

history. But the people simply dodged the responsibilities of deciding the momentous questions and compromised until the legislation of the sword began in 1861. The first shot on Fort Sumpter brought to the national conscience the knowledge that not only were freedom and slavery antagonistic social forces which could never be joined, but that slavery was inconsistent with the Republican ideal. The question of State sovereignty could not be decided by any one mind, nor by a chosen few but by the people themselves.

Josiah Quincy, who declared in Congress in 1811 that the dissolution of the union was already accomplished, lived to see the great national uprising at the fall of Sumpter and then on his death-bed said, "Now I know we are going to be a great nation. I never felt sure of it before." From that hour the existence of the nation in American politics became an accomplished fact. It was the result of a natural, slow, continuous and certain growth, culminating in the great struggle between two elements,—the one in favor of a loose confederacy from which any states might withdraw—the other, stronger and victorious, which decided that the States by the Union were one and inseparable.

With the reconstruction began the real organization of the nation. Once more our statesmen endeavored to form a "more perfect union and promote the general welfare." It required time to eliminate the sectional feelings, but to-day the student of American affairs can see no influences at work save those which make for a firmer and closer union. The time required for the amalgamation of this people seems to indicate a firm and homogenous welding.

A continuous stream of immigration which has poured in upon us spreading itself widely throughout the states has been most instrumental in bringing about this sense of union. Nowhere in the broad area of our country is there arising a fundamental diversity of interests. "The growth of nationality must always mean the collective growth of political institutions, industrial relations and class dependencies