THESIS,
THE RISE AND FALL OF POLITICAL
PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES,
FOR THE DEGREE OF B. L.
SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES.
BY
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In the history of a monarchy, no part is of such importance as the account of its rulers, for the character of the sovereign shapes in a large measure the destiny of the nation. England's periods of greatest advancement were those when her worst and best kings were on the throne. Russia, through the good fortune of having three able kings in succession, rose from a mere principality to be one of the first powers of Europe. France, with Napoleon Bonaparte as Emperor, sprang from a state of perfect anarchy to be master of nearly all Europe.

In the history of a republic, however, the case is different, for there is no individual in whom all power is centered; but on the contrary, all power is vested in the people. It is a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people.”

Since it is impossible for all men to hold like views, it has been an inevitable consequence in
all republican forms of government that there should be different opinions regarding the administration of the government. Hence, those holding similar views have collected into organized bands, thus forming the Political Parties.

The history of these parties bears much the same relation to that of the republic as the history of the monarch does to that of the monarchy. The existence of parties in a republic is necessary for the existence of a monarch is in a monarchy.

Since the history of the United States as a nation begins July 4th, 1776, we will take that date as a starting point in the discussion of her political parties.

At the time the Colonies declared themselves severed from the Mother Country, there were two parties known respectively as the Whig party and the Tory party.
Prior to this time there had been no political parties with definite titles other than these two. To be sure there had been the court-party and the popular rights party, but these were only the beginnings of the Tory and Whig parties.

The Tories at this time constituted but a very small portion of the inhabitants of the colonies. They upheld the measures of the Mother Country, and when the Revolution broke out, ranged themselves upon her side. The Whigs, on the other hand, comprising the bulk of the colonists, opposed the British power and declared the Tories to be their deadly enemies. As the war proceeded, the Tories were gradually vanquished and exterminated, and at its close all issues on which the Tory party had been based having died, the party ceased to exist.

There now remained only one party, but
This state of affairs was not to last long. It soon became evident to the statesmen of that day that a stable and lasting union could not be built upon such a faulty foundation as the Articles of Confederation. These had been ratified by the last of the thirteen colonies, March 1st, 1781.

In 1787, New York began to agitate the question of a reform of the Articles of Confederation. This movement rapidly gained strength and the defects of the Articles were becoming evident to all the states. This led to the adoption of our present constitution in 1789.

The presentation of the Constitution to the people of the several states by the Convention of 1787, led to the division of the people into two great political parties. The first of these advocated the adoption of the Constitution, and taking upon themselves the title of "federalists," while the opponents of the Constitution and the
supporters of the Articles of Confederation "into Federalists." The opposers of the Constitution afterwards accepted the name; although the name "federalists" properly belonged to them, this being the supporters of the Federal government as organized under the Articles of Confederation.

Prior to the Convention of 1787 and after the close of the Revolutionary War, the old Whig party was composed of men holding opposite views in national government. The great bulk of the party believed in the supremacy of the state government over the central government. The men holding these views were known as "particularists" and were those who afterwards formed the anti-federal party. The other class were those who believed in the supremacy of the central government over the several states. These were styled strong-government men and went to form the Federal party.
The contest between the federals and anti-federals continued with unabated fury during the progress of the adoption of the Constitution. The chief leaders among the federals were Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, while the prominent leaders of the anti-federals were Henry, Samuel Adams, Hancock, and Clinton. This contest was not without good effects. The opposition to the Constitution led to the thorough scrutiny of its text and to several revisions in and amendments to the original text, the wisdom of which has been since apparent.

The adoption of the Constitution was the death blow to the anti-federal party and placed the federal party in power. Washington was unanimously chosen President under the new Constitution.

We have now to turn our attention to the formation of another great political party between which and
The federal party there was to be a long and bitter strife. At the beginning of Washington's administration the anti-federalists did not constitute an organized opposition to the party in power, but they soon began to organize again on new issues. They railed their opposition to the Constitution to be forgotten. They retained their old views of state rights, advocated free trade, denounced Hamilton's financial policy, opposed the establishment of a National Bank, and in other ways placed themselves in opposition to the party in power.

