

## Jonathan P. Dolliver

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## JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER

BY HARVEY INGHAM

At the bier our relations are personal. At the bier it is the Algona convention where a young man in defeat, black haired, bursting with vitality, wittily compared himself to Dore's figure in *Paradise Lost* who stands holding his own head at arm's length, and in that one speech fixed himself permanently in the politics of the Tenth Congressional District. At the bier it is the state convention of 1884 where this same young man, honored as temporary chairman, made the speech in the old Grand Opera House that introduced him to the politics of the nation. At the bier it is the Senator the day before he died seated on the porch of his Fort Dodge home discussing at length the meaning of the insurgent movement, somewhat stooped in figure and somewhat worn, but giving no hint either in appearance or in manner of the vital collapse that at that moment threatened him.

In the midst of an epoch we think of leadership. It is then the causes in whose espousal we found our own purposes expressed. Nothing could be more natural for those of us who had a part in the tariff debates, the debates over human rights, who suddenly found ourselves confronted with our new national destiny in our unanticipated occupancy of the Philippines, who came to the tremendous disruption of the Republican party in the convention of 1912 over the insurgency of the first years of the Taft administration, than to give our half hour to the causes Senator Dolliver championed and to his championship of them.

But we are not at the Senator's bier, and we are not in the epoch in which the Senator had his part. A chasm four years wide and a million years deep separates those of us on the hither side of 1918 from those on the yon side of 1914 and that chasm cannot be bridged. Even in our own lives it cannot be bridged. We, ourselves, are living in two wholly unrelated periods.

The period of Senator Dolliver is as much a part of past history as the period of Thomas Corwin or even of John Randolph, and just as in speaking of Corwin or Randolph we should try to fix his place in the long procession of leaders who have come and gone, so today our duty is not to recall the friendly presence of Senator Dolliver nor to recall the movements in which he led, of which we, ourselves, were part, but to estimate as fairly as we may the qualities of mind and heart that gave him leadership and relate as adequately as we may that leadership to the other leaderships of our American history.

In this view we may name the Senator the spokesman. Perhaps many would say the orator. But running through all the definitions of oratory is the suggestion of rhetorical effect and that is not the service of the spokesman. The spokesman voices a purpose or carries a message. In *Exodus* it is said, "He shall be thy spokesman unto the people."

The spokesman may be orator and the orator spokesman. The same man may be orator on one occasion and spokesman on the other. This in fact the Senator many times was. He practiced all the arts of oratory on occasion but the bent of his life was in the other service. He deliberately cultivated the art of debate to avoid being known only as orator. Gifted with a sense of humor that put him in the very front rank of American humorists, he cultivated the art of debate to avoid being known only as humorist.

The Senator himself pictured the service of the spokesman in a reference to Mr. Bryan's spectacular appeal to the national convention that first nominated him for the presidency. The Senator was a contemporary of Mr. Bryan's, they were in Congress together, they met in joint debate on the stump. The Senator was speaking in terms of calm appraisal and not of eulogy when he said:

"At last Mr. Bryan got the opportunity which he came there to seek. He had the look of an athlete as he stood up in that tumultuous assembly. His voice was strong and musical and he had learned how to use it. It reached the extreme limit of the amphitheater and as he spoke he made every inflection count so that while he did not add an idea to the sum of human knowledge, and but few striking phrases to the familiar vocabulary of the discussion, it gradually dawned on the convention that they had found in him their appointed leader in the great controversy upon which they were about to enter. It is vain to belittle Mr. Bryan's achievement for, though he was without money or influential connections of any kind, it made him before he had yet reached the age of forty the well beloved leader of millions of people and a distinct factor in the thought and progress of our times."

It is fortunate for the occasion that the Senator emphasized the fact that Mr. Bryan did not owe the leadership he gained in that convention to the contribution of new thoughts nor even of new phrases, but merely to the fiery power of persuasion that makes of one man the mouthpiece of the multitude and puts into the multitude the moral purpose to carry through.

Much has been said in these days of the passing of the spoken word. At one time it was the newspaper that was to take the place of the stump. Today it is radio. And yet never were such tremendous audiences gathered as in these later days to listen to the spoken word. Of all the services of invention the one that carries the recognizable human voice to hundreds of thousands where the unaided voice reaches but thousands is most important. For there is something involved in the personal appeal of the spokesman that has never been secured anywhere nearly so effectively in any other way. And if it shall happen that through the latest invention we shall have the physical presence of the spokesman in a thousand widely separated forums and at the same time hear his voice, both with sufficient reality to create an atmosphere, nobody can foresee what it may do to add to the power of

the great leaders who put into form the aspirations of the masses and who say for them eloquently and concretely what they cannot say for themselves.

