EVOLUTIONS FROM RADICALISM TO CONSERVATISM IN THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES.*

A comparison of the history of parties and their relation to political progress in Europe and America reveals three distinct lines of development. In England there have long been two clearly defined parties, the one always conservative, the other always advocating more or less radical measures. Political progress has been attained through an alternation in power between the two. When conservatism has become oppressive the Liberals have been called into office to introduce the needed measures of relief. When radicalism has gone too far, the Conservatives have been restored. Liberalism has extorted progress from the Conservatives, Toryism has held in check the Radicals. On the Continent, in most countries, there is a similar opposition of radical and conservative forces. Here, too, progress has been attained through the oscillation of power. But instead of two well defined parties there are many. Occasionally some issue divides the numerous groups into two opposing camps, one radical, one conservative. The pressure over, the conservatives fall apart into two or more sections; the radicals split up even more minutely. In the United States, there have been, as in England, only two important parties. But neither is radical. There is no clear cut opposition of progressive and conservative forces. Both parties have been radical and have become conservative. Progress has come through a series of radical movements, every step being taken by a new party. The step taken, the party becomes conservative. The next great onward impulse must create for itself a new radical party, drawn from the ranks of both the old.

The different forces and conditions which have caused this variation are easily distinguished on a closer examination. A knowledge of them is necessary for a clear understanding of the history and tendencies of our own political parties.

The normal development of parties under a republican government is seen in England. The Tories and Whigs of the last century, the Conservatives and Liberals of the present are the natural outgrowths of a parliamentary system. The logical course for political factions out of power is to unite into an organized opposition. For

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those which are in, more especially under a system of ministerial responsibility, the best mode of defense is to join hands and stand or fall together. The Ins and the Outs, the Government and the Opposition, thus force each other to make compact organizations. Inasmuch as in an established political system there is always conflict between those who favor things as they are and those who wish for change, it is natural that the conservatives should be attracted to one of the parties and the forces of progress to the other. The conservative party is a homogeneous one; there is but one way of standing still. The radical party is made up of factions which tend to fly apart; the paths of progress are many. But if there is such general satisfaction with the established order that the conservative forces are too strong to be routed by any but a combined attack, and there are common principles of progress luring enough to draw together the forces of change, all minor differences laid one side, this tendency is held in check. When the radicals are in power fear of the opposition and of a conservative reaction will keep them together and weigh against rash steps. Desire to regain control will impel the conservatives to become more progressive. Excess on either side will start back the pendulum of power. Such has been the history of parties in England. There has been at all times a powerful body well content with existing institutions and opposed to all change. There have been, on the other hand, frequent calls for reform, urgent enough to unite and give victory to the radicals. In the early century, the popular demand for an extended suffrage brought the Liberals into power and the Reform Bill was passed. Not wise enough to stop here they began an attack on the Church, the House of Lords and other established institutions. Fear of the destructive tendencies of the radicals caused a reaction in 1842 and the establishment of a strong conservative party under Peel. Four years later the Liberals again triumphed, united this time in the struggle for free trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws. The defeat of the previous elction had had its effect on them and fear of another overturn restrained their radicalism and held them well together during the next twenty years of power. Then under the influence of Gladstone more extreme doctrines began to prevail. Old institutions were again violently assailed and the new radical policy was sternly rebuked by a temporary triumph of the opposition. The Conservatives had by this time learned that to keep their grasp on the reins they must be progressive. When the Liberals were returned to power at the next election they had not yet learned to be cautious and in 1886 their extreme attitude in favor of Home Rule, Disestablishment and the Local Veto caused another reaction.

Again the Conservatives showed the effect of Liberal influence and passed important measures for the relief of rural working classes and for educational reform. Another change in power took place six years later and again at the last election the pendulum swung strongly to the conservative side. Thus throughout the century each of the parties has been united and well defined. No third party has acquired any strength. The Liberal Unionism of late years is but a new name for a wing of conservative proselytes. The conservative party has been strong enough to force the radical forces to unite, and to prevent the passage of extreme measures. The Liberals have had great common principles for which they could fight as one body. They have forced the Conservatives to be so progressive that much of the real reform of the century has come from that party.

This normal tendency is not confined to England. In Canada, for instance, the Conservatives and Liberals have alternately controlled the government; the Liberals having recently come into power after eighteen years of Conservative control. There are examples, too, on the Continent. Belgium until very recently has had but two parties. The alternation in power is well shown in the recent movement for a change from a highly restricted to a universal suffrage. The agitation for this reform brought the Liberals into control, and the changes were effected. Elated with this success they began a vigorous attack on the clerical power. In this they went too far and the first result of the reform was a decisive conservative victory. In the Netherlands, Liberals and Conservatives have alternated for half a century, their contests centering largely around religious issues. In 1883 the Liberals who of late years have in the main prevailed, were defeated on a too radical proposal for an extension of the suffrage. The Conservative party, to hold the power it had gained, saw itself forced to move on a step and amend the constitution to meet the demands for reform. New issues in a few years brought the Liberals again into control. In Norway also there are two well formed parties. The radicals are seeking to attain a separate consular and diplomatic service, the conservatives looking only for equal representation with Sweden. The situation here is complicated by the fact that the radicals are striving not only against the conservatives, but against strong opposition in Sweden. On the whole, however, here, as in the other instances mentioned, the same tendency is seen as in England.

On the Continent these normal conditions are seriously modified by other forces. In general the same cause and the same results exist everywhere. The characteristic political force which has

swayed all the Continental nations of late years is a widespread and profound dissatisfaction with the existing systems of government. There is, furthermore, as a recent writer* has pointed out, no "common consensus of opinion" as to what is the best form of government. There has been neither a common and abiding faith in existing political institutions nor any general agreement as to what should be substituted for them. In some nations this has resulted in revolutions and counter-revolutions, radical democracies and monarchical reactions. One government has been tried after another and even yet there are strong parties entirely opposed to the existing order of things. In some states, even among those who are satisfied with the outward form, there is a bitter conflict over the balance of power between social classes or different races ill mixed under one flag. In different ways this one common characteristic works through varying local conditions to produce the same result. Its effect is everywhere to emphasize the tendency of the radical forces to fly apart, a tendency which under normal conditions is held in check by the existence of a strong conservative opposition and an enthusiasm for some common principles of progress. The result is that instead of two well defined parties there are a number of indistinct ones, often a dozen or more small and scarcely distinguishable groups. Wherever, on the other hand, this common characteristic is not present and there is a general acceptance of and faith in the fundamental political institutions of the country, there the tendency is universally found to make towards two parties. There is an apparent exception to this rule in Switzerland, where there is a third party, the Clericals. They are the extreme conservatives. The Center stands between the Right and Left, voting with the radicals on religious matters, in most others acting as conservatives. It must be remembered, however, that there is in fact no real party government in Switzerland. This is partly because the executive branch chosen by the Federal Council merely to execute its laws is by unwritten law non-partisan in character and so no party is responsible for the administration. Nor is any party responsible even for the legislation. By the Referendum each separate measure may be brought before the people. The constituent can thus vote on the individual laws and is not confined as under other systems to an endorsement or rejection of a whole party policy. Often a member is returned to the Assembly, although the measures which he favored are rejected by his constituents. The

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*A. L. Lowell, to whose excellent work on Governments and Parties in Continental Europe I am much indebted.

vote for representatives is entirely for men, not for measures. Local considerations and personal qualifications prevail and no organization of office seekers, on the basis of a national program, is possible. There is little change in the political complexion of the Assembly from year to year. There are in Switzerland three distinct divisions of opinion rather than parties. In so far as there are parties, the third element is the Clerical and its existence is due to lack of agreement as to the fundamental relations of Church and State. It is true, also, that in Belgium a strong third party of socialists has lately sprung up, and that recent years have shown a marked tendency in England for the radicals to break up into groups. The Socialists in Belgium are largely absorbing the Liberal party. If the movement grows in strength, the conservative Liberals will probably join with their old foes in common opposition to the new radicalism, and the tendency is towards an eventual redistribution into two parties. However, the socialistic movement in Belgium, as well as in Switzerland and Great Britain, may be considered indicative of a growing disagreement with present fundamental theories of the functions of government. If this view proves correct, such disagreement may result in these countries as elsewhere, in the splitting of parties into groups. In England, on the whole, the present division in the Liberal ranks does not seem to be necessarily permanent. Any excess on the part of the Conservatives, any great need of reform, would undoubtedly reunite the radicals.

