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Theodore Roosevelt, Governor

WHEN Colonel Theodore Roosevelt disembarked at Montauk Point from the transport which brought him and his Rough Riders from Santiago, he was full of the fight that was over. A score of his friends who had hurried down eager to see him were pressing against the line of bayonets at the end of the pier; they were full of something else. One by one they seized him, and one by one they whispered to him:

“You are the next governor of New York.”

“Good,” he said, half hearing; but he turned to wave at the yellow fellows just tumbling out of the boat. “What do you think of the regiment?” he asked.

“Campaign buttons are out with your picture already.”

“Yes? Bully! Look at them. Aren't they crack-a-jacks?”

“But how do you feel? Do you think you can stand the strain of a political campaign?”

“I feel like a bull moose. I'm ashamed of myself to be so sound and well. See, that's K Troop.”

And he pointed out men who had distinguished themselves. It was impossible to get his attention.

“Colonel, Croker said a few weeks ago that the man who would be the next governor must have been wounded in battle.”

“Did he? Well, I have a wound. See here on my wrist, a piece of shrapnel—see?” There was no trace left. “Well, it was there, anyhow.”

He laughed with the crowd, but again he turned to the column of khaki, and was soon off with his men in Cuba again, when a sober-faced man with a steady, quiet voice said:

“Platt wants you to run for governor, Colonel.”

The soldier turned sharply, looked at the man a moment, then said:

“I'll see you again about this matter.”

It began then. Senator Thomas C. Platt, the boss of the Republican party, and President Roosevelt of the Police Board had not been friends, for the police commissioner had refused to serve any of the purposes of the boss in New York City. The Assistant Secretary of the Navy and Mrs. Roosevelt had called, in Washington, upon the United States senator from New York state and Mrs. Platt; but that was official courtesy, a social duty, and a personal and private pleasure. Politically the two men were out. The one was a reformer, the other was the head and front of the machine; but both were politicians, different, yet practical politicians.

Mr. Platt realized the truth of what the Tammany boss had said, that only a soldier could carry the state. That was not all, however. Mr. Platt had blundered the year before. He and his party had established the Greater New York, and then had lost it to Tammany by fighting obstinately for a machine candidate for mayor against Seth Low, an independent Republican. The whole of the reform element in the party had been alienated, and had turned up with more

votes than the machine could show. Theodore Roosevelt represented that body of voters. The reformer as much as the soldier, therefore, was needed to unite the party and play good politics.

But would a man like Mr. Roosevelt be useful to the machine? And could a man like Mr. Roosevelt afford to strengthen the machine?

The boss sent emissaries to Montauk, and so did the independent Republicans. While the machine men talked to the Rough Rider in his tent, the independents lay waiting on the grass under the regimental colors, watching the cowboys ride their bucking broncos.

“Mr. Platt does not expect much of you,” was the gist of the party’s message. “The party needs a leader who can carry the state. After that, the candidate for governor shall be governor.”

That was fair.

Then the reformers spoke: “We want to smash Platt. He’s down now. One more blow will end him. Take an independent nomination, and the machine will have to support you. You must do so. You are of us, you belong to us. If you don’t, you are a ruined man.”

This sounded rather like the threatening language of boss-ship.

One day the Colonel walked slowly down over the plain, kicking little stones across the sand and thinking. He had fought hard for reform; he always would. He had stood for it in the city of New York, and the city had turned to Tammany. He owed the city allegiance, but it could not command him to disregard everything else. And since he had served it he had served the nation, which had its claims and its attractions. But to do large things in the nation the individual must act through, for, and with his party.

Was he thinking of the Presidency?

He stopped short. “No, no. Don’t ever say that again. I never sought an office. I always wanted a job, for I like work. Do you know, I have been thinking lately that I should like to have a professorship of history in some good college? I’d enjoy that sort of work. Still there is one big public job I’d like to do, a bully big job, and I hope to get it some day, but it is under, much under, that of governing the United States.”

Then he walked on, and told what his ambition was, and how he would go about accomplishing the task of its achievement. But long before he approached it there were other things; and these, like that, required organization, party.

