THE LADY OF THE WHITE HOUSE AND HER CHILDREN

MRS. TAFT'S HOME LIFE.

IN the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette on June 20, 1886, appeared the following:

Yesterday afternoon, at 4:45, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Herron, was celebrated the marriage of their daughter, Miss Helen L. Herron, and Mr. William Howard Taft, the son of Judge Alphonso Taft, late United States Minister to Russia.

The ceremony was performed by the Rev. M. A. Hoge, D.D., pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of Zanesville, Ohio, who years ago married the bride's mother and father.

The bride wore a charming gown of white silk, with embroidered tablier, her veil caught up by sprays of white lilacs, and she carried a bouquet of sweet peas and lilies of the valley. There were no bridesmaids and no best man, but the bride's sister, Miss Maria Herron, and the groom's sister, Miss Fannie Taft, both in lovely white toilets, stood near the bride during the ceremony, at which were present only the families of the bride and groom and a few intimate friends.

In the reception which followed, between the hours of 5 and 8, about 100 guests assisted. Mr. and Mrs. Taft left last night by the limited for New York, whence they sail on Wednesday by the City of Berlin for Europe, intending to pass the summer in England. The best wishes of a wide circle of friends go with them. The bride comes of a sterling family and has had the highest social and domestic training.

That was the ceremony that transferred a young society lady of Ohio into the "first lady of the land."

As mistress of the White House for the next four years she is bound to be an interesting personality and an enormous aid to her distinguished husband.

A True Homekeeper.

She is a woman of marked individuality, of great strength of character and independence of belief, but from the day when she was first married her principal role has been that of homekeeper. Later the children came to occupy much of her best attention. Next to her home and children, she has found her greatest interest in her husband's career.

Mrs. Taft is a college woman. She is a firm believer in the value of higher education for women. She does not believe that women should be educated so as to compete with men, but thinks that education for women is necessary to round out that femininity which is the chief charm of the fair sex.

On Higher Education.

In a recent interview Mrs. Taft expressed herself frankly as to the value of higher education. She said:

Higher education for women? My daughter has elected to take a full college course and is now studying very diligently at Bryn Mawr to equip herself for entrance into college, probably next autumn. I believe in the best and most thorough education for every one, men and women, and it is my proudest boast that all my children are studious. My idea about higher culture for women is that it makes them great in intellect and soul, develops the lofty conception of womanhood; not that it makes them a poor imitation of a man.

I am old-fashioned enough 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. No fundamental superiority or inferiority between the two appears plain to me. The only superiority lies in the way in which the responsibilities of life are discharged.

Viewed in this light, some wives are superior to their husbands, some husbands to their wives, some girls to their brothers, and women to men in varying circumstances. Education for women, and as much as is obtainable, possesses, to my mind, far greater advantages than the commercial one of providing means for making a livelihood. This is very great when necessary, but for the aggregate woman the highest mission is the ability to preside over a home and to fulfill the highest obligations of a home with grace, dignity, and exalted sense of duty.

It does not seem to me that a college course makes a girl rather unfit for domestic obligations 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.

Few, in my opinion, find intellectual or professional triumphs more desirable or more satisfying than that moral greatness which makes a woman reign a queen even in the humblest home, reigning equally over the heart of her husband and by the reverence with which she inspires her children. As for masculinity which comes from college course, why, every sensible girl wants to become great and learned as a woman, not as a man, and she avoids acquiring all habits which have that tendency.

Wastes Few Moments.

Mrs. Taft is essentially a home woman, and her life is so well ordered that she has few wasted moments. She has so trained herself in the duties of presiding over a home with dignity that her house in Washington has long been a favored meeting place for Washington society.

At her home in Cincinnati, as in Washington, Mrs. Taft is known as a musician of more than ordinary accomplishments, and she is very keen in looking after the interests of musicians and artists. She has paid much attention to the question of government aid for music and believes that the time will come when the government will send aid to the development of art and music in the cities of the United States to an extent hitherto unknown.

She is a woman suffragist also, but not a blatant one. She has always believed that women should have a right to vote, and she said once:

"I favor bestowing upon women every civic right, but I should like to put in a prohibitory clause debarring them from running for office. If women should indulge in a scramble for office I think that the natural scheme of things would become disjointed and the aim of the home would be destroyed. I see nothing unfeminine in women casting the ballot, but it seems to me for the present that it is impracticable to dissociate the right to vote from the right to hold office."

