The disappearance of the Federal party between 1815 and 1820 left the Republicans masters of the field. But in the United States if old parties vanish nature quickly produces new ones. Sectional divisions soon arose among the men who joined in electing Monroe in 1820, and under the influence of the personal hostility of Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson (chosen President in 1828), two great parties were again formed (about 1830) which some few years later absorbed the minor groups. One of these two parties carried on, under the name of Democrats, the dogmas and traditions of the Jeffersonian Republicans. It was the defender of States' Rights and of a restrictive construction of the Constitution; it leant mainly on the South and the farming classes generally, and it was therefore inclined to free trade. The other section, which called itself at first the National Republican, ultimately the Whig party, represented many of the views of the former Federalists, such as their advocacy of a tariff for the protection of manufactures, and of the expenditure of public money on internal improvements. It was willing to increase the army and navy, and like the Federalists found its chief, though by no means its sole, support in the commercial and manufacturing parts of the country, that is to say, in New England and the middle States. Meantime a new question far more exciting, far more menacing, had arisen. In 1819, when Missouri applied to be admitted into the Union as a State, a sharp contest broke out in Congress as to whether slavery should be permitted within her limits, nearly all the Northern members voting against slavery, nearly all the Southern members for it. The struggle might have threatened the stability of the Union but for the compromise adopted next year, which, while admitting slavery in Missouri, forbade it for the future north of lat. 36° 30′. The danger seemed to have passed, but in its very suddenness there had been something terrible. Jefferson, then over seventy, said that it startled him "like a fire-bell in the night." After 1840 things grew more serious, for whereas up till that time new States had been admitted substantially in pairs, a slave State balancing a free State, it began to be clear that this must shortly cease, since the remaining territory out of which new States would be formed lay north of the line 36° 30′. As

every State held two seats in the Senate, the then existing balance in that chamber between slave States and free States, would evidently soon be overset by the admission of a larger number of the latter. The apprehension of this event, with its probable result of legislation unfriendly to slavery, stimulated the South to the annexation of Texas, and made them increasingly sensitive to the growth, slow as that growth was, of Abolitionist opinions at the North. The question of the extension of slavery west of the Missouri river had become by 1850 the vital and absorbing question for the people of the United States, and as in that year California, having organized herself without slavery, was knocking at the doors of Congress for admission as a State, it had become an urgent question which evoked the hottest passions, and the victors in which would be victors all along the line. But neither of the two great parties ventured to commit itself either way. The Southern Democrats hesitated to break with those Democrats of the Northern States who sought to restrict slavery. The Whigs of the North, fearing to alienate their Southern allies by any decided action against the growing pretensions of the slave-holders, temporized and suggested compromises which practically served the cause of slavery. Anxious to save at all hazards the Union as it had hitherto stood, they did not perceive that changes of circumstances and feeling were making this effort a hopeless one, and that in trying to keep their party together they were losing hold of the people, and alienating from themselves the men who cared for principle in politics. That this was so presently appeared. The Democratic party had by 1852 passed almost completely under the control of the slave-holders, and was adopting the dogma that Congress enjoyed under the Constitution no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. This dogma obviously overthrew as unconstitutional the Missouri compromise of 1820. The Whig leaders discredited themselves by Henry Clay's compromise scheme of 1850, which, while admitting California as a free State, appeased the South by the Fugitive Slave Law. They received a crushing defeat at the presidential election of 1852; and what remained of their party finally broke in pieces in 1854 over the bill for organizing Kansas as a territory in which the question of slaves or no slaves should be left to the

people, a bill which of course repealed the Missouri compromise. Singularly enough, the two great orators of the party, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, both died in 1852, wearied with strife and disappointed in their ambition of reaching the presidential chair. Together with Calhoun, who passed away two years earlier, they are the ornaments of this generation, not indeed rising to the stature of Washington or Hamilton, but more remarkable than any, save one, among the statesmen who have followed them. With them ends the second period in the annals of American parties, which, extending from about 1820 to 1856, includes the rise and fall of the Whig party. Most of the controversies which filled it have become matter for history only. But three large results, besides the general democratization of politics, stand out. One is the detachment of the United States from the affairs of the Old World. Another is the growth of a sense of national life, especially in the Northern and Western States, along with the growth at the same time of a secessionist spirit among the slave-holders. And the third is the development of the complex machinery of party organization, with the adoption of the principle on which that machinery so largely rests, that public office is to be enjoyed only by the adherents of the President for the time being.