There is too much tendency to leave the emotional out in our estimate of the forces that move men. We rely too much on cold analysis, on the certainties of statistics, on the reports of commissions, on the reasoned papers of heads of departments. But none of these nor all of these together can fuse great masses of people into coherency in the pursuit of good government. Men may reason clearly and yet not act and it is action in the end and not the preliminary investigation that counts. People are stirred to action by feeling. If that feeling is wisely directed by intelligence then great movements come. But the feeling must be there and the man who in the end determines the movement will be the man who is able to stir the feeling.

A multitude of reasons can be given why we shy at the emotional appeal. So frequently it is wholly unreasoned, leading masses of people into all sorts of folly. So frequently it is used unscrupulously. There is something so meretricious about much of our popular oratory. So much can be done by mere physical energy put into a resonant voice, filling the air with sound and fury signifying nothing. But we must not be misled as to the mainspring of human action. The man who fails to stir the feelings of the people will never lead them. If he serves in any large way it will be as confidential adviser to the man who does.

Recognizing that the spokesman is and always must be the important man in all great mass movements, such as government and the lesser organized agitations that go on under government, Senator Dolliver at once takes his place with a very limited number of the real leaders in our 150 years of American democracy. If every United States senator had been spokesman the number of them could readily be counted among the hundreds of millions of people of that 150 years. But how many spokesmen have there been in each senate as one after another senate has succeeded senate? How many spokesmen are in the Senate today and how many have been in the Senate in the whole war and post war period, the men who can fire great masses of people with a mighty purpose, who can determine the direction of great movements, who can keep the enthusiasms of democracy from dying down and insure that government of the people shall not be met with a shrug of the shoulders?

Those who knew Senator Dolliver well can readily appraise his outstanding qualities, little as anybody can define the exact combination of them that gives what we call personality, the most evasive thing about us all, and yet the thing that determines our ultimate place. He had first of all a splendid physical presence, tall, commanding, powerful. And running through him was that latent energy that could be called upon and that gave him as combat deepened a sense of growing

power. There is a common saying about some men that they rise to the occasion. There was something of the sleeping giant about the Senator in everyday life, genial, playful, leisurely, and then when aroused the flashing eye, the even harsh voice, the determined mien of a man who will not budge. There was never any feeling of retreat about the Senator nor, after the issues were joined, of compromise. The man whose eye flashes is rarely ever a compromiser.

The Senator had a marvelous memory. He was able to speak exactly as he had written because at one reading, or at the most two readings, he could deliver his longest speech word for word. Probably the most remarkable memory of which we have any record was Lord Macaulay's. It is reported on good authority that on a test he read a page of the *London Times* and then repeated it. Mr. Bryan had a remarkable memory and he also delivered his longest speeches substantially word for word as written. It is likely that memory plays a larger part in all great oratory than any other one gift. For while men without the gift of memory can write eloquently and may have every other attribute of the orator, only those with the most absolute confidence in their delivery can speak the finished product of burnt midnight oil with the semblance of spontaneity absolutely indispensable to moving power. Not only does memory play this wonderful part, in giving to the spoken word spontaneity, but it plays a no less wonderful part in holding for the orator every finished phrase of literature. Once read no fine word or phrase is ever lost to him.

The Senator never trifled with nor neglected careful preparation. If he had been a man of mental leisure, as his social physical presence often seemed to suggest, he would have trusted to his ready wit and to the casual flow of extemporaneous speech. But he himself followed the advice he gave to a friend, "Young man, burn the midnight oil."

Discussing the oratory of the stump he wrote, "Whoever would deal with the modern American mass meeting must put into the preparation of his speech time and labor without stint or grudge." This was not mere phrase making. It was a description of his own painstaking method. He said of the average extemporaneous speaker that he usually finds himself before an audience, "likely to value its own off-hand impressions even more highly than it does his." Reviewing the great advocacy of the world the Senator wrote, "Little or nothing worth remembering has ever been spoken in this world without the most painstaking preparation entering into the very language and arrangement of the speech. If that were not so our school children would not be reciting today words of Demosthenes, or Burke, or Webster as they would all have perished in the utterance."

