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## MR. WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT.

The following account of the career of Mr. Taft, Republican candidate for the United States Presidency, appears in the *Review of Reviews*. It is from the pen of Mr. Walter Wellman, who has known the subject of his article for many years, and his remarks therefore assume an enhanced value:

Twenty-five men have been President of the United States. Not often, if ever, have the American people deliberately set out to train a man for the Presidency, to prepare him through education and experience and work for the responsibilities of their highest and most exacting public office. That is what they are doing now, have been doing for some years. They are training William Howard Taft to be President. He has been nominated by the Republican party, and his chances of election are fairly good, though by no means certain.

If Mr. Taft is chosen to be the twenty-sixth man to sit in the Presidential chair he will be placed there because an intensely practical people, in a period of their history when emotionalism is somewhat checked and dull, follow out their natural instinct to recognise, to reward, and to utilise the highest efficiency. That is a natural instinct with the American people. In America there is surer, quicker recognition of individual merit, efficiency, power to do things and do them well, than in any other country. More or less consciously, but none the less surely, the American people are trying to use this principle in their President-making.

If ever a man was put in training for the Presidency and kept there, and required to go through all the arduous experience sure to fit him for the final and highest promotion, that man is Mr. Taft. From first to last he unconsciously acted precisely as if he were conscious, as if he were ambitious for the Presidency, as if he realised that he had signed articles with the American people. That is the way the greatest achievements of the larger scheme of things are almost always worked out in this world.

Mr. Taft trained himself for the Presidency, without knowing it, by always following the law of gravity of his nature, the force which compels him ever to do his best. His is not a complex character. It is not difficult to analyse. It is large, massive, plain, strong, simple. But the very heart, essence, and vitality of it is this something within him which compels him, in every situation and task and relation, every day, hour, and moment, to give forth his best, to reserve nothing of strength from his duty to forget himself, to throw himself into his work with all his might for the very love of doing that or through the sheer impossibility of doing anything else. The blood of the Puritans is in his veins, and Duty is the god of the practical modern Puritan.

We read this dominant note of his character,—this seeking of excellence,—throughout all we know of his half-century of life. In boyhood he excelled both in games and studies. At Yale he was not only the most popular man of his class as "Big Bill Taft," but the leader of his class in every activity,—the stroke of his class crew, the champion wrestler of the university, and finished second in scholarship in a class of more than 100. Leaving college, he took up the first work that came to hand, as newspaper and law reporter while studying law. He was a good reporter, a good student. Though he had a famous and well-to-do father, he made his way on his own merits. He practised law with success, held one or two minor offices in Cincinnati, became a judge of the Superior Court of that city, and a little more than eighteen years ago appeared in Washington as Solicitor-General under the Administration of President Harrison. Here again his habit of hard work stood him in good stead. He won several important cases, and attracted attention above the ordinary run of easy-going departmental officials. At this time, also, he met and made a friend of another young official, then Civil Service Commissioner Roosevelt. It was not strange that Roosevelt, the energetic, the strenuous, and Taft, "the big steam-engine working day and night," should find something in common; nor is it necessary to say that the friendship between them has been of importance to both, and is likely to continue of importance for years to come.

Upon leaving Washington it was to become United States Circuit Judge at Cincinnati. Here again he did his best. Duty was his master. He rendered certain decisions affecting labour which to this day are much discussed, which have brought him more or less criticism from labour leaders and spokesmen. Moreover, there was courage as well as conscience in those decisions. One of them was rendered in troubled times. There was a railway strike; passions ran high; a number of men, misrepresenting labour, gathered in the court-room, and muttered that if the judgment were against them the judge should not leave the building alive. The blue-eyed judge faced them serenely, smilingly; calmly he announced his decision. Then the smile vanished, a fighting glint came into the blue eyes, down upon the desk banged a large, firm hand, and a clear voice rang out: "When you leave this room I want you to do so with the knowledge that if there is enough power in the army of the United States to run these trains, these trains will run." Then the judge strode out of the room, unafraid, and the sullen crowd melted away. The trains were run.

It was in 1900 that Mr. Taft made his appearance upon the national field of action. President McKinley was in trouble about the administration of the difficult affairs of the Philippines. He was at loss to find the man for the emergency. "I want a man who is big, strong, patient, tactful yet firm, and willing to kill himself with hard work if necessary," said McKinley to Mr. Day, then his Secretary of State. "Why don't you send for him then?" replied Day; "Will Taft is the man you want,—he's on the bench at Cincinnati." McKinley telegraphed Taft to come to Washington. Taft came, without the slightest idea of what was wanted of him. He was amazed when told it was desired he should go to the Philippines and try to create a nation out of that crude, peculiar, bleeking, heterogeneous, unpromising human mass. Taft did not want to go, and said so frankly, adding that he had not believed in holding the Philippines, and that his ambition was for judicial, not executive work. "But here is one of the most difficult tasks now confronting our nation," said McKinley. "You are the man to do it. You must help me out. It is your duty." And because he, too, saw that it was his duty, and for no other reason, Taft at length assented.

