LIFE of FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT by Emil Ludwig

t 28, He Enters olitics and Wins His First Election

In Chapter One of Emil Ludwig's "Life of Franklin D. Roosevelt," the noted biographer of Napoleon, Bismarck and Lincoln describes Roosevelt's sheltered youth—the consciousness of his family background and wealth, and the awakening of a democratic spirit which stubbornly proved itself in the snobbish atmosphere of Groton and Harvard. The chapter comes to a close with Roosevelt's marriage, at 23, to his sixth cousin—twenty-year-old Eleanor Roosevelt.

CHAPTER II.

IN HIS young wife Roosevelt found corroboration of the uncertain instinct which had impelled him to venture forth against his own class. Her nature, heavier than his, more responsible, more ethically fixed, bade this young man, carried along joyously on the broad stream of his health, listen more closely to that which his own inner voice had until then only whispered to him fleetingly. These premonitions must have decided him unconsciously, for when his mother, thinking he had made his choice too early, invited him on a sea voyage, this oft applied recipe only increased his longing for the one from whom he was parted, and sent him back more fixed than ever on her and on his resolve.

Meanwhile, a second motive seems to have influenced his choice: the girl was the niece, indeed the openly declared favorite niece, of Theodore Roosevelt. Not that he was looking to a career through this marriage; the grounds obviously lie deeper. The emergence of this remote uncle, who had suddenly sent the name of Roosevelt ringing 'round the world, must have had about it, for the twenty-year-old boy, something magically attractive and fascinating. Distinguished gentlemen and politicians of that name had been known before, but for him it was Theodore Roosevelt who embodied the pride of an aristocratic family which in a certain sense had now given a king to the country.

Young Husband Returns to School

Whether it was as a beckoning light or as an obscuring shadow, one thing is certain: from childhood on the far-off nephew (as he virtually was, though literally no more than a fifth cousin) was deeply stirred by his illustrious uncle.

The first thing the young husband, who very soon was also a father, did was to return to school. This student period at the Columbia Law School first made the twenty-three-year-old Roosevelt into the big-city type, and this was no accident.

For the sociable husband the sole attraction here was the contact with men and the consequent political career in the world city. The responsibility which his wife, as a rich woman, felt in the presence of the injustice of poverty did not oppress or burden him; and so it was that she was less often at peace with herself than he, whether on the land or in the

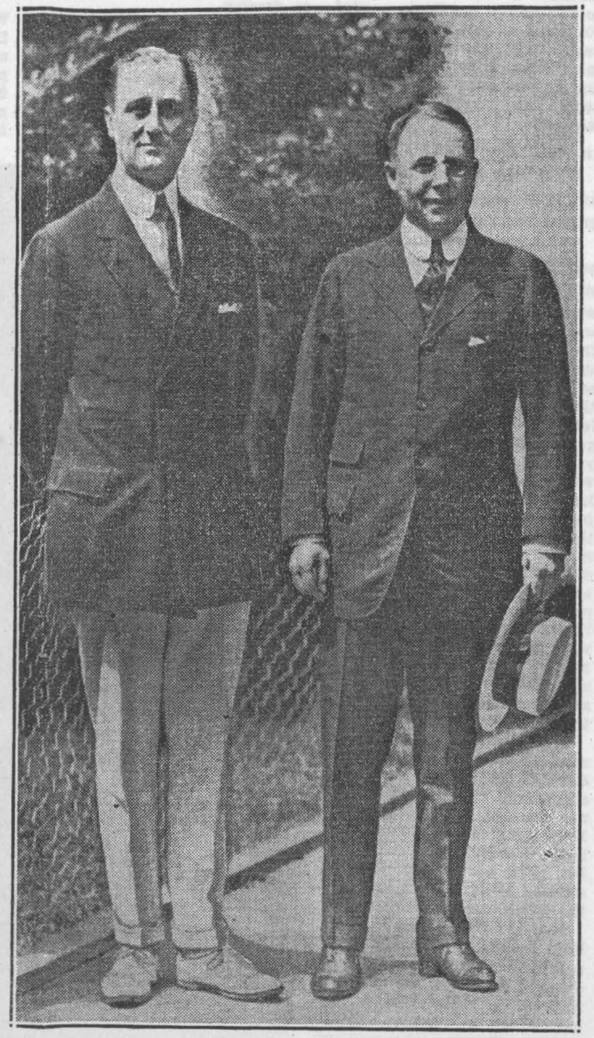
NOMINATED—A smiling closeup of Franklin D. Roosevelt as he appeared in Washington on July 20, 1920, after he had received the nomination for Vice-President.

their choice a rich man of dubious reputation. Sheehan, nicknamed "Blue-Eyed Billy," much respected in the party councils. As lawyer and later director of large companies, he had been in a position to distribute big contracts, and he had contributed heavily to the Democratic campaign funds.

