promised to interfere least with them. Lately in Idaho a party found it worth while to run a Mormon candidate.

The distribution of parties is to some extent geographical. While the South casts a solid Democratic vote, and the strength of the Republicans has lain in the North-east and North-west, the intermediate position of the Middle States corresponds to their divided political tendencies. The reason is that in America colonization has gone on along parallels of latitude. The tendencies of New England reappear in Northern Ohio, Northern Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, giving the Republicans a general predominance in this vast and swiftly-growing Western population, which it takes the whole weight of the solid South to balance. This geographical opposition does not, however, betoken a danger of political severance. The material interests of the agriculturists of the North-west are not different from those of the South: free trade, for instance, will make as much and no more difference to the wheat-grower of Illinois as to the cotton-grower of Texas, to the iron-workers of Tennessee as to the iron-workers of Pennsylvania. And the existence of an active Democratic party in the North prevents the victory of either geographical section from being felt as a defeat by the other.

This is an important security against disruption. And a similar security against the risk of civil strife or revolution is to be found in the fact that the parties are not based on or sensibly affected by differences either of wealth or of social position. Their cleavage is not horizontal according to social strata, but vertical. This would be less true if it were stated either of the Northern States separately, or of the Southern States separately: it is true of the Union taken as a whole. It might cease to be true if the new labour party were to grow till it absorbed or superseded either of the existing parties. The same feature has characterized English politics as compared with those of most European countries, and has been a main cause of the stability of the English government and of the good feeling between different classes in the community.[1]

[1] At the present moment the vast majority of the rich, a proportion probably larger than at any previous time, belong in England to one of the two historic parties. But this phenomenon may possibly pass away.

CHAPTER LVI

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON THE PARTIES

Besides the two great parties which have divided America for thirty years, there are two or three lesser organizations or factions needing a word of mention. Between sixty and seventy years ago there was a period when one of the two great parties having melted away, the other had become split up into minor sections.[1] Parties were numerous and unstable, new ones forming, and after a short career uniting with some other, or vanishing altogether from the scene. This was a phenomenon peculiar to that time, and ceased with the building up about 1832 of the Whig party, which lasted till shortly before the Civil War. But Tocqueville, who visited America in 1831–32, took it for the normal state of a democratic community, and founded upon it some bold generalizations. A stranger who sees how few principles now exist to hold each of the two great modern parties together will be rather surprised that they have not shown more tendency to split up into minor groups and factions.

What constitutes a party? In America there is a simple test. Any section of men who nominate candidates of their own for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States are deemed a national party. Adopting this test we shall find that there have lately been two or three national parties in addition to the Republicans and Democrats.

The first is (or rather was) that of the Greenbackers, who arose soon after the end of the Civil War. They demanded a large issue of greenbacks (*i.e.* paper money, so called from the colour of the notes issued during the war), alleging that this must benefit the poorer classes, who will obviously be

[1] The same phenomenon reappeared at the break-up of the Whigs between 1852 and 1857, and from much the same cause.

richer when there is more money in the country. It may seem incredible that there should still be masses of civilized men who believe that money is value, and that a liberal issue of stamped paper can give the poor more bread or better clothes. If there were a large class of debtors, and the idea was to depreciate the currency and let them then pay their debts in it, one could understand the proposal. Such a depreciation existed during and immediately after the Civil War. As wages and prices had risen enormously, people were receiving more money in wages, or for goods sold, than they had received previously, while they were paying fixed charges, such as interest on mortgage debts, in a depreciated paper currency. Thus the small farmers were on the whole gainers, while creditors and persons with fixed incomes were losers. It is true that both farmers and working men were also paying more for whatever they needed, food, clothes, and lodging; still they seemed to have felt more benefit in receiving larger sums than they felt hardship in paying out larger sums. Those who now call for a great increase of paper money do not profess to wish to depreciate the currency: nor have they been to any great extent supported by a debtor class to which a depreciated currency would be welcome, as a debased coinage served the momentary occasions of mediæval kings. But the recollections of the war time with its abundant employment and high wages cling to many people, and are coupled with a confused notion that the more money there is in circulation so much the more of it will everybody have, so much the better off will he be, so much the more employment will capital find for labour, and so much the more copious will be the fertilizing stream of wages diffused among the poor.[1]

The Greenback party, which at first called itself Independent, held a national Nominating Convention in 1876, at which nineteen States were represented, and nominated candidates for president and vice-president, issuing an emphatic but ungrammatical denunciation of the financial policy of the Republican and Democratic parties. They again put forward

[1] The matter is further complicated by the fact that the national bank-notes issued by the national banks are guaranteed by government bonds deposited with the U. S. treasury, bonds on which the national government pays interest. The Greenbackers desired to substitute greenbacks, or so-called "fiat money," for these bank-notes as a circulating medium.

candidates in 1880 and 1884, but made a poor show in the voting in most States, and of course came nowhere within a measurable distance of carrying a State.