The Whig party having begun to fall to pieces, the Democrats seemed to be for the moment, as they had been once before, left in possession of the field. But this time a new antagonist was swift to appear. The growing boldness of the slave-owners had already alarmed the Northern people when they were startled by a decision of the Supreme court, pronounced early in 1857 in the case of the slave Dred Scott, which laid down the doctrine that Congress had no power to forbid slavery anywhere, and that a slave-holder might carry his slaves with him whither he pleased, seeing that they were mere objects of property, whose possession the Constitution guaranteed.[1] This completed the formation out of the wrecks of the Whigs and Know-nothings or "American party," together with the Free Soilers and "Liberty" party of a new party, which in 1856 had run Fremont as its presidential candidate and taken the name of Republican. At the same time an apple of discord was thrown among the Democrats. In 1860 the latter could not agree upon a candidate for President. The Southern wing pledged themselves to one man, the Northern wing to another; a body of hesitating and semi-detached politicians put forward a third. Thus the Republicans through the divisions of their opponents triumphed in the election of Abraham Lincoln, presently followed by the secession of eleven slave States.

[1] This broad doctrine was not necessary for the decision of the case, but delivered as an *obiter dictum* by the majority of the court.

The Republican party, which had started by proclaiming the right of Congress to restrict slavery and had subsequently denounced the Dred Scott decision, was of course throughout the Civil War the defender of the Union and the assertor of Federal authority, stretched, as was unavoidable, to lengths previously unheard of. When the war was over, there came the difficult task of reconstructing the now reconquered slave States, and of securing the position in them of the lately liberated negroes. The outrages perpetrated on the latter, and on white settlers in some parts of the South, required further exertions of Federal authority, and made the question of the limit of that authority still a practical one, for the old Democratic party, almost silenced during the war, had now reappeared in full force as the advocate of State rights, and the watchful critic of any undue stretches of Federal authority. It was deemed necessary to negative the Dred Scott decision and set at rest all questions relating to slavery and to the political equality of the races by the adoption of three important amendments to the Constitution. The troubles of the South by degrees settled down as the whites regained possession of the State governments and the Northern troops began to be withdrawn. In the presidential election of 1876 the war question and negro question had become dead issues, for it was plain that a large and increasing number of the voters were no longer, despite the appeals of the Republican leaders, seriously concerned about them.

This election marks the close of the third period, which embraces the rise and overwhelming predominance of the Republican party. Formed to resist the extension of slavery, led on to destroy it, compelled by circumstances to expand the central authority in a way unthought of before, that party had now worked out its programme and fulfilled its original

mission. The old aims were accomplished, but new ones had not yet been substituted, for though new problems had appeared, the party was not prepared with solutions. Similarly the Democratic party had discharged its mission in defending the rights of the reconstructed States, and criticising excesses of executive power; similarly it too had refused to grapple either with the fresh questions which had begun to arise since the war, or with those older questions which had now reappeared above the subsiding flood of war days. The old parties still stood as organizations, and still claimed to be the exponents of principles. Their respective principles had, however, little direct application to the questions which confronted and divided the nation. A new era was opening which called either for the evolution of new parties, or for the transformation of the old ones by the adoption of tenets and the advocacy of views suited to the needs of the time. But this fourth period, which began with 1876, has not yet seen such a transformation, and we shall therefore find, when we come to examine the existing state of parties, that there is an unreality and lack of vital force in both Republicans and Democrats, powerful as their organizations are.

The foregoing sketch, given only for the sake of explaining the present condition of parties, suggests some observations on the foundations of party in America.