There now arose a dispute in the federal party as to the true interpretation of the Constitution. The greater portion of the party adopted Hamilton's interpretation which was that there were many implied powers in the Constitution, thus extending the power of the central government. Those advocating these views were called "Road constructionists." Their opponents in the
federal party, headed by Jefferson, maintained that
the Constitution should be interpreted literally, and
consequently conceded less power to the central govern-
ment. These were called "strict constructionists." The
strict-constructionist element of the federal party
with Jefferson at its head, claimed that Hamilton's
party was tending to a monarchical form of govern-
ment, and in 1793 Jefferson gave his party the
name "republican" in contrast to the "monarchical"
federalists.

Another cause of party division at this time
was the French Revolution. At the breaking out of
the war, the greater part of the people of the
United States were in sympathy with the revolution-
ists; but as the war progressed and the revolutionists
went to such extremes, there was a reaction. At first,
in the United States, still, many maintained that
the government should take an active part on the side of the revolutionists. These were the views held by the remnants of the anti-federal party. At the first formation of the republican party, the anti-federalists were looked on merely as adheres of Jefferson and his party, although the principles of the two parties were much the same. But the proclamation of Washington in 1793, setting forth the necessity of the United States maintaining a neutral policy in respect to the European disturbances, served to unite the anti-federal and republican parties and from that time the anti-federal party ceased to exist.

As far as we have traced the formation of the republican party, we find it to have been an offshoot from the federal party, which afterwards absorbed the remaining element of the anti-federal party. The republican party under this name was
destined to have only a temporary existence.

There was a faction of reformists, who held views of government so socialistic and advocated principles so antagonistic to the federal government that they could not even be countenanced by the Republicans. This faction formed themselves into clubs after the model of the Jacobin clubs of Paris, and took upon themselves the name of "Democrats." They regarded every opponent as an enemy of the people. Washington and his party looked upon them with contempt. The Republicans first only countenanced them as allies, then discarded them altogether, but afterwards, in 1798, absorbed them and took upon themselves the name of the Democratic-Republican Party.

We have now traced the origin and formation of the two great political parties which were to strive with each other for more than a quarter of a
century for the control of the government.
Towards the close of Washington's second term as President, it became evident, since he had declared his intention to retire from public life, that the next election would be on party lines. There was no other man on whom all the people could unite. As the election of 1796 drew near, both parties prepared for the contest. The federalists nominated John Adams and the democratic-republicans, Thomas Jefferson. The result of the election was a federal President and a democratic Vice-President. This was the first President elected for the ascendency of party. Washington being elected both times by an unanimous vote.

The administration of John Adams requires special notice here, since it marked the downfall of the federal party. Several unpopular measures passed
in Congress during the administration, served greatly to weaken the federalists. Among these were the Stamp Act, which resembled that of 1765, the alien and sedition laws, and an act requiring a foreigner to be fourteen years a resident in the United States before he could become a citizen.

While the federalists were thus losing strength by making laws repugnant to the great mass of the people, as well as by internal disagreement, the democrats under the guidance of Jefferson, were doing all in their power to gain the good will of the people.

The election of 1800 resulted in a defeat for the federalists and a victory for the democratic-republican. Although the federalist party with the defeat of John Adams, passed out of power, never again to administer the government, yet it established
many salutary principles beyond the power to change. It is to the Federal Party that the great Republic of the United States owes its foundation and we might say, its existence, for it was chiefly through this party's uniting efforts that the Government was established on a firm foundation.

During the administrations of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and John Q. Adams, the democratic-republican party remained in power. Many of the measures which it bitterly opposed when out of power, it now supported. During this time there were some dissensions in the party itself, but none of much importance. Just after the election of Jefferson, a few of Burr's friends, thinking he ought to have been chosen President instead of Jefferson, formed a little party of the members of which were called Burrites. The term "Quid" was also applied to a few followers of Randolph.
who became dissatisfied with Jefferson's party and withdrew themselves from it. At the election of 1812, a small party left the democrats and nominated De Witt Clinton for President, thus gaining for themselves the name of Clintonites.

