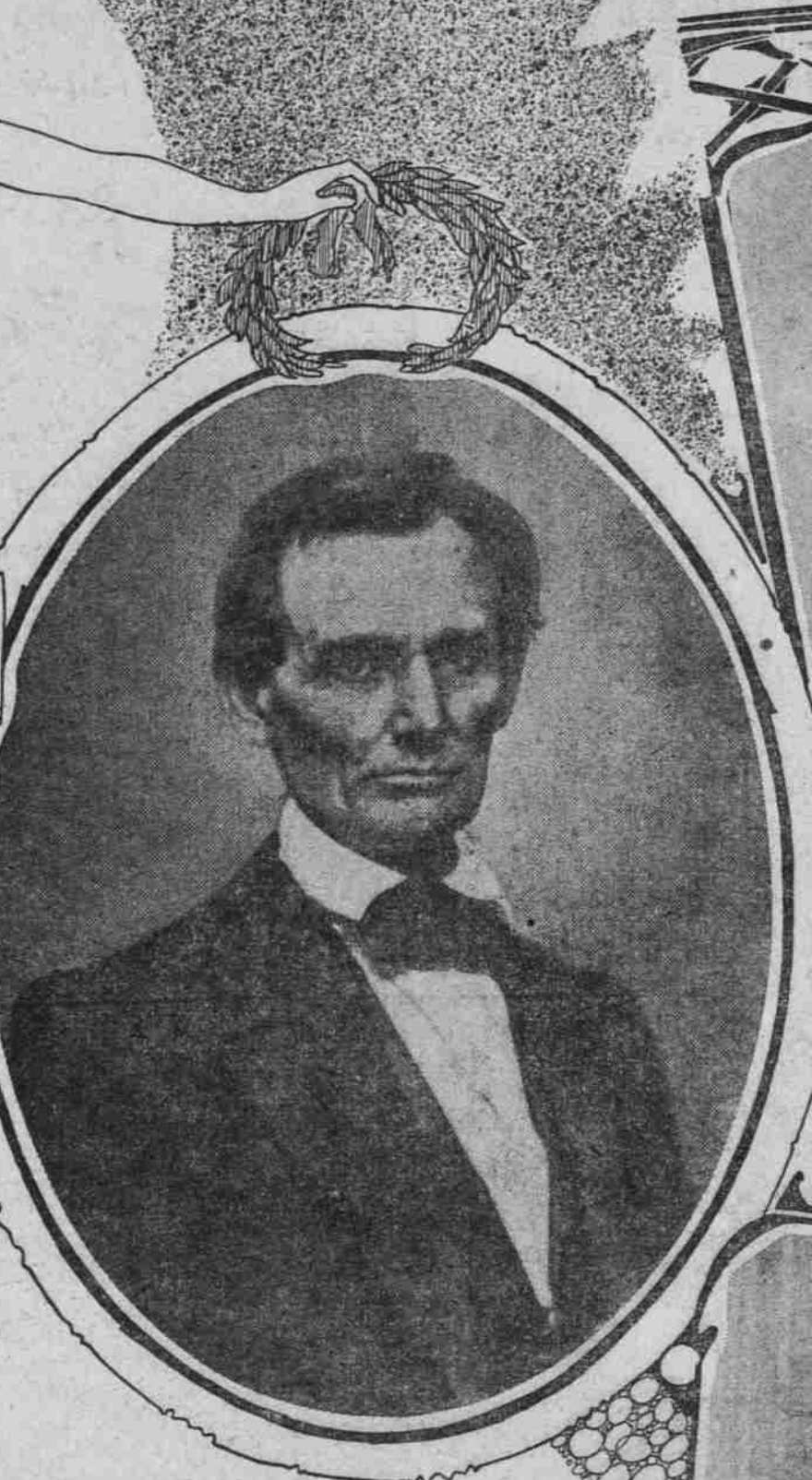


THE LIFE ACHIEVEMENTS OF SOME BIG MEN



BY DEXTER MARSHALL.

ANY of the most interesting and forceful Americans now living are men who failed to "find themselves" until middle life had overtaken them and whose most important achievements have all been made after 40. Nor is this true only of the men now upon the stage. Middle-life successes, in fact, have been noteworthy in this country since the beginning of its history.

Hon. Leslie M. Shaw, Secretary of the Treasury and Presidential aspirant, now 48, was utterly unhandy in politics or outside of his own state, Iowa, in any other line, until ten years ago, when, at 42, he undertook to answer Bryan's freer-trader arguments, and was credited with saving his state for his party.

