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CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN MARSHALL

*A Symposium**

Foreword

As one focuses a reflective eye upon the pages of our national history, he cannot but be struck by the emergence of great figures to meet the occasion at every critical juncture. Perhaps this is indicative more of the fact that great men and women are a product of the society in which they live than of the influence of those individuals upon human affairs. In any event, it is hardly chauvinistic to observe that the forces which act on human affairs have contrived to cast great players in leading roles in the unfolding drama of American civilization.

There is an interesting subsidiary speculation. The course of events which brings a person into a position of key importance appears often to be highly fortuitous. John Marshall, the subject of this symposium, was not the first choice of President John Adams to fill the office of Chief Justice. The nomination, moreover, was made only a few weeks before Marshall's great political adversary, Jefferson, became President.

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The year 1955 marks the bicentenary of the birth of the great Chief Justice, the most noted and influential actor on the living stage of American law. It is, thus, a very appropriate period for lawyers and judges, in particular, to reflect upon the character, work and influence of John Marshall. It is a time when we must turn from the national to the international community to give attention to the greatest problems of the social order and a time when the strong federal union, which Marshall did so much to assure, occupies a position of unique responsibility and influence in the world community.

This is a selective, interpretive treatment of Marshall. It is not intended to be comprehensive in breadth or exhaustive in the selected areas of discussion. It gives the reader a portrait of Marshall, the man, through the medium of a very felicitous biographical sketch by Mr. Justice Harold H. Burton of the Supreme Court of the United States. The four other papers treat of Marshall's influence in areas of tremendous importance in this day—social welfare, regulation of economic activities, international affairs, and human rights. That a Marshall symposium can be presented in these terms is impressive testimony to the timeless quality of his judicial statesmanship.

Jefferson B. Fordham