TWENTY-ONE YEARS.

The national anniversary of 1886 is the twentieth since that which immediately followed the downfall of the rebellion. The nation has thus come to its majority in the new existence which began with the end of the civil war and the abolition of slavery. The intervening period has been in a sense one of nonage, and it is hardly fanciful to regard the reunited nation as having only now come to the full stature of manhood.

For the first time in their history the people of the United States now feel an assured confidence in the greatness and safety of the nation. The danger of dissolution shadowed the whole existence of the republic down to the war; the fear that irreparable harm might yet be done the country by the section which attempted secession has possessed a large share of the population since the war. One thing alone could demonstrate the integrity of the reunited nation, and that was proof that its government was as secure with the party which was strongest in the South in power as with the party which was strongest in the North. So long as hundreds of thousands of men believed that a party which contained all the people would plunge the country into ruin. It should still suffice that a power, real confidence in the republic could not exist. Nothing short of a year's peaceful administration of the Government by the party which they so dreaded could convince these hundreds of thousands of men that the country is truly safe. This test has been applied, and a host of hopeful men are now drawing encouragement and relief at the evidence that their honest apprehensions were baseless, and that there are no longer any "rebels" against whom they must "vote as they shot." It is simple truth to say that there is now a more general, settled, and well-grounded confidence in the future of the republic than ever before since it was established.

This confidence largely grows out of the discovery that the nation no longer has a negro problem to settle. Before the war, slavery always threatened the attempt at secession which was finally made; for some time after the war emancipation did not give assurance of the black man's future. The race still suffers keenly from injustices, and it will long be handicapped sadly by its generations of servitude. But experience has shown that the negro is as safe with one party in power at Washington as with the other, and that his former masters are ready to give him the education they once withheld, which is seen to be as essential for them as for the whites, in the interest of the latter quite as much as in that of the blacks. The education of colored children in fade schools maintained at the public expense by the old slave States is proof that the negro problem is at last in process of solution. Still another great gain is the war and how which has been dealt at the domination of the spoils theory of popular government. Pernicious and demoralizing as this theory was when originally formulated two generations ago, it was not until the population had reached 50,000,000, and the number of votes exceeded 100,000, that people realized all the dangers which it threatened. The "clean sweep" demand typified and embodied the doctrine of the spoilsmen, and when a new administration, involving a change of parties for the first time in a quarter of a century, refused to make a "clean sweep," the axe was laid at the root of the evil. A vast deal remains to be done to remove the corruption incident to the reform of the civil service, but the spoilsmen have already met their Waterloo—and they show that they know it.

There are dark shades as well as light in the national picture. While the black labor of the South is emerging from ignorance, the North is awakening to the danger of ignorant white labor. We have not yet learned to regard emancipation as a step toward the white man's North, as the East and West have avowed and endeavored by force to establish the doctrine that a man shall not have the right to earn a living unless he subjects himself to the odious depositum of a secret, oath-bound "union," is an unwelcome revelation of the lack of intelligence among the masses of the newcomers from abroad. A body of workmen who had been educated in the public schools of this country would never have tolerated such a proposition, and while some native-born Americans have participated in the recent assertions of this doctrine, its chief strength has been found among the ignorant laborers who have come to the lowest classes of every European nation. The work of emancipating such men from the shackles of ignorance is no small task.

The growth in the power of corporations is an unhealthy sign. The undue influence of these great aggregations of capital in our legislation, the demand that public funds be used to promote men of public men, are plain to the most careless observer. The wide ramifications of more than one vast monopoly, as they are sometimes exposed to view, are well calculated to alarm the timid. It is not strange that people are found who consider the dangers threatened by corporations are sufficient to warrant the country in the sacrifice of the personal liberty of the citizen, even the right to the freedom of speech.

For some time past we have been afraid that the country might be threatened by something more than a political "union". The present Government, which was selected by the people in 1876, is the people's Government, and it is determined to see that the people's work is carried forward. The people expect the nation to be governed by them, and not for them. If there is a man living whom a decent sense of gratitude should move to pronounce that invocation, it is Maj. Powell, Director of the Geological Survey. This officer is now intrusted with the annual expenditure of a lump sum of $400,000, in his own way, through agencies selected by himself, in the preparation of a geological map of the United States. In judging what a geologic map is, and how it is to be made, what regions should be first covered, what agencies to employ; in the adoption of methods of administration and in the fixing of compensations to be paid, he is subject to no legal limitation or control whatever, except such as the Secretary of the Interior has the power to exercise. Not two months ago it was authoritatively reported as the unanimous opinion of the joint commission on the survey that this power should be in some way restricted. And yet, last week, a proviso intended to limit the expenditure of the money strictly to the object then in hand, was discarded, on the ground that no such approach to unanimity as that not even a count was called for. Two days later the Committee on Appropriations in the Senate recommended a reduction of the Director's salary by $1,000. On a division this recommendation only received five votes. We doubt if there is any instance in the history of the country of an officer of the Government in time of peace, exercising such powers and receiving such an endorsement in both houses of Congress.

If we ask why this endorsement was so emphatic, the natural answer will be that Congress was willing for the moment to sacrifice the usual precautionary provisions in making appropriations for the survey, because the survey is the people's survey, for the people. The survey has received the endorsement of every member of Congress; and if we asked any one of them what would be the policy of Congress, it is probable he would speak of the survey as the people's survey, for the people. If we ask why this confidence, we shall find it to be very largely the result of a series of unfounded attacks upon the Survey which has been made in various journals during the past twelve months. If there was anything open to criticism in the Director's conduct of his work, the authors of these attacks were singularly unfortunate in failing either to bring it to light or to guess at it. The published statements of the Director himself and the result of examinations both by officers of the Treasury and of the