Levi P. Morton, now 82, and near the end of a long life in which he has filled many important positions, failed in business when on the verge of 40, but rehabilitated himself and later paid 100 cents on the dollar. His entire public career was carved out after he was 40. Grover Cleveland, the only living ex-President, now only a year less than 70, began his public career as Mayor of Buffalo in 1852, when he was five years less than 40. During the succeeding 12 years he was one of the greatest personal forces, if not the greatest, in the whole Republic.

Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, best known to the public through the productions of his pen, despite his comparatively early success in medicine, did not really begin his interesting career as a literary writer until he was 64.

The late Russell Sage, who seems to have lived the later years of his life solely to hoard more money, and yet more money, did not begin his Wall-street career until 40, when he was 46. Then in the face of determined opposition he was appointed a Captain in the Northern Army. How he rose from post to post and finally fought to a successful issue the greatest American war, is part of history. He was just under 40 when he captured Fort Donelson, the first really convincing deed in his military career.

Abraham Lincoln got to Congress at 33, but was not re-elected and did not become in any sense a National figure till 1858, when at 50, as a candidate for the United States Senate, he engaged in his memorable joint debates with Stephen A. Douglas. Lincoln was 52 when elected President.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was 45 when he wrote "The Scarlet Letter," though some of his earlier tales became famous later, he did most of his important work after finishing that romance.

S. P. E. Morse, then known as a painter of pictures, got his first idea of the telegraph at 40, while on the ocean voyaging between the old world and the new but he didn't even take out a patent, preliminary to a patent, until he was 46.

General W. T. Sherman was past 60 when the Civil War broke out and General R. E. Lee past 50, yet both did great service—the first for the North, the second for the South, during that contest.

Charles A. Dana was only one year less than 40 when he became editor of the New York Sun; it is true that he had been Assistant Secretary of War before then, but that post was not given to him by Stanton till he was 44.

The Four Divisions of Sage's Life.

Every man's life is divided into more or less well defined periods; the cleavage between the four distinct sections in Russell Sage's life was more than usually clean cut.

Leaving out his childhood, which stopped sharply at 12, the first period, lasting till he was 23, was given up wholly to the most intense activity, his main object being to establish himself in life. To that end, soon after he began working in his brother's grocery at Troy, he hired a private teacher out of his slender wages to teach him nights and rest much sleep through nocturnal study. Yet at that time and for years afterward he had higher aspirations than those of the money getter. He was ambitious to be a man of some note in the world. He wanted power. So, in 1846, while still a year under 30, he went into politics with the apparent intention of giving up much of his future to the public service. His first office was that of Alderman in Troy.

His career during the second well defined period of his life as a member of the House of Representatives almost wholly forgotten by his fellow citizens until they were reminded of it by the biographical sketches published the day

after his death, began in 1852. During the two terms of his service he gave every evidence that the love of money for its own sake was not then a predominant element in his character, his whole course being that of an earnest patriotic citizen.

Though not at all financially interested in the project, he championed vigorously the scheme to build a Pacific railroad. He almost begged Congress not to put off extending the country's railroad system across the mountains and the plains to the Western Coast, but without avail.

He wanted the Nation to purchase Mount Vernon, President Washington's home, and worked for the passage of the bill to authorize it. He was beaten, but there is no doubt that his fight did more than anything else in bringing about the formation of the Mount Vernon Association, which has preserved the estate intact.

He was always a staunch friend of West Point, and his logical clean-cut speech in favor of adopting the postage stamp had a good deal to do with that great life step in the United States mail service.

Sage would probably have continued in public life had the general prosperity of the Nation gone at that time. Certainly the panic of 1857, which came the year after the close of his second term, exercised a profound influence upon his actions. He was just beginning to get rich, and he realized that he couldn't attend to his own and the public business at the same time.

He had made such large investments in the La Crosse Railroad, now the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, then in process of construction, that his entire fortune of \$75,000 would be jeopardized by disaster to the road through the panicky conditions. In order to protect the loans he had already made he became the owner of practically all the stock in the system. It was because of his railroad complications that, in 1861, he began to operate in Wall street, during which he was a money lender, pure and simple, the most extensive in the world, probably, and devoted wholly to the hoarding of interest, were less sharply divided than the others. But during all the years that he was apparently nothing but an accumulator he maintained his interest in his horses.

