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L I V E S
OF
EMINENT LAWYERS AND STATESMEN
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,
WITH
NOTES OF CASES TRIED BY THEM,
SPEECHES, ANECDOTES,
AND
INCIDENTS IN THEIR LIVES.

BY
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JOHN YOUNG.

Incidents in his Early Life.—His Parents.—Love of Knowledge.—Self-Taught in the Classics.—Becomes a Teacher.—Amusing Anecdote.—Vaulting Ambition Overleaping Itself.—Determined to Prepare for the Bar.—Commences his Legal Studies.—Supports Himself by Teaching.—Admitted to the Livingston Common Pleas.—Charles H. Carrol.—The Case of Miss Saterlie *v.* Windsor.—In Danger of a Disastrous Defeat.—A Successful Cross-examination and Brilliant Speech.—Saves his Client.—His Marriage.—His Early Politics.—Joins the Anti-Masons.—Elected to the Assembly.—Francis Granger.—William H. Maynard.—Two Future Governors in the Legislature of 1832.—His Speech in Opposition to Mr. Van Duzer.—Retires from the Legislature.—Devotes his Attention to his Profession.—The Case of the House Burners.—A. A. Bennett.—Mr. Young Nominated.—Elected to Congress.—His Congressional Career.—Retires from Congress.—Luther C. Peck.—Forms a Partnership with General Wood.—Again Nominated to the Assembly.—His Brilliant Legislative Career.—Becomes the Opponent of Horatio Seymour.—Great Debate Between Them.—Mr. Young as a Speaker.—Becomes the Leader of the Whigs in the State.—Returned to the Legislature.—Speech on the Mexican War.—Nominated for Governor.—His First Message.—High Reaching Buckingham Grows Circumspect.—His Administration.—Anecdote.—Appointed Assistant Treasurer.—His Death.—Reflections.

THE distinguished position which John Young occupied at the bar as a legislator and statesman, renders his name conspicuous in the history of the State. "Bold, skillful, and determined, he gave character to the political party," which in the State of New York acknowledged him as its leader. He did more. When that party was defeated and prostrated in the great conflict of 1844, by his ability as a legislative debater and tactician, by his stirring speeches in popular assemblies, he reformed its broken columns, lifted its trailing banner, infused new courage into its despondent cohorts, and finally led it to victory. He is charged, and perhaps justly, with many faults,

mistakes, and errors, for at present his public career will be subjected to the lights and shadows of the political atmosphere through which it is viewed. Happily for such men, for society, for history, the traces of passion, of rivalry, collision, and jealousy wear away by the lapse of time, are often forgotten in the requiem for the dead.

John Young was born in the State of Vermont, on the twelfth day of June, 1802. His father was Thomas Young, who removed with his family to Conesus, Livingston county, when John was but eight years of age. He was an innkeeper by occupation, and in early life was distinguished for enterprise and industry, and always for his irreproachable and manly character. Mrs. Young, the mother of John, was a woman possessed of those sterling traits of character, those strong mental qualities and heroic virtues which distinguished many of the pioneer wives and mothers.

John was the youngest of three brothers. At an early age he began to develop a mind which gave his friends high hopes for his future success in life. His mother read with pleasure and profit works of gifted authors and accomplished scholars. Thus she was qualified to exercise excellent taste and judgment in the selection of books for her boy. Accordingly, she placed in his hands productions which tended to enlarge and liberalize his mind. When but ten years of age he had read of Aristides the Just, of Themistocles, with his Spartan virtues, of Brutus, and of the mother of Gracchi. Greece and Rome rose before him, and his youthful mind was fired with the eloquence of Demosthenes, the oratory which sprang native and vigorous amid the factions and freedom of the accomplished Athenians.

In that early day, the *Columbian Orator*, and the *English Reader*, works compiled from the most elegant American and English writers, were the principal reading books used in schools. Mrs. Young encour-

aged her son to commit large portions of these works to memory, and then repeat them to her while she carefully corrected every error in pronunciation and period. This mental occupation was almost invaluable to him in forming his style of speaking and writing in after life.