A close companion of her husband ever since his career as a public man, Mrs. Taft has taken advantage of much foreign travel to become a distinguished linguist, and as mistress of the White House it will be found that she will be able to converse with the diplomats and foreign statesmen in their own tongue. In spite of her many home duties she still finds time for study, and she devotes some portion of every day to foreign languages, French and Spanish being her favorites.

Life in the Orient.

Of course, it would be impossible for a woman like Mrs. Taft to have traveled so far and to have seen so much without having stored in her memory a host of delightful reminiscences. Of her life in the Orient she talks most entertainingly, and those who know her say she is simply delightful in her relation of incidents and adventures during voyages across the Pacific, through the Philippines, Japan, Russia, and Europe.

In spite of talents that are much above the ordinary, Mrs. Taft is pre-eminently a normal woman, cultivating no fads or fancies, devoted to no isms. She has no cults or hobbies. She is versatile and has many interests, but everything to which she lays her hand will be found to be something of profit to her family in an intellectual or moral sense. She is a great reader, one of her favorite authors being George Eliot.

Mrs. Taft has never made the mistake of allowing her husband to outgrow her in his interests in life. On all the subjects that interest him or which touch vitally on his career she is thoroughly informed. She calls him "Will," and if she finds that he has become interested in some weighty treatise or dry-as-dust classic she studies up the same thing and sometimes astonishes him by being able to discuss it intelligently. This is one of the great secrets of the fine comradeship that has always existed between President Taft and his wife.

But with it all Mrs. Taft is nothing of the bluestocking. She is simply an up-to-date, well-informed, thoroughly self-possessed society woman of the best class. She is always thoroughly well-dressed, becomingly, never extravagantly, attired. Her favorite color is blue. She is fond of society, the theater, and the opera.

Yet, after all, Mrs. Taft's paramount pleasure has always been in her home. It is filled with almost priceless treasures gathered from abroad. The gobelin tapestry that hangs on the walls of her music room is a gift from the Empress of Japan, and in the same room a conspicuous object is a gold lacquer box with pearl lilies carved upon it which was a parting souvenir presented to her by the Emperor of Japan himself.

Throughout the house will be found Chinese carvings of teakwood and ivory, silver bowls of unique workmanship, fans, screens, and many other valuable objects, gifts from Chinese and Japanese friends. Her drawing-room is paneled in rose brocade and painted in ivory. The furniture is rose and gold. Her own bedroom and boudoir are painted in blue, her favorite color. And so dainty and homelike is her house that one can well imagine the attention the White House will receive at her hands.

The "Big Red House."

The "big red house" in K street, where they lived here, had many homelike touches. Over the parlor and the library windows climb crimson roses. There was no pompous British liveried footman to guard the door. Jackson, the colored butler, was from Virginia and had the low voice and the polite manners of the Southern major-domo.

One of the other servants was a Filipino named Monaco, who is endeared to Mr. and Mrs. Taft through long service when President Taft was governor of the Philippines.

Mrs. Taft's home-keeping qualities are evidenced also by the fact that she has always made it a rule to breakfast with her husband and always knows what is coming to the breakfast table, and in spite of the fact that she has many social duties and belongs to many clubs, she never leaves him at home in the evening unless he has work to do which her presence would hinder rather than help.

It may be guessed that the man who inspires these attentions is not the sort who buries a gloomy breakfast countenance in a newspaper. He is one to whom the little courtesies of courtship days have not become obsolete, who has an eye for the filmy silk morning gown that his wife has chosen, knows whether it is pink or mauve, and notes the tulip at her belt, caught with the old cameo pin he saw her wear with the first dress he ever bought her.

Gives to Charity.

Consideration of others, high and low, has always marked the Taft home. It is a part of the family creed. No matter how late he has worked the night before, no matter how dogged has been the office grind, Mr. Taft dresses in the morning with his face toward the sun and meets the day smiling. Almsgiving is a habit with him.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg on his recent trip around the world each morning he filled his pockets with silver pieces to give to the poor, whose misery and want met him at every turn. In such practical charity Mrs. Taft, too, is apace with him. Indeed, her kind-heartedness in this direction inspires some of his favorite jokes at her expense.

