

was indeed a slow one. Francis A. Walker says, "To my mind it was the course of events during the first four decades of our national history, the fortunes of our people, the action of political parties, as well as mere living together through an entire generation which made us a nation."

In the year of 1812, the great tide of immigration set in. Previous to that time the pioneers had lingered along the sea coast, knowing that there remained the last traces and influences of that European life which, while not essential to them, was yet very dear. The people of the United States were but a disconnected part of the Old World whose thoughts and habits were still our standards of speech and action. But now the English, Germans, Swedes and Norwegians who flocked to the county, crossed the mountains, together with many citizens of the Atlantic States, and began the great westward movement. From now on the states west of the Alleghenies figure prominently in American History.

This period marks a great change in the social and political relations of the people. Our early statesmen with but few exceptions might have taken their places in the English House of Commons with as easy and natural adjustment to their place and task as in the Continental Congress or the Constitutional Convention. There was almost an oligarchical succession to the executive chair during the first forty years; but in 1829 the old order went out and with Jackson a distinctly American type, free from the conservatism of old world politics, came into power. The United States had broken with the old world and stepped upon the stage of history with a true and vigorous democratic spirit, eager to work out a separate policy and destiny of its own.

With the admission of new states came the discussion and solution of great problems which required the keenest intellect and genius of all time. At the mention of Clay, Calhoun, Hayne and Webster we think at once of the great contests of what is known as the "middle Period" of our