That was only eight years ago. In three and a half centuries Spanish rule had given the people of the Philippines one institution—the Church. In three and a half years Taft moulded them into a nation—a rudimentary nation, true, but equipped with all the institutions of modern civilisation. He smiled upon those people, and won their liking; he laughed with them, and won their good humour; he worked for them, and won their confidence; he made "the Philippines for the Filipinos" his guiding star. Now the Filipinos affectionately call him "Santo Taft." To them he must indeed appear as something like a saint. It was Taft who convinced a sceptical world that the Americans not only had the power successfully to administer a colonial trust, but to administer it beneficently, unselfishly—working like a human steam-engine at Manila and appealing to the American people at home for justice and help and patience. He protected the national conscience and preserved the national honour.

Taft is a man many of whose ways are those of a boy—a big, husky, rollicking boy, ever ready for a laugh or a joke or a prank, yet never overstepping the bounds of dignity, mixing jest and laughter with work, always bright and sunny, yet always a marvel of industry and achievement.

At college we see him declining to accept a class post of honour because someone had questioned the regularity of his election, only to be unanimously chosen to the same place immediately afterward. At Cincinnati we see him giving a sound and well-deserved thrashing to the editor of a scurrilous sheet who had slandered his father. As judge on the federal bench we see him declining an offer to go to New York as member of a law firm, with a guaranty of 50,000 dollars a year, saying, "There are bigger things in this world than money." In the Philippines we see him taking advantage of every possible means of winning the affection and confidence of his wards, even going so far as to have a native prepare for him a diagram of the native rigodon, or Spanish quadrille, that he might

study its movements and be able to lead the wives of the presidents through its mazes in a manner creditable to the Governor of the islands and builder of a new nation—in forty days attending no fewer than a score of state balls, and literally dancing and smiling his way into the hearts of the people. We see him, at the end of a long, hard ride in the hot sun upon the back of a mule, keeping his own dinner waiting an hour while he goes in person to make sure that the weary beast of burden had his supper. We see him at his summer home in Quebec, at midnight, clad in the robes of repose, walking barefoot through the dewy grass with a mosquito-bitten and sleepless babe on either arm that tired womenfolk might sleep. This giant is as gentle as he is strong.

(To be concluded.)

## GENERAL NEWS.

### NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

#### THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

London, July 23.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald asked the Under Secretary for the Colonies whether any agreement had now been reached between His Majesty's Government and the Natal Ministry regarding the payment of Dinizulu's salary.—Col. Seely regretted that no agreement had so far been arrived at. Correspondence would shortly be laid on the subject. The view of His Majesty's Government was that one side or the other was honourably bound to pay this money, and in view of the poverty of the prisoner His Majesty's Government had decided to pay it forthwith. The question of the allocation of the money would be decided later.—Answering Mr. Mackarness, Col. Seely said that the Government greatly regretted the protraction of the proceedings in connection with the prosecution of Dinizulu. It was, however, only right to remember that the circumstances and position of the prisoner necessarily put special difficulties in the way of the production of native evidence. He had every reason to hope that the prolonged examination of Dinizulu was coming to a close.—Mr. Mackarness: Is it the view of the Natal Government that they have not yet enough evidence on which to frame an indictment?—Col. Seely said he could not state the view of the Natal Government unless he had sufficient notice to ascertain what their view was.—Mr. Macneill: Is it not the fact that natives have been flogged to give evidence against Dinizulu?—Col. Seely: There is no evidence that the witnesses have been subject to pressure of this kind.—Mr. Macneill: Has the hon. gentleman seen the statement of Miss Colenso?—Col. Seely: Yes; I have seen the statement, and I have given the answer I have given (Opposition cheers). Answering further questions the hon. gentleman said His Majesty's Government felt sure that the Government of Natal would see that it was nothing less than a public scandal if this native chief were retained indefinitely in custody.

Mr. H. C. Lea asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he could give the House an assurance that the King's Regulations would be altered so as to forbid any officer or man in the British Navy engaging in business.—Mr. McKenna: No, sir.—Mr. Lea: Is the House to assume that the Board of Admiralty consider that it is conducive to the best interests of the taxpayers in this country that their naval officers should engage in business?—Mr. McKenna said the hon. gentleman had asked him whether it was proposed to make any change in the King's Regulations on the subject of forbidding any officer in the Navy to engage in business. The Admiralty did not propose to make any change.—Mr. Lea: Is the House to assume that the Board of Admiralty consider that it conduces to the best interests of the Navy that officers on full pay are to engage in business besides carrying out their naval duties?—Mr. McKenna replied: The hon. gentleman did not ask me about officers on full pay, but about officers in the British Navy, and I have given him an answer.—Mr. Lea said he would alter his question, and ask about officers on full pay.—Mr. McKenna: When the hon. gentleman has altered his question I may give him an answer (cheers).

(Continued on page 2.)