

# VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

dollar a day upwards. High class private board may be secured for \$10 per week within the city limits; but let no one come expecting to find a plethora of "Wanted Boarders." The truth is Victoria hasn't enough private accommodation for tourist guests!

Perhaps my own experience may be of use to some other cramped purse. I "discovered" Alberni quite by accident. It was a happy accident I shall always think! The boat "Tees" (captained by Townsend) runs once a week from Victoria to what is called "west coast." This takes in such important points as Bamfield, where the Pacific cable station is found, and the visitor is permitted to land and see the working cable enter the Sound (Berkeley) on its long journey to Brisbane, Australia! This

is one of the sights of the world I can assure you! Then Alberni comes, an important lumbering section and on again to Uclulet, the Presbyterian mission; on to "Wreck Bay," where the tourists may "pan-out" so much as \$3 per diem of gold flecks from wet sands. On again to Long Beach, a stretch of musical sands running twelve miles along the face of the broad Pacific sea! The "musical" sands give out sounds of running gamut under the footfall; if they were anywhere on the Yankee side of the line there would be all sorts of big advertising done to bring people to hear the queer singing sands. Then there is the run to the whaling station, where each day the whaling vessels go out and bring in from one to thirteen monsters of the deep.

The "Tees" puts up meals and "comfy" little state rooms are given; and Capt. Townsend occasionally invites his guests to his quarter-deck, where the wheel-man stands like some grim figure of stone. The simile is broken only when he repeats his captain's order: "West by sou'-west, sir!" and it is perfectly grand to catch sight (as it is perfectly horrible to get sniff of) the great whales being cut up and robbed of their oil, which gives Victoria Island one of its biggest industries, by the way.

Board in the farm homes of Alberni is to be had for from \$5 a week, to \$10 in town at an hotel. It was my good luck to find shelter at "Valleyfield" farm, where I had free use

daily of a coupe and pony, and where I found prime fishing twenty rods below the house. As I write the big whitewashed brick fireplace is breathing cedar breaths. Just below my window is a half acre of strawberries; at the south side stands apple and peach trees, the latter a mass of pink buds; and the raspberries, currants, etc., are full in promise and flower! To speak of the table cheer of "Valleyfield" seems vulgar, if not profane; but the hot scones, oat cake, ginger cookies and home-made bread of my genial hostess; with the eggs, warm from the nest, and cream that goes glug, glug, into my coffee, served each morning at my bed side, makes me regret that tomorrow it all ends and my six weeks holiday is over!

The cost of the boat trip from Victoria to Alberni is \$3.25 and \$1 for state room. Meals, 50 cents each. The run is twenty hours. The return trip may be made by motor or horse stage over the summit (1,300 feet high), taking the train at Nanaimo for Victoria, or the steamer for Vancouver again. The stage road is sixty-two miles through a magnificently treed country; here you get a view of the biggest timber in the north. The trip costs \$5 one way, or \$8 the round trip.

I have no hesitation in recommending to the tired out school teacher, the weary office woman, or indeed the person of leisure, this grand and most beautiful west coast country as a holiday, taken as above suggested, and believe it can be done satisfactorily for \$150.

## William H. Taft, a Presidential Probability—His Career

FEW months ago, during the latter part of the year 1907, a large man swung off a train in a Russian town; he walked quickly down the platform of the station, swinging his shoulders as he walked, and smiling with kindly eyes into the strange faces that greeted him, writes Allen White in the American Magazine for May. In due time, as he stood looking about him, chatting with the men of his party, a delegation in uniform came up and dumbly saluted him. He returned the salute with dignity, the occasion required, smiling pleasantly into the eyes he could catch in a personal way, and turning to a man in his own party who was acting as interpreter said: "Oh, tell them we're glad to see them; that we have enjoyed our journey through Russia, and that we have been treated most magnificently." His face wrinkled a little to foreboding, a smile—"you know—say that we've seen no poverty," the smile crowded up into his eyes, and closed them into slits. "Tell 'em they're all right—you know—the usual old thing—anything—just fix it up," and he laughed quietly, looking at the dumb auditors with the benign face of an over-fed saint. Then the interpreter went at it. He talked for a long time, and waxed eloquent, and when he was done there was a consultation in the visiting delegation, then out stepped a spokesman. He was a solemn man, and he said in most beautiful English: "Most honorable secretary, we understand entirely what you have said, and appreciate its spirit and its friendly interest in us, but we can not understand what this other man has been trying to say." And then the big man threw his head back and laughed, and his party laughed, and the solemn Russian envoy smiled, and they all shook hands and laughed again, and when the train pulled out and the scene was ended, the ancient friendship between that particular section of the Russian nation and the American people was re-established more firmly by the episode than it could have been by gifts or language or by protestation, for the whole incident was so human that the American representative left with that Russian delegation the soul of brotherhood and not the mere declaration of it.