In France, where revolutions and counter-revolutions have marked the clash of radical and conservative forces and no form of government has for long held the approval of all or even a great part of the people, there is a hopeless subdivision of the parties. The Clericals, who are the logical conservatives, have until lately entered but little into the government of the Republic. They have been irreconcilable and reactionary rather than conservative. There has been no other large body of voters well enough satisfied with existing conditions to be opposed to all change. The radicals, with no strong conservative force to oppose them, have divided and subdivided, one faction favoring progress in one direction, one in another. The French are better theorizers than organizers and there is little coherence in their parties. Those who think together for the time being vote together and the government moves on by stepping from one coalition of groups to another, missing its footing on the average of once in less than nine months. It is true that the bureaux and committee systems in the Chamber of Deputies and the custom of Interpellations which weaken the Ministry's power and the requirement of a majority for election in the choice of depu-

ties, all tend to foster the existence of factions. Still the underlying reasons why there are many parties are that there is not enough agreement as to the political changes needed, to give any one opinion predominating influence, and that there is no conservative force to compel unity among the radicals. Recently the Clericals have grown more reconciled to the government and it is not unlikely that when they become entirely so, a strong conservative party may arise and a radical union in opposition be necessitated. In Italy nearly the same forces prevail. The Clericals, the natural conservatives, are not allowed to participate at all in the affairs of the Republic, which is not recognized by the Vatican. The result is that the radical forces have been left unopposed in the parliament. An apparently well marked division into Right and Left some thirty years ago, in the early days of Italian unity, was really a division of the radical forces. The real conservative influence existed outside of the government, opposing the unification of Italy. While accomplishing that object, the radicals clung pretty closely together. The nation once well established, the radicals were left to split into countless factions—no great mass of people being able to unite on any one national issue. Groups are not even formed for principles, as in France, but around leaders. A group has been likened to a free lance fighting on his own account at the head of his band of retainers. There is little faith or interest in the government, no widespread common principles of progress, local interests predominate over national, and the only united conservative party refuses to have anything to do with the government. In Spain there have been well nigh as radical and revolutionary changes in the whole order of government during the last century as in France. Here, too, there is no prevailing faith in the present system. On the one side are the Carlists, the reactionaries, looking for a change of dynasty, split into two factions. On the other side are four different types of Republicans, to say nothing of the Socialists, all opposed to the present monarchical institutions. All these are represented in the Cortes. Among those who really favor the existing system there are two quite well defined parties, radical and conservative, which have alternated in power. Among those who are satisfied the normal division of parties prevails. Those who would change the whole system of government and simply acquiesce in the present order,—the Carlists on the one side, the Republicans and Socialists on the other,—are divided into many groups.

In Germany and Austria the dissatisfaction with fundamental institutions is of a somewhat different order. There are, as elsewhere, large bodies of voters who are entirely opposed to the pres-

ent political system. Besides this, there is in Germany great dissatisfaction with social conditions and in Austria a perpetual desire to change the balance of power between the races. In German politics in the early days of Bismarck there was a conservative and a radical camp. The Fortschritt, or radical party, opposed the strong new government till Bismarck's success made him recognized as the popular champion of German unity. A portion of the party then became partially reconciled and the old conservatives split up. These four parties have multiplied to as many as thirteen at a recent election. This, it is true, may be in large part due to the fact that there is no real party government in Germany. The executive rules and the parties can simply legislate; that is, they can only criticise and direct, but not control the government. Nevertheless the great obstacles to party unity are general discontent, one faction wanting one change, one another, and the lack of social homogeneity. The conservative force in Germany to-day is making toward a military monarchy. If this tendency grows stronger it may be sufficient to outweigh the centrifugal forces of discontent and class hatred, and compel a union between all opposition factions. In Austria there is a slightly closer approximation to two parties. The conservatives are federalists, in favor of decentralization, not a real party, but a motley gathering of factions, which unite only in the common hatred of one another and desire to be allowed to draw farther apart. They are more truly reactionary than conservative, having little love for the existing order. On the other hand there are various groups of liberals favoring one form or another of closer constitutional union. They cannot agree as to what they want; the early party of Liberals having split up about 1879, after some twelve years of rule. The situation is complicated with conflicting race and religious interests. Over these factions the Emperor exerts practical control of public affairs.

An entirely different variation from the norm of party growth has been caused by the political forces at work in the United States. There is here the same tendency as in England to form two rival parties rather than numerous groups. There is, too, that general satisfaction with existing institutions which makes a strong conservative party possible and the lack of which has exaggerated the centrifugal tendencies of radical forces on the Continent. On the other hand the parties are held together not by enthusiasm for common principles as they have been in England, but by the strength of the organization. The result of these two sets of conditions is that peculiar arrangement of parties in which there is no opposition of radicals and conservatives. Both the great parties have been for

many years conservative. In their origin both were radical. Each wrought out its own reform and became conservative. This peculiarity is caused no doubt in large part by the fact that radicalism in general has found little footing in this country. Elsewhere the task of radicalism has been chiefly destructive, seeking to break down oligarchical institutions. The great radical steps in this country were taken before the adoption of the Constitution. Since then there have been no oligarchical institutions to destroy. The liberty which radicals of other nations have been striving for, we have long since attained. Our task has been not to tear down, but to build. Yet there are other characteristics of radicalism which have existed and might continue to exist here. Radicalism is not necessarily destructive. It stands for progress. Progress may and will in time be constructive. There have been times when our parties stood daring and determined for progress. A few years have slid by and the party once thorough-going and untrimming in its radicalism has become not only conservative, but cowardly. It fears and shuns all new issues. That political conditions have not left room for long and deep seated conflicts between radical and conservative principles in this country, that there are no thoroughly conservative aristocratic institutions to rouse radical ire and few great needs for reform, might well tend to make party feeling less intense; it does not explain why what radical forces there are are not grouped always in one party, why the party once of progress should at last come to a standstill and oppose all change. The distinction between radicalism and conservatism lies in the sphere of mind; some men are always for resting on their oars, some always for going ahead. It is natural, experience everywhere but in the United States has proved it almost inevitable, for the go-aheads to be in one camp politically and the keep-what-you've-gots in the other. Why is it then that here radicals and conservatives are hopelessly mixed, that a party cannot remain radical as elsewhere but must turn conservative?

