

UNDERWOOD OF ALABAMA

Open Air Players Here and Abroad

A Feature of Summer Life That Is Finding Favor in America

Patience and Attention to Business Two Characteristics of the Majority Leader of the House of Representatives

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26.—After that scene on the floor of the House of Representatives in which Majority Leader Oscar W. Underwood described William Jennings Bryan as a writer of statements "absolutely false," when the crowd of cheering Democrats had slowly been rapped into order, Mr. Underwood said in his characteristic calm manner and with the usual absence of any note of hurry or excitement in his voice:

"Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolve itself into the committee of the whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H. R. 12812) to reduce the duties on manufacturers of cotton."

It was characteristic of Mr. Underwood that he appeared to be the one member on the floor not in the least concerned in the excitement. He was doing what he is always doing on the floor, he was patiently attending to the conduct of the bill under consideration. This is mentioned because it is a striking example illustrating Leader Underwood's two most notable characteristics, his imperturbability and his strict and uninterrupted attention to business.

It is that latter characteristic which, considered aside from his ability, has brought Mr. Underwood into leadership. He is not there accidentally, nor there through any contrivance of political manipulation, but because since he entered Congress sixteen years ago, when he was 33, he has always been attending strictly to the business of Congress and has learned that business thoroughly.

That appears to be a fair explanation of the House leadership of Mr. Underwood. He obtained it by close and intelligent application to Congressional work. How he earned that remarkable degree of personal restraint which was shown when he denounced Bryan on the floor the other day is a longer and more interesting story. The present writer was recently in a group of men engaged in the now popular occupation of discussing the majority leader when one of the group, Sherry of Kentucky, said:

"Underwood's chief political as well as personal quality is his patience."

That seems an odd attribute to which to ascribe political success and personal popularity, but another of the group explained it a little as he gave assent to Sherry's dictum:

"Yes, I guess that is fact," said the other. "Take it in caucus for instance. When Underwood has presented a new tariff bill for the consideration of the caucus there is something more than fatherly in his patience."

"I recall when Underwood brought in the wool bill. He had not gone far before some member asked him if his committee had given consideration to the growth of the country's population as well as to the stimulus of imports in arriving at the probable amount of revenue to be collected under a lower duty on woollen goods. The House leader made a detailed and clear explanation of the effect the factor of the country's growth would have upon certain importations."

"Then he proceeded, and presently a late comer asked almost the same question and received the same careful explanation. This happened a third time, and while Underwood's patience was not in the least depleted, there were cynical remarks heard concerning those who dine so late that they were not entitled to much consideration."

"When the fourth belated diner solemnly arose and asked the same question, he was nearly drowned in impatient jeers and more cynical remarks. Underwood smiled at the impatient members and remarked that the gentleman was entitled to an answer to his question, and again made his explanation."

This characteristic was seen in Mr. Underwood's presentation of the cotton bill in the House. It had been arranged for one of the other members to make the presentation speech, but that member was ill and no one else was properly prepared, so Mr. Underwood had to make the preliminary explanations. For three hours he stood there presenting the bill while the opposition tried to turn the presentation into a defence. That is what the opposition is for, and Underwood had to meet the attack of many experienced and successful debaters, men long familiar with the cotton schedule.

Verbal balls were pitched at him from every angle with every possible curve, drop and unshoot, but he caught and returned them with a skill and deftness which left undisturbed that imperturbability which appears to be at once his defence and an active weapon against the opposition.

This does not seem to be anything in the way of an affectation or an acquired characteristic of the Democratic leader. One judges it to be purely temperamental. He appears to be thoroughly a quiet tempered man, as well as a good tempered man, and that helps probably to account for his success. It certainly helps to account for his personal popularity, especially with the new members.

