

TAFT, THE CITIZEN

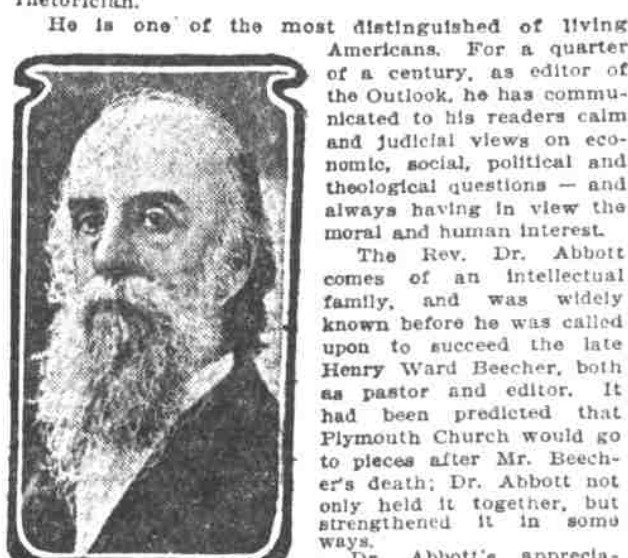
He Has Been Described as "A Great Brain and a Great Heart in a Great Body"



The Taft Smile is infectious.

Making an Address of Civic Duties

THE REV. DR. LYMAN ABBOTT, who has written the following estimate of William H. Taft's citizenship, has in all his work as editor, preacher, lecturer and author, preferred to be regarded as the teacher, rather than the orator or rhetorician.



THE REV. DR. LYMAN ABBOTT

He is one of the most distinguished of living Americans. For a quarter of a century, as editor of the Outlook, he has commended to his readers calm and judicial views on economic, social, political and theological questions—and always having in view the moral and human interest.

By the Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott

THE difficulty with Taft as a candidate, said to me one of his most intimate friends and active supporters, "is that he takes no interest in his own candidacy. He is wholly absorbed in his work, especially in the Philippines, and leaves the campaign to others. 'My dear fellow,' I say to him, 'you are not running for the President of the Philippines Islands.' But it makes no difference to him. Cuba, Panama and the Philippine Islands are much more interesting to him than the national Republican convention."

This absorption in his work is not merely an executive's ambition for achievement; it is not merely a philosopher's interest in problems. Mr. Taft's interest is in men, not in theories. The problem of labor and capital is for him how to promote justice between employers and employed and the welfare of both. His interest in Panama is how to conserve the health and happiness of the men who are digging the canal. How to reduce the death rate is of more consequence to him than how to increase the number of cubic yards of earth displaced each week. The colonial problem he regards not as a curious political question to be worked out in algebraic terms; it is how to promote the welfare of a distant people, whose well-being depends on our success or failure in colonial administration. It was this interest in men which led him to abandon his chosen judicial career to sling away the opening for certain preferment which lay before him and go to the Philippines to organize a government and attempt what had never before been attempted, "to teach an oriental people to become self-governing. 'You are the Father of the Philippines,'" said a friend to him the other day. "Oh no," he answered, "I am not; but what I would like to be called is the Father of the Filipinos." It is the Filipinos, not the Philippines, that interest him; it is not the islands but the islanders he wishes to develop. The sugar industry in the islands he does not wish to promote, because it develops social conditions that do not promise well for the political and industrial development of the people. It is this intensely human quality of Mr. Taft's which makes men wish that he might be the chief justice of the Supreme Court. For our courts need humanizing. They need to realize that they are dealing with living men and women, not with abstract problems in political economy and legal constructions. And there is no man who could do more than Judge Taft to humanize our courts, and no place in which he could do so much as on the Supreme Court bench. It is his human quality that gives him his popular sobriquet of Bill Taft. He likes men, and he likes all sorts of men except those that are dishonest or dishonest. He was the most popular Governor the Philippines have ever had. This was not wholly because he was absolutely just, but loyal to their interests, urged the earliest possible substitution of civil law for military law, and offered an invincible opposition to all schemes of exploiting the islands for the benefit of unscrupulous American pioneers. He



Urging Patriotism Upon Young America 1908 by H.L. Dunn



Comfortable Position for a Discussion

was the personal friend of the Filipinos; he believed in them, defended them, befriended them, trusted them and—danced with them. This last fact, I am inclined to think, went as far as any, perhaps as all of the others combined, to make the Filipinos idolize him, as they certainly do. For Judge Taft is in the best sense of the term a democrat. He is as free from race and class prejudices of every description as any man I have ever known. He is as thoroughly a believer in the motto, "A man's a man for a' that." His friendship for the Filipino is not a patronizing friendship. It is that of a big, wise, helpful brother.

