodore himself was just crawling out, teetering above the cobble-stones of the yard two stories below. My mother caught him and dragged him back again. Hair-breadth escapes were his portion in life, and this was one of the first!"

Now again it is Anna who picks up the story: "Next door to us lived our uncle, Robert Roosevelt, with his wife and family, and they built a piazza similar to ours which, when they were opened into one another, made a wonderful playground. But, unfortunately for our happiness, the aunt next door kept a monkey of a violent character. I have always thought its temper was ruffled by the fact that she insisted on dressing it completely as though it were a human being, with finest, most beautiful little ruffled shirts and gold studs. But it bit us whenever there was a chance, so that the two piazzas were not often opened.

"One evening, however, I was sent in through this back entrance to take a message to my aunt and entered into the nursery and, by a small passage, to Aunt Lizzie's room. In the passage, the monkey caught me and bit my leg so badly that I bear the marks to this day. It was caught by one of the older cousins and chastised, but my aunt seized it and kept saying "Poor little Topsy, poor little Topsy," while I lay on the bed screeching with pain.

"However, fortunately for me the monkey eluded Aunt Lizzie and went up on top of a wardrobe where, with absolute rage, it tore off every garment and flung them on the floor, until it got to its trousers, with which it was totally unable to grapple, as the tail was too long to be pulled through, and I can remember, as if it were yesterday, lying on the bed and ceasing to feel my wounds while

giggling with laughter at the appearance of Topsy dancing up and down trying to get his tail out of his trousers.

"In the third story of her house Aunt Lizzie kept a perfect menagerie - guinea pigs, chickens, pigeons, everything under the sun that ought not to have been kept in a house. A little later in our lives she decided to have a cow in the backyard, so the cow with great effort was persuaded down the basement steps, through the hall and out into the yard, where of course it had no sooner arrived than the entire neighborhood rose in arms and threatened legal action unless the cow were at once removed. It proved almost impossible to accomplish, for the frightened creature refused absolutely to enter the house again, and finally had to have its legs bound together and its eyes blindfolded, and then be dragged out."

"All of this added excitement to our life as children," especially ~~to, whenever a spoon or fork was missing it was always supposed that Topsy had stolen it. Later on we discovered that Topsy had been maligned, the real thief being a magpie owned by Mr. Goelet, which spent a great deal of one winter stealing everything through our third story back windows. There was a very deep snow on the roof, and it was not until this snow vanished that a watch and all manner of household articles were found that had been carried out by the magpie, which evidently was not strong enough to fly with them."~~

III. The Family

Let us imagine the children of the Twentieth Street household, years later, at the White House dinner-table, perhaps, or before the open fire in the Trophy Room at Sagamore Hill, telling their children of those "deities of the nursery," who taught their lips to laugh cleanly and without malice, their hearts to love God and their fellowman, their minds to know and understand, their spirits to aspire.

The Father

Theodore: "My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness. He would not tolerate in us children selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness. As we grew older he made us understand that the same standard of clean living was demanded for the boys as for the girls; that what was wrong in a woman could not be right in a man. With great love and patience, and the most understanding sympathy and consideration, he combined insistence on discipline. He was the only man of whom I was ever really afraid. I do not mean that it was a wrong fear, for he was entirely just, and we children adored him. We used to wait in the library in the evening until we could hear his key rattling in the latch of the front hall, and then rush out to greet him.

"Morning prayers were with my father. We used to stand at the foot of the stairs, and when father came down we called out, 'I speak for you and the cubby-hole too!' The place between

father and the arm of the sofa we called the 'cubby-hole'. The child who got that place we regarded as especially favored both in comfort and, somehow or other, in rank and title. The two who were left to sit on the much wider expanse of sofa on the other side of father were outsiders for the time being."

Anna: "My father was the most intimate friend of each of his children, and in some unique way seemed to have the power of responding to the need of each, and we all craved him as our most desired companion. One of his delightful rules was that on the birthday of each child he should give himself in some special way to that child, and many were the perfect excursions which he and I took together on my birthday.