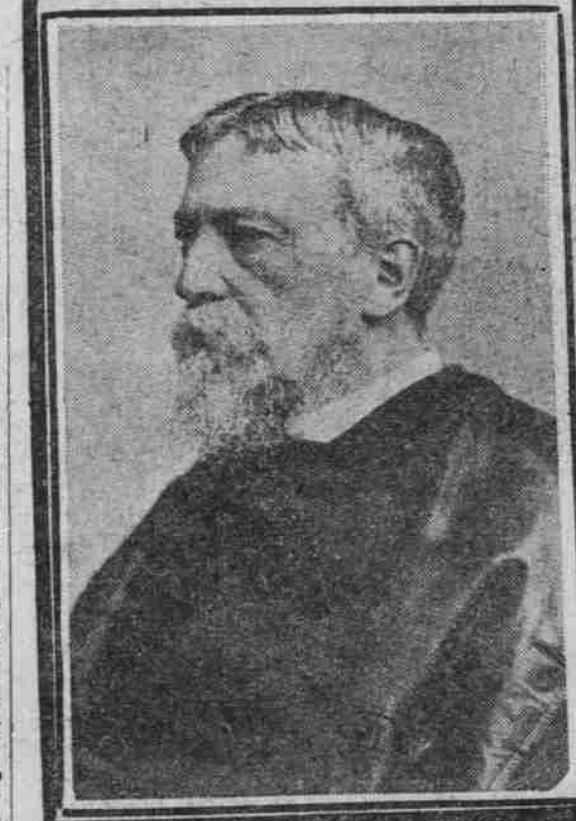
This was never shown more interestingly than one day a few years ago, when Wall street was fairly boiling over for money. A writer of "specials" detailed to "do-a human interest story on Uncle Russell" went to his office, but finding the anteroom crowded with reporters waiting to get his views on the situation "backed out" discouraged. In the corridor he met a man named Lawson, an old friend of Sage's, locally famous for his ability to drive four-and six-in-hand teams. The writer told Lawson his trouble.

"Go and tell Sage's clerk you have my ringbone cure," said Lawson. "He'll see you. He's been trying to get it for 30 years."

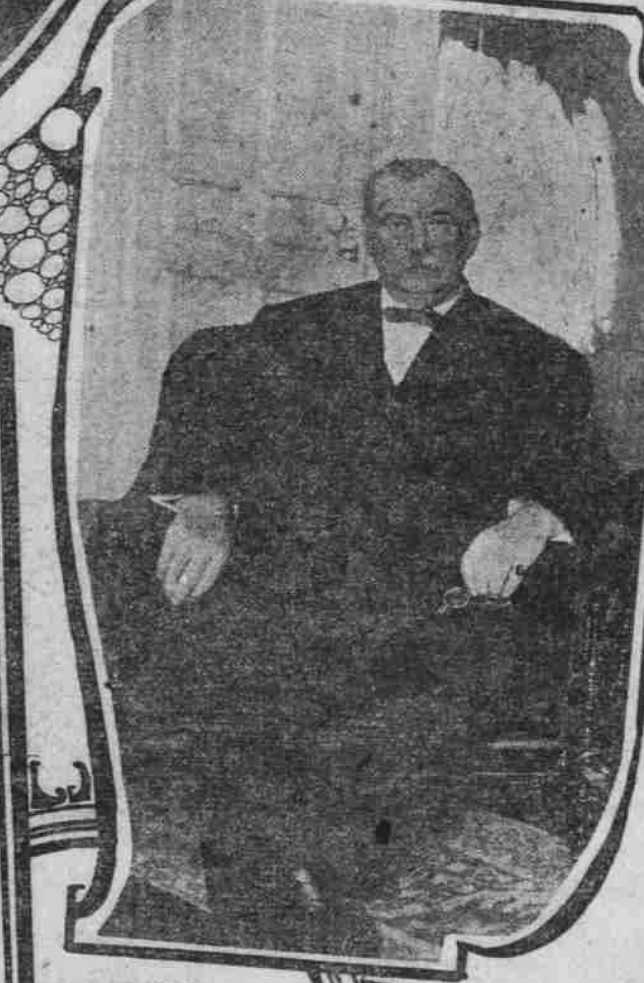
Lawson then wrote out a formula, the writer did as suggested, and the scheme worked. Sage let him into his office, and, having copied the formula, got to talking about the horses he had owned. The talk lasted hours, the writer got his "story," and Sage did not start for his Long Island Summer home till two trains later than usual. Meanwhile the news reporters cooled their heels in the anteroom and finally had to return to their city editors empty-handed. More than that, several men who called upon the financier that afternoon to talk about loans were turned away that Sage might talk about his horses.