The next day, or perhaps a day or two afterwards, the same large man slipped gently out of bed at 6 o'clock, and groped around in the dark of the murky morning looking for his trousers. He did not make a light for fear of waking his wife. Prodding quickly but softly through the dusk, falling easily over the concealed furniture of the room, he was getting well along toward a half-dressed stage without waking his wife to ask her where things were packed—after the fashion of Americans of his class—when in drawing on his trousers—his only pair of black trousers—his Sunday trousers, if you must know the truth, pressed and rather unfamiliar—he lost his balance and fell, sticking one foot through a trouser knee. A man weighing 240 pounds can put considerable force and emphasis into a job of his toe when he tries to catch his balance with it, and the hole loomed up dark, gloomy and peculiar. He couldn't bring himself to awaken his wife. He knew that she was tired and needed the sleep. So he called a bell-boy and asked him to have the trousers mended. They were his best trousers, the only pair he had that would "go" with his black clothes, and he had to ride two hours in a sleigh and meet by appointment at 9 o'clock the czar of all the Russias. There was nothing to do but to wait for the bell-boy's return with the mended garment. When the boy came he brought such a botch job that the fat man grinned and tackled it himself. But he was in a hurry, and his hands were strong and clumsy, and zip went a second tear right across the knee. He looked at the hopeless wreck a moment and then rose, hunted for and found a black sock, snipped off the foot, drew the black stocking up over his knee to cover the white underclothing, put on his trousers, got into the rest of his clothing and marched proudly out to the sleigh, and met the czar as America's representative—a "gentleman afraid."

And thus, smiling, always thoughtful of others, always kind, full of makeshifts for every emergency, the common man and not ashamed of it, William H. Taft went around the globe last year, the official representative of the kindly, shifty, hearty Yankee people. Always his sense of humor saved him whole. He was America incarnate—sham-hating, hard-working, crackling with jokes upon himself, lacking in pomp but never in dignity, the

brother but never the father of all the world, a dynamo in a velvet box, a great, boyish, wholesome, dauntless, shrewd, sincere, kindly gentleman. And when he got home after four months spent in lands where caste and rank and the pride and "circumstance of glorious war" marked the relations of men of his station toward their subalterns, one day at lunch at the army and navy club, in the kindness of his heart the big man ducked under a divan, and pawed about looking for a pair of lost overshoes for a captain of infantry whom the secretary of war might have sent to Alaska with a scratch of his pen. Yet this amiable giant was the man who several years ago, rigid with anger, strode over to a cardinal representing the pope and asking too much of the American people in behalf of the church in the Philippines, and roared out so that the servants heard him: "No, sir—no, sir; that is unfair, that is un-American, and never on earth will we yield an inch in that direction." And so great is the power of kindness—even when it sheathes an iron determination—that all the friends of Taft in the world none is more loyal than the cardinal whose plan Taft thwarted.