Roosevelt recounted later how

tions in Albany. Service and fun may go hand in hand, so the young State Senator goes to it with a doubled will.

The life course of every man born in the '80s and'90s of the last century must at a certain point, have been thrown off its track by the World War; and, if certain men seem actually to have been put on the right track



CANDIDATES—Franklin D. Roosevelt and James M. Cox. Democratic nominee for President in 1920, photographed when Roosevelt ran on the ticket for Vice-President.

every respect. Wilson was twenty-five years older than Franklin; could, like Theodore Roosevelt, have been his father. Everything that the young man had found attractive in his uncle, robust hardihood and the joy of battle, bodily skill, the bronzed skin, was lacking in Wilson. Yet Wilson had almost everything that Theodore Roose-

ing buttons for Clark, who had been decided on by the State Democratic heads and stole with them into the big convention hall in Baltimore. Suddenly they began to chant in chorus. "We want Wilson."

It was a lark after Roosevelt's own heart, for what he thoroughly liked then, and still likes today is to carry out by a mean

World War Proves A Finishing School For Later Career

the former; for his heart was on the commander's bridge, and not in the White House.

The speed which was now called for suited his temperament, and turned the war into his finishing school. And yet his preparations for a possible entry into the war ran up against an astounding obstacle. When Roosevelt, in the absence of his chief, went to Wilson in the Fall of 1916 to press for mobilization of the navy, Wilson replied that this was impossible.

"I repeated" thus he told me the astounding story—"that we were on the brink of war, and therefore had to be prepared. He shook his head. I turned to leave, for what could I do but obey the Commander-in-Chief?

Spot for Roosevelt.

"At the door he called me back and said:

Come here Roosevelt, and sit down. I'll explain it to you. The eyes of history are fixed on us. Yes, it is true that we shall probably enter the war. But look yon, in the year 1980 some historian will be writing the history of this war, a German or perhaps a Russian. This man must say, "America did nothing to be prepared before it was compelled to go to war." I was astounded by the degree to which Wilson's thoughts and acts were determined by his historic consciousness; but I had to be silent and obey."

No made up anecdote could have brought out more sharply the contrast between the two men. Here likewise we may glimpse the reasons why Wilson's ideas crashed. When I therefore asked Roosevelt whether the idea of the League of Nations had come to grief because of America or because of Wilson's incapacity, he answered:

"That needs a politican like

end. The new election would probably put the other party in power and the American political roundabout, which changes all the higher officials every four or eight years, would soon take him and most of the others out of the limelight.

And as he had experienced too much of the prodigal breadth of state affairs, of its gigantic field of operation for his will to action to be able to relinquish it without regret. Hence, his joy when a year after Theodore's death he was nominated as the Vice-Presidential candidate. He had done nothing to further the nomination, there was even a question whether it would not do him more harm than good.

Now, instead of going into a deep self-searching, he plunged after his fashion, into the thick of things. That was agreed at once between the two candidates who were now to tour the country. Roosevelt freely confessed afterward that it was his intention to put the question of the League in the second rank. But tact demanded that Cox meet him now, and so the two men came to him in the White House.

Story He Kept Secret

They found him in a large armchair, a warm shawl about his shoulders, and Cox, small, cheerful, said, "Mr. President, I have always admired your fight for the League of Nations."

Thereupon the sick man leaned forward and said with feverish intensity:

"Mr. Cox, the fight can still be won!"

Outside, Cox burst into tears; The sharply observant Roosevelt saw his eyeglasses flood. Then Cox said:

"Roosevelt, we'll make the fight on the League!"

I add here, out of Wilson's last sickness, a never publicized phrase of his, which illumines him like the setting sun shining

woman, felt in the presence of the injustice of poverty did not oppress or burden him; and so it was that she was less often at peace with herself than he, whether on the land or in the city, while he made both comfortable for himself.

