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## A Close Range View of TAFT And The Taft Family

His "Personal Magnitude," His Unfailing Good Nature, His Democratic Qualities, His Industry and Devotion to Duty and His Remarkable Record as Statesman-Traveler—Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott's Tribute—A Laugh For Earth's Sad Places

By ROBERTUS LOVE.

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CHARLIE TAFT.

PERSONAL popularity counts for much in this world. Particularly does it bear weight in politics. No unpopular man ever was elected to office. Still, there are degrees of popularity, and there are men who possess the quality of likableness far above the average of their fellows. William H. Taft is one of these. "Personal magnetism"—he has it in great abundance. An old darkey in the south was discussing Mr. Taft's chances for the presidency. He was for Taft because Taft is popular.

"What makes Mr. Taft so popular, uncle?" asked a bystander.

"His pussional magnitude," promptly replied Uncle Rastus.

It cannot be denied that there is much of personal magnetism about Mr. Taft, who weighs in the neighborhood of 300 pounds when he is in fighting trim. He is a big man, and he was a big boy. Somehow men of extra avoirdupois usually enjoy a greater degree of popularity than do their brethren of the shrunken shank and the lean and hungry look. Most large men are good natured and jolly. When bigness runs to frame, to head and to heart the combination is irresistible. That is the Taft sort of bigness, for the secretary of war combines with his big frame a large and active intellect and a heart of human kindness that beats for all.

The Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott says: "It is this intensely human quality in Mr. Taft 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 disloyal. He was the most popular governor the Filipinos have ever had. This was not wholly because he was absolutely just, was 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 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



ROBERT TAFT.

any, perhaps as all 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.'

Those who know Mr. Taft either intimately or casually testify to his unfailing good nature, his spirit of comradeship. He is a man who likes a joke and upon occasion can crack one himself. The Taft smile is famous because of its reproduction in newspaper and magazine pictures. The Taft laugh cannot be reproduced thus, but a recent caller at the war department said after having heard the big cabinet officer laugh: "A great, deep roared laugh—the Taft laugh, in fine—which ought to be put on a phonograph record and sent to all those sad places on this earth where folks never smile."

But Mr. Taft can be stern when sternness is required. He knows how to enforce discipline in the army or out of it. When Taft was placed in charge of the Panama canal work as secretary of war he received a delegation of steam shovel engineers who were threatening to strike for more pay. The spokesman said:

"We'll strike right now if you don't agree to give us this raise."

"Do I understand you rightly, gentlemen?" inquired the secretary. "Do you mean to say that you want that raise before I have decided and that if you don't get it you'll strike?"

"Yes; that's right," replied the other, with a swagger.

"Then, gentlemen," said the secretary, "will you kindly step over to that table and write out your resignations?"

The men didn't want to resign. They reconsidered. The upshot was that

they went back to work. Taft investigated their claims and after due consideration determined not to grant them the increase until such time as all other classes of labor employed on the canal could have a proportionate raise in pay.

Though Mr. Taft's home has been in Cincinnati all his life and he still votes in the city where he was born, it is probably a fact that no man ever considered for the presidency of the United States has been such a globe trotter. Mr. Taft has been nearly everywhere. He is essentially a world citizen, having hobnobbed with kings and commons, with princes and peasants, in various countries. It is estimated by a careful statistician that in his official capacity since his appointment as chairman of the Philippine commission Mr. Taft has traveled approximately 150,000 miles, or half a dozen times around the earth. It seems as easy for him to undertake a journey halfway around the world as it is for the average person to make a hundred mile trip. And Mr. Taft always works hard right up to the last minute. When he was about to start on the journey to the Philippines which became famous as the "matchmaking trip" because the president's daughter and other young ladies found their life romances en route the secretary of war was exceedingly busy. He had much work to do in his office in the war department. A messenger notified him that it was but twenty minutes to train time.

"All right," cheerily responded Taft, continuing at work.

Five minutes later the messenger announced the flight of time.

"All right," said Taft.

When there were but ten minutes to spare a second messenger rushed in and tried to hurry up the chief personage connected with the journey.

"Train leaves in ten minutes, Mr. Secretary."

"Very well," said Mr. Secretary, still working at his desk.

About eleven minutes later the first messenger walked in and remarked:



GOLFING TAFT ON THE PUTTING GREEN.