Would Be Our First Suburban President. For, after all, it is the heart more than the hand of one's antagonist that breeds enmity. And the diplomacy of the sackcoat will get as far in this world on its essential kindness and fairness as the diplomacy of gold braid and tin swords will get on its essential selfishness and greed. For, after all, this is a sackcoat world. Generally speaking, the world has come to the belief that the longer tails a man's working coats have the less energy and the lower temperature will be displayed. Between the sans-culottes and the spiketails is the business suit, and in America, at least, that is the royal garment. Secretary Taft and Mrs. Taft went around the world without a valet or a maid, visiting high potency princes and powers. Taft belongs to that class of Americans who when occasion requires can hook up their

wives' dresses in the back and lace their own shoes. And this does not mean necessarily that the Tafts are "poor but honest." They are the kind of people who most of their lives have lived in a house of nine rooms, on an income ranging from \$2,000 to \$6,000 a year, with one or two servants, a horse and buggy, and a child in college. The independence of America is in that class. For the man who does not need a valet is not much awed by a king. If Taft should be made president of this republic he would never cease to be in the heart of him a straphanger, a commuter, not of the city, with its crass wealth and biting poverty, nor of the country—but a suburban president, the first of his type. Our presidents have been curiously reflective of our national life. A considerable minority of the men whom this nation had elected to the presidency since the Civil war—Lincoln, Grant, Hayes, McKinley—have come from the farm. Cleveland was village-bred, Roosevelt was city-bred. Harrison got his best training from the inland town. But this new type of American from the suburban community, who as a boy knew both swimming hole and pavement, who roamed the woods and fought the north end gang, who was afraid of neither cows nor cars—that is a new type of man in American politics—a type that must become more and more prevalent as the country grows less and less rural and more and more urban.

Often an illuminating point at a man may be had by looking at his boyhood; and the boyhood of William Howard Taft, which began in Auburn, a suburb of Cincinnati in eighteen-sixty-four, when he was seven years old, was the rollicking, fighting, dreaming, animal boyhood of the average American boy, who has hooks and brooks around him, and is torn in his heart to decide which tempt him most. In his early teens he resembled the type of tall, rawboned, lubberly, queasy-voiced, milky-eyed shock-headed, big-footed boy who laughs at himself more than at any one else; and Taft's whole boyhood career is epitomized in

the fact that a dozen or so men now in their late forties and early fifties scattered over this planet remember the honorable secretary of war, not as William, not even as Will, certainly not as Willie and not as Bill, but as "old Bill." Taft. The elimination of William signifies that he was not a prig; the elimination of Willie indicates that he was not a sissy; the elimination of Will goes to show that he was not a lovely character; and Bill proves that he was no coward, while "old Bill" makes it definite and certain that he was well beloved, and that proves that he was effective, impulsive and kind. These traits, then, form the foundation upon which the man is built.

He is in every sense a big man. Whenever some peculiarly difficult or complex problem arises he is at once deputed to solve it. Work on the Panama canal, for instance, is disorganized and threatens to stop through the friction of a multiplicity of boards and the resignation of one engineer in chief after another, writes Sydney Brooks in Fortnightly Review. Mr. Taft visits the isthmus, looks into things, decides that the army engineers are the men to "dig the ditch," and all is peace and progress. Cuba, again, conducts itself by the usual Spanish-American route to the very brink of revolution. Mr. Taft steps in, examines, humors, conciliates, takes over the whole business of government and almost makes the outside world question the gravity of the situation by the ease with which he adjusts it. The American and Japanese papers and the people who read them scowl at one another over the immigration difficulty. Mr. Taft, en route for the Philippines, calls in at Tokio, has an audience with the mikado, and straightway the rumors of trouble are dissolved in a douche of sanity. An ugly controversy of personal charges and recriminations breaks out between two American diplomats. It is a matter altogether outside Mr. Taft's department, yet it goes to him for settlement, and he settles it. "Go over and see Taft about it," is a formula

so often on the president's lips that it has passed into the slang of the day, and the war secretary's nickname, "General Utility Bill," gives both the popular and the official measure of his capacities.

He has a peculiar gift of lubricating sagacity. He radiates jollity and conciliation. All men instinctively like and trust this huge, good-humored giant, whose mere physical immensity impresses one with a sort of guarantee of invincibility. He crashes through problems and tangles with the all-conquering certainty of a smiling, patient, supremely human steam roller. I have met no one even in America more wholly destitute of fussiness and affectation. Nothing seems to flurry him or to break through his reserves of genial placidity. Though scarcely less badgered than Mr. Roosevelt himself, he never explodes. He has the evenness of temper, the cheery self-confidence, which it would be positively dangerous for a man of his colossal bulk not to have. There is a hearty and most winning naturalness in his intercourse with people. He has all of the average American's indifference to externals and appearance—a snapshot of Mr. Taft seated at his official desk would make an admirable study of democracy in undress.