The circumstances of his father did not admit of his receiving those advantages of education which his mind demanded. The only institution of learning to which he was admitted, was the common school of Conesus. But the growth of such a mind as John Young possessed, could not be retarded by the want of advantages. It grasped after knowledge, with the same intuition which causes the tendril buried in darkness, to lift itself into the pervading bright life-giving sunbeam. What could not be taught him in the Conesus school, he studied with success by his father's fireside, with no other tutor but self-reliance, energy, and perseverance. He purchased the best classical works of the day, and devoted himself to them with such untiring industry, that in his humble home, far from academic halls, he became an excellent classical scholar, uniting with his acquirements that practical knowledge which prepared him to enter the theatre of life, a successful actor; and without which, apparatus or books, teachers, criticism, ancient language, and general literature are of little moment.

Indeed, without practical learning, fancy and logic may please, but they cannot move men profoundly and permanently. It is the practical, which in a speaker or writer suggests ideas, gives facility and energy of expression. It prompts "the thoughts that breathe and the words that burn," it excites those mysterious combinations of speech and thought, which send the speaker's soul through his hearers, breathes new life into old and faded truths, and causes an instantaneous gush of thought and feeling in the mind of the auditor. The world is full of impracticable educated men, who, like the solitary Crusoe, on a distant

island, possess rich, solid bars of gold, but whose value is useless.

“Like certain chintzes, calicoes, and gingham, they show finely in their first new gloss, but cannot stand the sun and rain, and assume a very sober aspect after washing day.” But he who seeks knowledge as did John Young, cannot fail to be practicable, for his mind is kept lively and active by being compelled to exert his energies—by the stir of the world around him, which acts upon his intellect like an invigorating breeze blowing away all the dust and rubbish, keeping his faculties in a healthy tone, when, perhaps, they would become feeble under the regimen of recluse scholars, and dealers in mere erudition.

At a very early age Mr. Young was fully prepared for a teacher of common schools; and in that profession, he soon acquired a reputation which gave him the choice of the schools in Livingston county. He once related to a friend at Albany, after a triumphant legislative contest, the following circumstance in his life, while teaching :

“One winter, while I was teaching in the town of Livonia,” said he, “my scholars accepted a challenge to meet a rival school at a spelling match. It was a great event in their lives—greater in mine, for I was their commander-in-chief, and the thought of defeat was like death to me; so I drilled my scholars in the spelling book, with untiring industry. The day of the contest came, and my pupils were victorious. The young men of the defeated school then challenged my boys to a wrestling match; the challenge was accepted, and the match immediately took place on the play grounds of the school, and my scholars won another victory. The exultation which I felt was only equaled by the triumph of my boys. I was Cæsar at Pharsalia, they my conquering troops. That would have been the proudest day of my life, had I not lost my laurels by accepting a challenge from my rival teacher, to decide the contest of the day by wrestling with him.

In the flush of two victories, I felt the strength of giants. But this contest ended by my being ingloriously thrown into, and covered up by a snow-bank, as a reward for my vaulting ambition, which in this case, surely overleaped itself. That day, however, was the epitome of the ambitions and struggles of life—one moment exultant with success, the next despondent with defeat.”

At the age of twenty-one, Mr. Young entered the office of A. A. Bennett, Esq., then a prominent lawyer practicing at East Avon, New York.

In those days, a clerkship of seven years was required of law students, before they could be admitted to a class for examination, unless classical studies had been regularly pursued, under some competent teacher, or the candidate was in possession of a diploma from some college. As Mr. Young had no certificate of classical studies, from a competent teacher, and had no diploma, he was compelled to struggle through a seven years' clerkship. Unwilling to be an expense to his father, he sustained himself through several years of this term, by teaching. At length he was invited by Ambrose Bennett, Esq., a leading lawyer of the Livingston bar, residing at Geneseo, to enter his office as a student. The offer was accepted, and Mr. Young became a resident of Geneseo for life. Through the influence of Mr. Bennett, he was admitted to the Livingston Common Pleas, after studying four years. The late Charles H. Carrol was then first judge of that court.