Theodore:

"He never physically punished me but once. It happened when I was four years old. I bit my elder sister's arm. I do not remember biting her arm, but I do remember running down to the yard, perfectly conscious that I had committed a crime. From the yard I went into the kitchen, got some dough from the cook, and crawled under the kitchen table. In a minute or two my father entered from the yard and asked where I was. The warm-hearted Irish cook had a characteristic contempt for 'informers', but, although she said nothing, she compromised between informing and her conscience by casting a look under the table. My father immediately dropped on all fours and darted for me. I feebly heaved the dough at him, and got a fair start for the stairs, but was caught half-way up them. The punishment that ensued fitted the crime, and I hope - and believe - that it did me good."

Corinne: "I think, perhaps, the combination of the stern old Dutch blood with the Irish blood made my father what he was - unswerving in duty, impeccable in honesty and uprightness, and yet responsive to the joy of life to such an extent that he would dance all night, and drive his 'four-in-hand' coach so fast that the tradition was that his grooms frequently fell out at the corners!"

Theodore: "No one whom I have ever met approached his combination of enjoyment of life and performance of duty. He was a big, powerful man, with a leonine face, and his heart filled with gentleness for those who needed help or protection, and with the possibility of much wrath against a bully or an oppressor. He was interested in every social reform movement, and he did an immense amount of practical charitable work himself."

Corinne: "He always gave up one day of every week to the personal visiting of the poor in their homes. Although he did the most extraordinary amount of active organization work - being one of the founders of the Children's Aid Society, of the State Aid Society, of the Sanitary Commission and Allotment Commission in the time of the Civil War, not to mention the Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum of Art - he felt that even more than this organized effort must be the effort to get close to the hearts and homes of those who were less fortunately situated than he."

Theodore: "At a very early age we children were taken with him, and were required to help. On Sundays he had a mission class. On his way to it he used to drop us children at our Sunday-school

in Dr. Adams's Presbyterian Church on Madison Square. I remember hearing my aunt, my mother's sister, saying that, when he walked along with us children, he always reminded her of Greatheart in Bunyan."

Corinne: "My older sister suffered from spinal trouble, and my father was determined to leave no stone unturned to make her body fit for life's joys and life's labors."

Anna: "There never was anyone so wonderful as my father, in his devotion, and, one summer when I was not well enough to be taken out of town, stands out vividly to me now as having been a period of great happiness."

"When my father would arrive from business he would always come directly to the piazza - furnished later as a gymnasium, but at this time merely like an outdoor living-room - where I spent my entire time on a sofa. He would always bring with him a cornucopia of delicious ice cream or a basket of fruit, or some little thing for me, and would frequently sit with me until I had had my supper, and would then, with his very strong arms, quietly carry me into the nursery where I slept."

"During the winter I would hear the click in the front door of his key, his quick, light running up the stairs, and immediately into my room. I had a little iron Franklin stove where he would take a piece of kindling wood and make small chips to light a fire, ^{I would} and ^{I would} put rice in a little pot to boil. Of course it never boiled - it never did anything but burn up the chips, but I felt that I had been cooking most industriously. He also brought me a little iron which you put something warm into, and I ironed the top of my

sheet on the bed all the time, feeling I was greatly helping with family things.

"It was that winter that he found Dr. Charles Fayette Taylor, who had invented an entirely individual treatment for all troubles connected with the bones, and so, instead of the terrible instrument that I had formerly had to wear, gave me one which allowed of my being up and about all the time. So from then on I became very strong and well."

Corinne: "It was because of his efforts to give his little girl health - successful efforts - that, in cooperation with others, he started the great work of the New York Orthopaedic Hospital."

Fanny Smith: "Although I was too young to realize the part young Theodore's father played in the public activities of his time I knew him as a rarely delightful human being because of the enthusiasm with which he entered into and often initiated our youthful activities. A sail on the swan-boat in the Central Park lake under his energetic guidance, amateur theatricals in which he drilled us tirelessly, little impromptu speeches are vivid recollections. ~~That encouragement in oratory might be held responsible for the brassy manner in which both Corinne and I would seize the opportunity to burst into public speech many years later.~~"

The Mother

Theodore: "My mother, Martha Bulloch, was a sweet, gracious, beautiful Southern woman, a delightful companion and beloved by everybody."

