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Notes: Teddy Roosevelt, 1897-1898, Navy & War Department

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Autobiography:

If a note has not already been made certainly a picture should be drawn of Roosevelt as I saw him in the Winter and Navy & War Department in the Spring of 1897 & 1898. In this connection quote McKinley, "Roosevelt was in a desperate state of mind." (See Pringle) - Chapter which he calls admirably "The Lord of the Navy" and he might have said of the Army.

In connection with the War/Incident there is a chance for a paragraph on my experience in going from Washington in that awful heat to the Adirondacks. I think for the tariff article. Suddenly from out a violent scene of shouting statesmen I came into the quiet of the mountains. Here people went on busily from morning until night - Ted had his school here as I remember - doing useful and interesting things without bluster or accusation or noise. In Washington I felt hopeless of the country, if this is the way men rule us, but back here I saw it was different and when I remembered that four or five thousand miles across the country and three thousand miles north and south there were everywhere communities like this into which I had dropped with such physical and mental and spiritual relief going about their business. They had their eye on Washington, too. We talked it all over in the quiet of the evening and quietly decided that this was not the way to do business. But of course they would have to go ahead - we put them there - that they were being measured up. And I could not help but wonder how many of the excited and
dogmatic individuals that I had heard talking in Congress
or running through as I went about my task at the War Department
how many of them really kept its in mind the vastness of the
country with its center of discussion. I had this experience
again and again being pulled back from Washington and New York
for the power and the lack of the power where it lies, conscious
of itself ordinarily, only intent on making up its mind.

Here I might introduce the impression I got in my
speaking trip as in the Atlantic article. That Atlantic article,
by the way, probably offers the best example of impressions
that I have produced on the way this autobiography should be
written. I think it gets the tone, the tempo, the mental
attitude.

Apropos of T. R. in the War Department at this time
somebody said, and I can't think who it was, maybe it was a
cartoon, "Don't he make you think of a boy on a roller skate
hobby horse tearing up and down these halls, brandishing a
wooden sword. It is just a boyish performance."

But Theodore had a clear idea in his mind to know
that what/boyish performance ought to get for him and he got it.