He was a man of ability, dignified and winning in his manners, a gentleman of the old school. In early life a scholar, whose attainments were polished by intercourse with a highly cultivated and refined society, in his mature years a lover and patron of progressive agriculture, an amiable, high-minded and valuable citizen, a Christian gentleman, an honor and an ornament to the bench of Livingston county. The Common Pleas possessed original jurisdiction,

and was a tribunal in which important civil actions were commenced and tried; while it relieved the Circuit from a large amount of business, and led to a speedy termination of litigated suits, it also tended to a more strict and better education of lawyers in the trial of cases, than the loose, careless trials before referees, to which, owing to the crowded state of the Circuit calendars, the profession is now obliged to resort. After his admission to the Common Pleas, Mr. Young amply sustained himself by practicing in that court, and in the courts of justices of the peace. In these tribunals he evinced that legal ability, which subsequently led to the high distinction he attained at the bar.

In October, 1829, he was admitted to the Supreme Court, and at once entered into a practice which was lucrative and flattering to his professional ambition. He had been at the bar of the Supreme Court but a comparatively short time before he was conceded a high rank in the profession.

One of the early cases which greatly distinguished Mr. Young, was an action brought by a Miss Saterlie against Richard Windsor, for the breach of a marriage contract. Mr. Young conducted the action for the lady, and the late Judge Mullett appeared for the defendant. It was tried at Batavia. The defense admitted the promise and breach, but set up in defense of it, the unchaste and impure conduct of the lady after the engagement. Both parties belonged to influential families, who occupied high social positions, and as may well be supposed such an issue engendered the most bitter feelings. A large number of witnesses were examined, and the defendant succeeded in establishing by the testimony of a young man, the truth of the matters set up against the lady. There were other witnesses whose testimony tended to show corrupt conduct on her part. This brought the trial to a fearful point; for the plaintiff and her friends to be defeated in such a case,

would be ruin to her, and disgrace to them ; and as the case stood when Mr. Mullett closed the examination of the young man, there seemed little hope for her. But on the cross examination, Mr. Young succeeded in drawing from the witness the fact that he was a discarded suitor of the lady, and that he had on one or two occasions, made certain threats, which exhibited his desire for revenge. The counsel also succeeded in entangling him in the second relation of his story, to such an extent, that it had the appearance of improbability. But after all, when the evidence closed, the case had an unpleasant appearance for the plaintiff.

Judge Mullett made a strong and powerful effort for the defense. It combined the eloquence of reason, of sympathy and passion. It was such an effort as drew from Mr. Burke his celebrated and beautiful panegyric on the eloquence of Sheridan, when those brilliant orators were opposed to each other on a State trial.

Mr. Young saw the effect which Mr. Mullett's address had on the jury, and he prepared himself to overcome it. He commenced by extolling the speech of his adversary in the highest terms. "In the language of another," said he, "my antagonist has used every species of rhetoric, every kind of eloquence. Whatever the acuteness of the bar, the solidity of the judgment seat, and the sacred morality of the pulpit, have hitherto furnished, nothing has equaled what we have heard to-day in this court room. But, gentlemen, my opponent is entitled to still higher credit.

"With no reliable evidence to sustain him in the defense of this man, he has invented a theory, which in less powerful hands, would have been but the stuff which dreams are made of, but filtered through his fine brain, it assumes something like reality. It will therefore be my duty to dissect this theory, and to ascertain what evidence there is in the case to sus-

tain it; and then to see what facts there are to warrant a verdict for this deeply injured young lady; for you are the unfettered, unlimited, and final judges of that question, and of the amount of damages you may think proper to give. Gentlemen, you have, thank God, a still higher power and duty—the power to examine and decide upon the credibility of the witnesses who have testified in this case, according to your best knowledge and observation;—in the light of experience and according to the laws of human actions and frailty. Exercise that power, gentlemen, sternly and impartially in this case (for I tell you there is perjury here) with the conviction that the eye of God is upon you, and my client is saved.”

Mr. Young then took up the case, and his effort was characterized by such power of mind, that it rendered him the peer of Williams, and Ogden Hoffman, as a jury lawyer.

The jury returned a very heavy verdict for the lady. A motion was made by the indefatigable Mullett for a new trial, which was denied by the court.