Captain, Cook and Fisherman

In the immemorial manner of all healthy egotists he sometimes left her alone with his children and for a few weeks took a trip with old schoolmates in a boat along the coast. On these trips he was captain, cook and fisherman all in one. Sports and gymnastics, which meant so much to him, remained almost alien to her. On their very honeymoon she had watched him go mountain climbing with another woman because she was not equal to it; and the frankness with which she herself tells about it is a measure of the innocence of the incident.

She had at first not the slightest interest in politics; she did not even know the difference between State and Federal rights. And how could she become enthusiastic about his legal studies when he himself found them a bore and has continued to think of them as such ever since? He did not even obtain his LL. B. from Columbia; but he did obtain the right to practice, and at the age of twenty-five became a member of a law firm and actually earned money in it, if only irregularly.

Decides to Run for State Senate

When they came to the twenty-eight-year-old Roosevelt in his country home to persuade him to become a candidate for a seat in the New York State Senate, there was nothing about that offer, as seen from the outside, to tempt him.

Naturally he himself refers us to the usual American motive—it was his duty; but behind the much misused word "service" a double motive seems in this case to have lain concealed. He saw before him a game, an adventure which could mean a lot of fun; he saw before him an opportunity to get to know a great many new people.

So this young Coriolanus went riding for a couple of weeks through his district on the Hudson accompanied by a skilled comrade who at the end of every speech produced an American flag out of nowhere; he spoke twenty times a day, shook hands with hundreds of farmers, and from all of it learned more than his listeners.

His plea for the common man, against the boss; and in his heart he took up the fight all the more readily since the Republican whom he opposed was a personal enemy of Theodore Roosevelt. Feelings like these may have a decisive effect in a delicate situation, for Franklin Roosevelt is a gentleman in the good old sense of the word, which means that he is crafty but loyal, and he could not have attacked that personally honored opponent, his uncle, with the same fury. On top of this, the farmers were constantly confusing him with the other family and mistaking him for Theodore's son. He heard one of them say: "I don't care if he is a Democrat. I'm going to vote for Teddy!".

But at the same time he becomes seriously aware of the dangers of imitation; for when he unconsciously repeats some of the gestures of his uncle, a friend of his counsels him to be on his guard against doing it. He stops it at once; and the result of this counsel, he told me, was that he rid himself forever of this danger of theatrical, explosive, oratorical gestures.

It was a grand time he had, beating his way through wind and rain to the doors of farmers, pressing their callused hands, offering them cigars, peering into their houses and stables, and recognizing at every glance what these people loved and what they lacked.

At twenty-eight Roosevelt won his first election with the same means and emotions; drew to himself, by personality and not as party spokesman, the votes of the same so-called little people, as he did at the age of fifty in the role of candidate for President.

The party chiefs, ironical, patronizing, had encouraged the scribes to represent him as an artless youngster; now they suddenly drew their brows together, for within a few weeks after his election this youngster began a fight which was nothing short of a revolution.

In 1911 United States Senators were still elected not by popular vote but by the vote of the State Legislature. In that year the party bosses had put forward as candidate a man who represented all the worst features of the old system. He was a man of great wealth, and he had contributed heavily to the Democratic campaign funds.

Roosevelt recounted later how when he heard of the decision of his party's leaders, he went for a long walk through the wintry streets of Albany, called on a friend, and decided there and then to go out on a crusade against the designated representative of his own party. To be elected the candidate needed 101 votes in both houses of the Legislature; that was Roosevelt's calculation. If he could win over one or two dozen friendly Senators, the election could be stopped.

An Amazing Fight

What was it that moved an unknown beginner to such a protest against his own party?

There was a tremendous hubbub. "The college kid, the calf still wet behind the ears," was what the papers wrote; the boy was out for publicity. But on the day when everything seemed to be set for the election so many Senators were missing that only 91 votes could be collected. Eighteen Senators had gathered round Roosevelt, the youngest of them all—the oldest was 71, and every one of them had been much longer in the party than the young insurgent; these stated publicly that they refused to recognize the decision of their leaders, and were voting against Sheehan. To the reproaches of the party leadership the leader of the revolt retorted with simulated seriousness that he had been elected in a fight against bosses, "and it makes no difference to me what party the bosses try to run."

Ten weeks had passed. A meeting between Roosevelt and Sheehan had yielded no results; suggestions of a compromise had not brought a solution nearer. Everything seemed to be hopelessly deadlocked. And then at last the elements themselves stepped in and brought about the much desired change.