He was once heard to declare that the only way he could be sure of keeping two suits in the house was to wear his second best under his new one. In Murray Bay, the lovely spot in the Arcadian country whither they go each season to relax from official cares and to rest for the work of winter, their thoughtfulness of others is proverbial.

In this small, congenial colony—for the spot has so far been discovered by a mere handful of families, who go there for refreshment, not for fashion—the War Secretary can play golf with his sons and come near to forgetting that problems of state exist. Many a summer morning has seen him swinging off down the laurel and wild honeysuckle paths with his arm through a heavy picnic lunch basket and his family beside him. If the master had a holiday, why should not the servants get one, too?

This broad, human, considerate trait is marked in all that Mr. and Mrs. Taft do. They are interested in the uplift of others' lives and cherish an abounding belief that the world is far better than it is bad.

Is an Episcopalian.

There is only one point perhaps on which President and Mrs. Taft differ. The President is a member of the Unitarian Church; Mrs. Taft is an ardent Episcopalian. But they follow their religious beliefs in perfect harmony. Mrs. Taft adheres strictly to all the ordinances of the Episcopal Church, and she is one of the few women in official life who have never yielded to the growing cosmopolitanism of Sunday entertainment.

There is one other point in which Mrs. Taft is strictly in accord with "Will," the President. She, like him, is a stickler for out-of-door exercise, and although she appears to be frail, is possessed of great activity and nerve force.

Last summer, for instance, she found that her nerves were causing her some trouble, and at the earnest solicitation of President Taft she and her three children took a cottage in Oxford, England, and spent a beautiful outdoor summer. Mrs. Taft took to rowing here, and on every fine day she would row ten or twelve miles in the river Cherwell.

When the weather was rainy she had to give up her boating, but was not content to remain indoors. She would don a big mackintosh and go for long walks into the country, returning with glowing cheeks and sometimes with bedraggled hair, but bearing with her a sense of exhilaration which did more for her than any medicine.

It is highly probable that Mrs. Taft will continue, as mistress of the White House, the exercise that was so beneficial to her as plain Mrs. Taft, and it is not unlikely that citizens of the District of Columbia will have the pleasure of seeing the massive President and his slender wife tramping, as President Roosevelt did, in search of health through all weathers.

MISS HELEN TAFT.

Like his distinguished predecessor, President Taft enters the White House with a daughter whose debut will be made during his incumbency of office.

Alice Roosevelt, it will be remembered, was seventeen at the time her father succeeded to the Presidency on the death of the lamented William McKinley.

Miss Helen Taft is now in her eighteenth year, so that the social set of Washington will have to wait nearly two years before welcoming the new White House debutante, as her mother insists that she must finish her work at Bryn Mawr before entering the new world. It will not be until 1910 that the new daughter of the White House will take her place in society.

A New Discovery.

Miss Helen Taft is practically, so far as publicity is concerned, a new discovery, for while her brothers, Robert and Charlie, have been more or less in the public eye and have been filling space in the newspapers, Miss Helen has been kept in the background. This is partly due to Miss Helen's own desire, but the sterling common sense of her father and mother—Mrs. Taft is a strong believer in the old-fashioned ideas of home life—is also responsible.

Miss Helen Taft is a graduate of the National Cathedral School in Washington. She was graduated with high honors when she was sixteen and was sent at once to Bryn Mawr, whence she was graduated from the sophomore class in March of last year. She evidently inherits much of the talent of her distinguished father and mother, for she has achieved much distinction at all of the schools she has attended.

But in spite of her devotion to study, there is nothing of the stern and frumpy "new woman" about Miss Helen Taft. She is altogether wholesome and wholesouled, unaffected and unspoiled, and with an engaging frankness of manner which gives her, as it has given her distinguished father, the happy faculty of making friends easily and retaining their allegiance long.

Favors Her Father.

In appearance Miss Helen Taft "favors," as the saying goes, her father—that is, so far as features are concerned. She gives promise of becoming a tall, stately woman, and it is almost certain that she will be considerably taller than her mother. Like her mother, she is a devotee of outdoor exercise, although her favorite diversion is reading. But when her family spends the summer months at Murray Bay, Quebec, they are outdoor months entirely for the daughter of the house.