The Labour party has of late years practically superseded the Greenbackers, and seems to have now drawn to itself such adherents as that party retained. It is not easy to describe its precise tenets, for it includes persons of very various views, some who would be called in Europe pronounced socialists or communists, others who wish to restrain the action of railway and telegraph companies and other so-called "monopolists," and of course many who, while dissatisfied with existing economic conditions, and desiring to see the working classes receive a larger share of the good things of the world, are not prepared to say in what way these conditions can be mended and this result attained. Speaking generally, the reforms advocated by the leaders of the Labour party include the "nationalization of the land," the imposition of a progressive income tax,[1] the taking over of railroads and telegraphs by the National government, the prevention of the immigration of Chinese and of any other foreign labourers who may come under contract, the restriction of all so-called monopolies, the forfeiture of railroad land grants, the increase of the currency, the free issue of inconvertible paper, and, above all, the statutory restriction of hours of labour. But it must not be supposed that all the leaders adopt all these tenets; and the party is still too young to make it easy to say who are to be deemed its leaders. It shows a tendency to split up into factions. Its strength has lain in the trade unions of the operative class, and particularly in the enormous organization or league of trade unions known as the Knights of Labour: and it is therefore warmly interested in the administration of the various State laws which affect strikes and the practice of boycotting by which strikes often seek to prevail. Besides the enrolled Knights, whose political strength is less feared now than it was some years ago, it has much support from the recent immigrants who fill the great cities, especially the Germans, Poles, Czechs and other Austro-Hungarian Slavs.

[1] This was demanded by the Greenback national convention in its platforms of 1880 and 1884, and by the Farmers' Alliance in 1890; but less than might be expected has been heard of it in America. Its adoption in the Canton of Vaud in Switzerland caused some of the wealthier inhabitants to quit the canton.

The Labour party did not run a presidential candidate till 1888, and was then divided, so that its strength could not be well estimated. But it has been wont to put forward candidates in State and city elections when it saw a chance. It ran Mr. Henry George for Mayor of New York City in 1886, and obtained the unexpected success of polling 67,000 votes against 90,000 given to the regular Democratic, and 60,000 to the regular Republican candidate;[1] but this success was not sustained in the contest for the Secretaryship of the State of New York in 1887, when a vote of only 37,000 was cast by the Labour party in the city. In 1892 one section, calling itself the Socialist Labour Party, ran a presidential candidate, but obtained only 21,164 votes, 17,956 of which came from New York, the rest from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. At present it is a somewhat incalculable force in State and local politics, nowhere strong enough to carry its own candidates, but sometimes able to defeat one of the regular parties by drawing away a part of its voters, or to extort a share of the offices for some of its nominees. It is only in some States, chiefly Northern States, that Labour candidates are run at all.

The Prohibitionists, or opponents of the sale of intoxicating liquors, have since 1872 regularly held a national convention for the nomination of a presidential candidate, and put out a ticket, *i.e.* nominated candidates for president and vice-president. The action of this party has been most frequent in the State legislatures, because the whole question of permitting, restricting, or abolishing the sale of intoxicants is a matter for the States and not for Congress. However, the Federal government raises a large revenue by its high import duty on wines, spirits, and malt liquors, and also levies an internal excise. As this revenue was for some years before 1890 no longer needed for the expenses of the National government, it was proposed to distribute it among the States, or apply it to some new and useful purpose, or to reduce both customs duties and the excise. The fear of the first or second of these courses, which would give the manufacture and sale of intoxicants a new lease of life, or of the third, which would greatly increase their consumption, was among the causes which

[1] In 1874 when a Labour candidate was first run for the New York mayoralty he obtained only between 3000 and 4000 votes.

induced the Prohibitionists to enter the arena of national politics; and they further justify their conduct in doing so by proposing to amend the Federal Constitution for the purposes of prohibition, and to stop the sale of intoxicants in the Territories and in the District of Columbia, which are under the direct control of Congress.[1] Their running a candidate for the presidency is more a demonstration than anything else, as they have a comparatively weak vote to cast, many even of those who sympathize with them preferring to support one or other of the great parties rather than throw away a vote in the abstract assertion of a principle. One ought indeed to distinguish between the Prohibitionists proper, who wish to stop the sale of intoxicants altogether, and the Temperance men, who are very numerous among Republicans in the North and Democrats in the South, and who, while ready to vote for Local Option and a High Licence Law, disapprove the attempt to impose absolute prohibition by general legislation.[2] The

[1] The Prohibitionist platform of 1884, issued by their national convention, contained the following passage:—

"Congress should exercise its undoubted power and prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages in the District of Columbia, in the Territories of the United States, and in all places over which the Government has exclusive jurisdiction; that hereafter no State shall be admitted to the Union until its Constitution shall expressly prohibit polygamy and the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages." In 1892 their platform ran thus: "The liquor traffic is a foe to civilization, the arch enemy of popular government, and a public nuisance. It is the citadel of the forces that corrupt politics, promote poverty and crime, degrade the nation's home life, thwart the will of the people, and deliver our country into the hands of rapacious class interests. All laws that under the guise of regulation legalize and protect this traffic, or make the government share in its ill-gotten gains, are 'vicious in principle and powerless as a remedy.' We declare anew for the entire suppression of the manufacture, sale, importation, exportation, and transportation of alcoholic liquors as a beverage by Federal and State legislation, and the full powers of the government should be exerted to secure this result."