Before examining the development of our parties in detail it will throw some light on this question to note a somewhat similar tendency in England in the recent history of the Liberal party. Up to the time of the Home Rule split in 1886, that party had been thoroughly radical. It stood for definite principles of thorough-going reform. Since then there has been a remarkable change. The Rosebery cabinet came into power in 1892 with a clear cut and positive radical program. Most of the proposed measures it failed to carry through and then gradually abandoned. Its policy grew weak and uncertain. When it went out of power it could scarce be

deemed worthy of the name of Liberal. Now, the party is without a program, without a principle. It has no great leader. It is vainly looking around for some unifying issue on which to swing back into power. The Salisbury government has had to face turbulent and difficult conditions in foreign politics. The old Liberal party under such circumstances would have been quick to find and seize some new issue. The present party cannot. Its old radical principles it has completely abandoned. It stands no longer for Home Rule or Disestablishment, its members fear to advocate the Local Veto. They differ from the Conservatives only in that they are an opposition. The original radical party urged strongly the abolishing of the House of Lords. Rosebery was only for weakening it by resisting its claims to a veto power. The Liberals, now, vaguely advocate a reform of the House of Lords; which so far as it means anything is a policy diametrically opposite to the original position of the Radicals. The weakness and timidity of the party is attributed to the lack of some strong common principle and of great leaders. No radical reform is so needed as to unite the progressive forces in an enthusiastic party. Yet how account for this sudden abandonment of the old principles and the reforms which once called forth such enthusiasm? What has caused this evolution from radicalism to conservatism? True, there has been a strong popular reaction against radical principles. But earlier Liberals did not entirely turn tail when the country voted against them.

We have already referred to the tendency in late years of the English parliament to break up into groups and said that it does not seem to be necessarily permanent. A new issue may create a new and united radical party. It is true on the other hand that these groups are still roughly united into two parties, a conservative and an opposition, held together by the force of organization. The opposition ceased to be radical under Rosebery. The ministry's majority was precarious, the groups had to be held together; to hold them together there must be conciliation and balancing of interests; extreme measures must be abandoned. The prime object came to be not to legislate but to stay in power. Love of party and office began to triumph over principle, organization over measures. Out of power, the evolution went on. Formerly great ideas and great leaders drew the party after them. To-day principles have lost their power to enthuse. There is no great leader to kindle devotion to himself or his cause. The party is seeking merely to regain power, not to effect definite reform. The Whip rules, he sacrifices everything to keeping the organization together. He dares not espouse warmly the cause of any one group for fear of

alienating another. So the party without a policy, without a leader, radical no longer, is merely an organization. The power of the Whip, of the organization, has risen above principles and leaders; the party once fearless and radical has become cautious and timid. Liberalism still exists in force among the people but not among the political leaders. Gladstone strove for ideas, his followers are fighting for the organization. In time some new and dazzling issue, some brilliant leader arousing anew the enthusiasm in political circles for old radical ideals, may cast into the shade the purposes and plans of the machine and the Liberal party become radical once more. Or, as is not unlikely, the Whip may prove too strong and the new issue or leader may have to create an entirely new party, as has been the way in America.

Another instructive example of the conservative influence of organization and the desire for power, is seen in the political position of the Magyars, the dominating race in Hungary. That they keep together in one well organized body is essential to their self preservation against the surrounding Slavs. Through long experience they have learned the secrets and value of organization. To maintain unity, a conservative policy has been found necessary. At first they took radical ground, bitterly opposing the compromise and the resulting compact of union with Austria brought about by Deak and his followers. They sat in Parliament as irreconcilables, the advocates of independence and decentralization. When, in the course of events, the Deak party went to pieces and the Left, consisting chiefly of the Magyars, could come into power if only they would accept the compact, they changed front under Tisza, were reconciled and though nominally liberal became in reality conservative. Previously they had stood strongly for local self government. Now they favor high centralization. As moderate conservatives they have since ruled, the only united party in Hungary, facing a divided opposition of mixed races. Power and unity have been necessary to the Magyars as a race. Quarrels and loss of power would mean destruction. Before this requirement of unity and the demand for power radicalism had to give way.

Nowhere, however, is this tendency so clearly illustrated as in the United States. This, in fact, is the chief cause of the peculiar history of our party life, wherein lines of radicalism and conservatism, though sometimes sharply drawn, are quickly obliterated. The American is swayed not so much by ideas and theories as by love of power. The control of the government is in the gift of the people; the conflict has been not so much how it shall be exercised as who of the people shall exercise it. Our politician cares little

for principle, much for office. Our political genius is not for thinking, it is for organization. Occasionally a great idea stirs us, a new party with a ringing platform leaps into being, the new idea is carried through or loses its attractiveness. Then the lust for office, the interests of organization, become again supreme. The party of progress turns towards its past and fears to choose any new path.

It is with the Democratic-Republican party of Jefferson that this tendency begins to be manifested. Parties before that, did not come under the peculiar influences which have moulded those which have followed. In the Colonies, from an early day, were Tories and Whigs, reflecting more or less accurately the divisions of opinion in the mother country. They were in no sense national organizations. The Whigs who brought on the Revolution were the first national party. Even here there was scarce a party in a modern sense, little common action, no organization, simply a similarity of opinion and feeling. So far as it may be called a party it was strongly radical. Its aim was to resist the burdens of oppressive taxes and the policy of more and more centralized control attempted by England. War was not in its original program. The Revolution was the unforeseen end of its plans and policy. The aim of the Whigs accomplished, they ceased to be a party. Their radicalism culminated in war; that over, it came to a standstill. It had been in no sense a constructive party. It did not now try to govern or to build; it did not become conservative; it went to pieces. Radicalism had nothing to offer for the future. The forces of repudiation and anarchy were left alone in the field. Things went from bad to worse until very necessity of self preservation caused a strong reaction. The forces of order drew together in a vigorous conservative movement. From this common impulse sprang the great conservative Federalist party, destined to bind together the scattering fragments of confederate existence and build up the new nation.

The tide began to set back immediately after the end of the war. There were then three distinct parties, or rather shades of opinion. The old Tories still retaining their attachment for Great Britain hoped to be allowed to live on undisturbed, the past forgotten. The extreme Whigs, on the other hand, violently enraged against the Tories, wanted them driven from the state and their property confiscated. Dividing itself off from them was a group of more moderate Whigs, who, while favoring the exclusion of the Tories from all participation in the government, were opposed to banishment and confiscation. The radical Whigs were at first in a great majority. Laws of extreme harshness were passed in many states and the Tories forced to migrate under circumstances causing them

great suffering. Gradually, however, the moderates grew in strength, supported by such men as Adams and Hamilton. Here are the first beginnings of the conservative Federal party. But it was slow in forming. Many of the great leaders who would naturally foster it were abroad or attending to their private affairs. In time, however, the moderate Whigs grew more and more determined in their stand for a strong government. The financial needs of the country became so great that impost taxes were requested from the States. A strong conservative following was drawn to the support of this measure. In 1786, party lines were deepened by a wave of paper money enthusiasm which swept over the country, arousing the enthusiasm of the anti-conservatives and winning to its support a majority in seven states. In the meanwhile these anti-Federalist elements;—it is not correct to call them radicals, they were more anarchistic in their tendencies;—were driven into more and more violent opposition by the efforts of the creditor classes to enforce their legal rights in the courts, and finally broke out into open disorder and rioting. There was the inevitable reaction. Shay's Rebellion in Massachusetts, and the disgraceful conduct of the anti-Federalist malcontents in Rhode Island, greatly strengthened the conservative movement. New England had been the anti-Federalist stronghold. These outbreaks changed public opinion there in a few months. The propositions for a convention to reform and make stronger the government, already warmly advocated, were carried through. There were at this time among the conservatives a number of influential extremists who leaned strongly towards monarchy. On the opposite wing were those who abhorred a monarchy, but did not believe in the feasibility of a common representative government, and favored a sectional division into three separate confederacies where state rights would be secure. Between these two the great body of the party wanted a stronger government, of what sort they little cared, providing order was restored. From these various wants grew by a series of compromises the present Constitution. The promulgation of that document drew sharp the line all over the country between the Federalists and the anti-Federalists. Among the former were most of the merchants and importers of the great towns, the creditor classes, the educated, the great political leaders, and the old Tories who saw in a strong government their only hope of personal security. Against them were arrayed the few who opposed the Constitution on principle, swayed by local jealousies and fear for the welfare of the states, the second-rate leaders whose talents would shine more brightly in the lesser state arenas than in the larger field of national politics; the debtors,

the paper money men, the persecutors of the old loyalists, and all elements of repudiation and anarchy. The conservative wave was irresistible. The Constitution was carried through. The task of nation building lay ahead.