Miss Helen Taft has not had the opportunities of globe-trotting that have come to her parents, or even to her younger brother, Charlie. She was a resident of the far East while President Taft was governor of the Philippines, and while there she succeeded in acquiring several Oriental dialects, and, like her mother, she is a capable linguist and understands French and Spanish thoroughly.

While President Taft was Secretary of War the Taft family were for a time residents in England, but even here Miss Helen Taft succeeded in keeping quite out of the public gaze and spent the months peacefully at Oxford with her mother, her companion in outdoor exercise as well as in study.

Simple American Girl.

Up to the present Miss Helen Taft's life has been that of a simple American girl. No trace of snobbery has been allowed to creep in. She, like her mother, has lived plainly, and as her mother has had no lady's maid, neither has Miss Helen.

Mother and daughter have established the relations of near and dear companions, rather than those of parent and child. Always Miss Helen's life has been supervised and guarded by her mother, and it is quite certain that it will be Mrs. Taft who will have full charge and direction of Miss Helen's career when she takes her place at the proper time as one of the leaders of the younger set in Washington society.

In the matter of religion, as in many others, Miss Helen Taft follows her mother, and the President is more than willing that this should be so. It is the characteristic of the man who loves his wife to look on with satisfaction when the daughter follows her mother's footsteps. There is a pretty and sentimental attachment between Mrs. Taft and Helen which President Taft looks upon with that complacent equanimity which is part of his nature.

Boys in Limelight.

It may be taken as pretty certain that the general public will hear mighty little as to the doings or the life of Miss Helen Taft until she has graduated from Bryn Mawr. Her brothers, Robert and Charlie, have never tried particularly to keep out of the public gaze, Charlie in particular, as a companion of Quentin Roosevelt, having been extensively written about.

But Miss Taft's life has up to the present been closely guarded to keep the writers from giving her unwelcome attention. Even during her residence in Manila Miss Helen Taft was not allowed to take too prominent a part in the amusements of the American colony, and in Cincinnati, as well as in Washington, she has been kept as close to the home as possible.

From all accounts this retirement has been anything but displeasing to Miss Taft. She, like her mother, has the fine instincts for home, and it is predicted that even after she comes from college, makes her debut, and takes her place in society she will find greater joy and pleasure in her quarters at the White House than she will in the swirl of society.

SONS OF THE WHITE HOUSE.

There are two boys, the sons of President Taft, who will figure in the White House during the next four years. At Yale is Robert Taft, a sturdy nineteen-year-old lad, a replica of the President, who seems to have inherited from his distinguished father a faculty for study, for he took two prizes there last year.

Robert seems also to have inherited his father's love of outdoor life and athletics, for in his freshman year he rowed in the victorious crew, and during the same year that he won honors in the barge he equaled the record of the leading aspirant for the Woolsey scholarship, which is the highest of freshman honors at Yale.

The winner had to be decided by lot. This feat served to call attention to the fact that the Taft family has an unequaled record for scholarships at Yale, a record that has hardly been duplicated at any other American university. The Taft scholarships have been among the highest in the university's history. So it is only following the family tradition when we learn that Robert Taft leads his class and that, aside from his race for the Woolsey prize, he has taken several prizes in Greek, mathematics, and Latin.

White House Boy.

But however much Robert Taft may figure during the coming administration, it is pretty safe to predict that it is Charlie Taft, aged ten, who will be the "boy of the White House."

It is this lad who has inherited his mother's eyes and sparkling wit, who has been his father's playfellow and traveling companion.

Charlie pays much attention to his books, but he is not at all precocious in the matter of study and is much more a healthy, rollicking, fun-loving boy than he is a student.

He has a taste for literature that has carried him pretty deep into the juvenile department of the Congressional Library—a taste so catholic that it runs all the way from the Henty books to the ancient classics. And not only can he discuss the standard modern novel, but he has brains enough to tell why he prefers one author to another.

Yet with all his book learning he is a genuine boy, and those who know him best say that no one could doubt his boyish enthusiasm after hearing him tell of the adventures that were experienced one famous Saturday afternoon in the White House garret, where he met the members of the "big attic centipedes" under the leadership of Quentin Roosevelt.

One day Charlie came skating in from school waving at his mother as he hung his cap in the hall. The roller skates left a few scratches on the beautiful hardwood floor, but mother could get another floor, and the boyish smile was worth it. His jacket was bulging in suspicious fashion.