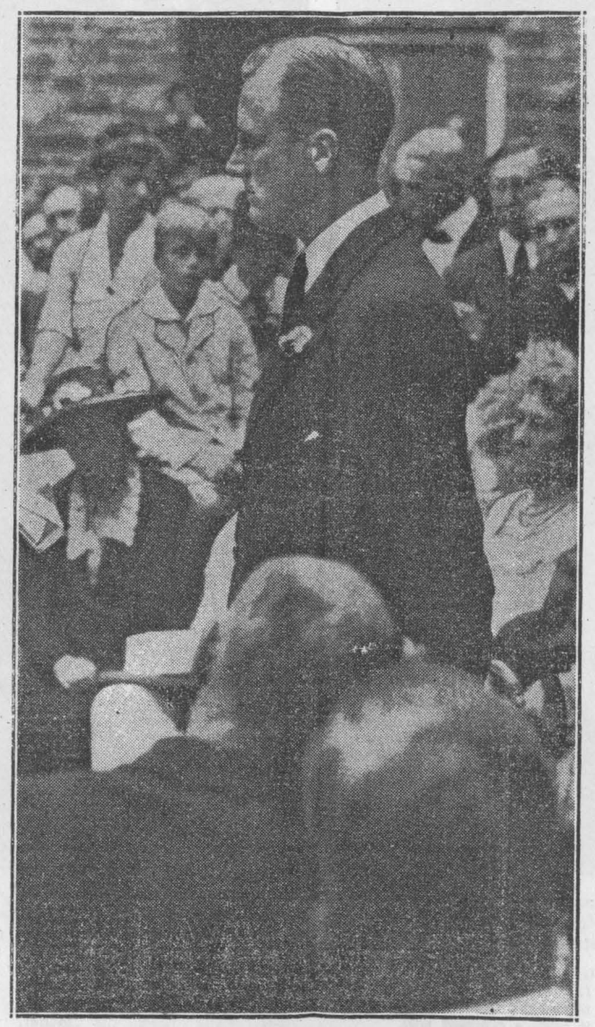
Just as Roosevelt's father had been enabled by a fire to resolve a protracted crisis and sell his estate, so this crisis also was resolved by a fire which broke out at its very center, in the Capitol. Now the exhausted and frightened representatives of the people, meeting the next morning in one of the courtrooms, decided to get through with the business at any cost, for all of them were anxious to go back to their businesses and their friends. The leadership yielded, a decent man was nominated and elected, the Senators scattered to their homes.

Once more government functions, and he was thrown off its track by the World War; and, if certain men seem actually to have been put on the right track thereby, it is impossible to ignore the influence which, like a comet affecting the path of neighboring stars, they exert on the life courses of other men. In this respect, too, Roosevelt is among the fortunate—it was the war which gave him his opportunity to develop.

At first it was more Wilson than the war. It seems that, with the exception of Jefferson, there is not a single President he has studied with the same devotion and profit as Wilson.

The two men were different in joy of battle, [illegible], bronzed skin, was lacking in Wilson. Yet Wilson had almost everything that Theodore Roosevelt, and likewise Franklin, lacked, all-around education, penetrating logic, philosophic and theoretic equipment. The link between Wilson and his new disciple Frankin was actually only the will to a more just distribution of the goods of life.

Now, when the job was to make Wilson President, Roosevelt as Democratic Senator rose once again in rebellion against his party chiefs, created a New York State committee to work for the nomination of Wilson, gathered two hundred followers, all wear-



ACCEPTS—Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, making the speech of acceptance of the Democratic nomination for Vice-President. He was later overwhelmingly defeated.

own heart, for what he thoroughly liked then, and still likes today is to carry out by a mean trick what he earnestly believes to be the right thing.

Wilson Is Nomtnated.

The vote as between Clark and Wilson stood that day at 556 to 350. By the next day, under the hour-long influence of Roosevelt and his friends on the delegates, it stood at 84 to 990, and Wilson was nominated. Thus his election, which had such immense consequences for Europe, was influenced by Roosevelt.

When the young State Senator came to the inauguration in Washington he had, as friend of the President and one of the campaign workers, a claim to a Federal post, he seems to have taken no part in the scramble.

"I have absolutely no wish to collect customs duties," he said when the Secretary of the Treasury offered to make him Collector of the Port of New York. He likewise declined the post of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

His eye was fixed on another office on the same afetrnoon the new Secretary of the Navy offered him the Assistant Secretaryship. He accepted without hesitation.