The Federal party during this time was rapidly losing strength, and in 1816 closed to exist.

The administration of Monroe is called the "era of good feeling" on account of its freedom from party strife. The President was a general favorite of the people and his election seemed to satisfy all parties.

Towards the end of Monroe's second term, there appeared to be no man on whom the people could unite. There being only one party, the Democratic-Republican party, the choice would necessarily be on personal preference. The election which followed is known as the "rent race". The candidates were John C. Adams,
Andrew Jackson, William H. Crawford, and Henry Clay. There being no decision by the electors, the election went to the House of Representatives which chose John Q. Adams. This election created much dissatisfaction in the democratic-republican party, which being intensified by the subsequent policy of the President, finally led to a division of the party. Those who adhered to Mr. Adams, advocated a loose construction of the Constitution, a protective tariff, and at the election of 1828 adopted the title of the "national republican" party and nominated their leader for the presidency. The followers of Jackson called themselves "democrats" which felicitous appellation the party still bears. Jackson was the successful candidate in the election of 1828.

During the administrations of Adams, a small party known as the Anti-Masonic party, took its rise in New York. The formation of this party was due to the following circumstances.
A man by the name of William Morgan published a book purporting to disclose the secrets of Freemasonry. After the theft had been made, he was arrested for some small device taken from the prison where he was confined, by the Masons it is supposed, and nothing else was ever heard of him. This occurrence created a good deal of excitement and raised up many opponents to masonry. The practice of holding national conventions to choose candidates is due to this party, it having held the first prior to the election of 1832, nominating William Wirt as its candidate for the presidency.

During Jackson's first term, a rupture occurred between him and Calhoun, the Vice-President. The latter denounced Jackson's measures and endeavored to form a party with himself as leader for the coming election. This party, called the nullification or Calhoun party, had only a temporary existence.
At the election of 1882 three parties contended for the supremacy, namely, the democrat, national republican, and anti-Mason. The result of the election was a victory for the democrat, Jackson being chosen for a second term.

The convention which nominated him was the first to introduce the two-thirds rule; the Vice-President, Van Buren, being the first candidate chosen under it.

Jackson believed that the party in power should fill all offices with its own members. The saying that "to the victor belong the spoils" originated during his first term of office, the language being that of William Marcy, a senator from New York.

The high-handed measures of Jackson towards the end of his second term of office produced great dissatisfaction in his party. At the election of 1836
approached, a new party was formed. The national republican, antislavery, part of the nullifiers, and many dissatisfied democrats united and adopted the old revolutionary title of Whigs. This party chose William Harrison for the regular nominee. Daniel Webster, T.C. White, and William Smith were also candidates of the Whig party being chosen by state legislatures.

At the convention of the democrats, held in Tammany Hall in 1835, there was some disagreement in the choice of a candidate for the presidency. During the disturbance which followed, the lights were extinguished, but the hall was immediately relighted by means of candles and locomotive matches. From this occurred the name "loco-foco" was applied to the democratic party by its opponents.

About this time also the national antislavery society took its rise under the leadership of William Lloyd


Harrison and Benjamin Ludwig.

In 1837 Van Buren was inaugurated. He retained the cabinet of Jackson and indorsed most of his measures. The President was a strong pro-slavery man. This caused many northern democrats to join the abolition or liberty party, which took its origin, as stated above, during the administration of Jackson, with the title of the national anti-slavery society. This party also received some recruits from the Whigs. This strength enabled it to nominate a candidate in the election of 1840. This election resulted in a victory for the Whigs, Harrison and Tyler being chosen. But General Harrison only lived a month after his inauguration. The President Tylor did not carry out the measures of his party and accordingly became very unpopular with the greater portion of the Whigs. This rupture in the Whig party insured its defeat in
the next election.

About this time was formed what was called the native American party. This party was opposed to Catholicism and to the election of men of foreign birth to office. It was an offshoot from the Democratic party.