"Why, Charlie, what have you in your coat?" his mother asked.

The boy laughed.

"Anne of Gierstein is in there," he said, tapping his pocket. "She and I took a recess together to-day."

And then, flushed with health and eager with enthusiasm, he curled up in the fork of his favorite library—a sugar maple in the front yard in K street—reading "The Sword of Wayne," which he had chosen because, as he said, "It had a fight in it."

One day while he was in the front yard a sight-seeing automobile went by carrying a load of tourists, and the chauffeur called out through his megaphone: "That big red house is the residence of William Howard Taft, Secretary of War."

Charlie remarked: "I wonder how many in that rubber-neck wagon are wondering whether we'll be living here next year."

Charlie Is the Wit.

The lad inherits from both his father and his mother a fine tendency toward wit. "Buffalo Bill's coming to town," he observed one morning. "He used to send us tickets. I hope we've been enough in the public eye for him not to forget."

"Wouldn't it turn your head, Charlie," one of his schoolmates asked him, "if you were to become the son of a President?"

"Oh, I don't know," he replied. "It didn't turn Quentin's. I guess I could stand it."

Charlie is a favorite playmate of his distinguished father. "Never mind, Charlie; I'll play tennis with you," Mr. Taft was heard to say one day; and thereafter might have been seen a big-girthed, heavy man, clad in a cheap flannel suit, knocking the ball over the net to his knickerbockered son.

"You're all right, papa," shouted Charlie. "You can't play good tennis, but you're an awful lot of fun."

Charlie Taft goes into the White House with, as his chief claim of distinction, the fact that he took a trip around the world with his father and mother. Mrs. Taft and Charlie were summoned from their summer home at Murray Bay, Quebec, to St. Paul, where Gen. Edwards met them and took them to the coast to join Mr. Taft. On the journey west Charlie got into trouble for pulling the bell rope on the train, and in a side trip through Yellowstone Park saw a good many bears. In Seattle Charlie didn't have time to hear his father make a speech. "I had to go around and see the city," said Charlie.

Knows How to Box.

Charlie had a pal on board the Minnesota during the fifteen-day voyage to Yokohama. Telling of his playmate, he said:

"One day I had a boxing match with a boy on the ship. I got some pretty hard licks, but I kept right on, and the crowd gathered around, and I guess we gave them a pretty good show, for they all cheered and gave each of us a pile of advice how to get a good one."

Charlie caught fish in the private ground of the Mikado of Japan. "Some of them were as long as my arm," he said, "and some smaller ones, too. They were dandies. I took photographs of them, but they didn't turn out well.

"On the second day I rigged up a pole and started out to get some big fish. I wanted to get some Japanese ones, and saw some big fellows, but I couldn't seem to land any. In Japan they do not fish with a fly, only using bait."

Charlie tried to get a photograph of Buddha, but a Japanese boy thought he ought not to do such things and ran in front of his camera. This eleven-year-old successor to Teddy, jr., also rode to the top of a volcano on horseback while in Japan.

In Tokyo little Charlie Taft received from the newspapers all the solemn attention that was claimed for the personality and dignity of his father. His doings were commented upon in all gravity as the doings of the son of a man who inevitably would be the next President of the great United States.

In the streets of the capital the appearance of a child from the Occident constitutes a sideshow feature. In his jinricksha Charlie had at every turn a following of small, slant-eyed youngsters, gaping and preserving their Oriental silence and impertubability. Their small feet in wooden clogs pattered after him everywhere.

Favorite in Japan.

In the largest store in the city Charlie was invited into the private office of the proprietors, where tea was served according to the quaint ceremonials of the shopkeeper in Japan.

As he was bowed out of the store a package was placed in his hands wrapped in the ceremonial cloth which covers such gifts and bound with the red and gold tuft of gilt paper. Opening it later, even the Taft aplomb was a little shaken to discover—a big doll! Yet the Hochi Shimbun, chronicling the incident, was moved to say that "Master Taft accepted the beautiful gift with rare grace."

Perhaps the one severest test that Charlie Taft passed in the Tokyo visit was the luncheon at which he was the sole official guest of the empire. In his stocking feet and seated on a mat, Charlie made ready for the meal, with the official interpreter on one side of him and the official guide on the other.

The restaurant proprietor with rare forethought removed the chopsticks from Charlie's plate and substituted the Occidental knife and fork, after which Charlie tackled the raw fish.