Levi P. Morton's Middle Age.

The life of Levi P. Morton, now 82, ex-Representative in Congress, ex-governor, ex-Vice-President and ex-



DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL'S LITERARY FAME CAME TO HIM AFTER HE WAS FIFTY



GROVER CLEVELAND DID NOT BECOME BUFFALO'S MAYOR TILL HE WAS 45



GENERAL GRANT AS HE APPEARED SOON AFTER THE CAPTURE OF FORT DONELSON

Governor, has been almost as sharply divided as was that of Russell Sage.

But Mr. Morton took pains to get rich before he went into public life. Sage's first impulses were to serve the public; his inordinate love of money came rather late in life; Morton appears not to have thought about politics at all until after he had packed away a fortune.

Morton's father, a New England Congregational minister, planned to send him to college, and did send the boy's elder brothers. Levi saw how it would pinch the family were he to take a college course, and declined. He worked in a country general store, went to night school and became agent for one Esterbrook in the conduct of a store at Hanover, N. H., the seat of Dartmouth College. He went there with two trunks, which contained the stock in trade of the store, as well as his wardrobe. He built up a business of \$100,000 a year before he left Hanover.

At the beginning he entered into all sorts of small enterprises. One year he furnished the graduating class with suits of black clothes on contract.

Meanwhile Esterbrook, who had several enterprises besides the store at Hanover, failed, and one of the creditors, named Beebe, set Morton up in business for himself. After a while Morton went to Boston and went in business with Beebe, the firm name being Beebe, Morgan & Co. The Morgan in the concern was Junius S., father of J. Pierpont, who is not altogether out of the running at the present day. Then, in 1854, after he had taken his first job as a "clerk" in a country general store at Enfield, Mass., Levi P. Morton removed to New York and established the dry goods firm of Morton, Grinnell & Co. This was in 1854, when he was only 30.

One of the first things he did after establishing his New York dry goods store was to order all the salesmen to cut off their mustaches, certain customers from the country not liking the then new-fangled custom of wear-

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN, FROM A WAR TIME PHOTOGRAPH



LESLIE M. SHAW DID NOT GO INTO POLITICS UNTILL HE WAS WELL ALONG IN LIFE

ing in London, and in this enterprise was making money "hand over fist." One evening in 1863, in the darker days of the Civil War, he asked all his old creditors to dine with him. As the guests seated themselves, each found beside him plate a check for the exact amount, with interest, that was due him morally, though not legally, from Morton, Grinnell & Co. This classic incident in American business annals is essentially pertinent here, since Morton was on the eve of middle age, being 39, when the dinner was given.

For 12 years after that he gave strict attention to the banking business, amassing a fortune which has since become very large. In 1868 he was a member of the famous syndicate that helped the Government to resume specie payments and fund the public debt. J. P. Morgan, Jay Cooke, the Rothschilds and other famous bankers here and abroad were among the other members of the syndicate, which, it is estimated, saved \$70,000,000 to the Government.

This made Mr. Morton famous, but he didn't get into public life in which he was best known for years, till 1876, when he was 52. Then he ran for Congress, but was defeated. This nettled him, although the district he ran in was normally and heavily Democratic. In 1889 he ran again and was elected by a majority larger than his opponent's entire vote. The way he did it was about as follows:

He made one Captain McDonald his manager. McDonald took Morton all through the East Side district which he wished to represent and "put him next" to all sorts and conditions of voters. East Side voters are made up of classes the like of which Morton had never known, but he "stood up to the rack like a Major," according to the Captain, spent his money freely, slugged longshoremen, butchers and whoever came along on the back with perfect good-fellowship, and made votes steadily.

The result of the election has already been indicated. Colonel Ben Willis, his opponent, who had previously beaten Morton, was fairly daffy with chagrin over the result, since none but a Democrat had ever been elected from that district.

Willis was particularly sore over his defeat, because Morton was a "society man." Some time later, when William Waldorf Astor wanted to go to Congress from the same district, he, too, hired McDonald as his political manager. But Astor was too standoffish for the East Side. He spent his money freely as Morton had, but the voters would have none of him as a Congressman, though they had sent him to the Legislature two or three times.

In 1889 Morton was one of the 300 who stood by Grant in the fight for the Presidential nomination to the last. Being offered the Vice-Presidency, he declined it and Arthur took it, to be made President by the pistol of Guiteau when the latter had sent him to the Legislature two or three times.

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