Why not be a boss, then, and do something fine in bossship?

Again he stopped. “There is a chance for big things there, but they are not for me. I know what I can do, and I know what I can’t do. And my limitations end at that. It is impossible, it is unattractive. The cavalry for me, not the engineers.”

The Republican party in New York state should stand for the higher interests of the state. It must, for Tammany can win at the Tammany game. All the “cranks,” “theorists,” “reformers,” “kickers,” all the “fools” are naturally of the Republican party. It is the problem of the Republican leader to lead all, not some, of these elements, and leadership there must be, since “bossing” will not do. Croker has another problem. He has none of the cranks, etc. He has the ignorant, the selfish, the naturally subordinate minds which need, love, caress a master. Republican politicians in New York state have learned too much politics from the Democrats, and their mistake always has been the application of Tammany methods to a party these do not fit.

Colonel Roosevelt saw not any one great specialized service that he could do to the state by governing it, only the general one of governing well. There was the canal scandal; the Republican superintendence of the Department of Public Works had been extravagant,

incompetent, and notoriously corrupt, and the great Erie Canal, which is in this department, was not effectively improved, though nine millions was set aside and spent on it for that purpose.

“I’ll stick the knife way into that,” the Rough Rider said, “and I’ll turn it clear around.”

A few other things required vigorous treatment, but nothing lay waiting in the state to compare with the reform of the police department—nothing that was worth risking everything in the world for.

The big thing would be to lead the party to victory; then, as governor, carry out a policy which would be a party policy and would be so plainly, constantly, and bravely for the good of the state that the party would be set solidly down on public confidence. That meant to hold all the elements of the party together: the good—all except the useless asses; the “bad”—all except the incorrigible rascals. The utmost hope would be by thus strengthening the party, with the restoration to it of all the best and most difficult independents, to prove that, at least for the Republican party of the state of New York, good public service was good practical politics—a policy on which the machine could win.

Colonel Roosevelt decided to accept the party nomination, if it came properly to him, and to decline the independent nomination anyway.

Oh, what a howl there was then! The independents would not, they declared they could not, believe Mr. Roosevelt would “betray them,” put his “neck into Platt’s collar,” resuscitate the “dead boss,” etc., etc. The outcry could be heard at Camp Wikoff; but the Colonel was dictating his report on deficiencies of the Santiago campaign, disbanding his regiment, and writing the story of the Rough Riders. He paused as he was about to mount his horse for a ride down to the surf for a bath, to say that his friends the enemy forgot that he always had been a party man; that he stuck to the party when he fought hardest for decency in the legislature; that he voted for Blaine after leading the opposition to him in convention. And when he rode off with his cowboy troopers, he led the laughter.

Then the city wished to know how the nomination would be arranged. Would the boss go to the candidate, or would the candidate go to the boss? Both sides were anxious about this. The Independents said that would be the final humiliation, and the machine men shook their heads solemnly over it. They picked out a tactful man to approach the candidate, who alone thought nothing of this terrible question of etiquette. This man called on Mr. Roosevelt, and, announcing that the nomination was practically decided upon, asked whether he would call on Mr. Platt in town.

“Of course I will. But why doesn’t the senator come down here and see our camp? He may not have a chance to see such a sight for a generation.”

It appeared then that the senator was a little particular about the etiquette of the matter.

“Oh, well, I’m not. I’ll be in New York any time he says after I’m through here.”

“What’s the difference?” he said afterward. “Can you see how it matters whether I call on Platt or Platt calls on me? I can’t. Since I have decided to accept the party nomination and to work with the party and for it, I have to see the leaders. I want to, anyway. For I am acting in good faith. I mean to go as far as I can with them. Of course I may have to break away and fight, and in that case I will fight hard, as they know. But I wish to start fair, give the leaders of the party every possible chance, and see. And mark this now: I’ll do much more for Mr. Platt than I’ll promise to do. I won’t promise anything, but all that I possibly can do for the machine I will. It seems to me that that is no more than honest; it certainly is necessary to the achievement of my hope to strengthen the party by bettering it. See Platt? Yes, I’ll see him now, and I’ll see him after election; I’ll see him when I’m governor.”