Charlie went through Russia, saw a circus something like an American circus, ate some real mince pie in St. Petersburg, and finally got down to Berlin. He ate dinner at the American Embassy, took a train for Hamburg, and caught the steamer President Grant for home. Then Charlie got sick, but he didn't miss the captain's dinner.

Charlie Taft likes horses, and during the next four years he, on his pony, will probably be a frequent sight on the streets of Washington. He can drive well, too, and there are few things he likes better than to play coachman for his sister Helen. Of one thing the world may be assured, and that is that during the next four years people are not going to be allowed to forget that there is a boy around the White House grounds.

TAFT GENEOLOGICAL TREE.

THERE was a reunion of the Taft family at Uxbridge, Mass., in August, 1874. It was attended by over 300 Tafts and their sons and daughters, who could trace their history back to the Revolution, through the colonial period, with its Indian wars, and even back into the history of England and Wales.

It was Mr. Alphonso Taft, father of President Taft, who made the principal speech at this memorable reunion, and he proudly said:

My blood was all derived from the Mendon of 1680, with its original ample boundaries. My ancestors on both sides came to Mendon on the resettlement, in 1680, of the town after King Philip's war—Robert Taft, carpenter; Grindal Rawson, minister; Samuel Hayward, yeoman, and Capt. Josiah Chapin.

My wife, too, is a descendant of the Torreys, the Davenports, and the Holbrooks of Mendon, and our children and our children's children will trace their origin to the same old Mendon of 1680.

History of Family.

He might have gone on and said that as one studies the history of the Taft family it is to find that it is noted for industry, energy, and frugality, and that since it was first established on this continent it has always taken an active part in the support of the government.

Alphonso Taft did not bring forward the argument that the original Taft stock was of that family which was honored by royalty in Ireland, though he might have done this, but he said:

I refer to these authorities not to claim anything more than plebeian blood by identifying ourselves with the nobility of Ireland, but to show the historical result is the same whether ancestors came directly from England, Scotland, or Ireland; and that the change in the spelling might as well have been from "Taft" to "Taffee" when the family now in Ireland left England or from "Taffe" to "Taft" when our ancestors settled in Massachusetts.

Yielding to the tradition among the descendants such weight as we cannot well deny, we must conclude that, though these families may well be of the same original stock, the emigration of the family now in Ireland, from England or Scotland, was several centuries earlier than that of the members of the family who came directly to this country from the original home of the race.

The Irish historians declare that the Taffes of Ireland were originally from England, their first appearance in Ireland being at the end of the thirteenth century. Members of this family stood well at court. The history says that "King James I gave William Taffe much" and that "Queen Elizabeth gave him preferment." The son of William Taffe became Sir John and was afterward advanced to the dignity of Viscount Taffe of Correnn by royal patent bearing date of Dublin, August 1, 1628. Said Alphonso Taft, ignoring the history of his titled progenitors:

The first of our progenitors in this country was Robert Taft. Of his birth we have no record. He died February 8, 1725, at an age of not less than eighty-five years, so that the date of his birth cannot be placed later than 1640.

Sarah, his wife, is shown conclusively to have been born about the same time. Who she was before the merger of her name in that of her husband we know not.

Of Robert's antecedents we have no direct evidence. His first appearance in America, so far as we have been able to trace him, was in connection with his house and lot in Braintree, which we find him owning in 1678. In 1679 he moved to Mendon. A deed for a lot adjoining his house lot shows his name spelled "Taffe."

Refuge in America.

Mr. Taft recited the history of the town of Mendon, which had thrived until 1675, when, in King Philip's war, the inhabitants were either killed or driven away and all their houses were burned. In 1680 the resettlement began, and Robert Taft came prominently forward. It is said that he was an adherent of the Commonwealth, a Scotch Puritan disgusted with the cavaliers, and that in the troublous times that came with the Restoration he sought refuge from civil and religious broils in the forests of New England.

Touching on this, the President's father said:

The first general town meeting was on January 3, 1680, and Robert Taft was one of the selectmen chosen. On the fourth day of the second meeting the town held another meeting and chose Robert Taft as one of the committee to provide for the building of the minister's house.

Helps in Minister's Support.