The war was the second opportunity which destiny offered Roosevelt to load his lightly sailing bark with a heavier cargo and thus make it more stable. For to him, as to every one else of the inner circle, the entry of his own nation into the war had by 1915 become a possibility, and by 1916 very much of a probability.

Since the politicians were in command, the technicians had to obey; between the two stood a Secretary of the Navy, and that was just the spot for Roosevelt.

"I need a battleship at once in Haiti.' Secretary of State Bryan had said to him one day, before the war.

"Our battleships are all a long way off," answered Roosevelt. "But I happen to have a gunboat near by; it could appear off Haiti in eight hours."

"Very good," said Bryan. "After this, when I talk about battleships don't think I mean anything technical."

That was typical of the conversations which for four years took place between the diplomats and the experts of frantic governments. It was up to Roosevelt to know everything that the navy heads knew, so that as the haisot between the Navy and the Administration he could give the maximum aid to cause of America or because of Wilson's incapacity, he answered:

"That needs a politican like me."

After the war a Senatorial committee was able to report, in perfect keeping with Wilson's intention, that on the outbreak of the war only one-third of the ships were decently prepared and only one-tenth fully manned, and that it needed up to nine months to get properly ready. For years Roosevelt had to hear, during election campaigns the accusation that as Assistant Secretary he had failed to keep the Navy decently prepared, but he never once unburdened himself publicly of the story.

His excursion into the war, which took place on a destroyer in July, 1918, was more a practical reconnoitering journey than the mere official gesture of a Secretary of the Navy. Of course he carried out his instructions, and that at top speed, inspecting fifty-odd stations between the Azores, Corfu and the Orkney Isles. During this journey he did not, it appears, pass two successive nights in the same place. He sped on, so that he might get in as much as possible, including the front, with which he had no official connection, and the military leaders in whose personalities he was eagerly interested.

First-Hand Experience

When Roosevelt returned with the President in March, 1919, on the George Washington, he had made a long excursion into European conditions and personalities. Such first-hand experience is, for an American President tied within the confines of his country, of inestimable worth. In this respect there is hardly a single predecessor of Roosevelt's who can be compared with him.

Meanwhile America's disillusionment with the manner of the peace, with the Allies, with the victors and the vanquished, was as sudden and as extreme as the enthusiasm had been two years before.

America had gone into the war without necessity of her own; America had decided the war and had derived no advantage from it; all that remained was the list of the 200,000 dead and a number of doubtful debts running into billions.

On top of this Wilson had followed an unwise course, had been obstinate instead of accommodating, and so his opponents did not find it difficult to checkmate his plan.

Franklin's term in the Navy Department was coming to an sickness, a never publicized phrase of his, which illumines him like the setting sun shining on the face of a sage. Toward the end, when one arm was paralyzed, he was being visited by Baruch, who gave me this story.

Baruch sat with him at his writing desk, and saw how Mrs. Wilson tended her husband wiping from his cheek the traces of some rice. Wilson understood the silent horror of his friend, and said:

"See how great is God's wisdom! He let me become sick, lest the League should become a reality. For that it is still too early in history."

Back in Private Life

Roosevelt agreed with that deeply felt decision of Cox's but from that moment on he considered the prospect hopeless. That he should nevertheless have flung himself into the vain adventure is explained by his character. To fall in defense of the League of Nations, in which he, with his international schooling, believed, was to go down fighting a good fight. Possibly he was egged on too, by the thought of Theodore's son, in the opposing camp,fighting for Harding.

In this duel between these two Roosevelts conducted now without any sparing of the name on either side, Franklin combated in a high spirit the shadow of that shadow which he had always admired only from afar. "He's a maverick," exclaimed Theodore's son once in a speech against his cousin Franklin. "He doesn't have the brand of our family."

With such arguments he even sought entirely in vain to fight down general antipathy of the America of that time against Europe. He did it between six and twenty times a day, delivering about a thousand speeches throughout the country in the course of three months.

The defeat was complete. Mr. Harding was elected President, and the cool Coolidge took the office Roosevelt had run for. Three years later, Roosevelt saw repeated that turn of events which had once lifted Teodore out of his obscure corner. Once again a President died in office.

Coolidge succeeded him and, shortly thereafter, again like Theodore Roosevelt, was himself elected President.

After ten years of public service, Roosevelt went back to private affairs, and as director in a big insurance company earned more money than ever before in his life.