So when all was arranged, Colonel Roosevelt called publicly on the boss. He went to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and his cab stopped at the main entrance. Some machine men seized him as he stepped out on the curb, and led him surreptitiously off to a by-entrance and up a side stairway. They wished to spare him the publicity, perhaps, of an entrance among the reporters in the main hall; but when he left Mr. Platt, he came down the main stairway and talked with the reporters, greeted some of his Rough Riders, and drove away from the front door.

That first interview with the boss was characteristic of both men. When Mr. Roosevelt entered the room and shook hands with the senator, he said at once: "Before you say anything, Mr. Platt, let me say this: that if I accept the nomination of the Republican organization I will stand with the ticket. Any support that is not for the rest of the ticket I will not seek, and an independent nomination of myself without my colleagues I will refuse. Now I am ready to listen."

Mr. Platt paused. But he said the thing that was uppermost in his mind; something of the old enmity.

He wanted Mr. Roosevelt to be the candidate of the party for governor, because he thought Mr. Roosevelt could win. If he thought any other man would run better, he'd take that other man. But he believed Mr. Roosevelt was the leader who could carry the ticket to victory, and he did want this year to win.

Then they talked. Benjamin B. Odell, the Chairman of the state Committee, was there, and Lemuel Ely Quigg, the chairman of the New York County Committee. They had reports from the districts everywhere showing the conditions which indicated that the party could carry the state, but only by a fight, a hard fight. Most of the returning soldiers were not fit for much more fighting, but a look at Mr. Roosevelt was enough. They laughed. He was ready for another campaign.

The conference was going off smoothly. But the conditions! Mr. Platt asked that the governor would give him an opportunity to express his views on any important matter that came up before deciding upon it.

Mr. Roosevelt said certainly he would; he would always listen to anything Mr. Platt had to say about any act of his. He would give a hearing to any party leader. But, if he was elected governor, he would be governor.

The senator said of course. He would have no respect for Mr. Roosevelt if he were not the governor.

That was all.

Then happened one of those surprising disappointments of politics which make skeptics of good men and try the courage of the strong. When Mr. Roosevelt came out of that conference and walked down into the crowd in the hotel lobby, he was elated that his old party opponents had accepted him on the strength of his character. They had exacted no pledges; they had suggested none. Nothing had been breathed or hinted to make either him or his friends regret that he had gone there. He meant to act fairly by these politicians whom he had antagonized in the past; but he could not, would not, tell them this. That they did not ask him to say so, but took him on faith, was a gratifying compliment to his self-respect. It showed that they believed they knew him well enough to foresee what he would do and what he would not do, without saying a word about it.

There was no reason why they should not. His life had been a public career from the year he left college. But if his enemies trusted him, why should not his friends? The independents, the reformers, the "better element" had a personal acquaintance with him, the intimacy of which

should have made them surer than this boss of his sense of dignity and decency. Indeed, if the boss had expressed a distrust and asked a pledge, though Mr. Roosevelt would have left the room and quit the business altogether, he would have been able to understand the psychology of the insult. He might even have called it natural.

It was not the boss, however, who offered the insult, but those others. When he walked out into the street rejoicing over the outcome of his visit, he heard the uproar of reproach, and he saw that it came from his old political allies. They wanted to know what had been said, they wanted to know how he could have brought himself to "see Platt." They drew back from him and asked what kind of a man Croker would offer them. Of course Croker's man would be Croker's man, and Croker named his candidate, a Van Wyck, who, though a judge, was taken by the boss because, being a brother of Mayor Van Wyck and like him in character, he would probably prove as satisfactory to a boss. And many of the independents said "a Van Wyck" was good.

It is true most of these political friends of Mr. Roosevelt did in the end vote the Republican ticket, but they did not help his canvass. It was to be a hard campaign, and they started it off with their backs for a damper. Those who supported him did so in a way that hurt more than it helped him. "We'll have to vote for him," they said. "There's nothing else for us to do. But it is hard, and we cannot advise others to follow our example."