The first list of names assessed for the minister's support that is shown in the records was in 1685 and Robert Taft pays a good rate. A committee was appointed to build a meeting house and raise the money and he was in the number. From time to time he was elected selectman and frequently was placed on important committees. In 1698 he, with Capt. Josiah Chapin, was appointed to "view the streams of the town and select a place for a corn mill."

The land he and his sons had laid out lay on both sides of the Blackstone, and they projected a bridge. It was a public matter, but of more importance to them than to all the rest of the town. The town was not ready to vote the money, but it did vote that "Mr. Taft and his sons be freed from working on the highways" in return for building the bridge.

This was in 1709, and it probably was the first bridge built over the river. The site is still known, though abandoned as a bridge site, the river having cut another channel. The old road they excavated is still plainly visible, though covered with shrubbery and trees. For many years the public had no other means of crossing, and it was known as "the bridge the Tafts built."

All Were Farmers.

Robert Taft had five sons, Thomas, Robert, Daniel, Joseph, and Benjamin.

The second son, Robert Taft, jr., was prominent in public affairs, but he was beaten by John, who held every office of trust and honor that the town had to give, from fence viewer to selectman and representative in the "Great and General Court." Samuel, a son of Robert Taft, jr., owned a tavern in Uxbridge, and it was at this house that Washington stopped and was entertained after his first election to the Presidency.

He was so pleased with his entertainment that he wrote to Samuel later, sending each of his girls a piece of chintz, and to "Patty," who bears the name of Mrs. Washington, "5 guineas with which to purchase something she desires." Another of this line, Frederick Taft, served three years in the army of the colonies. Daniel, the third son of the original American Taft, was the adviser of the town in financial matters and was for many years the town treasurer.

It was through him that the Taft family first showed its strength politically. Daniel became an object of attack against the leadership of the Tafts. He was moderator of the town meetings, and objection was made to his calling a meeting without a formal warrant. The town clerk made a record that the meeting called was of "no effect," but Daniel rallied the Taft family to his banner and at the next meeting he was elected moderator, selectman, trustee, and all the other offices were cornered by the Tafts.

One of Daniel's sons was Bazaleel Taft, who during the Revolutionary war went with a company to Rhode Island, he acting as orderly sergeant. Having made his first report, the commandant demanded the name of the writer, and Bazaleel, fearing a reprimand, was called before him.

"Did you make this report?" demanded his superior officer.

"I did," was the reply. "I was not familiar with military matters and I did as well as I knew how."

Instead of a reprimand, he was astonished to hear:

"Mr. Taft, you will act as adjutant to these troops. You may enter at once upon your duties, and you shall have a horse as soon as the government can provide one."

But the line from which sprang directly the new President of the United States was carried through the next oldest brother, the fourth son, Joseph. Joseph married Elizabeth Emerson, the daughter of Mendon's first minister, and he had four sons, Moses, Peter, Joseph, and Aaron. They were all industrious farmers. The line was carried to Ohio by Peter, who married Elizabeth Cheney, by whom he had four sons, Henry, Gershom, Aaron, and Peter.

It was this Aaron Taft who was the great-grandfather of William Howard Taft. He was fitted for and entered Princeton, but had to return home before finishing his college course, though he had already established a reputation as a scholar. He married in 1789 Rhoda Rawson, of Uxbridge, and they had a family of eleven children, nine of whom grew to maturity. After residing for some time in Uxbridge, part of the time serving as town clerk, he moved to Vermont and trace of him was lost. His son, Peter Rawson Taft, grandfather of the President, died in Cincinnati in 1867, and his son, Alphonso, speaking at that reunion in 1874, said of him:

At fourteen years of age he was taken by his father to Townsend, Wyndham County, Vt. There he labored on his father's farm the greater portion of his time, improving, however, the advantage of such schools and academies as were accessible.

Though a farmer, he was studious and always fond of reading. As soon as of sufficient age he was employed to teach the public school in the winter season. This continued for several years, but he made himself a skilled surveyor and was extensively employed in that capacity.

At the age of twenty-five he married Sylvia Hayward, a descendant of Samuel Hayward and Capt. Josiah Chapin, both pioneers of Mendon. They lived together fifty-six years. They had but one child, Alphonso Taft, with whom they resided the last twenty-five years of their lives.

Voters Also Honor Him.