If we look over Europe we shall find that the grounds on which parties have been built and contests waged since the beginning of free governments have been in substance but few. In the hostility of rich and poor, or of capital and labour, in the fears of the Haves and the desires of the Have-nots, we perceive the most frequent ground, though it is often disguised as a dispute about the extension of the suffrage or some other civic right. Questions relating to the tenure of land have played a large part; so have questions of religion; so too have animosities or jealousies of race; and of course the form of government, whether it shall be a monarchy or a republic, has sometimes been in dispute. None of these grounds of quarrel substantially affected American parties during the three periods we have been examining. No one has ever advocated monarchy, or a restricted suffrage, or a unified instead of a Federal republic. Nor down to 1876 was there

ever any party which could promise more to the poor than its opponents. In 1852 the Know-nothing party came forward as the organ of native American opinion against recent immigrants, then still chiefly the Irish, (though German immigration had begun to swell from 1849 onwards), and the not unnatural tendency to resent the power of foreign voters has sometimes since appeared in various parts of the country. But as this 'American' party, for a time powerful by the absorption of many of the Whigs, failed to face the problem of slavery, and roused jealousy by its secret organization, it soon passed away, though it deserves to be remembered as a force disintegrating the then existing parties. The complete equality of all sects, with the perfect neutrality of the government in religious matters, has fortunately kept religious passion outside the sphere of politics. The only exceptions to be noted are the occasionally recurring outbreaks, during the last sixty years, of hostility to the Roman Catholic Church. Nor would these outbreaks have attained political importance but for the strength added to them by the feeling of the native against the foreigner. They have been most serious at times when and in places where there has been an influx of immigrants from Europe large enough to seem to threaten the dominance of American ideas and the permanence of American institutions.

Have the American parties then been formed only upon narrow and local bases, have they contended for transient objects, and can no deeper historical meaning, no longer historical continuity, be claimed for them?

Two permanent oppositions may, I think, be discerned running through the history of the parties, sometimes openly recognized, sometimes concealed by the urgency of a transitory question. One of these is the opposition between a centralized or unitary and a federalized government. In every country there are centrifugal and centripetal forces at work, the one or the other of which is for the moment the stronger. There has seldom been a country in which something might not have been gained, in the way of good administration and defensive strength, by a greater concentration of power in the hands of the central government, enabling it to do things which local bodies, or a more restricted central government,

could not do equally cheaply or well. Against this gain there is always to be set the danger that such concentration may weaken the vitality of local communities and authorities, and may enable the central power to stunt their development. Sometimes needs of the former kind are more urgent, or the sentiment of the people tends to magnify them; sometimes again the centrifugal forces obtain the upper hand. English history shows several such alternations. But in America the Federal form of government has made this permanent and natural opposition specially conspicuous. The salient feature of the Constitution is the effort it makes to establish an equipoise between the force which would carry the planet States off into space and the force which would draw them into the sun of the National government. There have always therefore been minds inclined to take sides upon this fundamental question, and a party has always had something definite and weighty to appeal to when it claims to represent either the autonomy of communities on the one hand, or the majesty and beneficent activity of the National government on the other. The former has been the watchword of the Democratic party. The latter was seldom distinctly avowed, but was generally in fact represented by the Federalists of the first period, the Whigs of the second, the Republicans of the third.

The other opposition, though it goes deeper and is more pervasive, has been less clearly marked in America, and less consciously admitted by the Americans themselves. It is the opposition between the tendency which makes some men prize the freedom of the individual as the first of social goods, and that which disposes others to insist on checking and regulating his impulses. The opposition of these two tendencies, the love of liberty and the love of order, is permanent and necessary, because it springs from differences in the intellect and feelings of men which one finds in all countries and at all epochs. There are always persons who are struck by the weakness of mankind, by their folly, their passion, their selfishness: and these persons, distrusting the action of average mankind, will always wish to see them guided by wise heads and restrained by strong hands. Such guidance seems the best means of progress, such restraint the only means of security. Those on the other hand who think better of human nature, and have more hope in their

own tempers, hold the impulses of the average man to be generally towards justice and peace. They have faith in the power of reason to conquer ignorance, and of generosity to overbear selfishness. They are therefore disposed to leave the individual alone, and to entrust the masses with power. Every sensible man feels in himself the struggle between these two tendencies, and is on his guard not to yield wholly to either, because the one degenerates into tyranny, the other into an anarchy out of which tyranny will eventually spring. The wisest statesman is he who best holds the balance between them.