In the spring of 1833, Mr. Young was married to Miss Ellen Harris, an accomplished daughter of the late Campbell Harris, of York, Livingston county.

Early in life he was attracted to the political field. On attaining his majority, his preference directed him to the Democratic party. In the autumn of 1828, the Democrats of Livingston county nominated him for County Clerk. His opponent was the late Chauncey Bond, of Geneseo. During this canvass he ardently supported General Jackson for President, and such was his enthusiasm for “the old Hero” that he lost all interest in his own election. His party being in the minority in the county, he was, of course, defeated.

Some time previous to this election the abduction of William Morgan took place, and the anti-Masonic party sprang into a powerful existence. Mr. Young condemned the high-handed act of Morgan’s taking-

off, and shared in the general indignation which it created. His attachment to General Jackson prevented him from uniting his fortunes with the Anti-Masons. But in the fall of 1829 he identified himself with them, and adhered to their fortunes, through all their changes and vicissitudes, until they united with the old National Republicans and formed the Whig party.

In the fall of 1832, Mr. Young and George W. Patterson were elected members of Assembly from Livingston county. They took their seats in that body January 6th, 1833. The Anti-Masonic party in the Assembly was then led by Francis Granger, of Canandaigua, and in the Senate by William H. Maynard, of Utica.

Mr. Granger was distinguished by many splendid and showy attributes of mind and person, possessing those qualities which constitute a successful parliamentary leader. He had already represented the County of Ontario, with marked ability, in four successive legislative sessions. Subsequently, he was the candidate of his party for governor. For a long time he exerted an extensive influence in the politics of the State.

Mr. Maynard was the great intellectual light of the Senate—the Halifax of his party. As a lawyer, he was distinguished for the profundity of his learning,—the result of his industry. Accustomed to the long patient vigils of the scholar, and the ardent study of political philosophy, he was logical and exact.

In the different branches of the Legislature of 1832, two future governors of the State occupied seats; one of whom was William H. Seward, and the other John Young. The former was elevated from the gubernatorial chair to the Senate of the United States, and from thence to be prime minister of two presidential administrations. Both of these gentlemen, in 1833, were overshadowed by the talents, position and influence of Maynard and Granger. The

early death of the former opened a field for the splendid and powerful abilities of Mr. Seward, while the mental resources of John Young in the political arena, gradually removed all opposition in his way, and he grasped the highest honors in the Empire State.

In the Legislature of 1833, Mr. Young occasionally took part in the debates. Whenever he arose to address the House, he commanded respect and attention. His speech delivered in opposition to a resolution declaring that the charter of the United States Bank ought not to be renewed, exhibited a profound knowledge of the fiscal affairs of the nation, and gained him considerable reputation.

His speech in opposition to the bill introduced into the Assembly by Mr. Van Duzer, of Orange, increasing the salary of judicial officers, brought upon him the hostility of those interested in its passage, some of whom took measures for retaliation, which led to a singular and sharp contest. His ardent support of the Chenango Canal bill gained him many friends interested in that measure.

After retiring from the Assembly in the spring of 1833, he was not in the political field again for several years, preferring the solid honors of his profession to the precarious position and evanescent success of the politician, who to-day is lifted to the Pisga of his party, and to-morrow lies by the cold streams of Babylon, with none so poor as to do him reverence; or who, like the giant in the beautiful fable of Sisyphus, is fated to an eternal renovation of hope and disappointment.

Early in the year 1836, A. A. Bennett, Esq., then a resident of Lima, N. Y., was appointed District-Attorney of Livingston county. He was a powerful and indefatigable public prosecutor, and stood high at the bar. Soon after entering upon the duties of his office, several persons were indicted for the crime of arson, committed in one of the northern towns of the

county. The circumstances of the case created great public indignation and considerable excitement. Some of the persons who were charged were farmers, and men of good reputation. Mr. Young was retained for the defendants; the ability with which he conducted the defense will not soon be forgotten in the County of Livingston. The defendants were all discharged.

He possessed a polished sarcasm, but it was a weapon which he seldom wielded.