The active life of Peter Rawson Taft was spent mainly in Vermont. Though not educated for the bar, his reading included the law. He was early appointed as a justice of the peace, he was chosen continually to the most important offices of the town, and was elected one of the commissioners of the county. By election he was many times a representative in the Vermont legislature.

He was admitted to the bar, and four years he was judge of the Probate Court of Wyndham County by election of the legislature, after which he was elected a judge of the County Court and held that office four years. He was regarded as a just, humane, and wise man.

The only child of Peter Rawson was Alphonso, the father of the President, who was born in the Vermont home and who spent his early life on the farm, as had his father before him. He entered Yale at nineteen years of age and was graduated in 1833. For a time he taught school, but in 1838 was admitted to the bar and moved to Cincinnati to practice his profession. He was always active in city and school affairs, and was a delegate to the convention which nominated Fremont. He ran for Congress; was appointed once and elected twice to the Superior Court of Cincinnati. In 1875 he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for the governorship of Ohio, and in the campaign that followed was an ardent supporter of Gen. Rutherford B. Hayes.

All Inherited Size.

All the Taft boys inherited their father's intellect and most of them inherited his gigantic physique. All the sons testify to the persuading powers of "their good governor's strong right arm."

William Howard Taft referred to his father affectionately as his "good old governor" on the day the younger man took the oath of office as Secretary of War. The old gentleman's portrait looked down upon the son, and William said:

"I could not help but be good here. My good old governor had an overpowering brain, to say nothing of his hands."

Alphonso Taft could give his boys the best of opportunities, but he saw to it that they availed themselves of their chances. He had no millions to leave them, but he sent them to college and saw that they got all out of college there was in it.

Alphonso Taft's father, the old Vermont jurist, used to tell his sons that "there is more in life than money," and Alphonso lived accordingly, transmitting the sentiment to his own sons, and William Howard Taft repeated it, allowing no more comment, when he turned down offer after offer to become a corporation lawyer.

Move to Cincinnati.

After Alphonso Taft's family of boys began to run around the yard he moved to the hills outside of Cincinnati so, he said, "that his boys could have room to grow in." Charles P. Taft talks entertainingly of the glorious days of the Taft youngsters' boyhood.

"We were kept in close restraint to a great extent," he said, "but every one was a live, virile lad full of the old nick. Our mother, I recall, regarded us with no little alarm. There is an anecdote in the family which we all relate with increasing amusement about the confession she is alleged to have made once to a friend.

"'I am afraid,' mother said, 'that I am raising five young devils.' But we were not bad, just active. My stepmother, I fear, was not accustomed to boys.

"My father," continued Charles Taft, "succeeded William W. Belknap as Secretary of War, taking his place two months later as Attorney General. I doubt if he had ever met Gen. Grant, but he had spoken and written much about him. He prepared a speech about Gen. Grant's achievements—an appreciation, it might be called, because it was more of an essay than a speech—and the President's attention had been called to it. He was trying a case in court when the telegram calling him to the Cabinet was handed to him. Strangely coincidental is the fact that my brother was dictating a decision in the Federal Court when the message came from President McKinley which took him to the Philippines.

"Speaking of my father reminds me of a phrase of his which was often quoted while he was alive. 'It's a pretty bad case,' he said, 'that has not two sides.'"

Love for New England.

Millbury people know Taft and feel that one of their own sons has been singled out for distinction by the Republican party. After Judge Alphonso Taft died his widow returned to Millbury, each of her sons having established a home of his own, and lived with her maiden sister until her death last winter.

Mrs. Louisa Taft's matronly affection and love so impressed her big son that he visited her every time he had a chance, and during his enforced journeys about the country he was always solicitous as to her welfare. During her illness his first question at every stop was "How is mother?"

When Secretary Taft was ordered to make his tour around the world, he wished to avoid it; he felt he should stay near his mother. But duty forced him to go, and Louisa Taft died while her son was abroad, just completing his world tour.

Such is the fruit of the Taft genealogical tree. It has been abundant and the Taft descendants are scattered through every State of the Union, and their accomplishments would fill a volume.

It has always been a prolific family, for five sons of the head of the American branch had an average of ten children each, and some of their early descendants had more than a score of children, and there was one Taft, whom nobody seemed to regard as unusual, who left no less than thirty children to perpetuate the name which in the twenty-seventh President of the United States promises to become more famous than ever.