

he would have liked to have them. Once he was asked what he thought of the outlook for Socialism. The reply he made has never been printed, but there can be no impropriety in printing it now. He said:

Within twenty-five years the Government of the United States will be so changed that we would not recognize it. The furious speed with which we are rushing into new conditions will revolutionize our system before we know it. Every tendency of the time is toward the obliteration of individualism, on which our Government was founded and which is the theory of our system, and toward the supervision of the whole business of life, down to small details, by the Government. That tendency will not be checked. The Government will have to accommodate itself to it. The American system is passing.

He said, too, not as an opinion but as a matter of almost accomplished fact, that woman suffrage was sure to come; but instead of stopping there he looked forward beyond it to the changes it would make in our national life, and speculated in his own mind about them, though all he would say was, "But what they will do with it, and what the end will be, I don't believe there is any man living with foresight enough to see."

In such matters and many others there was a calm pessimism about General TRACY's vision of the future. He believed that he did foresee what was to come, and that it would have been short of the truth to say that he only guessed it. He saw the close of his long life coming with the change of an era in American history. It is unfortunate that he never wrote down his observations and conclusions. Prophecy is dangerous, even by men as well fitted to prophesy as he, for national tendencies are erratic in their movement and have a power of shooting off at an angle or doubling on their tracks to the confusion of the prophet. America twenty-five years from now may be very different from what General TRACY saw it; for instance, for all we can tell, the remaking of the world by the war may produce strange new tendencies beyond our present vision. Still, he thought he saw; and the cooling of life with age made him able to look at it with a pessimism that was not a black pessimism, as it would have been when he was younger, but with a pessimism that was tranquil and undismayed. He had lived long enough to know by observation as well as theory that nations never descend into extravagances from which they cannot emerge and rise.

GENERAL TRACY'S LAST YEARS.

If General TRACY had written a book just before he died, what an interesting book it would have been! Not a book of reminiscences, though a life of eighty-five years, half a century of which was spent amid the making of events, would have made it a good one. But the last fifteen years of his life were the years of a wise spectator, who had spent most of the preceding seventy behind the scenes, sometimes in the leading rôle. Any man can be a spectator, and many men can draw conclusions from what they see, though not all can do so. But General TRACY was no ordinary spectator. Few public men have been in the thick of things so long and so continuously. He became a District Attorney at 23, and he was nominated for the first Mayor of Greater New York at 67. There was a span of forty-four years, and he spent them at the front, most of them in high command. After his race for the Mayoralty he was still active in public affairs for a few years, and his public service covered a good half century.

Such a story may not be unique, but it is very hard to match it. In those fifty years he had been a soldier and a General, a Judge of the Court of Appeals, Secretary of the Navy, one of the three Republican bosses of what was then the third city in the Union—the word boss being used in no offensive sense, for TRACY's probity was that which CAESAR desired in his wife. He held many offices not so near the front, but he was always in the thick of events. He knew how events were made, for he had helped to make them for more years than most men live, and he knew the streams of tendency, for he had stood at the source of many and watched them broaden into rivers of movement in his lifetime.

So here was a critic of events who knew how to criticize them because he had lived with them. The last years he spent in watching them with the eyes of long experience and forecasting their course and their good or evil possibilities. It would be worth something to have a record of what he saw, but he was chary of speech about it. When, well past eighty, he did give some hint of what he saw in the future, his face would become intent and his steady blue eye fixed on the thing he saw, as he talked, so that sometimes the person to whom he was talking would have very strong upon him the impression that the thing itself was actually present in the room and that the old General was seeing it with the eye not of imagination but of sense. It was not unusual with him to say much, but said in such a way the few words he uttered weighed heavily.

He had thought much on the tendencies of these last years and the river into which the stream was broadening, and his conclusions were not such as