Mr. Bennett had the more original fancy,—a deeper pathos; though Mr. Young was no stranger to the pathetic; while he could follow an argument with a more sustained acuteness.

In the fall of 1836, Mr. Young was nominated by the Whigs of the thirtieth Congressional district as a candidate for member of Congress, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Philo T. Fuller. He was elected, and took his seat in the twenty-fourth Congress, December 4, 1836. After retiring from that body, he returned to the duties of his profession, declining a re-nomination.

Luther C. Peck, then a resident of Pike, Alleghany county, was nominated and elected a member of the twenty-fifth Congress. Mr. Peck was a member of the House of Representatives from his district four years, serving with distinguished ability, and leaving upon the record of its proceedings the indubitable evidence of his high capacity as a legislator and lawyer, as an orator and debater.

In the memorable contest of 1840, Mr. Young was, at the solicitation of the leaders of the Whig party in his Congressional district, again before the people as an aspirant for Congress. He was triumphantly elected, and on the 31st of May, 1841, took his seat as a member of the twenty-seventh Congress, at the extra session called by Mr. Tyler. This session continued until the 13th day of September, following. It again assembled on the 6th of December, 1841, and

adjourned on the 30th of August, 1842. It re-assembled on the 5th of December, 1842, and continued its session until March 3, 1843. This was Mr. Young's last service in the National Legislature. While in Congress he distinguished himself more by his labors in the committee room, and by his sagacious advice in regard to the movement and policy of the Whig party, than by the number and ability of his speeches. The Bank bill vetoed by Mr. Tyler,—the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands,—the tariff of 1842,—were the great questions of the day, and he participated in the discussion of them with an ability which reflected honor upon his party and his district.

On his return home from this Congress, he was publicly received by his friends, and partook of a public dinner at Geneseo. A large number of leading politicians of Livingston and Allegany counties were present. In a short address he alluded to the policy of Mr. Tyler, which evinced the disquiet he felt for the course pursued by him. "A short time ago," said he, "the country resounded with shouts for Tip and Tyler; but the scene is changed."

Mr. Young, having formed a copartnership with his brother-in-law, General James Wood, Jr., of Geneseo, in company with that gentleman, he again returned to the practice of law. Such was their success, that Young & Wood became a leading law firm in western New York. It existed until after the senior partner was elected governor of the State. Since that event, General Wood has continued in practice, attaining a high and honorable position at the bar. During the recent civil war, as colonel of the renowned One hundred and thirty-sixth New York volunteers, he proved himself a gallant soldier. For his meritorious services, and bravery on the field, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, serving until the war closed.

In the autumn of 1844, the Whigs of Livingston county again summoned Mr. Young from the duties

of his profession, and he was induced to accept the nomination for member of Assembly. His election was a matter of course. The powers of John Young as an orator and legislator, were never fully developed, until he entered the Legislature of 1845. Here he raised himself to an eminence, seldom attained in a legislative body, and from which he easily reached the executive chair, though compelled to contend with the ablest intellects of the State. Horatio Seymour was a member of that Legislature, and as the Democrats were in the ascendancy, he was elected speaker. Mr. Seymour was then attaining that brilliant reputation which has placed him among the most distinguished men of the nation.

In the year 1845, the most popular measure with the people of the State of New York, was the proposed convention for the amendment of the Constitution. It was claimed with much propriety, that there were many corruptions and abuses existing in the State, which would be eradicated by a convention, and the people, therefore, eagerly demanded the passage of a bill providing for this measure.

In the Legislature of that year the Democrats were divided into Radical and Conservative Democrat factions, which subsequently resulted in the great schism of Hunker and Barnburner. Between these factions, the Whigs held the balance of power. Mr. Young, who early understood the great popularity of the proposed convention, adopted that measure as a party policy, which he saw would lead to success. With one or two exceptions, the Whig members coincided with him. Under his lead and direction, no means were left untried which promised to widen the breach in the Democratic party in the House. His management was admirable and successful.

The Radicals had long been in favor of the proposed amendment to the Constitution, but did not desire a convention, while the Conservatives were in fact opposed to either convention or amendment.