Some of the latter take seriously the newspaper jokes and the pleasantries of their friends about the littleness of a new member. Many of the freshmen who had been reminded of their littleness in meeting some of the old members have had their hurt feelings soothed by a meeting, casual or sought, with the majority leader. A freshman going to Mr. Underwood either in the Ways and Means Committee rooms in the House office building or in his private office in the Capitol, or meeting him accidentally in the lobby behind the Speaker's desk with a request for information or advice is treated with exactly as much consideration and frankness as is an old or important member.

Just another incident to illustrate the even temper of Mr. Underwood. The other day in the House there was a vote on the report of the committee which had been investigating the alleged misappropriation of funds in payment for a portrait of former Secretary of State Day, and the last speech in favor of the committee was made by Mr. Underwood. When the Speaker announced that the committee's motion to amend, on a Republican motion, by 127 yeas to 125 nays, Mr. Underwood quietly left his seat and went to his private office near by on the House floor.

Probably many in the galleries and some on the floor thought that the leader was mortified and had gone into retirement and concealment in chagrin. The tally sheet had been taken to the lobby south of the House floor and a tally clerk, sur-

rounded by a score of members, checked up the votes and found that the result was in favor of the committee, the yeas being 127 and the nays 126. A member hurried to Mr. Underwood's private office and without knocking rushed in thinking probably to cheer a disappointed leader with good news.

He checked himself suddenly when he discovered Mr. Underwood with a pile of statistical data in front of him placidly dictating a statement to his stenographer. He continued his dictation and left it to Mr. Mann, the minority leader, to straighten out the muddle.

It is easy for reporters to find out what Mr. Underwood thinks on any subject which he considers proper matter for an interview, and he does not pretend that he considers it either improper or inexpedient to answer questions asked about the daily growing talk of his candidacy either for the Presidency or the Vice-Presidency. On this subject he said to a SUN correspondent who found him in his private office in the capital:

"Yes, of course I see what the newspapers say about the probability of some delegates going to the next convention and asking a place for me on the ticket and I receive scores of letters daily on this subject, but I am not concerned with this."

"I do not say that this is not all very pleasant; it would be difficult to imagine a man in public life to whom such distinction would not be agreeable, but it is not a subject that I allow myself to consider other than in the manner I have suggested. I am here occupying a very important position, with great responsibility placed upon me by my party, and that position and those responsibilities wholly occupy my time and my serious thoughts. Nothing else should and nothing else can. If I can preserve harmony in our party, keep it united and strong, I shall have accomplished all that my ambition seeks to accomplish."

"By the way, did you ever think what is the greatest privilege the majority leader has?" He smiled and looked out at the pleasant prospect to be seen from the south window of that private office. "The greatest privilege, or at least the one I like the best anyway, which comes with the position of majority leader is the use of this office. To my mind it is the pleasantest room in the Capitol and certainly has the prettiest view."

"So you see there is something besides honor and hard work that goes with the chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee. And I like to think as I work here that I am working where Grow, Randall, Elaine, Carlisle, Reed, Colfax, Crisp, Henderson and Cannon worked. This used to be the Speaker's room."

As he talked on it was evident that Mr. Underwood's personal political platform is not involved.

That is, he is a tariff for revenue Democrat so long as the tariff is the only available source through which to obtain a large part of the necessary Government funds. He seems to consider the conducting of the national Government more nearly a purely business than a partisan political affair, and that it is not the smallest part of the duties of his party to insist that there be maintained a strict distinction between public and private business. While that makes him object to those engaged in profit making business asking the Government to assure them profits through tariff or other favors, he also insists that the Government should let honest profit making business alone as much as the Government on its part should insist that profit making business should let the Government alone. He objects to alliance as much as to interference in this respect.

In respect to other subjects prominently before the public Mr. Underwood gave his views freely, although an active career in the Congress for sixteen years has revealed his views, in debates and votes, on many such matters. He opposed the corporation tax section in the tariff bill because he believes that it is an additional tax imposed on active capital employed in developing resources, extending industries and paying wages, and does not place upon idle capital the burden of supplying part of the nation's needed revenue. He was one of the few members who spoke as well as voted against that part of the Payne bill. His reason for opposing a corporation tax explains his advocacy of an income tax: the latter places, as he judges this matter, the burden of taxation on idle capital and upon individuals best able to pay it.