Corinne: "She was very beautiful, with black, fine hair - not the dusky brunette's coarse black hair, but fine of texture and with a glow that sometimes seemed to have a slightly russet shade. Her skin was the purest and most delicate white, more moonlight-white than cream-white, and in the cheeks there was a coral rather than a rose tint. She was considered one of the most beautiful women of the New York of her day."

Fanny Smith: "Although Mrs. Roosevelt was more reserved than either her husband or children she served as a contrast which only enhanced the electric atmosphere. Her sons treated her with a sort of caressing humor, as something a little fragile and helpless. But in spite of her reserve one was aware of her quick wit and occasionally of a comment that might have been considered caustic had it been enunciated in a less appealing voice. I think she transmitted to her four children the vivid personality which constituted her Southern dowry."

Corinne: "Her wit was never used unkindly, for she had the most loving heart imaginable. In spite of this rare beauty and her wit and charm, she never seemed to know that she was unusual in any degree, and cared but little for anything but her own home and her own children. Owing to delicate health she was not able to enter into the active life of her husband and children, and therefore our earliest memories, where our activities were concerned, turn to my father and my aunt, but always my mother's gracious loveliness and deep devotion wrapped us round as with a mantle. I have always thought that, in an almost equal degree with my father, my mother influenced my brother's nature both by her French Huguenot and Scotch blood, and her Southern ancestry."

The Grandmother

Theodore: "Her mother, my grandmother, one of the dearest of old ladies, lived with us, and was distinctly over-indulgent to us children, being quite unable to harden her heart toward us even when the occasion demanded it."

Corinne: "She had led a patriarchal life on the old plantation at Roswell, above Atlanta, in an old white-columned house, overlooking a beautiful valley, where she ran her Southern plantation - Mr. Bulloch died comparatively young - with the practical ability and kindly supervision over her slaves frequently found in the Southern men and women of her time."

Anna: "My mother was in a terrible position . . ."

Theodore: "Entirely 'unreconstructed' to the day of her death. . ."

Anna: "Married to one of the finest and most tender-hearted of men, yet a strong Northerner, being obliged to give a home to her mother and sister, as they had literally nowhere to go, while her brother and two step-brothers were all fighting or working with the secession cause. My father felt terribly about not enlisting, but Mother was very frail, and felt it would kill her for him to fight against her brothers. So he worked in every conceivable way, with the Sanitary Commission, and, finally, with the Allotment Commission. This was the beginning of his life-long intimacy and great friendship with John Hay, and a very deep and real friendship with President Lincoln."

Theodore: "Toward the close of the Civil War, although a very small boy, I grew to have a partial but alert understanding of the fact that the family were not one in their views about the conflict;

and once, when I felt that I had been wronged by maternal discipline during the day, I attempted a partial vengeance by praying with loud fervor for the success of the Union Army, when we all came to say our prayers before my mother in the evening. She was not only a most devoted mother, but was also blessed with a strong sense of humor, and she was too much amused to punish me; but I was warned not to repeat the offense, under penalty of my father's being informed - he being the dispenser of serious punishment."

Anna: "One of my most vivid memories of the 20th Street house were the days of hushed and thrilling excitement, which only occurred when Father had gone away, and Grandmother, Mother and Aunt Annie would pack a box, while Theodore and I helped, not knowing at all what it was about, except that it was a mystery and that the box was going to run the blockade."

"Our favorite game for years afterwards - needless to say, instituted by Theodore - was one of 'running the blockade' over the bridge in Central Park, in which I was the blockade runner, and he was the government boat who caught me."

Aunt Annie

Anna: "My Aunt Anna, my mother's sister, lived with us. She was as devoted to us children as was my mother herself, and we were equally devoted to her in return."

Corinne: "Both my aunt and my mother had but little opportunity for consecutive education, but they were what it seems to me Southern women ever are - natural women of the world - and yet they combined, with a perfect readiness to meet all situations,

an exquisite simplicity and sensitive sympathy, rarely found in the women of the North. This sensitiveness was not only evidenced in ^{their} the human relationships but in all pertaining to art and literature."