Here begins the most clearly distinguished division into conservatives and radicals that has existed in the history of the United States. The conservatives now favored strong central government in the hands of the wealthy and educated, and a return, as far as possible in a republic, to the principles and forms of the English Constitution. The radicals favored decentralization, a high degree of local self-government combined with a weak national government, and the rule of the masses. Since all the wealthy, the educated, the aristocratic, were Federalists, their opponents accused them bitterly of English tendencies and hankerings after a monarchy, of fostering class supremacy, aping court measures, striving for hereditary powers and distinctions and prostituting the Treasury to the money power. They did, in fact, often speak fondly of the perfection of the English constitution, though they cannot fairly be accused of disloyalty to the republic either in thought or action. They had great distrust of the stability of the government, fearing the jealousies and democratic tendencies of the state governments, and so they took every means available to strengthen the federal power. Some of them, notably Hamilton, were not averse to the annihilation of existing states and their reconstruction on new lines. They distrusted, too, the judgment of the people and dreaded a broadening of the principles of popular representation. They were, in no doubtful sense, a strongly conservative party. To the ranks of their opponents were gradually drawn the liberty loving, those who believed in state rights as a protection from central despotism, those who trusted the people and hated the aristocrats. They were fired with enthusiasm by the French struggles for liberty. Their opponents reviled them as Jacobins and Democrats, and prophesied that their advent to power would result in anarchy and destruction.

At first the radical forces were weak. They were few and faint hearted. In the first congress there was no distinguishable party line. There was a general agreement to give the new government a fair trial. But gradually the anti-Federalists increased in numbers. The government from the start adopted a vigorous conservative policy. The funding of the national debt, the assumption of state debts, and the rigorous excise laws which Hamilton forced through in quick succession, rapidly alienated the more liberal wing of his followers and within a year or two a bitter party strife was in full swing. The division was widened by the conflict over the National

Bank. Such influential men as Jefferson and Madison drew away and became the leaders of a radical opposition. Their sympathy with the French became more and more marked. Party feeling raged around the complicated foreign situation with extreme bitterness. The President's proclamation of neutrality between Great Britain and France issued in 1793 intensified the conflict; the radicals sparing not even Washington in their scathing denunciations of the government's policy. The breach between the parties became fixed.

For a while this French enthusiasm so helped the radicals as to give them a majority in Congress. But the overweening confidence with which the French minister Genet, relying on this feeling, appealed to the people in open insult of our government, combined with the downfall of Robespierre and the Jacobin clubs in France, caused an anti-French reaction to set in. The enthusiasm of the Republicans began to abate. Even the great unpopularity of the Jay treaty with Great Britain was not enough to stem the tide. The attempted interference in the election of 1796 by Adet, Genet's successor from France, in favor of the Republicans increased the conservative swing. The Federalists not only elected Adams, but secured a safe majority in Congress. Their forces were up to this time united and harmonious. Under the guiding hand of Hamilton, the party was well organized, its policy clear cut and strong. The radicals on the other hand had been undisciplined. They had no common program. They had simply combated the government, and vilified it. They had gone to the verge of fanaticism in their French sympathies. What political views they had had were aimless and unpractical, caught from the French doctrinaires. They were an unorganized but violent opposition rather than a party.

From this time on a marked change took place. The strife between Adams and Hamilton began to break up the Federalists. Nevertheless the insulting tone of France in the X Y Z negotiations and the near approach to war with that country which resulted, brought triumph to the conservative arms. In their elation the Federalists thought they had won a final victory. They pressed on into extremes. A rigorous Naturalization act and the Alien and Sedition laws were passed against the advice of their wisest leaders. In the outcry which was raised against these measures the conservative leaders committed themselves irrevocably to their defense. They grew more and more aggressive in their pronouncements for a strong government. The vigorous war measures they adopted required increased taxation. Salaries were raised, federal offices increased. Economy was thrown to the winds. Thus the conserva-

tives overreached themselves. The opportunity for the opposition was at hand. Jefferson had been long on the alert, waiting just this opening. As Vice President, and from his home at Monticello, he had been quietly organizing and disciplining a great new party. He was the first great party organizer, a consummate master. Under his influence the Republicans, as he called them, were welded together into a solid radical party. They adopted a positive policy. They gave up their French favoritism and stood in opposition to the government's anti-French demonstrations, for strict neutrality. They combated British ascendency and all tendencies towards American centralism. They denounced vehemently the Alien and Sedition laws as infringements on the rights of personal security. In the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions they went so far in their deprecation of central despotism as to promulgate the doctrine that the State may declare void whatever Federal acts it considers illegal. They opposed the war measures, and all attempts to increase the army and navy. They criticised the Federalists severely for their multiplication of offices and utter disregard of economy. The conservatives had gone too far and left themselves open to attack. Jefferson, with a well organized radical party at his back, with a definite policy of reform for a battle cry was ready to take the chance. The election of 1800 witnessed the complete overturn of the conservatives and the installation of the radicals.

The development of the Federalist and Republican parties which has just been outlined is worthy of particular notice because it is an excellent example of the normal growth of parties under a republican form of government. The country quickly divided into two strong, well defined parties, one in power, the other in opposition; one conservative, making towards the old, one radical, striving for the new; one composed of those who wished for as near a return as possible to the forms of English Constitutional government with the educated and wealthy in control, the other composed of those who wished to go ahead and create a genuine democracy where the people should rule. The Federalists were on top until the excess of their conservatism showed the people that for progress in democracy they must turn to the radicals. Party development up to this point was so typical of the norm that it could fairly have been expected to continue along the same line. It would have seemed that the conservatives, strong and aggressive as they were, would continue to be a powerful influence to restrain the Republicans, ready to take the control from them as soon as they went a step too far. The radicals came in with a strong majority, with definite principles of reform; principles so radical and so warmly advocated that the

Federalists saw in their advent to power imminent danger of anarchy and disorder. So strong was this fear of radical innovations that they were willing to go to any length to keep in power. Their plan to win Burr over to their camp and choose him President instead of Jefferson when the election came into the House, seems to have been defeated by no sense of honor on either part, but only by the over astuteness of Burr. Thus the radical and conservative forces were in sharp conflict. The natural and logical sequence would have been a long continued struggle, now one party gaining the fore, now the other, and gradual progress the result. In a word, had no modifying forces come into play, an alternation of Radical and Conservative governments, such as we see in England, would have occurred.

For a time, this seemed likely to be the probable course of events. The main body of Federalists quickly acquiesced in the result and set to work to organize for a vigorous fight for conservative principles. Two or three newspapers were started by them with this object in view. There were no signs of permanent yielding on their part. Their flag was nailed to the mast. Strange to say it was the victorious flag that was struck. No sooner did the Republicans come into power than they began, one after another, to abandon their radical principles; most of them without a trial or even a struggle. So rapid was this surrender that in sixteen years not a trace of their old policy remained. When Monroe's administration began, in 1817, there was no longer a division between the parties. A few of the most extreme of the old Federalists had sung their death song in the Hartford Convention. The rest had been absorbed by the Republicans, as they fell back onto the conservative position. The Republican party had become completely Federalized, in fact as well as in the taunts of their old opponents.