"I am unalterably opposed to the recall of the judiciary," he said when questioned on that subject, "and I do not see how a general law of old members are likely to speak of United States statutes as 'general laws' instituting the initiative and referendum could be successfully operated. I am not opposed to local, state or municipal initiative and referendum. We have had both in operation in my State for a number of years, relating to such subjects as fence laws, or as they are called in some States, cattle laws. Locally, I think the initiative and referendum would operate satisfactorily as to a number of legislative subjects."

"Election of United States Senators by popular vote? Oh, my record is old on that subject. I introduced ten years ago and passed through the House a bill, the first one providing for a constitutional amendment to effect the election of Senators by direct vote. It died in the Senate. As to conservation of natural resources, I favor reasonable legislation for that purpose. What we must avoid is radical laws likely to interfere with long and well established State policies in respect to their natural resources."

Mr. Underwood is tall, a little over six feet probably, stalwart, deliberate in movement, but athletic. He said to some friends the other day that he had put in from twelve to fourteen hours a day at hard work for six months and he anticipated with keen delight the adjournment of Congress, because then he intended to devote a solid month to morning golf and afternoon light reading. An added spice to his loafing month would be given, he said, by the thought that his secretaries would be answering all his letters. He is refusing invitations to speak at the Democratic conference report on the wool bill he evidently so much enjoyed getting back at his ancient legislative opponent, Payne of New York, that he hurried his utterance and for two or three minutes he spoke but six he gave rein to the joy of combat that must dwell somewhere in such a man in a bit of oratory which, whether the manner or matter brought the democratic side of the House to its feet cheering and gained enough votes on the Republican side to carry the report by more than two-thirds.

It has not yet come to pass that this country is provided with out of door theatricals to the extent that the countries of Europe are. In France and Germany out of door performances have come to be as much matter of the commerce of theatres as the indoor enterprises, although the representations are not so frequent.

At the out of door theatre of Hertenstein on Vierwaldstattersee in Switzerland there are regular daily performances throughout the entire summer. At one of the open air theatres near Paris the company of the Théâtre Français acted the other day one of the plays of its classic repertoire. This performance, which may be considered the highest mark of artistic recognition of the free air stage, was "L'Aventurière" of Emile Augier. All of the performances at this little theatre in the garden of the Maison Lafitte are of high artistic quality, but it is not often that the Comédie sends its best artists out into the open.

In addition to the great spectacle in the arena at Beziers there are performances scattered throughout all France. In Nancy for instance there is an open air theatre called the "Théâtre Passional," at which are given religious or miracle plays. Last summer it was a miracle play showing the life of St. Jeanne d'Arc. This year it was a mystery play showing episodes of the Old Testament which are of such a character that they can be put on the stage. Not unlike the performances at Oberammergau is the spirit of these religious representations. All the parts are taken by amateurs, although there are professional experts to look after the scenery and other material departments of the series.

Nor has music been altogether denied the experiment of a hearing in the open air. Twice last summer was "Tan-

hauser" sung in a forest near a north German watering place, and in Switzerland during the present summer there was an open air representation of opera. This took place at Mezières, not far from Lausanne. "Orfeo and Euridice" was sung, with Clotilde Brossier-Gianoli in the title role and other professional singers assisting in the important parts. The chorus, however, was made up of the peasantry and other dwellers in the neighborhood. In order to preserve the Greek spirit of the performance there was a staircase built on each side of the stage and the singers, who entered from doors on each side of the stage, walked through this to their places. The building in which these performances were held was little more than a rude barn.

At Charlottenburg, in the outskirts of Berlin, there is an outdoor theatre which is representing this year an episode of the war with Russia called "The Iron Crucifix." The representation is given in the late afternoon. The actual events took place far away from this spot, although the stage is so constructed as to represent the actual scene of the happening.