When the question came before the Assembly, the Whigs voted against the proposed amendment, thus compelling the Radicals to insist upon a convention rather than encounter the unpopularity of opposing it. The bill for the convention could not pass without the assent of the Whigs, who, of course, would not consent to the passage of any measure which did not tend to strengthen them in the State. And thus the question of a convention was, for a long time, one of absorbing interest in this Legislature, leading to frequent and exciting debates, which brought Mr. Seymour and Mr. Young in collision; the discussion which took place between them has rarely been equaled for eloquence or ability, at least in the Legislature of New York.

It drew to the Capitol crowds of deeply interested people, creating as much interest at Albany, as did the great Senatorial debate between Webster and Hayne at Washington. Each was a chieftain of his party, and each contended for a prize, well worthy the ambition of such contestants. Both won distinguished honors, and it is not invidious to say, that Mr. Young in this debate placed himself among the great parliamentary orators of the State. In one of his speeches, he alluded to Mr. Seymour in the following language :

“I have a single word to say of him. There is much of him to cultivate for good. He has shown himself the possessor of high, commanding, brilliant talents, and if he would forget party, and turn aside his passion for power, and the narrow paths of party discipline, and tactics,—tear away the drapery he has thrown around himself, and stand out his own living self, breathing out the purposes of his own great and generous heart; I hope, I trust, I shall live to see him occupying the highest station which his ambition desires.” Mr. Seymour’s reply was equally happy, and his retort to the charge made against him by Mr.

Young, of love of party and party tactics, was keen and pointed.

In his speeches at the bar, in the Legislature, or in the popular assembly, Mr. Young usually avoided anything like an exordium, and endeavored to lead his audience by the shortest and most direct course to the real point under discussion. In no instance did he permit himself to make a lengthy effort. Hence his arguments were like a short polished and keen weapon, used with intensified force and power.

The convention bill finally passed the Assembly, on the twenty-second of April, 1845. The Senate concurred; it received the signature of Governor Wright and became a law. The passage of this bill was an auspicious day for John Young. It was the successful consummation of a policy which would have added lustre to the laurels of Pitt, Fox, Clay, or Webster. It did not aggrandize himself alone, but in the next gubernatorial election it tended largely to the success of the Whig party in the State.

In the fall of 1845, Mr. Young was returned to the Assembly. The Legislature of 1846, like its predecessor, contained some of the most eminent men in the State. Mr. Young was the Whig candidate for speaker, but as his party was in the minority, he was defeated, and W. C. Crain, of Herkimer, elected.

This session was not an important one, excepting as it served to keep alive those divisions in the Democratic party, which at a later period developed themselves into an open and fatal rupture.

Just as the Legislature was on the point of adjourning *sine die*, the intelligence reached Albany, that a collision had taken place between the forces of the United States and the Mexicans on the Rio Grande. On the introduction of a bill into the Assembly authorizing the governor to sustain the nation with men and arms, Mr. Young, in an eloquent speech, declared his intention to sustain the resolution, concluding in the following memorable language:

“The country is invaded, the rights of our citizens have been trampled upon, and I will sustain the country, right or wrong.”

These remarks were the subject of much comment and considerable censure. But as has been well said, “Mr. Young never regretted the utterance of them, and construed in the spirit in which they were uttered, as indicating the duty of the good citizen, to waive his individual opinion, when called upon by the action of government to support it against a foreign power—it is so near akin to patriotism, that it must find a response in the heart of every one who loves his country.” The great patriot who uttered the words, “Our country first, our country last, our country always,” was inspired by the same sentiment which prompted those celebrated words of Mr. Young.

In the Legislature of 1846, Mr. Young voted for the law abolishing distress for rent, and he unreservedly declared his willingness to afford the anti-renters such aid and protection as the Constitution vouchsafed to them. He even asserted his willingness to amend the Constitution to protect them still further, and indorsed the changes made in their favor in the convention of 1846.

Such was now the popularity of Mr. Young in the State, that in 1846, he became a prominent candidate of the Whigs for governor. Mr. Fillmore had been urged as a candidate, but it was well known that he did not desire the position.