So the campaign began coldly, with the candidate standing alone among the strangers of yesterday, the politicians of his party and their leaders. It looked as though defeat were ahead of Mr. Roosevelt, and he was bitterly disappointed. But the Rough Rider soon remembered that, if defeat had to come, it was distant a month or more and that in the meantime there was a chance for a fight. That cheered him up. He went to Benjamin B. Odell, the chairman of the Republican state Committee, and asked to be allowed to stump the state. Mr. Odell did not like the idea. A candidate who goes about making speeches is apt to say something which will hurt somebody's feelings and give the other party a chance to make points. The district leaders throughout the state, however, began to send in reports which changed Mr. Odell's view. There was apathy everywhere, and it appeared that, if victory was possible at all, the Rough Rider personally would have to win it, for he alone would be able to warm the rank and file to enthusiasm. So Mr. Roosevelt was allowed to go his way.

He stumped the state up and down and across and zigzag, speaking by day from the end of his special train and at night at mass meetings, in the towns and cities. A promise of good government was his principal theme. Most of his speeches were pleas for the public confidence which had always been his. Twenty times a day he referred to the canal scandal, and he said that he would punish the corruptionists of the Public Works Department. But he had to depend for the most part on his appeal to the people to trust him to be what he had been before.

The only special incident of his campaign which helped him was the nomination of Judge Joseph F. Daly to be reelected judge of the Supreme Court—and this had a sequel. Daly was a Democrat, and had long been on the bench. The New York bar petitioned both parties to nominate him, but his own party refused because Daly had declined to remove, at the request of Richard Croker, a clerk of good service and abilities, to make way for a friend of the boss. Mr. Roosevelt made very effective use of this as an instance of the encroachment of the boss power upon the courts, which last of all should be touched by any influence that would diminish public faith in ultimate justice. Even this, however, was more forcible in the city, where Judge Daly sat and was known, and Tammany had the city sure. In the country, where Mr. Roosevelt made his fight, it was his personality that counted; and it did count. The campaign which began so gloomily brightened up as the Rough Rider went on, and toward the end there was genuine

enthusiasm. The bets that had been at odds against him changed, till a few days before election (November 8th) they were ten to seven in his favor, and then most of the Democrats' stakes were put up to affect public opinion and influence doubtful voters.

The whole Republican ticket was elected, but Mr. Roosevelt ran ahead of the other candidates. He had 661,707 against 643,921 for Van Wyck, a plurality of 17,786. The next highest plurality was 15,839, the lowest 8,664.

Mr. Platt said: "I feel that Colonel Roosevelt deserves all honor and credit for the victory in the state, for I am certain that he is the only man who could have carried our standard to victory this year. The Republicans of New York state are indebted to Colonel Roosevelt in no small degree for our splendid triumph today, and he has my heartiest congratulations and best wishes."

The moment the result was known, the interest in the relations of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Platt intensified. Governor Frank S. Black had begun his term by consulting the boss and obeying him, and now at the end he and Mr. Platt were strangers, political foes. Mr. Black's friends, Mr. Platt's, and Mr. Roosevelt's almost all agreed that the new governor would succeed no better than the old in keeping peace with the boss. Mr. Roosevelt himself was not very hopeful, but he was cheerful; for, as he said in the first postelection days, he was trying, in good faith, to serve both the state and the party, and, as he had declared at Montauk, he believed sincerely that these were not only compatible, but identical. At any rate, he would stand for the state, so that whatever happened that should not suffer; and if the party did not prosper, it should not be for lack of a good administration.

Part of this universal skepticism about the durability of such an alliance was due to the supposed character of the new governor. People who do not know him personally think he is quarrelsome, egoistic, headstrong, self-sufficient, and unthinking. He is a fighter, but he is more wary of entrance to a quarrel than any self-respecting man I know; it is only when "being in" that he bears it as Polonius advises. One of his faults is his openness to the counsel of others. But here again, and in the matter of thinking, he is two personalities in one—the first slow, reflective, open-minded; the other quick, reckless, and set. He gives time to making a decision; after he has settled upon a course, he ceases to be a man of thought and becomes altogether the man of action, the character, naturally enough, in which he is most widely known.

