

"I will try."

When the young man entered the sick-room, with the triumph of that first victory speaking in his light, quick tread, in his glowing, self-reliant face, he stopped short at the threshold. There lay his benefactor, his friend, crippled for life, pale as the linen of his bed, and beside him stood Mary Duncan, whose chestnut hair in the agony of those long hours of suspense had lost its brightness forever, and was now thickly powdered with gray. Duncan smiled and held out his left hand, saying feebly but cheerfully:

"Welcome home, my boy."

The visitor took the hand, pressed it a moment between both his own, and then walked quickly to the window, turning his back upon a scene which had well-nigh unmanned him.

"You see before you, my friend, one of the results of the theories your letters have been so full of. They usually do the thing more neatly in Russia, I believe. This was a bungling job after all; the only thing they have killed is the goose that lays the golden eggs."

"Don't say that, Mr. Duncan. You don't mean it, sir; I know you don't, even in this dreadful time. I am proud to remember that

you used to say that I should grow to be your right-hand man, and I had come to offer myself to you in any capacity—let me change that pillow for you."

As he spoke he lifted the wounded man's head to an easier attitude.

"Yes; you shall stay and help nurse me. The women are quite worn out with watching; and when I am a little better I will listen to your theories, and you shall help me with my plans."

"Your plans?"

"Yes, of course. My wife thinks she is going to carry me off to Europe and make an invalid of me for the rest of my days; Mr. Gray thinks he is going to sell the mill property at auction; but they can't hold a meeting until I am well enough to be present, and from the first I have been determined to rebuild the works."

"Then the goose is n't killed after all?"

"No, only hobbled!"

"You must not talk any more, George," cautioned Mary Duncan from the doorway; and in five minutes the patient was asleep, and quiet reigned in the sick-room.

Maud Howe.

THE NEW POLITICAL GENERATION.



HE close of the first century of the Republic finds a new political generation assuming control of its destinies. The average lifetime of a generation of human beings has long been held to be about thirty-three years, and the theory will be found also to hold good of public men as a class. Exceptions of course occur, when unusual longevity prolongs the career of one man far beyond that of his early associates; but such exceptions only prove the rule that, as a whole, the governing body changes three times in a hundred years.

The first generation under the Federal system held the stage during the period from 1789 to 1825, and may be called the constructive generation. The Revolution had been carried through by young men. Jefferson was but thirty-three years old when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, and the patriot army numbered many an officer like Monroe and Hamilton who joined it at eighteen or nineteen. The constitutional convention of 1787 contained a number of the men who had become prominent either in the field or in the council chamber during the war, and

who yet were comparatively youthful. It thus came about that the men who organized the new government in 1789, although a large proportion of them had already been prominent in affairs for a good while, were still for the most part in the prime of life. Washington, then fifty-seven, was the senior member of his administration; Jefferson, the first Secretary of State, forty-six; Knox, Secretary of War, thirty-nine; Randolph, attorney-general, thirty-six; and Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, only thirty-two. John Jay, first Chief-Justice, was not yet forty-four. Madison took his seat in the first House of Representatives at thirty-eight, and Monroe appeared the next year in the Senate before he was thirty-three.

It was in every way most fortunate for the young nation that its first rulers were young men, who were yet old enough to have shared in the long struggle which was necessary for its establishment. The Federal Government was an experiment; the Constitution was a novelty; the proposed division of powers between different departments of a central government, and between the central government and its constituent States, was without precedent. Questions immediately arose as to the interpretation of the fundamental law, which

must be decisively settled. Happily the very men who had helped either to frame the Constitution or to secure its adoption by the States were in Congress, on the bench, members of the cabinet, in the presidency; and so it long continued. Monroe entered the army only a year after the battle of Lexington; it was fifty years after the battle of Lexington when he retired from the presidency, and up to that day every incumbent of the highest office had been, like him, honorably associated with the Revolutionary era. Indeed, Monroe was not the last representative of that era. Marshall, the great Chief-Justice of our history, though nearly three years Monroe's senior, expounded the Constitution with unsurpassed ability for more than a third of a century, until his death in 1835, when nearing eighty.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the beneficent effect upon our development of the fact that this constructive generation represented in itself, and so perpetuated, the patriotic impulses of the Revolution. The Constitution had been grudgingly accepted by several of the States; the centrifugal forces which had manifested themselves during the period of the Confederation were still active. The Federal Government was distrusted by a large proportion of the population; sectional jealousies were rampant. A strong cohesive influence was needed to weld together the discordant elements, and it was furnished by the generation of public men who had endured so much in order to found a nation that they were bound to save it from early wreck.

