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FRANKLIN PIERCE; JAMES BUCHANAN

And so he [Lincoln] came,
From prairie cabin up to Capitol,
One fair Ideal led our chieftain on,
Forevermore he hurried to do his deed
With the fine stroke and gesture of a king.
Edwin Markham.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF FRANKLIN PIERCE (1853-57)

208. The Election of 1852.—In the presidential campaign of 1852 both the Whigs and the Democrats declared in their platforms that they stood by the Compromise of 1850. The Whigs nominated General Winfield Scott, hoping that his war record (p. 258) would carry them into power. The Democrats nominated Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire and swept the country, carrying every State but four. When Pierce took his seat in March, 1853, he was forty-eight years old and was the youngest man that had as yet sat in the presidential chair.¹ He was brave, handsome, and well educated, and he had the best wishes of his countrymen in all sections of the Union.

209. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill.—For a time after the election of Pierce it seemed that the slavery question really had been settled. The spirit of compromise, which in Congress had brought forth the Omnibus Bill, became in large measure the spirit of men everywhere. The people of the North ceased to resist the Fugitive-Slave Law; the underground railroad carried very few passengers; politics and slavery were almost forgotten, and a second "era of good feeling" (p. 222) seemed at hand.

But the question of slavery could not be kept down. In 1854

¹ In July, 1853, President Pierce opened an exhibition held in the Crystal Palace in New York. This was our first great exposition. It was attended by vast throngs of people and the articles exhibited came from every part of the United States and from all the leading nations of the world.