It was a prodigious labor to perfect himself as Senator Dolliver did perfect himself and this industry is to be emphasized all the more because his natural gifts were such as to make temporary triumphs easy enough to win. If we are to honor the patient industry of those who

can gain a place only by the hardest sort of labor, what is to be said for the patient industry of those to whom the ordinary triumphs come naturally enough and without effort? Lincoln could have been the country wit of Sangamon County without turning his hand. How can we estimate the patient and persistent and determined effort that made Lincoln the man he was?

Merely to illustrate the painstaking labor of Senator Dolliver let anybody stop for a moment and consider the opening paragraph of his oration on Robert Emmet delivered in Cooper Union, New York:

"I am here by the favor of your invitation to speak a few words in memory of the most picturesque character in the legends of patriotism. It is now nearly a century since a court of justice, upon the hurried findings of a jury, immortalized the name of Robert Emmet. The years have wrought a miracle in dealing with the verdict of the English law. The friendless boy who stood before the judge and received upon a blameless conscience the penalty of death has entered by the general consent of man into the glorious company of the martyrs and is numbered with the choice and master spirits of the world."

Stop a moment to analyze those sentences and to appraise the appeal of those words and then take note how simply it is said. And then try to rewrite it. Of course there must be inspiration and natural gifts. But paragraphs like that are even for the most gifted the product of painstaking emendation and rearrangement. They are not dashed off in hot perfection.

We cannot too much emphasize the Senator's capacity for sustained effort of the most laborious sort if we would appraise his service. How otherwise would he have been chosen to conduct that final debate of the insurgent group on so intricate and so involved a matter as Schedule K? The insurgent group had such men as Robert M. La Follette, Albert B. Cummins, George W. Norris, Joseph L. Bristow, Albert J. Beveridge, Victor Murdock, and Miles Poindexter. It was not because of any inheritance of easy-going genius that the burden of the debate fell on Senator Dolliver, nor by any spontaneous outpouring that he swept the floors of the Senate. The native-born wit was there and the native-born eloquence. But wit and eloquence were not the demand of that debate. There must be long years of patient study into intricate details. No man could sustain himself in a great tariff debate without complete mastery of statistics, without mastery of the conditions of American industry, of world markets, of the tides of trade, of everything else that goes to national prosperity. That is not the sort of thing men are born with. That is only acquired by hard and patient labor.

Again it may be said Senator Dolliver could have been the wit of the Senate without effort, or the occasional orator. But to be the spokesman of the crusade against Schedule K by the common consent of a group of talented men meant persistent devotion to a lifetime ambition.

If we turn from the Senator's personal qualities to the environment in which he grew we come to two very important directing influences in his life. Perhaps we should be warned not to over emphasize these directing influences. Thousands of men grow under precisely the same conditions and but one comes to great achievement. We are altogether too prone to say that a hard frontier life made Lincoln without asking ourselves what became of thousands of other boys on that Illinois prairie who had every experience he had. It would be easy to quote the acknowledgment of many great men of the debt they owed to the hard circumstances of their boyhood years which compelled industry and fired ambition. But in no case do those who achieved explain the failure of those who did not achieve, and yet who had all the stimulus of which they boast.

The influence of environment is important only as environment relates to the native talent of the environed. No alchemy of environment has ever yet been enough to overcome the disparity of gifts with which we are born. All that is important is that the man born with gifts shall be environed to the best advantage. It is in that thought that we may take into account two of the conditions that met Senator Dolliver as he came upon the stage.

The first was his boyhood spent in the home of an itinerant Methodist preacher whose labors were in the mountain regions of West Virginia in the years immediately following the Civil War. If we emphasize only the years following the Civil War, and have in thought the tremendous labors of the elder Dolliver in that borderland where men were rough and ready, we can see how powerfully the times must have been borne in on the imagination of the Senator's impetuous and fiery youth. The zeal of the proselyter was bound to come and he was bound to be a proselyter for human rights with intense sympathy for those who struggle, for those who are oppressed, for those who do not have a fair chance. Again let it be said that it was not the conditions of a boyhood in the West Virginia borderland that made a Dolliver, for too many others grew up in those surroundings who were not Dollivers. But born with the talent and the latent energy what could better fire the ambition and then direct it than the experience of a Dolliver boyhood and young manhood?

But the environment of the Dolliver boyhood on which we must lay stress was the environment of a minister's home. In the recently published journals which Emerson kept is a sentence we may all ponder:

"Elizabeth Hoar affirms that religion bestows a refinement which is missing in the best bred people not religious, and she considers it essential therefore to the flower of gentleness."