Mr. Taft dancing with the Filipino ladies, who are decidedly below the average American in both weight and height, while I believe Mr. Taft turns the scales only at 269 pounds, has been the theme of some wondering amusement on the part of those who have only seen Mr. Taft on the platform, or caricatures of him in the press. In fact, he is far from the corpulent and elephantine person he is sometimes described as being. The Boston American, which cannot be suspected of having any partisan fondness for him, in a recent semi-humorous description, hit off his physical personality very well:

"Mr. Taft is the kind of man you would expect to find in the president's office of a bank if you went in to start an account. His appearance would give you confidence in the bank. You would say to yourself, 'This man will not let the bank fail if he can possibly help it.'"

A POWERFUL CONSTITUTION

"They have talked a great deal about Mr. Taft as a fat man. He is not a fat man. He has a good broad chest and he stands straight. Below that chest there is a scapular. But it isn't the kind of a round stomach that comes from dissipation or self-indulgence. It is due to the fact that Mr. Taft has a powerful constitution and has not given that constitution sufficient exercise."

I agree with the American that it would be better for Mr. Taft and better for the nation if he would take more exercise. But he takes more than the average reporter seeing him on the platform would imagine. One thinks of a man of his build as a believer in the Arab proverb, "Never walk when you can ride, and never stand when you can sit." But Mr. Taft is not an Arab. There is nothing of the oriental love of ease in his make-up. He likes to walk up and down as he talks to you in his office, and is so light on his feet as he walks that you can readily understand that he may be a notably good dancer despite his avoirdupois. He will put his hands in his pockets much as the President does, and beginning his walk at the fireplace, will walk to the windows of his office, then down its full length, or at right angles down the side of his desk to the opposite wall, and then right about face and back again to the point of departure, and so on continuously.

Mr. Taft's intensity is expressed by his activity. He is a quieter worker than Edwin M. Stanton was, but he is not a less active worker. He is not as quick in his motions, either physically or intellectually, as the President; but he is not less a master workman. The day he was to start for Cuba he was at his desk

finishing up some last details. His assistant gave him warning: "Train starts in half an hour." "All right," was the reply. Presently a second warning. "Only fifteen minutes left, sir." "All right." Finally, "You've only three minutes left, sir." "All right." Came back as serenely as before. And in two minutes the alert secretary of war came out of the office door smiling, calm, imperturbable, unharmed. So the story comes to me; and I can well believe it. The legend seems probable.

If Mr. Taft's intensity is expressed in his actions, his bonhomie and his sense of justice are both expressed in his face. There are some men whom you like, but are not quite sure you can trust, and there are some men you can trust, but do not quite like. Indeed, I am inclined to think that stalwart principle and kindly good nature are not very often commingled in equal proportions in the same person. But in this respect the face of Mr. Taft and of Bishop Brooks are alike. A child would be as ready to go up to the one as to the other and put its little hand confidently in his big hand and go wherever he led the way. That this quality of attractive and unshakable integrity is manifest in Mr. Taft's face was apparent to the writer in the American from whom I have already quoted. "If the boat were sinking, and he could swim and you couldn't, you'd hand him your \$5,000. If you had it—saying, 'Give this to my wife,' and she'd get it if he lived to get ashore."

Mr. Taft's good nature, his inference to set, his apparently infinite patience, enables him to get along with men, however cold or acerb or crochety—provided they are honest. "He can get along with some men," said the President to me recently, "that I can't get along with. We were together in Harrison's administration. I was civil service commissioner; Taft was solicitor general. I got on Harrison's nerves, and whenever I came into the room he set his fingers drumming on the desk before him as though it were a piano. But Taft had no difficulty. And yet he was always a man of highest ideals." But Taft's sense of loyalty makes him seem to the average politician impractical. "This is the secret of the war between him and Senator Foraker in Ohio. I suppose no one in Washington doubts that Judge Taft could have had the presidential nomination with no effective opposition if he would have bought Senator Foraker's support by concluding an alliance with him. There would still have been 'favorite sons' and some 'high finance' opposition, but without any astute political leader to organize anti-Taft forces, the vote for favorite sons would have been powerless, some independent journals, the Washington Star, for instance, cannot see why the alliance should not have been made. 'Why,' it innocently asks, 'should the interests of two such men clash? Why retire Mr. Foraker from a place which he has filled with profit to his people and certainly with great credit to himself? If the end of politics is to get triumph for a party and offices for its leaders, there is no reason. But if the end of politics is to get incorporated in the organization and history of the country certain well-defined national principles, there is the best possible of reasons. For Mr. Foraker has declared himself, in the most explicit and vigorous language, opposed to the principles and policy to which Mr. Taft is devoted. And to Mr. Taft the presidency is not an end. It is only a means to an end; and he does not know how to sacrifice the end to the means—that is, the principle which he holds to the office for which personally he has no desire. The political principles of the two men are essentially and fundamentally antagonistic. It is impossible to har-

