



Theodore Roosevelt and His Times: A Chronicle of the Progressive Movement (Classic Reprint)

Harold Howland

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Excerpt from Theodore Roosevelt and His Times: A Chronicle of the Progressive Movement

He owed to his father, the first Theodore, the wise counsel that launched him on his determined contest against ill health. On the third floor of the house on East Twentieth Street in New York where he was born, October 27, 1858, his father had constructed an outdoor gymnasium, fitted with all the usual paraphernalia. It was an impressive moment, Roosevelt used to say in later years, when his father first led him into that gymnasium and said to him, "Theodore, you have the brains, but brains are of comparatively little use without the body; you have got to make your body, and it lies with you to make it. It's dull, hard work, but you can do it." The boy knew that his father was right; and he set those white, powerful teeth of his and took up the drudgery of daily, monotonous exercise with bars and rings and weights. "I can see him now," says his sister, "faithfully going through various exercises, at different times of the day, to broaden the chest narrowed by this terrible shortness of breath, to make the limbs and back strong, and able to bear the weight of what was coming to him later in life."

All through his boyhood the young Theodore Roosevelt kept up his fight for strength.

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