On the twenty-third of September, 1846, the Whig State convention assembled in Utica. It was the scene of a singular, and what might be termed a three-cornered contest. The defections which subsequently dissolved that great party, here distinctly exhibited themselves, under the names of Conservative and Radical Whigs, or Silver Gray and Woolly Heads. The former were lead in the State by Mr. Fillmore, Luther Bradish, and John A. Collier; the latter by Mr. Seward, Mr. Weed, and others. There was also a

strong anti-rent element in the convention, the leader of which was Ira Harris.

Although the name of Mr. Fillmore was presented to the convention against his wishes, yet such was his great popularity that he was a powerful competitor. Mr. Young was the Radical candidate, and although there was no personal friendship between him and Mr. Seward, yet on this anti-rent question they agreed, and as the Radical leaders preferred Mr. Young to Mr. Harris, they strongly sustained the former. After balloting for a long time, the anti-renters yielded their preference for Mr. Harris. Mr. Young received the nomination for governor, and Hamilton Fish was nominated for lieutenant-governor. The Democrats renominated Silas Wright and Addison Gardiner. With such powerful candidates they were confident of success. The election resulted in the success of Mr. Young by eleven thousand majority, and in the defeat of Mr. Fish; the Democrats elected Mr. Gardiner, lieutenant-governor.

Mr. Young entered on the duties of his administration. His first message was distinguished for conciseness and brevity, yet it was regarded as a dignified and able State paper. On the question of the Mexican war, he reiterated the sentiments of his speech on that subject in the Legislature of 1846. It is said that before this message was sent to the Legislature, he submitted it to certain eminent Whigs, who strongly urged him to expunge that part of it which referred to the war; but he was inflexible, and it was read to the Legislature without amendment in that respect. The measures which it recommended met the approbation of the Whigs; while they were condemned only by the most violent and bitter Democrats. In his second annual message, he alluded to the Mexican war in much the same language as the former message.

During his administration the Legislature was principally engaged in preparing such laws as were

demanding by the new Constitution; and as that instrument had deprived the executive of nearly all the official patronage formerly attached to that office, he was relieved from the vast responsibility of his predecessors. In the appointment of the few officials which the new Constitution left to the governor, he declined the advice and counsel of leading Whigs who had hitherto had a controlling voice in these matters.

Soon after assuming the duties of his office, two leading Whigs called upon him for the purpose of influencing him on the question of executive appointment.

“Gentlemen,” said he, after listening to their statements, “allow me to inform you that I am the governor of the State of New York.”

“Are we to understand that you decline to listen to our suggestions in this matter?”

“Certainly,” was the reply.

They withdrew.

“High-reaching Buckingham is growing circumspect,” said one of them, as they descended the steps which led from the executive mansion.

“Yes,” replied the other, “and his circumspection will send him to private life.”

Among the first acts of his administration was the pardoning several anti-renters, who had been convicted and imprisoned during the administration of Governor Wright. In this act he incurred the displeasure of the Conservative wing of the Whig party, and the usual criticism and newspaper condemnations followed, which had the effect of strengthening his friends as well as his enemies, and thereby leaving the matter about equally balanced. The governor insisted that the offense of the convicts was merely political, and therefore called for the interposition of the pardoning power.

In the early part of his administration, the question of the extension of slavery to the territory to be

acquired from Mexico, began to be agitated ; and sanctioned by him resolutions were adopted in the Legislature instructing the Senators and Representatives from this State in Congress, to vote for the prohibition of slavery in such territory, thus evincing his views on a question, the settlement of which, subsequently, led to such a fearful arbitrament.

“His views with regard to the war with Mexico, his refusal to make his appointments in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Seward and his friends, were not satisfactory to one branch of the Whig party, and led to considerable feeling, though no open rupture took place. He did not desire a renomination ; consequently the harmony of the party was not disturbed by any considerations merely personal to himself,” though the feud between the Woolly Heads and the Silver Grays continued until the great Whig party became a thing of the past.