monize them. Mr. Foraker opened the campaign against the administration's policy of railway rate regulation by the government. In the famous Senate debate in 1907 he was the foremost leader in the opposition to that policy, and in December of that year, in announcing himself as the presidential candidate against Mr. Taft, he announced this principle of non-interference with the railways as one of the fundamental planks in his political platform. In short, Mr. Foraker is perhaps the most consistent and vigorous of all the national advocates of the policy of leaving the railway corporations to manage the transportation of the country as a private business, and the shippers to seek correction of injustice by an appeal to the courts.

Mr. Taft, on the other hand, has been for a number of years the consistent advocate of the policy of government regulation of the great interstate commerce corporations. So far as I know, he was the first judge to summon railway receivers into court on a charge of rebating. Nine years ago, acting as United States Circuit Judge in Ohio, Mr. Taft discovered that the receiver of the Toledo, St. Louis and Kansas City Railroad Company (popularly known as the "Cleveland") was giving rebates extensively. Judge Taft sent an auditor of his own selection to the receiver's office in Toledo. Upon the auditor's report, verifying the suspicion, Judge Taft sent for the receiver and insisted upon his resignation forthwith. As the secretary says, "No criminal prosecution was begun against the receiver. That question was left open, and the receiver died within a few days after his removal."

KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR

It is fortunate for their health and happiness that both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt have a keen sense of humor, and can laugh at the asseverations of certain unintentionally comic papers, which take themselves quite seriously in their statement that Taft is but an echo of his chief. I first met Judge Taft at the American Bar Association in Detroit, in 1895, where he made an address in which he embodied, in his own judicious fashion, the principles concerning the relations of the federal government to the organizations of both labor and capital, the adoption and enforcement of which by the present administration have brought upon it so much of praise and so much of blame. I shall not attempt here to give an abstract of this paper; a few sentences taken from it will suffice to justify my characterization of it:

"The opportunity freely and publicly to criticize judicial action is of vastly more importance to the body politic than the immunity of courts and judges from unjust aspersion. 'Men of good repute, with complacency and intentional ignorance, acquiesced in the use of corporate funds to buy legislators and councilmen in the corporate interest, when they would not wish or dare to adopt such methods in their individual business.' 'Another reason for popular distrust of corporate methods is the use by corporations of great amounts of capital to monopolize and control particular industries. It is my sincere belief that no such control or monopoly can be maintained permanently unless it is buttressed by positive legislation giving an undue advantage over the public and competitors.' 'In spite of these well-known evils, nothing can be clearer to a calm, intelligent thinker than that, under conditions of modern society, corporations are indispensable both to the further material progress of this country and to the maintenance of that we have enjoyed. The evils must be remedied, but not by

GENEALOGY OF THE TAFT FAMILY

DURING the last years of her life Mrs. Louisa M. Taft, mother of the secretary of war, was busy compiling the New England history of the family from data that had been collected by her husband, Judge Alphonso Taft. Mrs. Taft died last December at her home in Millbury, Mass., while her distinguished son was on his trip around the world. The earliest ancestor reached by Judge Taft's researches was Robert Taft, a housewright, who went from the then province of Brantree and settled at Menton, Mass., in 1649. He had five sons, one of whom, Joseph, was born in 1680, and who married Elizabeth Emerson, the granddaughter of the first minister of Menton. Joseph's second son was Captain Peter Taft, born in 1715. Captain Peter's third son was Aaron, born in 1740. He was fitted for Princeton, but had to leave college before he had finished, although he had already established a reputation as a scholar. He settled at Uxbridge, Mass., but removed to Townsend, Vt., where he died in 1808. He married Rhoda Rawson, the great-great-granddaughter of Edward Rawson, secretary of the Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1650 to 1680. Alphonso Taft, father of the secretary of war, was born in 1810 in Townsend, Vt., and was graduated from Yale in 1832. He taught for two years in an academy in Ellington, Conn., and then became a tutor at Yale. He was admitted to the bar in 1838 and went to Cincinnati the next year. In 1841 he argued before the United States Supreme Court the claim of the city for the bequest of Charles McKicken, which secured the nucleus of the endowment fund for the University of Cincinnati. Mrs. Taft wrote concerning her husband's reputation who he was Judge of the Supreme Court. "No young man was ever turned away because his