So far, as governor he has appeared in the other character. He himself says the deliberate side predominates now, and I infer from some of his remarks about his experiences in the war, that he thinks fighting under arms altered him in some essential way. Once in arguing with him about a certain public measure he had determined upon, I exclaimed:

"That's right, governor."

"It is not only right," he answered quickly, "it is wise. I'm a changed man."

But I will leave it to Mr. Platt whether the change isn't only one of proportion, not of fundamentals. The senator knows that the fighting man in Colonel Roosevelt was not fought out on San Juan Hill. He and the governor have not "split" yet (March 18th), despite some of the interesting reports that they had; but they have seen fight in each other's eyes. However, this is a story of peace.

The governor-elect began at once to do what he said privately at Montauk that he would do—more for Mr. Platt than he would promise him. He recognized in the senator the head of the regular party organization, and, after his Cuban experience and his campaign for governor, Mr. Roosevelt acknowledged respectfully the first-rate fighting qualities of the regulars. But the volunteers also had their good points, so the governor-elect asked Seth Low as well as Senator Platt to advise him. Others also were invited to the first council—Benjamin B. Odell,

who is the executive head of the state machine; Elihu Root, an able lawyer; Joseph H. Choate, and some more. This was good politics, for it brought together all wings of the party, and the governor-elect, being for the first time a straight-out party man, sought the unification of all the elements in it.

Right at the start Mr. Roosevelt declared the first principle of his dealings with these party leaders. Governor Black not only refused to make some of the appointments the boss asked; he chose men with a following, to the end that they would in their grateful allegiance to him be Black men. That is to say, he undertook to build up a machine of his own. His success was not great. His party group was not strong enough to renominate him, but it was distinct enough to vote for him in the convention with uncompromising loyalty.

Mr. Roosevelt was the leader of no wing of the party, and when he said at Montauk that he could not be a boss, he meant also that he would not try to be. This was not because he was not ambitious.

“I should like at the end of my first term,” he said one day, “to be renominated and reelected; but it must be on my own terms. If the machine shall wish to defeat me, however, it will be able to do so, and I shall not grieve or regret it. I shall have no rival machine to oppose it. It cannot have all its men appointed. But whenever I reject its nominations and take other men, they will not be mine. They will simply be better men than the leaders found, and, if they have any party services to render, I do and shall refer them to the organization that represents the party. I am the governor of the state of New York, and all I care for is to have an administration that will be an honor to my name, a service to the state, and a credit to the party.”

Another principle which the governor laid down for his own guidance in machine politics was to stand, not for the appointment of men of his own selection, but simply for good men, better than those he removed. The only exceptions he made to this rule were in the departments or places where, either because very bad work had been done in them or extraordinary duties remained in them to be done, exceptional qualifications were needed. In such cases the governor has not allowed the machine to have a voice in appointments, and he has sought out his own men. But as an offset he has given over to the machine all the unimportant minor positions and, under some restrictions, many of the secondary departments.

The Department of Public Works, which had been conducted to the disgrace of the party, was one of the places he kept for himself. That was to be cleaned out; and since party politicians were pretty sure to be injured by exposures and possibly prosecutions, a courageous man was needed for superintendent; and since this necessary reorganization was a tremendous work, the superintendent had to be able. Mr. Platt had a candidate for the place, but the governor would not consider him. He went about among the greatest engineers in the state trying to induce them to give up private enterprises worth twenty thousand and fifty thousand dollars a year to take the state's seven thousand. They refused; but the governor finally induced Colonel J. M. Partridge, a man of great executive ability, to undertake the job. Likewise the post of adjutant-general was important. General Tillinghast, who held it during the war, had blundered so badly that the state militia was disorganized. The governor took this matter into his own hands by appointing Major-General Roe to the command, Avery D. Andrews to be Adjutant General. Mr. Andrews is a Democrat, but he is a graduate of West Point; and as for his personal and political character, the governor had learned all about that in the New York City police board, where they had served together as commissioners. Again, in the appointment of a surrogate of New York County the governor went beyond the machine. Edward J. Fallows, a young assemblyman who had practiced in the court, knew that one of the branches was corrupted, and he headed a legislative committee

which proved his allegations publicly. The Tammany surrogate resigned, and the governor, who had himself as a young assemblyman exposed the same court, backed up Mr. Fallows by insisting upon appointing to the bench a man of his own choosing. The machine had its man, and the machine “demanded” his appointment; but the governor quietly nominated James M. Varnum, and the Senate as quietly approved.

