

Aldrich rose to the height of his power, always on good terms with Roosevelt; it was Roosevelt who, in 1906, wrote an open letter urging the re-election of Speaker Cannon, against whom mutterings had then begun to rise; it was Roosevelt who asked Harriman to come to the White House secretly, who took his money to buy votes in New York, and who afterwards wrote to "My Dear Sherman"—yes, the same Sherman—reviling the capitalist to whom he had previously written saying: "You and I are practical men."

The "Evening Post" is not in itself sufficiently important to warrant an answer, but as representing a class with whose hostility it is necessary to reckon in any genuine movement for decent government, it is worth while to speak of it. There are plenty of wealthy people in this country, and of intellectual hangers-on of wealthy people, who are delighted to engage in any movement for reform which does not touch the wickedness of certain great corporations and of certain men of great wealth. People of this class will be in favor of any æsthetic movement; they will favor any movement against the small grafting politician, against the grafting labor leader, or any man of that stamp; but they cannot be trusted the minute that the reform assumes sufficient dimensions to jeopardize so much of the established order of things as gives an unfair and improper advantage to the great corporation, and to those directly and indirectly responsive to its wishes and dependent upon it. The "Evening Post" and papers of the same kind, and the people whose views they represent, would favor attacking a gang of small bosses who wish to control the Republican party; but they would, as the "Evening Post" has shown, far rather see these small bosses win than see a movement triumph which aims not merely at the overthrow of the small political boss, but at depriving the corporation of its improper influence over politics, depriving the man of wealth of any advantage beyond what belongs to him as a simple American citizen. They would be against corporations only after such corporations had been caught in the crudest kind of criminality.

I have never for one moment counted upon the support of the "Evening Post" or of those whom it represents in the effort for cleanliness and decency within the

MENDACIOUS JOURNALISM

In the New York "Evening Post" of Friday, August 26, there appeared in an editorial article the following statements:

"I will make the corporations come to time," shouted Roosevelt to the mob. But did he not really mean that he would make them come down with the cash to elect him, as he did before? For a man with Mr. Roosevelt's proved record it is simply disgusting humbug for him to rant about the corporations upon whose treasurers he fawned when he was President and wanted their money for his campaign. Does he think that nobody has a memory which goes back to the life insurance investigations, and that everybody has forgotten the \$50,000 taken from widows and orphans and added to Theodore Roosevelt's political corruption fund? Did he not take a big check from the Beef Trust, and glad to get it? And now he is going to make the corporations come to time! One can have respect for a sincere radical, for an honest fanatic, for an agitator or leveler who believes that he is doing God's will; but it is hard to be patient with a man who talks big but acts mean, whose eye is always to the main chance politically, and who lets no friendship, no generosity, no principle, no moral scruple stand for a moment between himself and the goal upon which he has set his overmastering ambition.

This champion of purity, this roarer for political virtue, is the man who was for years, when in public life, hand in glove with the worst political corruptionists of his day; who toadied to Platt, who praised Quay, who paid court to Hanna; under him as President,

Republican party, because the "Evening Post" would support such a movement only on condition that it was not part of a larger movement for the betterment of social conditions. But this is not all. In the struggle for honest politics there is no more a place for the liar than there is for the thief, and in a movement designed to put an end to the dominion of the thief but little good can be derived from the assistance of the liar. Of course objection will be made to my use of this language. My answer is that I am using it merely scientifically and descriptively, and because no other terms express the facts with the necessary precision. In the article in which the "Evening Post" comes to the defense of those in present control of the Republican party in New York State, whom it has affected to oppose in the past, the "Evening Post," through whatever editor personally wrote the article, practiced every known form of mendacity.

Probably the "Evening Post" regards the decalogue as outworn; but if it will turn to it and will read the eighth and ninth commandments, it will see that bearing false witness is condemned as strongly as theft itself. To take but one instance out of the many in this article, the "Evening Post" says: "It was Roosevelt who asked Harriman to come to the White House secretly, who took his money to buy votes in New York, and who afterwards wrote to 'My Dear Sherman'—yes, the same Sherman—reviling the capitalist to whom he had previously written, saying: 'You and I are practical men.'" Not only is every important statement in this sentence false, but the writer who wrote it knew it was false. As far as I was concerned, every man visited the White House openly, and Mr. Harriman among the others. I took no money from Mr. Harriman secretly or openly to buy votes or for any other purpose. Whoever wrote the article in the "Evening Post" in question knew that this was the foulest and basest lie when he wrote the sentence, for he quotes the same letter in which I had written to Mr. Harriman as follows: "What I have to say to you can be said to you as well after election as before, but I would like to see you some time before I write my message." I am quoting without the letter before

me, but the quotation is substantially, if not verbally, accurate. That statement in this letter to Harriman is of course on its face absolutely incompatible with any thought that I was asking him for campaign funds, for it is of course out of the question that I could tell him equally well what I had to say after election if it referred in any possible way to getting money before election. This is so clear that any pretense of misunderstanding is proof positive of the basest dishonesty in whoever wrote the article in question. As a matter of fact, when Mr. Harriman called it was to complain that the National Committee would not turn over for the use of the State campaign in which he was interested funds to run that campaign, and to ask me to tell Cortelyou to give him aid for the State campaign. Mr. Cortelyou is familiar with the facts. In other words, the statement of the "Evening Post" is not only false and malicious, is not only in direct contradiction of the facts, but is such that it could only have been made by a man who, knowing the facts, deliberately intended to pervert them. Such an act stands on a level of infamy with the worst act ever performed by a corrupt member of a legislature or city official, and stamps the writer with the same moral brand that stamps the bribetaker.

I have seen only a telegraphic abstract of the article, apparently containing quotations from it. Practically every statement made in these quotations is a falsehood.

To but one more shall I allude. The article speaks of my having attacked corporations, and, referring directly to my Ohio speeches, of my having "sought to inflame the mob and make mischief." In those speeches the prime stand I took was against mob violence as shown by the labor people who are engaged in controversy with a corporation. My statement was in effect that the first duty of the State and the first duty of the officials was to put down disorder and to put down mob violence, and that after such action had been taken, then it was the duty of the officials to investigate the corporation, and if it had done wrong to make it pay the penalty of its wrongs and to provide against the wrongdoing in the future. It is but another instance of the peculiar baseness, the peculiar moral

obliquity, of the "Evening Post" that it should pervert the truth in so shameless a fashion. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Cheyenne, Wyoming, August 27, 1910.

[Such an article as that to which Mr. Roosevelt refers is not primarily the concern of the man assailed; it is primarily the concern of decent citizens all over the country; its harm to the individual in this case can be disregarded; but its harm to good government is just as real and, so far as it extends, just as deep as the worst act of the corruptionist.—THE EDITORS.]