case was considered too small for the judge's patience; no experienced lawyer ever felt his case too large or the questions involved too intricate for the judge's capacity and learning." Judge Taft's first wife, Fanny Phelps, was a daughter of Judge Charles Phelps, of Townsend, Vt. She died in 1851. Three children were born to her, one of whom died in infancy. Charles Phelps Taft, the second son, is the proprietor of the Cincinnati Times-Star. The third son, Peter Rawson, died in 1858. Judge Taft married Louisa Maria Torrey in 1853. Her first son, Samuel Davenport Taft, died in infancy. Secretary Taft was the second son, Henry Waters Taft, of New York; the third, Horace Dutton Taft, the fourth, and the fifth child is her daughter, Fanny Louise, wife of Dr. William A. Edwards, of Los Angeles, Cal. "The fact that Secretary Taft throughout his long and honorable public career has received promotion continuously," wrote Mrs. Taft, "is ample evidence of his capability and reliability and of the sterling integrity of his character." Mrs. Taft was descended from William Torrey, who went from Somerset, England, to Weymouth, Mass., in 1640. He was for many years a member of the House of Representatives and a captain of militia, and died in 1690. The fifth and last child of William in the line of descent was reported to have been six feet seven inches tall. He was the father of Samuel Davenport Torrey and grandfather of Mrs. Taft. Mrs. Taft's father married, in 1824, Susan Holman Waters, daughter of Asa Waters, founder of Holman village, and granddaughter of Colonel Jonathan Holman, who raised and commanded a regiment during the Revolution and distinguished himself at the battle of Saratoga. Mrs. Taft's father established himself in Boston in the West Indian trade and retired to Millbury, Mass., in 1821. "Mrs. Torrey was a woman of rare endowment and character," wrote Mrs. Taft, "well educated in the

period, and her highest intelligence was always in the world of thought. She had an irresistible desire to know the best that had been written in literature and philosophy, and she had the courage to follow the new views of truth, which her active and progressive mind attained, to her conclusions." Of her father Mrs. Taft wrote: "Mr. Torrey will be long remembered as a man of marked individuality, of thorough business methods, of inflexible integrity, with a decision and force of character which left a lasting impression wherever he was known."

Mrs. Taft Fond of Outdoor Sport

A GREAT deal of interest, of course, centers about Mrs. Taft, wife of the Republican nominee for the presidency. It seems that she, as well as her distinguished husband, is a believer in outdoor exercise. A dispatch from Washington last fall stated: "Long walks, rowing and open-air exercise of all kinds form the panacea for fatigues caused by the long grind of the winter's social season, according to Mrs. William H. Taft, wife of the secretary of war. She has demonstrated her point." "Mrs. Taft left Washington for the country last spring, with the declaration that another winter in Washington would undermine her health. She was certain that the sure road to the cemetery was through the portals of society life. 'The summer in the country, however, has changed her opinion. She rented a rowboat, took ten-mile walks every day and now returns looking the picture of health and ready for another winter of social duties.'"

destroying one of the greatest instruments for good that social man has devised.

"The repeated efforts of different state Legislatures to impose restriction upon interstate commerce to secure some apparent advantage to their own constituents evidence the profound wisdom of the framers of the constitution in vesting complete control thereof in the national government.

"Like corporations, labor organizations do great good and much evil. The more conservatively and intelligently conducted they are, the more benefit they confer on their members. The more completely they yield to the dominion of those among them who are intemperate of expression and lawless in their methods, the more evil they do to themselves and society.