During the administration of Tyler, another rupture occurred in the Democratic party of New York, over some minor points of difference. Two parties sprang out of this breach. The members of one were called "Barnburners," those of the other "Whigs." The Barnburners reunited with the Democrats during the next administration, but the Barnburners remained distinct from the Democratic party, and went to help form the Free Soil party.

In the election of 1844, the same three parties that had candidates in 1840, had candidates in the field.
The election resulted in favor of James K. Polk, the democratic candidate. This administration is characterized by the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War.

During Polk's term of office, the Liberty party divided into two branches under the titles of "Liberty League" and "Liberty Party," but at the beginning of the next presidential term, they united, and together with the Barnburners and some adherents from the regular democratic party, formed the Free Soil party.

The election of 1848 resulted in a victory for the Whigs, Taylor being chosen President and Fillmore Vice-President. President Taylor died the year after he entered upon the duties of his office and was succeeded by Fillmore.

About this time the Whigs of New York held a convention and adopted some resolutions among
which was one thanking Mr. W. Y. Seward for his services in defending the principles of the Whig party. On the passage of the resolution part of the Whigs withdrew from the party, held a convention of their own, and called themselves the "silver group."

Still there is another party which deserves mention. This party was called the American or know-nothing party. The members maintained that they organized to purify the ballot-box, to prevent the election of foreigners to office, and to oppose the exclusion of the Bible from public schools. This party at first endorsed the candidates of some other political party, but, rapidly gaining strength, it took courage and in the election of 1852 nominated its own candidate for the presidency.

Franklin Pierce, the Democratic candidate, was elected President in 1852. The question that was to absorb the greater share of the attention of this administration,
was the slavery question. The Kansas war, which was going on at this time, tended greatly to in-
crease party feeling. The attack upon Senator Sumner by Preston Brooks of South Carolina, for a speech Mr.
Sumner had delivered in the Senate, aroused a feeling of indignation in the North.

The southern wing of the Whig party split off from the northern Whigs and joined the democratic party. It was now evident that a new party would have to be formed. In 1854 the first move was made in this direction. The northern Whigs, free-soilers, anti-
Nebraska democrats, and anti-slavery Americans meeting, formed a new party and called it the "republican" party. This party was a loose constructive party, advancing a protective tariff, internal improvements, a system of national bank currency, and also maintained that the federal government had the right to
control slaves in the territories. The first convention was held in Philadelphia, June 17, 1856, and John C. Fremont was nominated for President and William A. Dayton for Vice-President.

At the election of 1856, three parties were represented: the democratic, republican, and American parties. James Buchanan, the democratic candidate, was elected President.

The slave states saw that they would soon lose the balance of power in the government if they did not obtain more territory out of which to make slave states, thus balancing the free states that were rapidly forming. A scheme was set on foot to purchase Cuba, but this failed. They then tried to change the Constitution so as to renew the African slave trade, hoping that to be able to flood some of the territories with so that they would be admitted as slave states; but this
also a failure.

It was during this administration that the famous debate between Lincoln and Douglas took place, which served greatly to bring before the whole people the real condition of affairs.

As the election of 1859 drew near, the democratic party divided upon the question of slavery in the territories. One wing nominated Stephen A. Douglas and the other, John C. Breckinridge. The republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, and the constitutional union party a continuation of the American-nominated John Bell of Tennessee. Lincoln was elected president and Hannibal Wise, vice-president.

We now enter upon the most critical period in the history of the United States. The South had tried every means she could devise to make slavery a permanent institution, but she had failed.
She now resolved to pursue the only course which seemed to be left to her. She endeavored to separate herself from the Union and set up a government of her own, with slavery as the cornerstone.

The act of secession was the signal for the consolidation of political parties in the North. Let us see what changes were made. That came into power with Lincoln as its head, was a loose constructionist party, and was to continue at the head of the government for nearly a quarter of a century. The principal plank in the platform of the republican party was the preservation of the Union under the Federal Constitution. It protested against renewal of the African slave trade, maintained that freedom was the normal condition of the territories, and advocated a tariff and a home-
stead law.