The machine accepted all these independent acts of the governor, and in at least two cases, those of Colonel Partridge and Surrogate Varnum, Mr. Platt said the men chosen against his wishes were his men. And in a way he spoke truly, for they certainly were no other man’s men, and the governor advised all his appointees to adopt his rule of relationship with the machine. He consulted Mr. Platt, and so might they. He disregarded the boss, if necessary, when anything large was at stake, and rendered unto Caesar the things that were Caesar’s. The point was to do the utmost for the state and the party, and to that end the whole administration had to work together—governor, heads of departments, and the legislature, which, being regular Republican, was the machine’s.

The only time the boss and the governor disagreed hopelessly over an appointment was when a Democratic justice of the Supreme Court, Judge Morgan J. O’Brien, talked of resigning. Mr. Roosevelt thought at once of Judge Daly, the Democrat whom the Republican party had renominated for the bench at the request of the New York bar. Daly had been defeated, and here was an opportunity to appoint him and show that the party was sincere in its declaration for a free bench. But the bar had urged also the nomination on both tickets of Justice Cohen; the Democrats had rejected him, and the Republicans had accepted him. Judge Cohen likewise had been defeated, and Mr. Platt urged him for Judge O’Brien’s place. When two candidates were equally worthy, surely the Republican should be preferred, he argued, and the governor personally rather preferred Cohen. But the principle of nonpartisanship on the bench would be more emphatically illustrated by the choice of Daly, and the governor decided to appoint him.

This decision the governor conveyed to Mr. Platt one evening in December. They were to meet the next morning, and, in order to keep the Daly-Cohen controversy off the table, the governor sent word that he had made up his mind about it. Just what was done that night I do not assume to know, but Mr. Platt and some of his friends were up quite late, and before the meeting next day it became known that Mr. Croker, who hated Daly and was interested, for the sake of discipline, in the punishment of a judge who disobeyed him, had persuaded Judge O’Brien to withdraw his resignation. Of course the inference was that Mr. Platt had passed on to Mr. Croker the governor-elect’s decision, and that the Tammany boss took the hint and kept his judge on the bench. There is nothing a politician enjoys more than a “move” of this sort, and when Mr. Platt was asked if he had inspired it he winked wickedly and smiled.

And Mr. Roosevelt—he laughed outright when he was told. He knew how the politician loved the sensation of driving a knife into a man’s back, and he said: “They can beat me at that game every time. I never look under the table when I play, and I never shall. Face to face I can defend myself and make a pretty good fight, but any weakling can murder me. Remember this, however, that if I am hit that way very often I will take to the open, and the blows from the dark will only help me in an out-and-out battle.” The Daly controversy was ended, of course; but it served a good end. It put the Rough Rider on his guard. He dropped it out of sight, however, and went on telling his political allies all that was in his mind, what he would and what he would not do, giving his confidence in perfect good faith and assuming honesty and fair play. But he foresaw that, if the fight should come, the first blow would come unawares, and would catch him in the space between his shoulder-blades.

It was thought and said that this thrust was delivered in the legislature. In the period between November 8, 1898, and January 1, 1899, the policy of the party as to legislation was, of course, frequently discussed at the meetings of the governor and Messrs. Platt, Odell, and Seth Low. At first the governor and the machine leaders were far apart. For instance, Mr. Roosevelt wished to have passed a civil-service bill which should "put back the starch" that Governor Black had had taken out of the law on this subject. Mr. Platt opposed any change in the Black or "starchless" law. On the other hand, Mr. Platt was set on a police bill which should loosen Tammany's grip upon the New York City police department. Mr. Roosevelt was opposed to any interference by the state in the purely local affairs of the city.