His mind, I should say, is a healthy and vigorous rather than a pliable instrument. It works with a ponderous, probing thoroughness. One would not look to Mr. Taft for any original contribution to the philosophy of politics any more than one would expect him to bubble forth in epigrams. He is not a man of wide reading or of diversified intellectual interests and has as little of Mr. Roosevelt's many-sidedness as of the flashing alertness or his somewhat volcanic temperament. But his qualities, if of the minor order of merit, are strong, genuine and serviceable. He has had far more than the ordinary candidate's experience of men and affairs and high responsibilities, and Mr. Taft, like Cobden, is one of those men on whom no experience is wasted. His administrative aptitudes are unquestionable. He has that kind of impersonal disentangling mind, of perspective and judicial balance, which when united with an engaging personality and a dependable character makes its possessor a court of final appeal for private friends and public colleagues.

Mr. Taft is one of the most palpably honest men I have ever encountered. He is honest even in his politics. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that his politics are comprised in saying straight out precisely what he thinks. He is almost as incapable as Lord Rosebery himself, though from widely different causes, of the distortions of partisanship. That perhaps is one of the reasons why the professional politicians do not relish him. He is wholly scornful of the time-serving maneuvers, the intimate deals and propitiations they expect a presidential candidate to practice.

There is no quibbling about Mr. Taft. Like Mr. Roosevelt, he will prove a candidate all the more formidable because he never troubles about the votes. He suffers, however, from certain disadvantages. With practically the whole of his active life divided between the courthouse in Cincinnati, the Philippines and Washington, he has had little chance of becoming personally known to the bulk of his countrymen. Hitherto they have had to judge him at a distance. But with every week that passes he is becoming better known and, though little of an orator, better liked. The labor men cherish an old grudge against him because as a judge in Ohio certain of his decisions helped to perpetuate the abuse of "government by injunction." The negroes, who hold the balance of power in more than one state, are incensed against him because, as secretary of war, he agreed to, though he did not himself propose, the disbandment of an entire negro regiment, some of whose members were suspected of having "shot up" a southern townlet. The high protectionists do not like him because he has come out squarely for tariff revision and incessantly advocates a reduction of duties on Philippine imports into the United States. The conservatives suspect him because he subscribes "unreservedly" to the Roosevelt policies and because any administration over which he presided would be indistinguishable in its general aims, however much it might differ in temper and methods, from the present regime. And "the politicians," I need scarcely add, instinctively distrust a man of Mr. Taft's independence and will only accept and support him as a presidential candidate to avoid the yet greater catastrophe of a party defeat.

## Some of A. C. Benson's Reminiscences



R. A. C. BENSON writes on "Shyness" in his Cornhill article for May. Here are some of his stories.

"I was lately told a delightful story of a great statesman staying with a humble and anxious host, who had invited a party of simple and unimportant people to meet the great man. The statesman came in late for dinner, and was introduced to the party; he made a series of old-fashioned bows in all directions, but no one felt in a position to offer any observations. The great man, at the conclusion of the ceremony, turned to his host, and said, in tones that had often thrilled a listening senate: 'What very convenient jugs you have in your bedroom! They pour well!' The social frost broke up; the company were delighted to find that the great man was interested in mundane matters of a kind on which everyone might be permitted to have an opinion, and the conversation, starting from the humblest conveniences of daily life, melted insensibly into more liberal subjects.

"The fact is that, in ordinary life, kindness and simplicity are valued far more than brilliancy; and the best brilliance is that which throws a novel and lambent light upon ordinary topics, rather than the brilliance which disports itself in unfamiliar and exalted regions. The hero only ceases to be a hero to his valet if he is too lofty-minded to enter into the workings of his valet's mind, and cannot duly appraise the quality of his services.