A brief sketch of the course of the party will serve to make clear the completeness of this sudden evolution. The key-note of the policy of the anti-Federalists at the time they came into control was fear and hatred of the aristocratic bias which the party in power had been giving to the government. They were vehemently opposed to a strong central power. The main policy enunciated by Jefferson was clear cut and definite, to reduce the Union to a league of States. The Constitution as a grant of powers was to be construed with utmost strictness. In 1800, on the eve of his election, Jefferson declared that "the true theory of our constitution is surely the wisest and best; that the States are independent as to everything within themselves, and united as to everything respecting foreign nations." Such a federation for the sole and specific purpose of

controlling foreign intercourse would need no expensive or elaborate machinery. Thus "our general government may be reduced to a very simple organization and a very inexpensive one; a few plain duties to be performed by a few servants." Consistent with this conception had been at all times the action of the Republicans.

On coming into power the Republican party in accord with its past and its principles stood pledged to a definite radical program, embracing simplicity and economy in administration with a reduction in the number of offices; permanent opposition to the growth of military power in the hands of the government; the repeal of the internal taxes; the refusal to recharter the Bank; and above all, as their cardinal principles, to do absolutely nothing to strengthen the Federal government at the expense of the States, to exercise such powers only as a most strict construction of the Constitution allowed, and to take every step possible towards enforcing the doctrine of decentralization and state rights. To secure economy by a reduction of offices and to repeal the fourteen year Naturalization Act of the Federalists were in the nature of immediate reforms, rather than of permanent policy. These were at once carried through before radicalism had lost its force. The internal taxes were also repealed, an inclination to hedge being shown already in the President's intimation that it might sometime be necessary to re-enact them. After the war of 1812 the taxes were again imposed; under the stress of circumstances it is true, but in entire violation of the Republican principles of government, in accord with which Jefferson had maintained that such taxation never ought to have been allowed by the Constitution and never should have been enacted in any event. Gradually the opposition to a military establishment faded away. Jefferson reluctantly increased the navy and his successors with less reluctance. In 1800 the Republicans had scouted the idea that it was necessary to have a standing army. In 1802 they established one of 2,500 men and in 1815 increased its strength to 10,000. The lessons of war forced it on them; but they had violently opposed all military encroachments when war with France was imminent in the days of John Adams. The National Bank, which they had so persistently declared to be unconstitutional when it was first chartered and still thought to be so when they refused to recharter it in 1811, was given a new charter on an enlarged basis by a great Republican majority in 1816. But even more remarkable was their entire change of front with regard to the nature and powers of the central government and the construction of the Constitution. The men who had denied the right of the government to establish a bank did not stop to question its authority to acquire and rule over

a vast tract of land purchased from a foreign power. Congress, in governing this new territory, gave powers of supervision over it, equal to those of any monarch, to the man who had been infuriated by the pomp of Washington's levees. The party which had always maintained as its one grand fundamental principle the strict construction of the Constitution and the extreme limitation of federal power, allowed the President to exercise an authority far greater than ever attempted by the Federalists, and approved conduct of Jefferson's which even he himself believed to be unconstitutional, quietly neglecting to pass the amendments which he considered necessary to validate his action. If the President is to be allowed to transgress or even enlarge what he believes to be his constitutional limitations whenever his party deem it necessary, on the trust that subsequent amendments will make it constitutional, what is left of state rights and strict construction? But their surrender of principles did not stop here. When the offenses of Great Britain began to be unendurable the Republicans passed the famous Embargo Acts. At first, perhaps, a war measure, they continued it with the avowed purpose of protecting our commerce. The act affected seriously only New England States, where it worked great hardship. As a war measure, for a short time, it may have been within Republican principles. Continued as it was, it was a piece of federal tyranny, the central government in the exercise of a paternal authority enforcing absolute control over the commerce of the States, the majority imposing a ruinous restriction upon the liberties of a few. The party which had so bitterly resented the Alien and Sedition laws as an unwarrantable attack upon personal rights now, in not merely regulating but entirely destroying freedom of trade, infringes even more seriously upon the rights of property. The earlier measures threatened at the most the personal liberty of only a few individuals, the embargo ruined the business of whole sections. The merchants of New England resented with natural anger this attempt of the central government to decide what was best for their business and enforce its decision to their destruction. Jefferson, who had winked at the Whiskey Insurrection as not at most "anything more than riotous" and disapproved Washington's measures to suppress it, and who wrote the Kentucky resolutions, maintaining the right of the State to resist even to the utmost the tyrannous use of Federal power; now writes to his Secretary of War, when Boston merchants grew restive, to move on the first symptom of any opposition to law and put down at once any commotion. The party which had stood for the weakest sort of a Federal government and the jealous guardianship of every right of the State as the only corrective for cen-

tral despotism, passed the Force Bill, authorizing the free use of the Army and Navy in enforcing the provisions of the embargo in the recalcitrant States. Nor did the change of front stop even here. The Federal government which was to be but a league of states to deal with foreign relations was early urged by Jefferson to devote itself to the task of building all manner of internal improvements, with the avowed purpose of thereby cementing and strengthening the Union. Madison remained somewhat more true to original convictions. He changed ground entirely as to the advisability of such action and recommended it highly in the same message in which he advocated the conservative policy of an increase and more perfect organization of the army and navy and the establishment of military academies, but clung enough to the past to consider constitutional amendments a prerequisite. The main body of the party, however, no longer rode the strict construction horse and pressed forward along this line until internal improvements became a predominent Republican principle. Similarly the policy of protection of manufacturing interests which Hamilton had foreshadowed in 1791 was taken up gradually by the Republicans as a better means of creating mutual interdependence between the States and strengthening the Union. Strict construction would have faltered long before adopting protection. The full extent to which this policy was carried in the later days of the party was in direct opposition to the fundamental doctrine of radical days, which made for a rapid decrease of Federal powers.

Thus every one of its radical principles, the disestablishment of the Bank; opposition to excise laws, internal improvements, a standing army and a strong navy; strict construction; the jealous preservation of state rights; and the weakening of central authority in every possible way; was in a short time entirely abandoned. The radical party adopted the conservative principle of strong government in all its details.

This phenomenon of course may be attributed to numerous causes. The exigencies of the situation, especially during war times, a closer and clearer knowledge of the practical working needs of a government, the responsibility of power, all tended to hold the radicals within bounds and show them the folly of many of their theories. Every radical party tends to become less extreme with the advent of power. Many plans are given up as infeasible. Events show the folly of many a cherished purpose. These same forces are at work in every country, tending to make the action of both radicals and conservatives vary widely from their promises. But nowhere else have we seen a complete and absolute change of policy,