The popular manners of Governor Young, his entire freedom from all affected dignity and self-importance, the perfect ease with which he received all those who approached him, his possession of those traits which command respect, rendered him personally popular. In his character there was a lively vein of wit and humor, which in public or private life rendered him attractive ; and he knew how to pass “from grave to gay, from lively to severe,” with a facility rarely met.

Among the amusing incidents of his gubernatorial life, which he sometimes related with infinite relish, was the following :

One morning, while busily engaged in his room, a person was announced as Mr. ——, from Livingston county. The governor did not recognize the name, but, coming from Livingston county, he was admitted ; and a tall, gaunt, queer, but somewhat self-possessed individual entered the room.

“Good-morning, Mr.—I beg pardon—Governor

Young ; glad to see you ; how's your health now, and your family ?" said the man.

"Good morning, sir," said the governor, looking very inquisitively at the queer specimen before him.

"You don't know me, I see. Well, governor, I'm the chap you saved from State prison for being mixed up in that confounded affair about the buildings going up one night. My gracious ! what a speech you made for me. The way you bored for water was awful. I felt bad, but I didn't cry until after the jury did. You got me off slick as grease. Hard work ; got good pay, though, and"——

"My good friend," said the governor, interrupting him, "I am glad that you remember my services in your behalf ; but as I am in great haste, you must excuse me now."

"But, Governor, this is a business call, and business is business," said the fellow.

"Well, what is your business ?" said Mr. Young, growing impatient.

"Well, you see, I'm in for it again—I'm indicted for another affair, a little worse than the first one ; pretty sure to go up unless I have help ; and as I'm out on bail, I've come to you again to assist me ;—always stick to those that do well by me," said the fellow.

"But I am not practicing law now, and I cannot help you," said the governor.

"I understand, but you see as you lay over all the judges in the State now, and I am going to stand a conviction, cause I can't help it, I 'spose ; and the judge will send me to State prison, and now, Governor, the joke comes in ; when I am fairly in (I shan't mind that), you just come down with your pardon, and lay out that judge, and set the district-attorney whizzing. Don't you see, Mr.—I beg pardon, Governor—that you can save me this time a good deal easier than you did before, and I guess for less

money, but don't wait long with your pardon," said the fellow.

Mr. Young, greatly amused at the man's sincerity and pertinacity, assured him, that if he was convicted, he would look over the evidence, and see how the case appeared, and then he dismissed his visitor.

In the Whig National Convention of 1848, Mr. Young was a warm friend of General Taylor, but the distinguished public services, captivating and profound qualities of Mr. Clay, caused him to prefer that great statesman for president; and when, in 1849, Governor Young desired to be appointed assistant treasurer in the city of New York, a position then held by ex-Governor Bouck, he was opposed by the leaders of the Radical Whigs, his preference for Mr. Clay to General Taylor being made as a reason why he should not be appointed to any office under the new administration. But the man who had been so long familiar with the detail of politics, and who understood so well the intrigues of cabinets, was a match for his powerful opponents; and in July, 1849, he was appointed to the important office he sought. This was the last public station he ever occupied. He died in the city of New York in April, 1852, in the fiftieth year of his age.

Mrs. Young and four children survive him. The former resides at Geneseo, N. Y., respected and esteemed for many distinguishing virtues and amiable traits of character.

Thus we have seen John Young, the artificer of his own fortune, the solitary and humble student, the teacher, lawyer, legislator, and, finally, governor of the Empire State. Often eulogized and vituperated, but in all these phases of his life successful. At times displaying powers of oratory of which he seemed unconscious, and exhibiting legislative abilities that made him the brilliant leader of his party, the chieftain who restored its fallen fortunes; and if he was hated by many, he was admired by more.

As governor, his administration may not be celebrated for any striking policy, nor may it dazzle us by brilliant contrasts between its good and bad qualities; between the vicissitudes of prosperous and adverse policies; but apart from the censure of its enemies, and the commendations of its friends, the impartial historian will accord to it as much ability and eminence as had been awarded to the administrations of most of his predecessors. As has been well said, "the light which radiates from the life of a great and patriotic statesman is often dimmed by the mists which party conflict throws around it. But the blast which strikes him down, purifies the atmosphere which surrounded him in life, and it shines forth in bright examples and well earned renown.