"When I was an Eton boy, I was staying with a country squire, a most courteous old gentleman with a high temper. The first morning I contrived to come down a minute or two late for prayers. There was no chair for me. The squire suspended his reading of the Bible with a deadly sort of resignation, and made a gesture to the portly butler. That functionary rose from his own chair, and, with loudly creaking boots, carried it across the room for my acceptance. I sat down, covered with confusion. The butler returned; and two footmen, who were sitting on a little form, made reluctant room for him. The butler sat down on one end of the form, unfortunately

before his equivoque, the second footman, had taken his place at the other end.

"The result was that the form tipped up, and a cataract of flunkies poured down upon the floor. There was a ghastly silence; then the Gardarene herd slowly recovered itself, and resumed its place. The squire read the chapter in an accent of suppressed fury, while the remainder of the party, with handkerchiefs pressed to their faces, made the most unaccountable sounds and motions for the rest of the proceeding. I was really comparatively guiltless, but the shadow of that horrid event sensibly clouded the whole of my visit.

"We had assembled for prayers in the dimly lighted hall of the house of a church dignitary, and the chapter had begun when a man of almost murderous shyness, who was a guest, opened his bedroom door and came down the stairs. Our host suspended his reading. The unhappy man came down, but, instead of slinking to his place, went and stood in front of the fire, under the impression that the proceedings had not taken shape, and addressed some remarks upon the weather to his hostess. In the middle of one of his sentences, he suddenly divined the situation, on seeing the row of servants sitting in a thieves' corner of the hall. He took his seat with the air of a man diving to the guillotine, and I do not think I ever saw anyone so much upset as he was for the remainder of his stay. Of course, it may be said that a sense of humor should have saved a man from such a collapse of moral force, but a sense of humor requires to be very strong to save a man from the sense of having made a fool of himself.

"I went, as a schoolboy, with my parents, to stay at a very big country house, the kind of place to which I was little used; where the advent of a stately footman to take away my clothes in the morning used to fill me with misery. The first evening there was a big dinner party. I found myself, sitting next my delightful and kindly hostess, my father being on the other side of her. All went well till dessert, when an amiable, long-haired spaniel came to my side to beg of me. I had nothing but grapes on my plate, and purely out of compliment, I offered him one. He at once took it in his mouth and hurried to a fine

white fur rug in front of the hearth, where he indulged in some unaccountable convulsions, rolling himself about and growling in an ecstasy of delight.

"My host, an irascible man, looked round, and then said: 'A grape?' He added to my father, by way of explanation: 'The fact is that if he can get hold of a grape he rolls it on that rug, and it is no end of a nuisance to get the stain out.' I sat crimson with guilt, and was just about to falter out a confession when my hostess looked up, and, seeing what had happened, said, 'It was me, Frank—I forgot for the moment what I was doing.' My gratitude for this angelic intervention was so great that I had not even the gallantry to own up, and could only repay my protectress with an intense and lasting devotion.

Some stories of Gladstone are also recalled in this same number of the Cornhill. At Oxford one day someone said: 'The four best biographies ever written are Boswell (something inaudible), Morley's 'Life of Cobden,' and Southey's 'Life of Wesley.'

"Ah," replied Gladstone, "you're right, but not about Morley. But I knew Cobden intimately, and he was a most remarkable man. The way that man worshipped Peel! The way he stuck by Peel and surrendered his own judgment to him. But the fact is that he had the most generous mind and one of the most sensitive. I remember Palmerston wounding him very much, quite unintentionally. Palmerston said lots of things which he did not mean, and never meant to wound anybody. But Cobden had said something in his speech which reflected on the conduct of foreign affairs, and Palmerston in reply applied to him the line 'ne sutor ultra crepidam.' Not an orator like Bright, but such a noble character, so simple and so strong."

Reviewing Marion Crawford's novel, "The Prima Donna," the Guardian says: "The critic sighs in reading, wondering what has become of the dramatic force, the psychological intensity of 'Greifenstein' and 'Saracinesca'; but Mr. Crawford's public seems content with the superficial narration of incident which has taken the place of his earlier and stronger manner."