not only in details but in its most fundamental points. Where else has a radical party, under most pressing circumstances, absolutely surrendered its dearest principles and become conservative? Nor was such an entire change of front necessary under the circumstances. Had the Republicans thoroughly believed and trusted in their announced policy they would not so easily have given it up. Granted that their original program proved unwise in the course of events; nevertheless, had their principles been ingrained, they would have modified their policy only in details and remained true to its fundamental positions. Elsewhere, when radical plans of reform work badly the reaction comes among the people, turning their support to the conservative party; it does not entirely transform the radical party itself. There is an underlying cause which must not be left out of consideration if we would adequately account for the completeness of this evolution. The real and basic purpose of Jefferson and his followers was not to carry out their theory of as little central government as possible. They really cared for state rights and strict construction so little that they were ready to sacrifice them at the first emergency. The Republicans, and Jefferson in particular, were great doctrinaires. They talked eloquently, theorized earnestly; yet in practice cared not a whit for their dogmas and principles. One desire inspired them all. It was the desire to rule, the yearning to have the power in their own hands. They had seen the government drifting into the control of what they looked upon as the aristocratic, the monarchial, British faction. And so they fought with savage energy to lessen the power their foes were winning. When, in time, Jefferson realized that the people if united could win for themselves this power, he began to organize them into a strong, coherent party. His aim, their aim, was simply to wrest power from the "Monocrats," to give it to the people. Whatever the shibboleths they shouted, whatever the cardinal principles of their confessed faith, this was the one common, all inspiring motive, to come into power, to let the people govern. That was the real radicalism of the Republican party. That goal won, there was left only to keep what had been gained. No change was wanted now; their wish, only to conserve the government which had come into their hands. When we see that not their principles, as is common in parties elsewhere, but the desire to rule was their prime motive, the startling changes of front, the sudden evolution from radicalism to conservatism, becomes clear and consistent. It was when the classes controlled the Federal government that the people wanted the central authority weakened. When they secured that control for themselves and felt sure of their ability to keep it, they

began to use and increase rather than diminish it. The power which, in the hands of their foes, they strove to weaken, in their own hands, they sought to strengthen. Instead of doing away one by one with the powerful institutions built up by the conservatives as they had promised to do, they adopted and reinforced them. Their real purpose was to govern, not to govern in a different way. The power once won for the people, the safest and surest way to use it was along the old, well-tried, conservative lines. Innovations and changes would have divided their ranks and risked their control over the government. So perforce they grew conservative.

The development of the Republican party which has just been traced is valuable for the light it throws on the course of future parties. No party has ever been so thoroughly radical, none has ever so completely changed front. In none can we trace so easily the underlying cause which wrought the change. Yet in the more partial and confused transmutations of later parties we can now readily discern the same force, the same love of power and office, which, triumphing over love of principle, has changed them from radical to conservative.

During the administration of Monroe, the "era of good feeling," there was but one party. That was the Republican, once radical, now become conservative. During this and the next administration its conservatism became more and more pronounced. The evolution culminated in the administration of Adams. The strong national feeling manifested itself in a renewed impulse towards internal improvements and the growth of a sentiment in favor of a high protective tariff which finally grew into Clay's American system. The government moreover had again fallen into the hands of a limited class of office holders. From Congress to Cabinet, to Presidency, was the regular progression. The executive was nominated by a Congressional caucus and was largely controlled by Congress. A conservative body of political leaders were in full control of the country. But a radical reaction had set in. As far back as 1818, when the movement for internal improvements was gathering great headway, a strong current of opinion began to make back towards a strict construction of national powers. At about the same time financial panics, due largely to reckless management, caused the banks of Tennessee and Kentucky and most of those in Ohio to suspend specie payment. They believed, more or less honestly, that their distress was due to the influence of the Bank of the United States, and publicly attributed it to that cause. This aroused intense hostility to that institution in those states; a feeling which was reciprocated with more or less intensity among all those interested in

other state banks. Many of the States tried to weaken the Bank's power in every possible way. Maryland would have taxed its Baltimore branch out of existence had not the Supreme Court come to its rescue by deciding, in the case of McCulloch v. Maryland, in favor of the constitutionality of the Bank and against the right of a State to tax this branch of the national sovereignty. This feeling against the National Bank grew more and more widespread in the next ten years, fed on stories of dishonesty in its management, stock-jobbing, and of other evils incited to stir up that popular antipathy to strong financial institutions and the "money power" which is always latent in the masses. Another strong factor in this new radical movement was the attitude the South began to take towards the government. Although the Missouri Compromise had disposed of the slavery question for the time being, the Southerners had been shown on which side their interests lay. A strong government meant a continual menace to slavery. In the House they would always be in a minority, in the Senate they could only by perpetual endeavor keep the balance of forces. Thus anti-slavery forces would prevail in Congress and it behooved them to weaken its power over the States and individual rights as much as possible. So the South began to lean strongly towards strict construction, state rights and weak government. The next session after the Missouri Compromise they introduced bills into the Senate to limit and decrease the Admiralty jurisdiction of the Federal Courts, to make the Senate the final court of appeals in all cases where a state is a party, and to limit the total number of Representatives to 200;—measures clearly intended to weaken the Federal government. It may be noted in passing, that this feeling of the South was emphasized some years later by the conflict of Georgia with Federal authority in the Cherokee Indian matter. Of equal importance as a factor in the growth of radical sentiment was the development of the West. The opening up of a great extent of new territory caused a general expansion of population. In the new country was room for all. The natural result was the development among the settlers of a strong sense of equality and self-reliance. Men grew strong, independent, and confident of their own powers. Democratic ideas had space to take firm root. The self-reliant Westerners began to chafe under the rule of the conservative aristocratic classes of the East. There was a scarcity of money among them which increased their jealousy of the Eastern money power. So they were ready to unite with the radical, adventurous elements of the older states in an attack on the rule of the capitalists and the Bank. This tendency was to some degree held in check by the desire for a sys-

tem of national roads, which would aid materially in the industrial development of the new country and by the fact that there was little care for state rights there. The new states owed their existence to the national government, they had no independent history in which jealousy of the Union could take root and flourish. A strong national sentiment was one of the most beneficial results of the opening up of the West. Nevertheless the radical forces were strong and the time was growing ripe for conservative excesses to drive the Westerners to unite with the South and the Eastern malcontents in open outbreak. The anti-conservative feeling everywhere was gradually being intensified by the series of decisions handed down from the Supreme Court under the lead of Marshall and Story. One by one these opinions were given out in favor of a liberal construction of the Constitution and a strong national government. They were of inestimable service in securing to the Federal Union the strength and coherence of a great nation. They served also to arouse fear and jealousy of the Federal power.

Thus the train was laid for a general radical explosion. The movement which has been sketched was among the masses of the people. It affected little, if at all, the leaders in Congress. The radical party did not spring into power until more or less fortuitous circumstances forced a body of politicians into an anti-conservative opposition. When a group of leaders suddenly found themselves radical, they found a radical party all ready to be organized and led to victory.

During the close of Monroe's administration there were no parties in Congress. Political conflict waged around the efforts of individual leaders to ascend to the presidency. The campaign of 1824 was one not at all of measures, but entirely of men. The popular choice was Jackson and he received a plurality of electoral votes. In the House, where the undecided election was settled, Adams was the logical candidate and with Clay's help was elected. The only conspicuous feature of the election from a political standpoint was the overthrow of Crawford, the Congressional candidate, and the caucus system, of which he was the regular nominee. Jackson was at first inclined to acquiesce pleasantly enough in the result until stories of a corrupt bargain between Adams and Clay made him believe that he had been cheated out of the presidency. His indomitable ire was at once roused and he and his managers set to work for the next campaign. They adopted the one comprehensive principle of opposition. Whatever point of attack Adams left open they struck for. Clay's Panama Mission, for example, roused a totally unwarranted storm. The trend of the administration was

conservative and towards high centralization. Consequently the Jacksonians gradually became radical. In the campaign, however, they announced no definite policy. On the tariff Jackson faced one way for one section, another for another. Their one war cry was that the people had been defrauded of their choice, that a wicked aristocracy of officeholders had by corrupt bargaining cheated the people's hero out of his due and thwarted the popular will. They wailed that the majority no longer ruled; that there was an oligarchy of officeholders who forced their own way down the nation's throat; that the party in power was corrupt, extravagant, aristocratic, bent on crushing out the liberty of the people. The great radical forces which had been silently arming for ten years rose at once on the sounding of this battle cry. Jackson's managers, well schooled in New York politics, organized the party with extreme skill, holding out the bait of a division of the spoils to draw their forces together. The radical wave swept Jackson into office by an overwhelming majority. The people felt that they ruled once more.