The constitutional union party divided. The larger portion of its members united with the confederates, while the remainder entered the ranks of the republican and democratic parties. The greater portion of the Buckingridge democrats joined the confederates. A few joined the republican party and the remainder of them united with the Douglas democrats. The Douglas democrats united with the republicans in supporting the Union, and the two parties together at that time are sometimes called the Union party.

At the election of 1864 there were two parties in the field, the democrats and republicans. Lincoln was again chosen president, but was assassinated shortly after his inauguration, and Andrew Johnson, the vice president, served the remainder of his term.
The war being now brought to a close and the seceded states having been restored to the Union, the southern and northern Democrats again united.

The election of 1868 resulted in another victory for the Republicans over the Democrats, thereby again uniting the two parties in the field. Ulysses S. Grant was chosen President.

Just after the election of Grant, a faction broke off from the Republican party under the name of "liberal Republicans," and in the election of 1872, united with the Democrats and endeavored to elect Horace Greeley President.

Grant was again chosen President in 1872. About this time three more parties took their rise. The temperence organizations which had been formed all over the country united under the title
The prohibition party nominated a candidate for the presidency. The labor reform party grew out of trade unions, and out of the granger organizations scattered over the country, came the greenback or independent party.

As the election of 1876 approached, the liberal republicans returned to the party they had left. The election which followed was very close but finally resulted in a republican victory, Rutherford B. Hayes being chosen President. At this election, there were four parties with candidates in the field: the republican, democrat, greenback, and prohibition parties. During this administration, the labor reform party united with the greenback party.

Revision to the election of 1880, some republicans left the party under the name of "independents"
presidents," but before the election came off, they again united with their old party. There was also a similar case in the Tammany democrats. This election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the republicans. General Garfield was chosen President, but on the 4th July following his inauguration, he was shot by an assassin. Chester A. Arthur, the Vice-President, served out the remainder of the term. At this election the same four parties had candidates in the field as in 1876.

The election of 1884 marked the downfall of the republican party and the coming into power again of the democratic party. At the conventions of 1884, James G. Blaine was nominated by the republicans and Grover Cleveland by the democrats. It was evident that the canvass was to consist chiefly in defiling the personal character.
Of the candidates, since there were not many points of difference in the two platforms. Previous to the election a faction of the Republican party, thinking their party ought to endorse temperance as a political issue, withdrew from the Republican ranks and joined the prohibition party. There was also quite a number of Republicans who declared that they could not support the party with Mr. Blaine as candidate. They united with the democrats and supported Mr. Cleveland. The chief leaders of this faction were George William Curtis and Henry Ward Beecher. The name “mugwumps” was applied to these by the supporters of Mr. Blaine.

Owing to these splits in the Republican party, Grover Cleveland was elected in 1884. Thus the Republican party which had been at the head
If the government since the election of Lincoln in 1860, met with a defeat
as the election of 1880 approaches, the two great parties are again preparing for the quadrennial contest, and it is very hard for the wisest men to predict the result of the coming election.

The great cause of temperance has been steadily gaining strength ever since the Rebellion, and it is quite evident that if either the republican or democratic party does not indorse temperance as a plank in its platform, before many years there will be a new party that will supersede both of them.

We have now reached the present condition of parties in the United States. A careful review of the preceding pages will show that the
two great parties—the republican and democratic, that are now struggling for the mastery of the government—are directly descended from the old federal and anti-federal parties of Washington's day. Taking the federal party, with its broad construction views, we next find the same party under the name of national republican, then whig, and finally the republican party of the present. In the same manner, we may trace the development of the anti-federal party. Out of the anti-federal came the democratic-republican party, and from the democratic-republican party, the democratic party, which is in power at present.

All along the history of these two great parties, we see little offshoots caused by some minor disturbance, which exist for a short time under some peculiär name and then pass out of sight. Yet these little parties insignificant as they may have seemed, often held the balance of power.