

has been in existence a greater part of the fall. He replied:

"I receive numbers of letters asking me that question. Some men want to know why I do not stop the silver discussion. Editors send me marked copies of newspapers directing me how to act. They do not understand my position. My power is clearly outlined in the Constitution and in the rules of the Senate. The code which prevails there is made up of laws and precedents which extend over eighty-seven years of legislative procedure. These are no more to be changed by me than are the laws to be changed by a judge of a court. Suppose a judge should say 'I don't believe that law is right, and I won't allow that statute to enter into this case?' It would be the same if I should attempt to act in the Senate irrespective of law. To do otherwise would be revolutionary. I took an oath to administer the laws of the Senate and I have to act according to them and to nothing else.

A WORD FOR THE MINORITY:

"Again," the Vice President went on, "it is a question as to whether the people are not unreasonable in their demands upon the Senate. These men represent great states, and they have to what they honestly believe to be right for both their own people and the Union. I believe they are honest. The Senate is a conservative body, and it is fair that the minority should have a show. It is, as Senator Turpie calls it, the 'asylum of the minority,' and one of the safeguards of legislation lies in that fact. It is a large body. There are eighty-eight Senators, and each has the right to speak, and when great questions like those we are now discussing come before it it needs the combined wisdom of the whole to decide them."

WHAT HE THINKS OF THE SENATE.

"Is not the Senate rather a social club than a hard working legislative body Mr. President?" I asked.

"No," replied Gen. Stevenson. "It has its social elements, it is true, and most of the members composing it are men of great social qualities. But the Senate is a body of business working men. It is made up of broad gauged men, nearly every one of whom has made himself a great name in his own state, and all of whom are men of strength and character. There are Senators on both sides of the chamber who would have made great reputations in almost any field, and as to the general average I don't believe there is a stronger body of public men in the world today than the Senate of the United States."

THIS SENATE COMPARED WITH THOSE OF THE PAST.

"How does the Senate of today compare with those of our past history?"

"I think it is equal to any we have ever had," replied the Vice President. "We may have no giants like Calhoun, Webster or Clay, but the average is higher, the men are broader, better educated, and the range of subjects which they have to discuss is wider and deeper than those which taxed the Senators of the past. The questions which are now to be decided by the United States Senate demand a well equipped mind. They are not abstract questions, beginning and ending in the theories of government. They are business ques-

tions, and upon the decision of them depends the welfare of an empire. When the first Senate met we had 3,000,000 people in the Union, and the country over which they legislated was a narrow strip running up and down the Atlantic coast. Now we have nearly twenty five times as many people, and we are bound by the Pacific. We have a country of vast resources, divided into sections, each of which has its own interests, and the government must be for the good of the whole. We have an enormous revenue to raise. When Buchanan was President one of the chief arguments against his administration was the immense expenditure which it made. It took \$50,000,000 to pay its bills. Now we spend over \$100,000,000 every year to run the government."

WILL THE UNION LAST?

"Does not this growth tend to dissolution, Mr. Vice President?" I asked. "Will not our country and people eventually become so rich and so great that it will be divided into sections? Will the Union continue?"

"I think the Union will last," said the Vice President, "though in the centuries to come, who can tell? Our chief safety lies in the patriotism of our people. We are at the bottom a nation of patriots, and I want to see this part of our nature developed to the full. Yes, I am in favor of Fourth of July celebrations. I want all the national holidays we can have. In the future we will have our troubles, but this love of country, added to a good government and a good Constitution, will be our salvation."

"How about the anarchists?"

"There is no danger from them. They form a drop in the bucket of our national life. We do not fear them. Public opinion is greater than parties, and the moment the anarchists threaten our institutions a public sentiment will arise which will result in the destruction of whatever imperils our free institutions."

POLITICS NOT CORRUPT.

"Is there not danger from the corruption which exists in our politics?"

"I don't think much corruption exists in politics today," replied Vice President Stevenson. "I suppose there is some, but if so it is found chiefly in the large cities. Politics are purer now than they have ever been, and they are growing better in every way from year to year. Our cities are growing better. Vice is being controlled, and this is an age of churches and charities. Millions are now spent in education where thousands were not known a few years ago. Fortunes are given daily to institutions for the betterment of the people, and we are making giant strides in the right direction. It is the same in politics. The people have an idea that there is corruption and bribery here in Congress. I was four years in the lower house, and I have had large acquaintance with members of Congress. I have never heard of a member who had been approached in that way, and I do not know of one to whom you would dare to offer a bribe. Look back over our history. What laws have ever passed by corruption?"

"There is the Credit Mobilier," said I.

"Yes," replied the Vice President, "and that is the exception that proves the rule. And look at its results. It was the political grave of every man who had anything to do with it. A case

happened many years ago in which a Congressman was expelled for selling a West Point cadetship. At present there is little if any corruption about the Capitol. Think of the hundreds of millions which have to be disposed of by Congress. Think of the billions which are affected by legislation, and it is one of the wonders of history that Congress is so pure. I do not believe that there is another body of legislators one hundred years old which can show such a clean legislative record as can the United States Senate and our House of Representatives. No, politics are not growing worse. They are growing better."

YOUNG MEN AND POLITICS.

"Would you advise a young man to adopt politics as a profession?"

"No, I would not," replied the Vice President. "We have no profession of politics, as has England. I believe, however, that every young man should take an interest in politics. Every American should know what his country is, how it is governed and take part in its government. If he does not he shirks his duty, and sponges, as it were, off of his fellow-men. As to political leaders, I sometimes think they are born, and not made. Some men naturally take to the management of their fellows, and such make good politicians. The game of politics is an interesting and a fascinating one, and the men who play it best become known as statesmen. I see that ex-Speaker Reed of Maine defies the word statesman as a successful politician who is dead. He is to a certain extent right."

A COUNTRY LIFE FOR BOYS.

"You were brought up on a farm, general. What do you think of farm life for boys? Would you advise a boy to be born upon a farm?"

"I don't know," said the Vice President, with a laugh. "If a boy could decide where he is to be born, the farm is as good a place as any. I sometimes think it is better than the city. A farmer's boy comes into close contact with nature. He gets strength by having to fight against the elements. Pure air and hard work give him good muscles, and he starts life with purer blood and better brains. As to his character, this depends more upon his home training than anything else. If he has the right kind of family surroundings there is little more danger of his going astray in the city than in the country."

SILVER AND THE TARIFF.

I here asked Vice President Stevenson to give me his ideas as to the tariff and the silver questions. He laughingly referred me to his letter of acceptance, in which he said his views had been expressed in full and approved by more than five million voters at the time of the late election. His position on both questions is well known. He believes in tariff reform, and he thinks that there should be a dollar's worth of gold and silver in every coin that is marked with the name of a dollar. He unquestionably would like to see both gold and silver used as money, and he believes that every dollar in the United States, whether gold, silver or paper, should be an honest dollar, and that all of our dollars should be of equal and exchangeable value and of equal purchase power.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.