The radicalism of the Jacksonian like that of the Jeffersonian uprising was in its underlying motives a grasping for power. With Jackson, his managers, and the politicians, it was not even nominally a contest for principles. They came into power with their political creed entirely to be made. In control they took little initiative, simply awaiting Clay's policy that they might oppose it. With the politicians from top to bottom it was purely and simply a grab for office. With the people radicalism was more clear cut and genuine, yet even here it was not for radical policies they strove. They were, it is true, as a rule opposed to the "money power's" National Bank. The Southern element was for the most part out and out radical on principle. They wanted a weaker government. Yet the movement in its whole breadth and depth was radical in seeking not a change in policy but a shifting of power. How the government was conducted they cared little, well content with present policies. Their complaint was that it had fallen into the hands of what they chose to consider an aristocratic, capitalistic monopoly of office holders. They rose in their might to win it back to themselves. In this only they were radical; this accomplished the government could go on in the same old lines, or as their chosen leaders should see fit to guide it.

In this conception of the real radicalism of the Jacksonian party we are able to understand how their policy could be such a varying hodge podge of radical and conservative measures. Had the radicalism been that of principle and policy it would have remained

clear cut and persistent, for the Whig conservative opposition was strong and aggressive. As it was, the real radical object was accomplished in victory; the various elements among the politicians were left to fight it out, until the force of organization gradually made the party over into complete conservatism.

Jackson was at first inclined to take radical grounds. He chuckled gleefully over the way the Georgia state government defied the power of the Supreme Court; in this case apparently favoring weak central control over the states. He at once began his bitter attack on the Bank, led on largely, it would seem, by motives of purely personal animosity. He vetoed a number of bills for internal improvements. He leaned gradually towards a reduction of the tariff. This was as far as he went in radical measures. When South Carolina freetraders passed the nullifying resolutions, encouraged, no doubt, to a great extent by Jackson's stand for state rights in the Georgia and Alabama Indian troubles, they were astounded by a sudden change of front by the President. He came out flat footed for the strong conservative principle expressed in his famous toast, "The Union; it must be preserved." In ringing messages he denounced the nullification doctrine and, though compromising on the tariff, pushed through Congress a Force Bill calculated to maintain the authority of the government by arms if necessary. When radicalism threatened the power in his own hands he at once became conservative. Although nominally opposed to internal improvements, his party favored them and attached provisions for them to so many appropriation bills that Jackson signed away, it is said, four times more money for internal improvements than his predecessor Adams, the recognized champion of that cause. This soon ceased to be an issue of any importance; it was shortly abandoned by all parties, largely because the growth of railroads made public roads of little value. The tariff was no longer a question upon which radicalism or conservatism took sides. It became, what it has ever since remained, a question in which sectionalism and conflicting business interests are the controlling factors and on which parties have taken their stand according to the relative strength of sectional and business interests in their ranks. In only one question did Jackson and his followers stick to a radical policy. In the overthrow of the Bank of the United States and the Independent Treasury scheme, they persisted and won out for many years. At present, however, opposition to the system of National Banks introduced by the Republicans during the war, is no part of their program. The party is too anxious for control to cling to an unpopular radical issue on a fundamental ques-

tion of national powers. In all other respects the Democrats were much sooner given over to the conservative influences. Under Polk the last vestiges of radicalism, the Loco-focoism of Van Buren, ceased to be of account. Without the slavery question, organization was triumphing over the remaining vestiges of principle, and the party could lay no claim to being radical. The slavery interest converted the party from timid to aggressive conservatism.

The underlying motive of the Southern element had always been conservative, to preserve the interest of slavery. An aristocratic, military, slave holding caste had sprung up in and controlled the South. At first their fears for slavery led them to adopt the radical policy in national affairs, of a weak government. In the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854 they still maintained radical principles and kept with them the Douglass wing which favored "squatter sovereignty." In a more essential point the South grew strongly conservative. In passing and enforcing the Fugitive Slave law it upheld the right of the national government to invade the states. It sought to turn the force of the Union to the protection of slavery. On the other hand it denied the government's power to prevent the extension of slavery in the territories. In annexing Texas it stood for the conservative principle of a Federal government capable of annexing new territory and of fighting for its possession. Thus the Southerners shifted from radical to conservative principles as the exigencies demanded. There was no genuine radicalism of conviction in their policy. So far as either term may be correctly applied, the slavery interests were conservative, favoring anything that would protect the existing institutions of slavery from the fierce, radical, anti-slavery movement springing up in the North. It must be remembered that the doctrine of secession is in no sense a radical doctrine. It is not a measure of progress. It had been used by both parties. The Federalists, while out of power were constantly talking of it. Secession is not a change of policy in, it is a breaking off from the government. It was a weapon of last resort for the out party, despondent of power, be it radical or conservative.

With secession and war the Democratic party experienced a slight radical revival. The organization was now in control of the Douglass wing, the wing which had clung to states rights and "squatter sovereignty;"—the extreme conservative faction having broken off. This tendency was most strongly marked after the war in contrast with the Republican high handed reconstruction policy. That issue settled, the Democrats became merely an opposition. At the time of Grant's second election John Sherman said that there

was not the slightest difference in platform between the two parties. Since then, though perhaps containing more elements which would join a new and radical party than the Republican, the organization as a whole has been as conservative as the other.

The Whig party which sprang up in opposition to Jackson, is unique among the organizations of the century in being the only one which originated as conservative. True, it chose a radical name, and claimed to stand for liberal principles; liberty and resistance to executive prerogative. In the latter purpose it was truly a Whig but not a progressive party. It contained, too, some radical elements for one reason or another out of harmony with the Jacksonians, such as the nullifiers. It was a heterogeneous body, united only in opposition. In the main, though, it was composed of strongly conservative factions. The bulk of its support was drawn from the old National Republicans, under which name Clay had first organized the opposition. The new name and organization were adopted for the sake of attaching such elements as the Anti-Masons and the revolters from the high handed attack on the Bank. Its platform favored protection and internal improvements, and was against the Independent Treasury;—as far as the leaders dared go at this time in favor of a Bank. Its policy was that of a vigorous conservative opposition. For some years it can fairly be said the government saw an alternation of a conservative and partially radical party. The Whigs were strong among the young men, who were attracted by its high moral tone and its opposition to the Spoils System. But the old issues were fading out. Radicalism was growing weak and hesitating. Then a new question came to the fore. On the slavery issue the old radicals took an aggressive conservative stand. The Whigs were pusillanimously conservative, seeking to keep slavery down, to make compromises, to hold the slavery and anti-slavery wings of the party together. It was not clear and uncompromising enough in its defense of slavery to become the party of the Southerners. It did not dare espouse the cause of the anti-slavery men, nor even take a strong stand against further aggression on the part of the slave holders and become the radical party of the North. The country was soon to divide on this issue. The Whig party could not take sides, so it fell to pieces.

The Republican party, which was formed at this juncture, is of a type peculiar to this country—a "one idea party," as it has been called. Such a party takes radical ground on a single issue, makes that its war cry, and is conservative or non-committal on other points. The first of this sort was the Anti-Masonic, formed in 1826, rising to some national influence in 1832, and quickly losing influ-

ence; its one purpose being the abolition of Free Masonry. Other such parties were the Liberty or Abolition party, taking extreme abolitionist ground; the Know Nothings, or American party, a secret organization whose main purpose was to weaken the influence of foreigners on the government; and, after the war, the Greenbackers and Prohibitionists. All of these have failed to gain any permanent influence, and, except the last, have shortly broken up or been absorbed in some new party. In the Republican alone can we trace anything like a complete history and note the gradual spread of conservatism.