If we say no more of the environment of a home devoted to religion, it is a home bound to fix the mind on that culture that gives the flower of gentleness.

No matter how far the boys and girls of such a home may stray

from the fixed limits of any given theology, how recreant they may seem to be to the doctrines of the church, they never lose a certain elevation of aim and a certain refinement of method. Emerson in another note said, "When I bought my farm I did not know what a bargain I had in bluebirds, bobolinks and thrushes: as little did I know what sublime mornings and sunsets I was buying."

There was something about Senator Dolliver to those who knew him intimately that was always looking in the depths of the fields of grain of Iowa for the bobolinks and thrushes, something in him that was always looking over the tops of the fields of waving corn for the sublime mornings and sunsets.

He was practical in his politics. And in his statesmanship he dealt with the situations that immediately confronted him. He was not a visionary, nor as we abuse that word, an idealist. He did here and now what the day called for.

But the day and its duties were never quite all of it with him. There were the sublime mornings and sunsets.

It is with this thought of the Senator in our minds that we may come to one of the most interesting "ifs" of our American political history, "if Senator Dolliver had lived."

Senator Dolliver died in the very middle of the Taft first term, after issues had been raised that insured a tremendous controversy in the Republican National Convention of 1912.

It is now well known that there was a time in that convention when overtures were made in behalf of the Taft majority to withdraw the name of the President from the consideration of the convention on the condition that a third man could be agreed upon for the nomination. It is also known that of all the insurgent group Senator Dolliver was the one who enjoyed the personal friendship of Mr. Roosevelt. There have been hints that for some time Mr. Roosevelt had been looking on the Senator as the one man who could carry through the program he was interested in. Of course it is idle to speculate over what might have happened if the Senator had been in the convention. But it is known that the names of several others were carried to Mr. Roosevelt, the name of Senator Cummins among them, and were promptly rejected. Whether Mr. Roosevelt could have consented to the naming of any third man after the fight had gone so far may be questioned. But it is certain that Senator Dolliver would have been the man if he had lived.

The nomination of the Senator would have solved every party difficulty, for he was highly enough esteemed by what was then called the standpat element to insure against a reactionary bolt, while he was looked upon as potentially the most effective leader of the insurgents. Moreover he had the most positive talent for precisely that situation, for he was dyed in the wool in the traditions of the Civil War days when Republicanism was born, and he was able to urge his program

of progressive reforms against a background of the strictest party regularity.

If the Senator had been nominated in that convention by no possible stretch of the imagination can anybody picture a failure of the wings of the party to come together, particularly in view of the bitter controversy in the Democratic convention that took the then almost unknown governor of New Jersey, Woodrow Wilson, out of his background and thrust him suddenly into national attention. If nominated Senator Dolliver would have been elected.

It is at this point that we come back again to the Senator's capacity for sustained effort under the strain of a great responsibility, that we must never lose sight of nor minimize if we are to fairly understand what he in fact did, and fairly to estimate what he might have done. This is all the more important because in our own day a president has been elected with many of the fine personal qualities of the Senator, but who in the early days of his administration took the easy way. We may believe and with good reason that another two years would have brought a very different estimate of President Harding for at heart he was right, and he was awakening to the fact that the destiny of his administration was in his own hands and not in the hands of his friends. And he was not wanting either in ability or in patriotism, or in firmness. But be that as it may with President Harding; nothing of that sort would have happened if Dolliver had been elected in 1912. The Senator came up in politics by his own unaided efforts. Nobody shaped his program for him, nobody told him what to say and what to leave out. There was with him, behind the appearance of a most genial willingness to accommodate everybody, a most determined purpose to bring everybody to his own standard. As president he would have named his own cabinet, shaped his own national program, assumed his own personal responsibility for success or failure. Of wholly different temperament and in many ways of wholly different type, it may be doubted whether President Wilson himself was any more a personality in the presidency than Senator Dolliver would have been. And this talent for personality had been tremendously fortified in him by his long service in the House and Senate. He was thoroughly seasoned to the ways of the national capital and he had an intimate knowledge of the strength and weakness of the men who made up the government.

Senator Dolliver as president would have come to the World War practically, he would have done the things that needed to be done to win the war. But in it all he would have been looking for "the sublime morning." It is not necessary to enlarge upon the speculation, it is enough merely to suggest it.