As death thinned the ranks of the Revolutionary statesmen, there came to the front our second political generation,—the compromise generation,—which ruled the nation from about 1820 until the election of Lincoln. This was the age of Clay and Webster; of Jackson and Calhoun; of Benton and Taney; of the Missouri compromise and its repeal; of the fugitive-slave law and the Dred Scott decision. It was a generation which for the most part was born during the Revolution, and contained some men whose boyish memories covered incidents of that struggle, like Jackson's capture by a band of English troops in North Carolina when he was thirteen years old, in 1780, and the raid of English cavalry past Henry Clay's home in Virginia the next year, when he was four. Webster and Calhoun were born within two months of each other early in 1782, and appeared in Congress within two years of each other during the period which covered the second war with England, the South Carolinian in 1811 and the New Hampshire man (as Webster then was) in 1813. Clay had preceded them, hav-

ing entered the Senate late in 1806, more than three months before he had reached the constitutional age of thirty. Benton, who had been born four days before Calhoun, began his thirty years of continuous service in the Senate in 1821. The period which made four such men for a long while associates in the United States Senate must always remain a memorable one in our annals.

The Revolutionary generation lived to see the new government in good running order, and the wisdom of their constructive work vindicated. The delicate machinery had apparently been well adjusted, and men who had disagreed so radically on some points as John Adams and Thomas Jefferson came in their last years to be satisfied with the settlement which had been reached and hopeful as to the future. Yet there were already visible in their day signs of the impending trouble over the slavery question which confronted their successors. The difficulties of conducting a government in a nation half of which was slave and half free became constantly more obvious, but they were not yet admitted to be insuperable. It was still thought by most people that some arrangement might be made which would be satisfactory to both sections, and the constant effort was to discover a *modus vivendi*. One scheme and then another was tried, each in turn held by its authors to be the final settlement which was to end the trouble. Looking back now, it is easy to see how hopeless were all these attempts; but it is also easy to see how fortunate it was that the generation of compromisers held sway so long. They averted the inevitable struggle at a time when its issue would have been doubtful, and postponed the inevitable war until the disparity of the contestants should insure the triumph of nationality and freedom. "Let us make our generation," said Webster in his famous 7th of March speech, "one of the strongest and brightest links in that golden chain which is destined, I fondly believe, to grapple the people of all the States to this Constitution for ages to come." The wish was granted, for without that development of love for the Union which Webster sedulously cultivated, while Clay, "the great pacificator," preserved the peace, the two sections must have fallen apart.

Clay and Webster, the great compromisers, died within four months of each other in 1852. Feeble efforts in the same line with theirs were continued for a few years longer by surviving associates like Bell, Crittenden, and Everett. But even before the disappearance of Clay and Webster there had begun to rise the third generation of our national history—the generation which was to prove the recon-

structive one. It was composed of men born during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century, and it made its appearance in Washington when John P. Hale, the first senator elected as an anti-slavery man, took his seat in 1847, followed by Seward and Chase in 1849 and by Sumner in 1851. They met there men like Davis and Toombs, who represented ideas diametrically opposed to their own and who were determined that those ideas should prevail — peaceably, inside the Union, if possible; by secession and force, if necessary. The new men from the North saw that the old rôle of Webster could no longer be played. Webster had perceived that there was a conflict, but hoped that it might be repressed; Seward comprehended and proclaimed that it was “irrepressible.” A year before his death Webster had said, “If a house be divided against itself, it will fall and crush everybody in it”; but he argued in the same speech that there was no real division and consequently need be no fall, even though slavery were to be permanent in half of the national domain. Six years after Webster’s death, Lincoln, in opening his famous canvass of 1858 against Douglas, also quoted the saying, “A house divided against itself cannot stand,” but he gave it a very different application. “I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall,” said Lincoln; “but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other.”

The election of 1860 and the outbreak of the civil war pushed aside the survivors of the last century, and put the control of affairs, both North and South, with only an occasional exception, in the hands of men born since 1800. Lincoln, born in 1809, was at the head of the Federal Government; Davis, born in 1808, the chief of the Confederacy. The command of the Union army, which was held at the outbreak of hostilities by Scott, who had been born in 1786, fell to Grant, born in 1822, who was supported by Sherman, born in 1820; while his great opponent was Lee, born in 1807, whose lieutenant, Joseph E. Johnston, was born in the same year. Seward was born in 1801, Chase in 1808, Sumner in 1811, and Stanton in 1814.

It was men of the same age who held sway in Congress during the period after the war in which “the States lately in rebellion” were restored to their relations with the Union. Benjamin F. Wade, the leader of the majority in the Senate during the Johnson administration, was born in 1800; Thaddeus Stevens, his counterpart in the House of Representatives, dated back to 1792. The Supreme Court, as Lincoln found it, had a Chief-Justice born in 1777 and four of the five associate justices

had been born between the latter year and 1794. Lincoln’s Chief-Justice was born in 1808 and Grant’s in 1816, while the associate justices appointed by these presidents were men born between 1804 and 1816.