The Republican party formed early in 1854, quickly spread through first the central and then the eastern states, absorbing and uniting the Free Soilers, all the anti-slavery elements among the Know Nothings, Whigs and Democrats. Its policy was radical, clear cut and simple. To resist the further extension of slavery in the territory of the United States, to make no more compromises, was the battle cry. The Abolitionists who favored the entire doing away with slavery could join in this opposition to the encroachments of the Democrats. Less extreme anti-slavery elements from all the other parties could bury their old jealousies under the new flag and the historic name. The new radicalism had been long preparing. There had always been a strong anti-slavery feeling. Its followers were at first derided as extremists. Gradually the movement had gathered strength. The intellectual radicalism of Emerson, New England transcendentalism, shaking off old bonds that trammeled thought and maintaining the worth and dignity of the individual man, ripened the field for abolitionist seed. The agitators, the Garrisons and others, extremists and secessionists though they were, greatly stirred popular feeling. The slave-holders in trying to defend themselves grew too aggressive. Slavery might have been left alone, confined within its original limits. When it began to force its way into the territories, when it turned the power of the National government into a tool for enforcing its unjust and abominable treatment of fugitive slaves in the very heart of anti-slavery states, when it in a word made slavery a national affair, the North could bear it no longer. The Liberty party in 1840 had polled less than 8,000 votes. It was too radical for the times. In 1844 it was stronger; sufficiently so to defeat Clay, by drawing from his support enough votes to turn the scale in New York. This Liberty party was not root and branch abolitionist. Extremists of that type leaned rather towards secession, and cared little for voting. In 1848 the Free Soilers gradually absorbing the Liberty party and led by Van Buren and Adams showed considerable strength; this

time drawing from Democratic forces, and helping to defeat Cass. Time was not yet ripe, however; the compromises of 1850 seemed to lay the slavery issue on the shelf, and in the election of 1852 the Free Soilers cut but little figure. But in 1854 the compromises were repealed, the Kansas outrages incensed public opinion, the conservatives went too far, the radical embers were fanned into a flame throughout the country; and the new party, in 1856, though not yet victorious, showed wonderful strength. In opposing the further extension of slavery it was closely united, though most of the Republicans as yet by no means held abolitionist views. The Democrats on the other hand were splitting up. The section under Douglass, favoring the old diluted radical principles of "squatter sovereignty" could not swallow the Lecompton Constitution and other slavery aggressions. On the other hand Buchanan weakly turned over the majority faction of the party into the control of southern extremists. This division made the Republican triumph in 1860 assured. After the war was well under way Republican sentiment became more and more radical, abolition became a strongly favored principle and then a fact.

Thus far the Republicans on the one question of slavery had been persistently radical. On questions of river and harbor improvements they were from the start conservative, favoring a strong government. In reconstruction they were so highly conservative in maintaining the power of the Federal Union as to arouse a temporary, radical, state rights opposition. But these issues in time were settled. The radicalism of the Republicans had been purely destructive, aiming at the overthrow of slavery. This aim was accomplished. The one principle had triumphed. The radical force was exhausted in success. Instead of making new plans for the future, the "Grand Old Party" turned to its past. It had become well organized. Its members set themselves to work to keep in power. Principle no longer ruled; desire for office became the governing passion of the party. The Republicans at once became full fledged conservatives.

There is this distinction in the evolution of the two Democratic parties and the Republican. The two former advocated a complete radical program of principles. Their real radicalism, however, was in seeking to wrest power from a small circle of leaders and restore it to the people. The principles were but the cloak of the movement. The Republicans, on the other hand, were a party of principle. They stood for a genuine radical idea. When they came into control they did not abandon their program, they carried it through. This done the party succumbed to the organization, its goal no longer progress but power.

The study of American parties has shown that the desire for power is a conservative force. The American people are more eager for office and the spoils of office than to try new experiments. In their early days principles guide the party; but when the lust for power o'ertops devotion to principle, party energy is devoted to perfecting the organization and securing offices and turns away from the search for some new line of progress. No party that has reached this stage seems to be able to originate any new measure. As an organization it fears the untried. Progress must create new parties for itself. The Populistic ideas of recent years have had to build up a new organization. Neither of the old conservative parties dared initiate such policies. The silver movement of the last election well illustrates this. At first glance, one would say that the Democratic party, or its controlling section, had adopted a radical position on the currency question. It is more true to say that Free Silver adopted the Democrats. The free silver feeling was not originated and fostered by that party. Democratic leaders have not sought out free silver as a method of progress. The feeling grew up independent of party. When it gained national strength it united with other radical factors in forming the Populist party. It increased in strength till it succeeded in capturing the Democratic party machinery. For a time Free Silver has made an entirely new party, uniting the Democratic and Populist forces. Popocratic it was suggestively called. What the future relations of the two wings of the Democratic party and the Populists will be, is of course impossible to tell. We are apparently in the midst of the growth of a new party. The radical elements of both old parties are coming together on a new Populistic basis. The Populists are to-day the true radicals. They stand for a new policy and new principles. For the purposes of our discussion it is enough to say of current events that they show the way a new principle may gather to itself a new party or revitalize part of an old one, just as the anti-slavery movement caught and made over the body of the Whig party.

Undoubtedly the underlying cause of this common evolution to conservatism is the lack of a task for radicalism to perform in this country. In the only case up till the last few years where any thoroughgoing reform was imperatively needed, the love of power and its conservative consequences did not take effect till that issue was settled on a radical basis. With the other parties progressive principles were neither deeply rooted nor persistent. Lust for power prevailed from the start, and radicalism was soon abandoned. In European countries there has been a long path for the parties of reform to traverse. Radicalism has therefore had to be persistent.

Principles have been everything, parties little or nothing. What European radicals have been fighting for, was ours from the start. Now, however, conditions are changing. European radicalism has been chiefly destructive. It has aimed at breaking down restrictions and privileges. It is gradually becoming constructive. The extreme radicals are becoming socialistic. They aim not at breaking down, but at building up a new and complex system. Americans have not been originators in political thinking. They have taken their doctrines from abroad. They had already carried into effect what has been practical in European radicalism and have been waiting for Europe to catch up. Now that foreign political thinking is moving beyond our present position, the restless among our minds are following after. Radicalism abroad is laying out a new path. That path lies open to us and radical thinkers here are surveying it. Europe is giving us new ideas, is suggesting a new policy of gradual development. In overcoming the forces of inequality with a strong paternal hand, in substituting government monopoly for a monopoly government, radicalism has before it a long and difficult task. An extensive vision of possible progress has dawned on many minds. The radical elements in the masses are growing devoted to a new and far reaching policy. Principle is gaining more attractiveness than office. Formerly they thought "If only the people rule, all will be well." Now they are beginning to think "Present evils will be overthrown if only the people rule in a certain way." A radical party struggling with the question, not who shall govern, but how shall we be governed, is springing up. This radicalism is of the type that persists. Such a party will not become conservative, for principal is its aim, not power. If, as of course cannot be accurately foretold, socialistic and paternalistic ideas continue gaining in favor as rapidly as they have in the past, we may expect to have in time well distinguished radical and conservative parties, one for the regulation of forces of economic and social inequality by the strong hand of government, the other guarding the rights of individuals and the free play of natural forces. But if these or other new notions prove to be too weak to push into the background the desire for office, the party organization will again become master, as in the days past, and both parties will be timidly conservative.

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