Fanny Smith: "Anna Bulloch, later Mrs. James K. Gracie, stands out among the grown-ups of my childhood because of a power I've never seen surpassed of submerging herself in the interests of others, especially in those of her sister's children and their friends."

Anna: "Aunt Annie and my mother used to entertain us by the hour with tales of life on the Georgia plantations; of hunting fox, deer, and wildcat; of the long-tailed driving-horses, Boone and Crockett, and of the riding-horses, one of which was named Buena Vista in a fit of patriotic exaltation during the Mexican War; and of the queer goings-on in the negro quarters."

Corinne: "This same lovely aunt taught us our letters at her knee, in that same nursery, having begged, in return for my father's hospitality, that she should be accepted as our first instructress, and not only did she teach us the three R's, but many and many a delightful hour was passed in listening to her wonderful renderings of the Br'er Rabbit stories."

Can we not see them in the nursery, cold winter afternoons, Aunt Annie telling the stories, and the four children in a circle on the floor listening spellbound to the adventures of the indeluctible rabbit, with Br'er Fox and Br'er Terrapin, the Tar Baby, the briar-patch and the rest? Can we not see them, when the warm weather came, in a similar circle on the piazza, with the fragrance

of the wisteria in their nostrils and the chatter of Aunt Lizzie's monkey in their ears, ^{which} ~~and~~ their mother ^{told} ~~telling~~ about the plantation in the Georgia uplands, the hospitality, the hunts, the rides, and the handsome nineteen-year-old Northerner, Theodore Roosevelt, who had heard of the beauty and charm of the Bulloch sisters, coming for a visit to see for himself?

Anna: "I suppose one reason why we loved to hear about the life at Roswell was that it was so utterly different from that in our New York home; the very difference making it seem so entrancing that we never tired of asking questions, and our beautiful young mother, who must have been tragically lonely in her northern home, probably found a welcome outlet in giving us the details of her life in Georgia."

Theodore: "I never saw Roswell until I was President, but my mother told me so much about the place that, when I did see it, I felt as if I already knew every nook and corner of it, and as if it were haunted by the ghosts of all the men and women who had lived there. I do not mean merely my own family, I mean the slaves. My mother and her sister, my aunt, used to tell us children all kinds of stories about the slaves."

Anna: "It seems almost incredible that my mother's family should have owned slaves, and all that that implied, and yet of course all the stories of Roswell are connected with the slaves. When each child was born he was always given one slave, a year or two older than himself, to become his little black shadow. Mother's was named Lavinia and called 'Toy', and Aunt Annie's was called 'Bess'. They both slept on the floor of the room in which Mother

and Aunt Annie slept, while Grandmother Bulloch always had one small negro child sleep under her four-poster bed, to run errands for her in the night."

Corinne: "All these stories of the old plantation were fascinating to the children of the nursery in 20th Street."

IV. A Frail Little Boy Called Theodore

Theodore: "I was a sickly, delicate boy, suffered much from asthma, and frequently had to be taken away on trips to find a place where I could breathe. One of my memories is of my father walking up and down the room with me in his arms at night when I was a very small person, and of sitting up in bed gasping, with my father and mother trying to help me."

Corinne: "Theodore Roosevelt, whose name later became the synonym of virile health and vigor, was a fragile, patient sufferer in those early days. I can see him now struggling with the effort to breathe, but always ready to give the turbulent "little ones" the drink of water, book, or plaything which they vociferously demanded, or equally ready to weave for us long stories of animal life - stories closely resembling the jungle stories of Kipling - for Mowgli had his precursor in the brain of the little boy of seven or eight, whose knowledge of natural history even at that early age was strangely accurate, and whose imagination gave to the creatures of forest and field impersonations as vivid as those which Rudyard Kipling has made immortal for all time.

"We used to sit, Elliott and I, on two little chairs, near the higher chair which was his, and drink in these tales of endless variety, and which always were 'to be continued in our next' - a serial story which never flagged in interest for us, though sometimes it continued from week to week, or even from month to month."