Now Mr. Roosevelt had a peculiar interest in police affairs. His administration of the police department had brought up out of the vileness of it a set of men who had caught some of his spirit. There were honest, enthusiastically loyal patrolmen, and among the officers a few had either "reformed" or pretended to; they at least were doing what the governor used to call "straight police duty." The moment Tammany recovered control, these officers were sent off to the country precincts, while the rascals who had been dismissed from the force and barely escaped prison were promoted to the highest places. The men in the lower grades were "pounded"—that is to say, they were shifted about from Coney Island to Kingsbridge, as far as possible from their homes, and, when they moved their families to Kingsbridge, they were "fired back to Coney" or Staten Island. Good police service was punished. This is no exaggeration. Tammany requires good political service, and the discipline of gross injustice and petty abuse was applied to teach the police force that "reform" does not pay, whereas corruption and blackmail bring the highest rewards.

Mr. Roosevelt knew all about this. The men who suffered told their stories, and other witnesses whom he had trusted at the police headquarters reported it to him. His old friends of police days begged him to lay an iron hand on the department, but he would not. The city had chosen the Tammany rule--let the city abide by its choice. He was concerned about the men on the force who were known as "Roosevelt men," and if he had been anything of the boss he would have cared, for political reasons, to foster his party or following on the force. But he never seemed to think of this. He ground his teeth over the persecutions of the honest fellows, and he laid away a hope that later on he would have the right to help them. Tammany, if left free to do its worst, might make the city turn to him, and always he said the city was a part of the state. "Home rule" was no fetish for him. Now, however, his demesne was the state at large, and the city should work out its own salvation. He would not investigate, he would not consent to a reorganization law, nothing to check police excesses.

Mr. Platt urged and the other machine leaders grumbled, but none of their schemes found favor with the governor till Elihu Root stepped in and drew a bill to abolish the bipartisan board of police and turn over all the power of four commissioners to one single head, who was to be appointed by the mayor, but was to be removable by the governor if the police were allowed to interfere in elections. This attracted the governor. The mayor was a Tammany man. He would name a police commissioner who would give Tammany absolute control, and leave it free to do its very worst. At the same time it would give the governor the right to prevent the abuse of police power for political purposes, which affected the state and the nation. This bill, moreover, would make it certain that, if the city of New York should elect a good Republican mayor, he could appoint to the police department a man who would have sufficient power to clean it out from top to bottom, without having to fight or compromise with three other commissioners of various degrees of ability and morality.

Mr. Platt accepted this bill. Mr. Roosevelt liked it immensely. It was introduced, and with it went a civil-service bill, both of which were to be party measures. The Republicans had a large majority in the Assembly, but the Senate was theirs by only two votes, and it soon developed that four Republican senators were opposed to the police bill. A caucus was held, and these men bolted. It was time for the party whip, but none was applied. The police bill was “dead,” the civil-service bill was “asleep in committee,” and, when Congress adjourned. Senator Platt went to Florida to rest.

“Ha, ha,” said the Black men. “What did we tell you? If Platt wanted those bills to pass, they would pass.”

There is an alternative. Senator Platt has tried in the past to beat two of the objecting senators in their home districts; but they have won out over him, and they are really independent. They trade their votes freely, and they work with the Democrats, who, unfortunately, in New York state, are almost always able to buy up as many Republicans as they want in an emergency. So it may be that Mr. Platt is boss only when it is easy to boss (he has called himself the “easy boss”), and that he is “pulling straight” as hard as he can. He came back from the South in time to try pressure at Albany, and he said he meant to apply it.

So far as the governor is concerned, the situation is clear, a little amusing, but quite simple. Mr. Platt wanted the police bill, agreed to the construction of it step by step, and says he still is for it. Mr. Odell says that it is a party measure, and that he is working for it. No one knows to the contrary. It is all very well for irresponsible persons to see the knife in the gloved hand, but the governor has started out to give and take confidence, and in good faith he must act till the blood flows. The experiment-making is too interesting and too important to shy off from at the first whisper of suspicion, and no one wound of this sort can kill.