

Comment

If David Lloyd George had died in 1919, he would have been regarded as a powerful party leader, almost irresistible in his appeal to the voters of the United Kingdom. Since the coalition ministry formed in the later war period which he headed went out of office, he has found no party to lead or no party willing to follow him. The estimate placed on his capacity in that line will therefore be very different because he has lived through the period since the World War. Clemenceau had won no outstanding place in world history or even in French history prior to the World War, at the beginning of which, in 1914, he was seventy-three years of age. Still vigorous, physically and mentally, he was able to become one of the strongest men of the hour. Whether we praise or condemn what he did during the War and at the Versailles Conference, there is no question about the powerful influence which he exerted on his country and the world. If Woodrow Wilson had suffered collapse at the opening of the Peace Conference, as he did afterwards, what would the best of biographers say of his loss to the Conference?

It has often been said that Lincoln was fortunate in that his labors ended with the close of the Civil War, and it does seem that there was a possibility that he could not have gone through the "Tragic Era" without loss of prestige. It is not always true, but often it is surely true, that no correct summary of a man's career can be made without due consideration of the age at which death came to him.

The belief is common that Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Alexander Hamilton—men who died in middle life—had accomplished their work in the world before the summons came. In regard to Caesar, Cromwell, Theodore Roosevelt—there remains a question. In the case of Stephen A. Douglas, it seems very plain that it is impossible to pass a fair judgment on his career without remembering that his life ended when he was but forty-eight years of age. Most of the men born at about the same time as Douglas are known very largely by what they did and said and stood for in the years of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Douglas has had the misfortune to be studied and interpreted in connection with Lincoln. No other man of the time has been so universally contrasted with the emancipator.

Remembering that Douglas had no opportunity to play a part during the armed conflict between North and South, it is manifestly unfair that he should have been so often unfavorably compared with Lincoln. If the latter had died at the beginning of 1854 when he was forty-five years of age, he would be accorded very few lines in the pages of any history and no biography at all. When Douglas died he was only three years older than was Lincoln in 1854. It was not until the last mentioned year, that Lincoln found a cause and took a stand which gave him some claim to a place in history. Even hostile critics of Douglas usually declare that he rose to a high stature in 1858 when he fought against the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton Constitution. In that year, he arrived at the age which Lincoln had attained in 1854.

It is impossible to conjecture what manner of statesman Douglas would have become had he lived to the age of sixty or seventy, but it is entirely proper to give attention to his early death when passing judgment on his character and career. He should be judged by his statesmanship in the period through which he was permitted to live and by his understanding of what it was best to do to avoid serious dangers that were likely to come.

Indiana is a wealthy state. It is a commonwealth in which there is much culture, where there is a belief in general education and even in the promotion of scholarship. Nevertheless, the patient researcher by whose work new knowledge is added to the world's store in one field or another, is one of the forgotten men of the state. There is no center in Indiana where either through state appropriations or private endowment, research can be carried on as it should be. It is very easy to economize where so few seem to be concerned. The fundamental truth is, however, that a multitude of people are involved. College education, high school training, elementary teaching, all will suffer in time, but the greatest tragedy resulting from the starvation of research work at a great university is what happens to the faculty. No university can remain a great institution and no faculty can keep above the water line very long unless a spirit of scholarship prevails, which spirit can only live where reasonable facilities for research are provided.

In the last year of his life, Daniel Webster was asked to speak before the New York Historical Society, which invitation he accepted. Certain passages from the address of the old statesman are well worth quoting:

But History, while it illustrates and adorns, confines itself to facts, and to the true narrative of actual events. It is not far from the truth to say, that well written History is the Epic of real life. It places the actions of men in an attractive and interesting light; rejecting what is improper and superfluous, it fills its picture with real, just and well drawn images.

And the dignity of History consists in relating events with truth and accuracy, and in presenting human agents and their actions in a clear and impartial light. The first element in History, therefore, is truthfulness; and this truthfulness must be presented in concrete form. . . .

An effort is now being made to interest the high school teacher of history in Indiana in the *Indiana Magazine of History*. During the year now closing a new department, "History Teachers' Forum," has been added. Matter suitable to this department is desired, and brief articles from teachers of history in high schools and colleges will be welcomed by the *Editor*.

A hope is indulged by those interested in the preservation and study of Indiana history that many, indeed very many, of the high schools of the state will become members of the Indiana Historical Society. Very few high schools have a file of the *Publications* and *Bulletins* issued by the Society or of the *Indiana Magazine of History* published by Indiana University. All of these will come regularly each year to every high school becoming a member of the Society. The annual dues are \$3.00 for any institution. The time will come when files of the publications available now through the outlay of this small sum will be much desired by high schools. They will prove valuable as they are periodically received, but they will become worth more with the passage of years. Students and teachers who work in the high schools of the future will praise those who act wisely in the present, but will have good reason to look back with disfavor on those who do not.

Contributors to this issue: Dr. William M. Reser is a physician of Lafayette, Indiana, and an active member of both

the Indiana Historical Society and the Tippecanoe County Historical Society; Dr. Thomas Jefferson Griffith is a physician who lives in Washington, D. C., but he is a native of Indiana; George E. Amick, World War veteran, First Lieutenant Indiana National Guard, and former clerk in federal Census Bureau, lives at Scipio, Indiana; John G. Van Deusen is an assistant professor of history at Hobart College, Geneva, New York; Julia LeClerc Knox is a teacher of Latin in the High School of Crawfordsville, Indiana, whose home is at Vevay, Indiana, and who is a frequent contributor to this quarterly; Leonard S. Kenworthy is a graduate of Earlham College, and was a graduate student at Columbia University last year. He is now taking teacher training and serving as an assistant teacher in the social studies department of Friends' Select School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Christopher B. Coleman is Director of the Indiana Historical Bureau and Secretary of the Indiana Historical Society. "Old Timer," who furnished the copy for the History Teachers' Forum as a "pinch-hitter," has taught history for a long time, but refused to turn over his contribution until the *Editor* promised not to divulge his identity.