Anna: "From his earliest infancy, Theodore had a leaning towards natural history - the specimens of animal and bird life about his home fascinated him. He confesses in his autobiography that the sight of a freshly killed harbor seal, lying on a slab of wood in front of a Broadway market where he had been sent to buy strawberries, filled him with romance and the spirit of adventure. He haunted the market as long as the seal was there, tried to measure its curved girth with a folding pocket ruler, speculated on its living habits, and finally succeeded in getting its skull as the foundation of his private museum of natural history.

"His collections of specimens, living and dead, filled his mother and sisters with dismay. At one time he announced to the neighborhood below 23rd Street and north of 14th that he would pay five cents for each field mouse turned over to him, and thirty-five cents for families of them. Then he suddenly had to go away with his father, leaving me to deal with the consignments of mice, both dead and alive, which duly arrived at the house. When our mother, in the interests of good housekeeping, threw a litter of mice out of the ice-chest where he had concealed them, he loudly bemoaned, 'The loss to science, the loss to science.'

"One day the laundress complained, 'I'll be leaving the house soon enough. How can I do the laundry with a snapping turtle tied to the legs of the sink?'

Another day there was an odor which attracted attention clear to the third floor of the house. The maid refused to be interviewed. 'See the cook for yourself!' she told me. 'Either I leave or the woodchuck does!' The cook cried in high dudgeon. Theodore had

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killed a fine specimen of the groundhog species and, desiring to save every particle of it for study and experimentation, had given orders that the animal, fur and all, was to be boiled in the kitchen for 24 hours."

Theodore: "When I was about thirteen I was allowed to take lessons in taxidermy from a Mr. Bell, a tall, clean-shaven, white-haired old gentleman, as straight as an Indian, who had been a companion of Audubon's. He had a musty little shop, somewhat on the order of Mr. Venus's shop in 'Our Mutual Friend', a little shop in which he had done very valuable work for science. This 'vocational study', as I suppose it would be called by modern educators, spurred and directed my interest in collecting specimens for mounting and preservation."

Fanny Smith: "Theodore's interest in birds was not that of an amateur. For purposes of identification he would shoot the bird, stuff it himself, classify it scientifically and set it in its proper place on the shelf of his small museum on the top floor of the house. It is only necessary to read any account of his boyhood to realize the extraordinary acuteness of his intelligence."

"Even when very young I recognized that quality, but perhaps I was even more conscious of a forthright honesty and high-mindedness and of the moral and physical courage which were always conspicuous. Many years later he told me that he had been by nature timid and that he had only conquered this trait by constantly forcing himself to do the difficult or even dangerous thing. That was hard for me to believe even though I could not question his

sincerity. That my recognition of his unusual qualities was not the result of hindsight is supported by the frequent comment in later years of my older sister: 'Even as a child you always declared that some day he would be President!'"

V. The House Today

The house on East Twentieth Street, in the Eighteen Fifties and Sixties, was a household of children and for children. To Theodore Roosevelt the Elder and to "Mittie", his wife, it wasn't the material things in the house that counted, though some of them were valuable and a few were beautiful; nor was it the people who came there, though many of them were eminent in the world of New York and of the nation, interesting to listen to, and noble of heart and spirit. It was the children around whom the household revolved. The house is worth talking about and is worth going far to see, not just because one of those children ~~was a boy~~ who became President of the United States, but because the father and mother of the children worked together to establish there a kind of family life that has influenced home life in America for over half a century.

For the kind of home that the boy "Teedie" knew at 28 East 20th Street, became a model for the home that he and his wife created at Sagamore Hill, their home at Oyster Bay on the north shore of Long Island, and that they re-created in the White House. That home, in turn, became a model for millions of homes from Montauk Point to the Golden Gate. The children who grew up in those homes are different from what they would have been if their fathers and mothers had chosen a different model, and their children in turn feel the effect.

~~"How far this little candle casts its beams!"~~

The family life that was lived at 28 East 20th Street sheds its glow over a century of American history, and still shines

brightly. The house that was its frame recalls more than a man who became a great leader for a people determined to have and to hold in their own hands the government of their country. It recalls the love of a man and woman, tested by the fire of civil war, the tenderness and understanding and strength of a father and mother, and the devotion they evoked in their children to them and to each other. The house recalls a spirit that lives on, and will continue to live.

Seen in that light, the house is holy ground.