Thirty-seven years have passed since Sumner, the most conspicuous senatorial representative of the reconstructive generation, appeared in Washington, and not one man whom he then found in office now remains in public life. Only a few names, like those of Jefferson Davis and Hannibal Hamlin, have escaped the mortuary star. His great associates in the Senate chamber before the war, Seward and Chase, died within the eighteen months before his own death in 1874. Stevens had preceded him by six years; Wade was already in retirement. Of all the men who were in Congress at the time of Lincoln’s election, John Sherman, then a representative and now a senator, and L. Q. C. Lamar, then a representative and now a justice of the Supreme Court, are the only ones who are today conspicuous. Three of Lincoln’s five appointees to the Supreme Court are dead; the other two are seventy-two years old, and may retire on a pension at their pleasure. Two of Grant’s four appointees to the same bench are dead; a third retired on a pension eight years ago, and the fourth has been eligible to a pension for five years. Allen G. Thurman, who was elected congressman nearly forty-five years ago, seems a relic of a by-gone age.

As the third generation of our public men dwindles in size, the fourth comes in steadily swelling numbers to fill the vacant places. It is a generation which has grown up since the period when secession and state sovereignty were burning issues — which in large part is too young to have had any record on the slavery question. There are many men in Congress who were too young to vote in the election of 1860; some who had not then reached their teens. The State of West Virginia has two senators and four representatives, and the oldest of the six was born as recently as 1843. Four of them served in one or other army during the war, but this incident in their lives hardly dissociates them from the two who did not, one of the latter being but eight years old when Sumter was fired upon. Younger still is a Minnesota representative, who was not born until 1854, and whose case, by the way, well illustrates the cosmopolitan character of our population, as he is a native of Sweden and did not reach Minnesota until 1868. Another illustration of the same feature is the case of the New Jersey congressman who was born in Ireland in 1853, and a third the Wisconsin member who was born in Prussia in 1845 and did not come to this country

until 1866. An Indiana member has but recently completed his thirty-first year.

Nor do such facts as these fully show the extent to which the new generation has supplanted the one which brought on secession and carried through the war. The Constitution does not permit a man to become a senator until he has attained the age of thirty, or a representative until he has completed his twenty-fifth year. It seldom happens that a man becomes a senator until he is considerably past thirty, or a representative until he is much beyond twenty-five. But the ten years from twenty-one on are years which mark the age of a much larger proportion of voters than anybody who has not investigated the matter would suspect. A table of the ages of native white males, as returned in the last national census, shows that out of a total in the whole country of 8,270,518 who had reached the voting age, no less than 1,546,703, or nearly one-fifth of the whole number, were 21, 22, 23, and 24 years old. Add those who were between the ages of 24 and 30, and the aggregate is 3,019,663, or much more than one-third of all. Another census would show different totals, but the proportions would be the same. This means that nearly one-fifth of the voters are too young to be eligible to the House of Representatives, while much more than one-third are not old enough to be chosen to the Senate. Nearly all of this latter class, it must be remembered, are men who have been born since the outbreak of the war, for the baby born the day Sumter was attacked is now a man in his twenty-eighth year. Indeed, there are far more than a million of men entitled to vote for President this year who were not born until after Lee's surrender. On the other hand, those who were old enough to vote in 1860 are at least 49 years of age this autumn, and less than a quarter of all male adults (1,958,776 out of 8,270,518 in 1880) are men who have passed 48.

It is thus clear that the new generation is already here. The men who heard the Dred Scott decision, who went to the polls for Lincoln or Douglas, constitute but a small minority of the electorate to-day. They still linger in the halls of Congress, but they find the seats fast filling with those whom they have always considered mere boys, until it is suddenly revealed to them that they are no longer the real rulers of the republic. The old issues disappear with the old men, and

New things succeed as former things grow old.

The death of Chief-Justice Waite served to show how completely the reconstructive generation to which he belonged has done its work. The Supreme Court is the final arbiter in our system of government, and its decisions must be awaited before the nation knows what even an addition to the Constitution itself really signifies. The changes which the war had brought about were embodied in the new amendments to the Constitution, but there was much dispute as to how far-reaching those changes would prove to be. It was held by many, and Congress passed laws based upon the theory, that these amendments had greatly minimized the powers of the States and correspondingly enlarged those of the Federal Government. The Supreme Court alone could decide. Fortunately it was still composed entirely of judges who had been appointed by presidents belonging to the party which had carried through the amendments and which had based upon them the assumption of greater authority for the General Government. A long series of decisions, of which the last and, in some respects, the most important (in the Virginia debt cases) was rendered only a few weeks before Justice Waite's death, settled these disputed questions and established the rights of the States under the amended Constitution upon a basis entirely satisfactory to the party whose President was to name his successor. It was frankly confessed by candid Democratic journals that, so far as a correct interpretation of the Constitution was concerned, it was to them a matter of no consequence whether Justice Waite's chair were filled by a Republican of his type or by a Democrat. One needs only to recall the bitterness with which the decisions of the Supreme Court were received by the opposition party during the compromise generation to appreciate how wonderful is the change, and how complete the work of settlement after the terrible storm of civil war.

A crowd of issues press for the attention of the new generation, but one overshadows all the rest. The Union has been reconstructed upon an enduring basis; now the Government itself is to be reconstructed. The slavery of human bondage has been abolished; the servitude of the spoils system is now to be done away with. This is the work of the new political generation, and there is happily abundant evidence that it will prove equal to the task.

Edward P. Clark.