Each of these tendencies found among the fathers of the American Republic a brilliant and characteristic representative. Hamilton, who had a low opinion of mankind, but a gift and a passion for large constructive statesmanship, went so far in his advocacy of a strong government as to be suspected of wishing to establish a monarchy after the British pattern. He has left on record his opinion that the free constitution of England, which he admired in spite of the faults he clearly saw, could not be worked without its corruptions.[1] Jefferson carried further than any other person set in an equally responsible place has ever done, his faith that government is either needless or an evil, and that with enough liberty, everything will go well. An insurrection every few years, he said, must be looked for, and even desired, to keep government in order. The Jeffersonian tendency has always remained, like a leaven, in the Democratic party, though in applying Jeffersonian doctrines the slave-holders stopped when they came to a black skin. Among the Federalists, and their successors the Whigs, and the more recent Republicans, there has never been wanting a full faith in the power of freedom. The Republicans gave an amazing proof of it when they bestowed the suffrage on the negroes. Neither they nor any American party has ever professed itself the champion of authority and order. That would be a damaging profession. Nevertheless it is rather towards what I may perhaps venture to call the Federalist-Whig-Republican party than towards the Democrats that those who have valued the principle of authority have been generally

[1] David Hume had made the same remark, natural at a time when the power of Parliament was little checked by responsibility to the people.

drawn. It is for that party that the Puritan spirit, not extinct in America, has felt the greater affinity, for this spirit, having realized the sinfulness of human nature, is inclined to train and control the natural man by laws and force.

The tendency that makes for a strong government being akin to that which makes for a central government, the Federalist-Whig-Republican party, which has, through its long history, and under its varying forms and names, been the advocate of the national principle, found itself for this reason also led, more frequently than the Democrats, to exalt the rights and powers of government. It might be thought that the same cause would have made the Republican party take sides in that profound opposition which we perceive to-day in all civilized peoples, between the tendency to enlarge the sphere of legislation and State action, and the doctrine of *laissez faire*. So far, however, this has not happened. There is more in the character and temper of the Republicans than of the Democrats that leans towards State interference. But neither party has thought out the question; neither has shown any more definiteness of policy regarding it than the Tories and the Liberals have done in England.

American students of history may think that I have pressed the antithesis of liberty and authority, as well as that of centrifugal and centripetal tendencies, somewhat too far in making one party a representative of each through the first century of the Republic. I do not deny that at particular moments the party which was usually disposed towards a strong government resisted and decried authority, while the party which specially professed itself the advocate of liberty sought to make authority more stringent. Such deviations are however compatible with the general tendencies I have described. And no one who has gained even a slight knowledge of the history of the United States will fall into the error of supposing that the words Order and Authority mean there what they have meant in the monarchies of Continental Europe.

CHAPTER LIV

THE PARTIES OF TO-DAY

THERE are now two great and several minor parties in the United States. The great parties are the Republicans and the Democrats. What are their principles, their distinctive tenets, their tendencies? Which of them is for free trade, for civil service reform, for a spirited foreign policy, for the regulation of telegraphs by legislation, for a national bankrupt law, for changes in the currency, for any other of the twenty issues which one hears discussed in the country as seriously involving its welfare?

This is what a European is always asking of intelligent Republicans and intelligent Democrats. He is always asking because he never gets an answer. The replies leave him in deeper perplexity. After some months the truth begins to dawn upon him. Neither party has anything definite to say on these issues; neither party has any principles, any distinctive tenets. Both have traditions. Both claim to have tendencies. Both have certainly war cries, organizations, interests enlisted in their support. But those interests are in the main the interests of getting or keeping the patronage of the government. Tenets and policies, points of political doctrine and points of political practice, have all but vanished. They have not been thrown away but have been stripped away by Time and the progress of events, fulfilling some policies, blotting out others. All has been lost, except office or the hope of it.

The phenomenon may be illustrated from the case of England, where party government has existed longer and in a more fully developed form than in any other part of the Old World.[1]

[1] English parties are however not very ancient; they date only from the struggle of the Stuart kings with the Puritan and popular party in the House of Commons, and did not take regular shape as Whigs and Tories till the reign of Charles II.