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It was a house for children. It is a house for children still. They come by tens and by fifties, in buses, from schools all over the New York metropolitan area. Most of them are in the fifth or sixth grade in which they study about the "Rough Rider" President.

He comes to life for them in the basement museum. There they see some of the birds he shot as a boy and himself preserved and stuffed. There they see, too, the sombrero he wore as a cowboy in the Bad Lands of Dakota Territory, his lariat and spurs and six-shooter, as well as a saddle or two and the guns he used in hunts in Wyoming and Montana. Have the children been reading of the charge up San Juan Hill? Well, there, in a case, is the uniform and the hat the Colonel of the Rough Riders wore that day, and the book of military tactics he carried in his pocket. Have they read how he became President when President McKinley was shot? Well, there is the high hat he borrowed for his call on the President's widow before he himself took the oath of office. In

the museum the children see, too, the speech and the spectacle-case through which the bullet passed when Theodore Roosevelt was shot in Milwaukee during the 1912 Bull Moose campaign.

Many of the children come from apartments or one-floor "ranch-houses," and have never seen a house with stairs. Here the stairs are long for the ceilings are high. One flight up from the basement they see the restored drawing-room, the library and dining-room and, across the hall, another large exhibition-room with a lion, mounted, that Mr. Roosevelt shot in Africa, a bronze statue of him as a Rough Rider by ^{A.} Phimister Prector, and the desk he used as assistant secretary of the Navy. In the cases, they see the "billy" that Mr. Roosevelt carried when he was New York Police Commissioner, the "single-sticks" he used in contests with a friend in the White House, skins of big game he shot in Africa or South America, pictures and cartoons and, between the windows, on the street side, a copy of a portrait of Mr. Roosevelt made in the White House by the Hungarian painter, de Lazzlo, and the best likeness of him, inside and out, ever painted.

The children troop upstairs, peer into the room in which a President was born and into the nursery in which he grew and through which he passed to get to the historic piazza where he exercised and gradually made himself strong. On the top floor they find a big auditorium, the width of the two houses that stood at Number 26 and Number 28. On the stage, panels are drawn back, revealing a motion-picture screen, on which Theodore Roosevelt himself shortly appears, vigorous, forceful, dynamic, all-but-alive.

Evenings, occasionally, there are adults in the auditorium - ~~foreign-born~~ men and women from the Adult Education Division of

~~the New York Public Schools, studying for their naturalization~~
— many foreign-born.
~~tests.~~ To them as to the children, Theodore Roosevelt House
brings a new vision of a great American and of the country he
loved, a new vision of free government whose principles he
expressed in terms that children and foreign-born alike can
understand and learn to live by.

VI. The House Tomorrow?

A shrine? A museum? A structure of steel and concrete recalling a great American? Of course. But Theodore Roosevelt House, even today, is more than that; and those who have its future on their hearts and minds dream far beyond the service that the House is now rendering, in bringing Theodore Roosevelt vividly into the lives of New York school-children.

They conceive the House, in the future, as a great Center for the Stimulation of the Free Spirit, a sounding-board for Theodore Roosevelt's "summons to the defense of the democratic ideal." That summons rings through the book of quotations from his writings, "The Free Citizen", which, in word and action, presents the principles underlying a free society and his challenge to free men to make self-government work. "The Free Citizen" can be and should become to the free world what Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" is to the communists. Theodore Roosevelt House is the natural center for stimulation not only of its distribution and study, but for the application of its teachings in the life alike of the family, the school and the college, the community and the state, the nation and the family of nations.

Those who cherish Theodore Roosevelt House for its memories and for the inspiration of the name it bears, have a vision for it in the future, indeed, which goes beyond a national agency for the circulation of Mr. Roosevelt's teachings to a world center to which the free peoples - or peoples, struggling to be free - will look for guidance in the difficult business of learning to

govern themselves. Uttering to his own countrymen his summons and his challenge, Theodore Roosevelt speaks also to all men moving toward that free society, that popular sovereignty, which are valid and can endure only as they are based on faith in God, faith in man, character, and the recognition of human brotherhood.

It is to this vision of a world center of understanding and inspiration in the field of free government that Theodore Roosevelt House is dedicated.