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legalistic meaning were the same, but every day that the Union had existed had made it a greater folly, a greater wrong, a greater crime to breach it. The states had lost or lessened some original rights by non-user for forty years. The excessive states' rights position of the Calhoun Democrats brought about a revolution and a new aspect of the question. Yet Jackson stood unqualified for the rights of states within their province and for a limited but powerful federal government within its proper province. Jackson in complete control of his party named his successor. He turned over to him a thoroughly organized, loyal and enthusiastic party strong in numbers and in faith.

CHAPTER XIII

VAN BUREN, STATESMAN AND POLITICAL STRATEGIST
1837-1841


Martin Van Buren was in many respects the antithesis of his predecessor and sponsor. His views and general principles, his political tenets and policies closely approximated Jackson's. But whereas Jackson was gaunt he was rounded; Jackson rugged, he smooth; Jackson vehement, he diplomatic; Jackson raw, he done to a turn. Jackson had no more the courage of his convictions, but Van Buren had a keener appreciation of opposing opinions, and a disposition to outflank rather than run over, to convince rather than demolish, his opponents. Jackson's natural qualities were toned down and held in restraint; Van Buren's natural talents were carefully built up and added to, and trained. The two acting together on sound principles were invincible; Jackson made Van Buren President; Van Buren helped to make Jackson a great President—and Jackson never failed to feel the obligation.

Born at Kinderhook, New York, in December, 1782, the son of a small farmer, an innkeeper some say, little is known of Martin Van Buren's early days. The curse of politics still pursues him in that practically all writings about him begin with, and are restricted to, his political career. He must have had some good schooling for he knew a little Latin and all his letters, speeches and papers befit more than average culture, though his campaign biographer in 1835 rather stresses his humble beginnings. He studied law under W. P. Van Ness, a leading attorney in New York, and was himself a lawyer of unusual ability and success.

Delegate to a Republican (Democratic) convention at eighteen, in 1806 he was Surrogate of Columbia County, and in 1812 State Senator. From 1815 to 1819 he filled the office of Attorney General of the state, being State Senator part of the time, and
was a founder and ruling spirit of the Albany Regency, which controlled New York politics most of the time from 1818 to 1838. United States Senator in 1821, and relected in 1827, he served in the meantime in the constitutional convention of his state, where he battled for extended but not universal suffrage. Elected Governor in 1828, he resigned from the Senate. While Governor he put through the first guarantee of bank deposits law, called Safety Fund, each bank contributing to a state fund to guarantee deposits in all banks. After nearly a hundred years of desuetude, this plan was revived by Oklahoma and now is a feature of state bank legislation in many states.

In March, 1839, he gave up the governorship to become Jackson's Secretary of State; was Minister to England, 1831-32, Vice-President from 1833 to 1837, and had rounded out thirty-two years of official life when he left the Presidency in 1841. His career represents, in a way, the triumph of politics as a fine art.

When Calhoun and he quarreled Jackson forthwith adopted Van Buren as his political heir. He appointed him Minister to England, but Clay, Webster and Calhoun induced the Senate to reject him. Astuter politicians would have aided in keeping him out of the United States. It was pure politics, though the objections to his confirmation were stated to be proscription of office-holders, causing the breach between the President and Vice-President, and as Secretary of State ensuring the Adams administration in some instructions to our Minister to England.

If Van Buren's political death was accomplished not only would he be out of the way, but a sizable political estate would be left open to acquisition. Calhoun, the supplant, had against Van Buren a personal grievance no politician would blame him for avenging; had he been allowed to sit calmly in the Vice-Presidential chair and impartially preside over their friend's condemnation by others, few Van Buren men would hold Calhoun's part in the proceedings against him. Clay and Webster had no idea of allowing their co-conspirator any such advantage. Twice tie votes were arranged and on two vital questions, the reintervention itself, victory was attained only by the casting vote of Calhoun. There was great quiet jubilation among the enemy over this victory. "It will kill him! It will kill-him dead," said Calhoun, and so thought Webster and Clay.

But when the vote was announced Benton wisely remarked to Moore of Alabama: "You have broken a Minister and made a
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