With his kindly outlook on life, with his seasoned experience in politics, with his unwavering faith that beyond it all a kindly Providence watches over the affairs of men and directs human activities to large ends, with his boyhood experience in the harsh days of reconstruction

when man's inhumanity to man was burned into his very fibre, with the parental injunction always ringing in his ears that the earth is the Lord's and his glory must fill it, who can believe that the Senator as president would not have come to the close of the war with a far vision of world harmony, presented it to the people with winning persuasion, and urged it both upon our own Congress and the congresses of the world with political sagacity and shrewd appraisal of the forces to be conciliated and directed?

Of course there is an incidental "if" we have not considered. If Senator Dolliver had been nominated with President McKinley at the Philadelphia convention where Iowa presented him for the vice presidency and where he would have been named if Boss Platt had not been so determined to be rid of Theodore Roosevelt, then governor of New York. It was the Platt determination to shelve the New York governor in the vice presidency that worked upon Mark Hanna to accept Roosevelt, and in that way opened the door to one of the most remarkable careers known to our politics.

We may call this the incidental "if" for Senator Dolliver, for while the period immediately following the election of President McKinley was peculiarly suited to the temper of Mr. Roosevelt, it was not the period to call out all that was in Senator Dolliver. Just as the war period was a period in which Mr. Roosevelt would have been mainly the fighter, and possibly even probably would not have arisen to the larger call "of the sublime morning," so what we may call the McKinley period, a period of tremendous unrest over industrial and class relations, while it would have found in Dolliver a practical statesman, would not have inspired that other side of him, nor called out his distinctive talent.

The major "if" for Senator Dolliver was to come to the war period in the vigor of his years — he died at fifty-one — with all the call upon him of a world-wide working out of world-wide race relationships. In that situation he would have been what was called for in Exodus, an inspired "spokesman unto the people."

Nothing can be more interesting than this speculation over the "ifs" of history: "If" Lincoln had lived through the reconstruction period. "If" President Wilson had had the physique of a Roosevelt, or a Jan Smuts, as he began that last campaign to hold America to the idealism of the war. "If" Senator Dolliver had been nominated at Chicago.

When by fortunate coincidence the right man comes at the right time we seem to see the working together of great forces to shape the destiny of events. But when just in the flower of his strength the real leader drops out, sometimes when we seem to need him most, then we are shocked into the realization that after all the program is larger than we had understood, that time in our sense is not determining, that long ages are to be taken for what we had vainly hoped to achieve in our four score and ten.

We come now to the last "if," if Senator Dolliver had bridged over into old age. Hudson tells us that we live four very distinct lives, and have four very distinct personalities, childhood, adolescence, manhood, and old age. Some of us have health and fortune and achievement in one of these lives but not in the other. It may be beauty in youth, it may be dominating control in manhood, it may be serenity in old age.

Senator Dolliver would have bridged over into old age in the war and post war years, and we need not figure him in the presidency to know that at the very top of his powers, having won in the debates of the Taft Congress a leadership nobody either minimized or challenged, coming to the opening days of the war at fifty-three, he would in some way have figured as spokesman on a world stage. What might not the twenty years from 1914, the twenty years in his life from fifty-three to seventy-three, have done for a man of his large outlook, his alert sympathies, and his remarkable background of faith in the order of the universe that, whether we understand it or not, works slowly but surely to broaden and deepen and heighten the meaning of life? The mere fact that his last years witnessed his intensest efforts, that instead of accepting the easy and the comfortable way he had plunged into the very thickest of the fight, is an earnest of what the war period would have aroused in him.

But it was not to be.

And so we hang this portrait of the Senator in our gallery of notable men and women of Iowa, and we consign his part to history, and we turn again to the duties of the day and hour.

May we not all of us learn this one lesson from the Senator's life: As we give untiring energy to growing our wheat and oats and barley, not to overlook the bluebirds, the bobolinks and thrushes, as we pride ourselves more and more on our waving fields of corn, not to forget that there are sublime mornings and sunsets.

We have surpassed the records of mankind already in wealth, and all that that signifies. We ride in nineteen-twentieths of the automobiles of the world.

And yet you and I seem to know instinctively that that is not all we mean when we say America.

Senator Dolliver powerfully reinforced the most worth-while aspirations of our American life.

ALBERT B. CUMMINS

By H. W. BYERS

The place assigned to me on this program comes to me as a great joy and at the same time a task, but it is a task of love.

I knew Senator Cummins during nearly thirty-five years of his active life; knew him as a citizen, lawyer, and statesman, and during all this time his life was a constant inspiration to me. Throughout the period

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