One might have expected the Prohibitionists to advocate the repeal of the protective tariff on manufactured goods so as to make it necessary to maintain customs duties and an excise on intoxicants for the purposes of the National government. But this would imply that these beverages might still be consumed, which is just what the more ardent spirits in the temperance party refuse to contemplate. In 1892 they said: "Tariff should be levied only as a defence against foreign governments which lay tariff upon or bar out our products from their markets, revenue being incidental."

[2] Many State legislatures have "placated" the Temperance men by enacting that "the hygienics of alcohol and its action upon the human body" shall be a regular subject of instruction in the public schools. Whether this instruction

number of persons who are thorough-going Prohibitionists and pure Prohibitionists, that is to say, who are not also Republicans or Democrats, is small, far too small, even when reinforced by a section of the "Temperance men," and by discontented Republicans or Democrats who may dislike the "regular" candidates of their party, to give the Prohibition ticket a chance of success in any State. The importance of the ticket lies in the fact that in a doubtful State it may draw away enough votes from one of the "regular" candidates to leave him in a minority. Mr. Blaine probably suffered in this way in the election of 1884, most of the votes cast for the Prohibitionist candidate having come from quondam Republicans. On the other hand, a case may be imagined in which the existence of an outlet or safety-valve, such as a Prohibitionist ticket, would prevent the "bolters" from one party from taking the more dangerous course of voting for the candidate of the opposite party.[1]

The strength of the Prohibitionist party lies in the religious and moral earnestness which animates it and makes it for many purposes the successor and representative of the Abolitionists of forty years ago. Clergymen are prominent in its conventions, and women take an active part in its work. Partly from its traditions and temper, partly because it believes that women would be on its side in elections, it advocates the extension to them of the electoral franchise.

A spirit of discontent with the old parties, and vague wish to better by legislation the condition of the agriculturists, has caused the growth of what was called at first the Farmers' Alliance Party, but now the People's Party, or "Populists," which in 1889 and 1890 rose suddenly to importance in the West and South, and secured some seats from Western States in the Fifty-second and again in the Fifty-third Congress. Its platform agrees in several points with those of the Greenbackers and Labour men, but instead of seeking to "nationalize" the land it desires to reduce the taxation on real estate and to secure (among other benefits) loans from the public treasury

does more good or harm is a controverted point, as to which see the report for 1890 of the U. S. Commissioner of Education.

[1] The Prohibitionist Convention of 1888 was attended by a good many persons desiring to form a new Third Party, of which the regulation of the liquor traffic should not be the only basis.

to farmers at low rates of interest. Its tenets and aims are, however, still too much in the stage of undefined aspiration and windy demagogism to admit of being described with precision; nor would it be safe to predict a long life for it in its present form, although it ran a candidate at the presidential election of 1892 (carrying four States and obtaining one electoral vote in each of two others), and although the economic and social conditions of agricultural life in America are likely from time to time to produce similar outbreaks of dissatisfaction, with impatient cries for unpractical remedies.

The advocates of Woman's Suffrage cannot be reckoned a party, because women have no vote in presidential elections (save in Wyoming and Colorado), and because they do not run a presidential candidate. In 1884 a woman was nominated, but did not go to the poll.[1]

The European reader may perhaps wish to hear something as to the new group which goes by the name of Mugwumps.[2] At the presidential election of 1884 a section of the Republican party, more important by the intelligence and social position of the men who composed it than by its voting power, "bolted" (to use the technical term) from their party, and refused to support Mr. Blaine. Some simply abstained, some, obeying the impulse to vote which is strong in good citizens in America, voted for Mr. St. John, the Prohibitionist candidate, though well aware that this was practically the same thing as abstention. The majority, however, voted against their party for Mr. Cleveland, the Democratic candidate; and it seems to have been the transference of their vote which turned the balance in New York State, and thereby determined the issue of the whole election in Mr. Cleveland's favour. They were therefore not to be reckoned as a national party, according to the American use of the term, because they did not run a ticket of their own, but supported a candidate started by one of the regular parties. The only organization they formed consisted of committees which held meetings and

[1] See further as to women's suffrage, Chapter XCVI.

[2] The name is said to be formed from an Indian word denoting a chief or aged wise man, and was applied by the "straight-out" Republicans to their bolting brethren as a term of ridicule. It was then taken up by the latter as a term of compliment; though the description they used formally in 1884 was that of "Independent Republicans."