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### MR. WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT.

(Concluded.)

The laugh of Taft, deep, rumbling, laugh-compelling, the laugh of a whole-souled, wholesome, buoyant, boyish man, full of love of life and his fellows and of confidence in himself, has been heard around the world. The humour of Taft and the humour about Taft fit the humour of the American people. The people like Taft all the better for the trousers that were worn at St. Petersburg, all the better because he and Mrs. Taft were good enough Americans to make a famous tour of the world, meeting Mikados and Emperors and Kings and Kaisers, without taking with them either maid or valet.

He worked so hard at Manila that he exhausted the strength of all his aides, one after another, and at last his own health broke down and his doctor told him he must rest and return to the United States or his life would be in danger. Just at this time came an offer from the President of the United States to give him the seat on the Supreme Bench which his heart has always craved; but he fears that if he leaves the islands at that juncture his work and his wards may suffer, and he cables Washington: "Thanks, but impossible to leave here now." Again, within a year, the same temptation is placed before him, and again it is resisted. We see him many times appearing before Congressional committees, pleading for justice for his people, for help in the great task of making a free and progressive nation of them. One of these campaigns of education continued almost every day for six weeks.

He once said laughingly, "I believe I must be possessed of a little of the missionary spirit." Taft is a missionary in his work, but not much of a preacher in words. His blunt frankness, his abhorrence of indirection, his detestation of cowardice or "trimming," lead him often to say disagreeable things in a most agreeable way—to tell people that which they do not like to hear. Thus we hear him making a speech in Ohio denouncing a local boss without whose aid the Republicans could not carry the State, and without whose enforced support Taft himself would have had trouble in getting the delegates from his home city. We hear him making a speech in the capital city of a Western State, where the Governor was idolised by a great majority of the people, and criticising that Governor by name, out of sheer intellectual courage—some might call it recklessness—because there was not great need of it; that Governor, now a Senator, is a "favourite son" candidate against Taft. He goes to Boston and tells the "anti-imperialists" who would give the Filipinos their complete independence the plain, blunt truth about the Philippines.

Because of this invariable frankness, of this scorn of treacle and love of plain-speaking, it long ago became a tradition at the national capital that "Taft was a mighty poor politician," that he might reach the Presidency if he had more political sense. Those who thought Taft a great administrator but a poor politician were sure of it last year when he rejected overtures for peace in Ohio. Not for its historic value, but for the flood of light it throws

upon the character of Taft, is this episode of interest. Senator Crane, of Massachusetts, with a genius for compromises and peace-making, and with the best intentions in the world, sought to still the storm of party strife in Ohio. His plan was simple—Ohio for Taft as President, for Foraker for another term in the Senate. Crane saw Foraker; he was willing. He saw President Roosevelt; the President thought it a fine idea. "Go and tell Taft I like it and think it should go through."

Thus encouraged, the friend of peace sought Taft. To his amazement, Taft would have none of it. "What you virtually ask me to do is to enter into a compact that in consideration of Senator Foraker's support of me for President I am to ask my friends in Ohio to support him for Senator. Now, I have no objection to the re-election of Senator Foraker. But many of my friends in Ohio are opposed to the return of Mr. Foraker to the Senate. They had determined to oppose him long before I was thought of for the Presidency. In plain English, to secure harmony in Ohio I must sell out my friends. This I absolutely refuse to do. This is my answer—once and for all, no! A man might pay too high a price for the Presidency."

For this Taft was denounced as a stubborn, brutal man, without any political sense. And yet, in the end, in the larger working out of things, it does not appear that Taft was such a poor politician after all. It is never poor politics to be honest, straightforward, honourable to friend and foe.

It has become axiomatic at Washington that whenever trouble occurs anywhere in the world beyond the power of the ordinary agencies to deal with, Taft is the man who must be sent to straighten it out. Not only did he bring order out of chaos in the Philippines, but he averted civil war and anarchy in Cuba, settled the difficult problem of the friars' lands by a visit to the Vatican, started the vast activity at Panama in effective fashion, and then went back again to adjust a threatened struggle between two jarring States. Though the Secretary of Peace, he carried on the War Department with a strong grip upon its details, helped to reorganise the army and create a general staff, and incidentally found time to make a tour of the world and to travel all over the country as a fast-rising favourite for the Presidency. President Roosevelt said of him, "Taft is the biggest going concern in the country." He keeps going all the time. He works from eight in the morning till midnight. He not only works hard, but plays hard, laughs hard, sleeps hard, eats hard, and sometimes hits hard when roused, as Bowen and Stevens would be willing to certify. If he keeps going with luck this giant of a boy will reach the post for which destiny has been training him through these busy years.

The Presidency is without much doubt just what President Roosevelt has called it, "the hardest job on earth." The Presidency is now so big a post, its duties are so complex, they ramify so extensively and intimately to all the activities of the Government and of the people, that the human-nature side of the occupant of the high chair is of far greater importance than the intellectual side.

Not only has Taft had the training that fits him to be President; he has the temperament. It would be difficult to imagine a temperament better adapted

than his to this difficult task. He is a happy halfway between McKinley and Roosevelt, with most of the strength and few of the weaknesses of both. He has the training of the lawyer, of the judge, of the administrator, of the diplomat. He knows the American people, he knows the Government, he knows the affairs of the world. He has an almost unprecedented power of handling affairs and men. Serenity abides with him, and patience, and justice, and strength, and firmness. He may never fire the hearts of the people as Roosevelt has; he may never be looked upon by all as a paragon of unpicturesque goodness as was McKinley. But if Taft becomes President he will get results. He will be master without carrying a whip. He will always strive, as we see he has always striven, to use infinite pains to get at all the facts, to clarify them, to form slow but sure judgments, and then to stand by them. At the White House, if Taft presides there, will be a great calm, great patience of listening and investigation, great energy of work, great good humour, great peace.

## GENERAL NEWS.

### NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

#### MR. HALDANE'S EXHORTATION.

London, July 25.  
Speaking as the guest of honour at a banquet given by the South African Civil Surgeons' Association last night, Mr. Haldane, Secretary of State for War, said that if Englishmen desired to maintain their position and reputation in the world it was incumbent upon them to carefully study Germany's activity in every sphere.

#### SUCCESS OF NEW MILITARY AIRSHIP.

Farnborough, July 25.  
The new dirigible military airship, "Nulli Secundus," made a successful ascent yesterday afternoon after two disappointing failures, owing to the motors failing to work properly. No details are yet obtainable as to the actual results of the airship's maiden trip.

#### THE BOMBAY RIOTS.

Bombay, July 24.  
Outrages by strikers continue to be perpetrated on officials and policemen, many of whom have been stoned by the turbulent mobs. Today the crowd assumed a very threatening attitude and hurled stones at the police, whereupon a volunteer detachment of military fired a volley, killing five and wounding 43 of the agitators. The situation shows signs of slight improvement, although there still exists cause for anxiety.

### NEWS FROM AMERICA.

#### THE VOYAGE OF THE "INDOMITABLE."

Quebec, July 24.  
The following details have been made known relative to the voyage of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales to Quebec in the new cruiser "Indomitable."

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