Even admirers of open air performances agree that it adds some charm to these representations to have them take place on a spot that has some historical connection with the actual event. This is in a way a weakening of the purely theatrical development of the value of the pageant idea. The picture of the pageant shown here is from the celebration of history of Northampton in July and shows preparations for a Puritan wedding. Other pictures are scenes from "Elektra" by the Coburn Players with Mrs. Coburn as Elektra, the last act of "The Rivals" by the Ober company which has been acting Sheridan's comedy through the Catskills, with "Rip Van Winkle" as an alternate, and the Ben Greet company. It will be observed that none of these companies has a permanent home such as the foreign troupes have, whether in France or Germany. The difference between the open air theatres here and in Europe is that the place is found over there and a theatre established. Here the actors are gathered into a company and then set out to find some place suited to their appearances. Thus the companies that appear out of doors are all travelling companies.

This season there have been in addition to the Coburn Players and Ben Greet's company, which have been acting in a number of cities with the local symphonic orchestras, the George Ober troupe and Mme. Alberti's pantomimists, who give pantomimes out of doors. There have never before been four of these companies playing simultaneously, and in fact that both the Greet and Coburn companies have met with material success has led to this increase in the number. In this country the performances are usually given in the evenings, whereas it is the custom on the so-called nature stages in Europe to act the dramas in the afternoon.

There are many vigorous opponents of the open air performances. They find that there is an inconsistency between the actor's symbols and the nature in which he is placed. There is nothing, for instance, that makes a wig look so obviously artificial as to present it in the open air. A wig surrounded by natural trees and bushes looks what it is, and the light of day makes it seem still more at variance with its surroundings. The same is true of the make-up that actors must assume. Its falsity is obvious in the open air.

Then the question of lighting is difficult. If the performance is given at night the calciums must be employed and they distribute illumination in a way that makes impossible any calculated artistic effect. They blaze on the particular spot toward which they are directed, but they throw the rest of the stage into an inky blackness which makes an inartistic contrast. The effect of the wind is another factor that cannot directly be reckoned with. It may be that the elements will be favorable and there will at least be no blowing of the costumes, the foliage and the draperies that may serve as a proscenium arch. But on the other hand there are likely to be many interruptions to the dignity of the scene that can never be prepared for.

The voices may be made to carry, although it takes shouting rather than distinctness of utterance. Of course delicate effects of speech are just as impossible as



THE COBURN PLAYERS IN "ELEKTRA."



"THE RIVALS."



THE NORTHAMPTON PAGEANT.



"TWELFTH NIGHT" IN THE OPEN.

but gradually grow into favor as a beverage. With it was introduced the cream jug, which may be found in silver in an extraordinary variety of designs and patterns. Perhaps one of the most remarkable is the cow, which was first made in England about 1740 and continued to be made occasionally down to the reign of George IV.

It is also possible, though rarely, to find a goat jug. Undoubtedly the cow was first used in a practical manner, the liquid being introduced into the back of the animal and poured through the mouth, a method scarcely elegant; it must be acknowledged that at that period our manners had not reached their highest level.

Indians Knew the Law.
From the Arizona Republican.
The recent preliminary examination at Mesa of a lot of Indians implicated in a conspiracy to force brought out that they were familiar with their rights under the law. While they had told the officers all that was really necessary for them to know and had even furnished a written statement setting forth their accomplishments, the justice of the peace at Mesa directed one of them to take the stand. Without waiting for the advice of counsel he declined, saying that he could not be compelled to say anything that would tend to incriminate himself and that anything that he might say would certainly have such a tendency.



MRS. COBURN AS ELEKTRA.

Photo by Kate E. McClelland.

Photo by Byron.

The Cream Jug Era.
From the Burlington Magazine.
A cream jug in silver is hardly known earlier than the beginning of the eighteenth century, though they are found very soon after 1700. Tea had been introduced into England in the reign of Charles II.; it was first used medicinally,