"The courts, so far as they have expressed themselves on the subject, recognize the right of men for a lawful purpose to combine to leave their employment at the same time, and to use the inconvenience this may cause to their employer as a legitimate weapon in the frequently recurring controversy as to the amount of wages. It is only when the combination is for an unlawful purpose and an unlawful injury is thereby sought to be inflicted, that the combination has received the condemnation of the federal as well as the state courts."

These principles were thus stated in a carefully prepared paper by Mr. Taft at a time when Mr. Roosevelt was acting as president of the Police Board in the city of New York and had given no public utterance of his opinions on the question of great corporations and their relation to the federal government. Mr. Roosevelt would be the first to disavow the notion that he discovered or invented the principles which he has so vigorously and so admirably interpreted. The merit of his administration is that by the vigor of his utterances he has compelled the whole country to recognize their justice and set itself under his leadership to their practical application to existing conditions. Mr. Taft remains faithful to judicial principles which he declared six years before Mr. Roosevelt became President; therefore he is an echo of the President! Principles which he has maintained for at least a dozen years he refuses to abandon when they are adopted by his chief, and therefore he lacks independence! He will not enter into an alliance with Mr. Foraker, who is their chief national antagonist, and therefore he lacks political wisdom!

Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt have been warm personal friends ever since they first met in Harrison's administration in 1890. They were equally and simultaneously interested in the colonial problems in 1900, when Mr. Roosevelt was Governor of the State of New York and Mr. Taft was first president of the Philippine Commission. And from that time the four—McKinley, Root, Roosevelt and Taft—agreed in the two propositions, the Philippines for the Filipinos, and capacity for self-government must precede national independence.

Ever since, in 1878, Mr. Taft was appointed salutarian by the Yale faculty and class orator by his classmates he has been known as an effective speaker. Eloquent? That depends upon what is meant by eloquent. His style is Websterian; he is persuasive and convincing rather than electrifying. He compels attention rather than wins applause. He is not without humor, but the characteristic of his addresses is serious purpose. Some orators reflect their audiences. "What my auditors give to me in spray," said Mr. Gladstone, "I give them back in drops." This is often a very useful service; it formulates undefined and half-conscious impressions and converts them into convictions. Other orators are essentially teachers; they do not apply to oratory the law of supply and demand; they give their auditors opinions which they do not possess and to which they are not naturally inclined. It is to an audience of 2000 colored men in Tuskegee that he criticizes the reconstruction period and approves the limitations in the suffrage imposed by southern constitutional amendments. It is to an audience in Ohio, whose chief city, Cincinnati, is perhaps the worst example of a boss-ridden community in the country, that he speaks in judicial condemnation of rings, machines and bosses. It is before an audience of workmen in Cooper Union, New York, that he condemns labor violence, defends the practice of the courts in enjoining lawlessness, and points out what limitations should be put upon the power of the courts to issue such injunctions. Returning from his trip around the world and speaking in Boston, the cradle of the so-called anti-imperialism, and perhaps the most conservative financial center in the United States, in the morning he tells the clergy why he thinks a long process in self-government must precede the independence of the Philippine islands, and in the evening he tells the merchants that the cause of the hard times is partly world-wide conditions, partly unscrupulous speculation in American financial circles. It is in the same spirit that he has discussed, sometimes before unfriendly, sometimes before indifferent, audiences, during the last five years—to go no further back—and always with absolute frankness, so that there is no mistaking his opinions, such themes as "Our Eastern Policy," "The Currency Question," "The Tariff and Tariff Revision," "Criminal Law," "Local Option," "Sunday Legislation," "The Race Question," "Panama," "Labor and Capital," "The Great Corporations," "Railway Rate Regulation." No defining of his position on any important question is now necessary. The American people know, or can know, where he stands on all national issues. Of what Mr. Taft has accomplished in Panama, Cuba, Japan, China, the Philippines, I do not have space. For I am not attempting to tell the story of his life, but to give a pen-and-ink silhouette of the man. Comparing him with other presidential candidates, he appears to me to be as independent as Mr. Hughes, and to have had a larger experience; possibly not so good a lawyer as Mr. Knox, but a better judge; as human as Mr. Cannon, and possessing ideals which Mr. Cannon disavows possessing; as courteous as Mr. Fairbanks, with a power of action, and at times of splendid wrath, of which Mr. Fairbanks has shown no sign; as truly radical in his advocacy of human rights as Mr. La Follette, but unlike Mr. La Follette, equally determined to defend them whether the assailant is democracy or plutocracy. To define him in a sentence—Mr. Taft is a great brain and a great heart in a great body.