"Your train has just pulled out of the station, Mr. Secretary."

"Fine!" cried Taft, with the Taft laugh. He knew very well, of course, that his train would wait for him, and he was not worried. Twenty minutes later he bundled up the department papers on which he could work en route, stepped into his carriage and went to the railroad station.

"A train can wait," he remarked to his private secretary, "but the United States war department business can't."

Though Mr. Taft is a very busy man, he finds time to keep well acquainted with his family. He is a fine family man, with a fine family. Mrs. Taft, the first lady in the land in the event of her husband's election to the presidency, is a daughter of John W. Herron, who was President Hayes' law partner. The Hayes and Herron families were on terms of close intimacy. During the Hayes presidency young Miss Helen Herron, now Mrs. Taft, spent the Christmas holidays in the White House, the president being "uncle" to her and Mrs. Hayes "Aunt Lucy." This visit remains Mrs. Taft's pleasantest recollection of girlhood times. "Nothing in my life," she has said, "touches the bliss of human bliss which I felt as a girl of sixteen when I was entertained at the White House."

Mrs. Taft is handsome, intellectual, talented, witty and vivacious. She has been a student of music all her life and for seven years was president of

the Cincinnati Symphony orchestra. She believes in the higher education for both men and women, and it is her proudest boast that all her children are studious. Her daughter, Miss Helen Herron Taft, now sixteen, has elected to take a full college course and is at Bryn Mawr. The eldest son, Robert Alphonso Taft, is nineteen and is a junior at Yale. He took two entrance prizes when he entered the university. He has chosen the law as his profession. The other child is Charlie, a boy of ten, who now dreams of West Point.

"I am old fashioned enough," says Mrs. Taft, "to believe that woman is the complement of man and that what is most feminine about her is most attractive to man and therefore of the greatest utility to the world. It does not seem to me that a college course makes a girl unfit for domestic obligations."



MRS. WILLIAM H. TAFT.

tions or masculine in her tastes. All women are not called on to preside over a home or to rear children, but I think that all broad minded women concede that this is the loftiest type of usefulness."

Mrs. Taft says she never has had time for fads or to cultivate eccentricities—she has been too busy. She delights in traveling and in studying foreign tongues. During her residence in Manila she studied Spanish very diligently, and also some of the Tagal dialects. As Mrs. Taft has accompanied her husband on most of his long journeys, she, like him, is an exceptionally experienced traveler. She is still a young woman, having been married but twenty-one years, and is the most youthful looking lady in the cabinet circle. Until the accession of Mrs. James R. Garfield she was, in fact, the youngest.

The home life of the Tafts is described as ideal. Miss Helen, like her mother, is bookish and intellectual. Robert, like his father, is ambitious to excel in the law. It is remembered that up to a few years ago Judge Taft's great ambition was to become a member of the supreme court. He has turned aside from two opportunities to



MISS HELEN TAFT.

reach that exalted position owing to his devotion to the duty immediately before him. He declined to quit the Philippines until he had completed the work for which he was sent to the islands.

In religious matters the Tafts are divided, but not at all inharmoniously. The secretary is a member of the Unitarian church. Mrs. Taft is an ardent Episcopalian. Miss Helen has been confirmed in her mother's church, while young Robert Taft is a parishioner of All Souls' Unitarian church in Washington along with his father. Little Charlie's religion at present has to do chiefly with forts, arsenals and guns, but that may be due to the fact that his father is secretary of war. Mrs. Taft and her daughter attend St. John's Protestant Episcopal church in Washington.

Secretary Taft is a hard and systematic worker. He is accredited with doing an enormous quantity of work every day in the war department. When he is absent from Washington he usually carries great packets of public documents along upon which to work en route. When in Washington he frequently takes public papers home so that he can work in the privacy of his study.

Mr. Taft has been considered lucky by his friends as a remarkably lucky man. He has not known the bitterness of defeat in any of his endeavors toward distinction. As a matter of fact, with the single exception of his election to the Ohio Judgeship, all his preferences have come to him by appointment. It is a remarkable fact that when he was but thirty-two years of age his name was considered seriously for appointment to the supreme bench of the United States, and it was only his youth that caused the president to reconsider and finally name an older man.

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