NEW PARTIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

Political partisanship in the United States began about four years after the formation of the Federal government.

Prior to that time, such Whigs of the Revolutionary era as subsequently came out for a strong central government of general powers, constituted a faction in opposition to those who demanded strict limitations upon Federal authority. There was only one party. Out of the former of those factions, however, there came the Federal Party, and out of the latter the Democratic-Republican Party.

It was not until the Democratic-Republican Party had wholly absorbed the Federalists in the "era of good feeling" during the '20's of the Nineteenth Century, that new parties again appeared; and when they appeared, they had developed out of one-party factionalism.

The first of those new parties was the Anti-Mason Party. It was organized about 1827, its attitude toward Free Masonry being somewhat similar to that of the "A. P. A." against Roman Catholicism at a long subsequent date. It secured seven electoral votes in 1832, but had no permanency.

Soon afterwards the present Democratic Party took form under Andrew Jackson's leadership. Coincidently, Clay and Adams set up the National Republican Party, which, with accessions from the Democrats, soon became the Whig Party. The Whigs survived as one of the two principal parties until the Republican Party came some twenty years later.

Although the Democrats and the Whigs were the principal parties in American politics until 1856, there were meanwhile several Whig factions such as the Silver Gray Whigs, several Democratic factions such as the Hunkers and the Barnburners, and a side party or two, such as the Liberty Party. The Liberty Party was an almost voteless side party, bearing somewhat the same political relation to the slavery question of the '40's that independent Labor parties have borne to industrial questions since.

By 1848, the aggressions of pro-slavery leaders had so disturbed political partisanship at the North as to provoke the organization there of the Free Soil Party. From the fact that this was the first serious sign of political realignments at that time, that it sprang "bolt"-like out of the dominant party, and that its candidate for the Presidency was an ex-President of great political genius, the Free Soil Party, more suggestively than any other new party in American history, is like the Progressive Party of the present campaign.

The burning question of Van Buren's time, generated by the annexation of Texas, was whether slavery should go into free territory; and both parties were divided on the question to the extreme point of delicacy in the matter of political adjustment. The Whigs nominated a slaveholder in General Taylor, and voting down a declaration against the extension of slavery made no platform at all. The Democrats, then in power, voted down a resolution that Congress had no authority to interfere with slavery either in the States or Territories, and nominated Lewis Cass. At this point the Free Soil Party threw ex-President Van Buren's hat into the ring.

Mr. Van Buren had been the Vice-President of Jackson's second term, and Jackson's immediate successor in the Presidency. Renominated by the Democrats in 1840, he was defeated by Harrison at the election. At the Democratic convention four years later he had a majority of the delegates, but was tricked out of the nomination by the adoption at that convention, and for the purpose of defeating him, of the two-thirds rule which still persists in Democratic conventions. These were the personal circumstances under which he became the Free Soil candidate for President in 1848.

The Free Soil Party was pretty distinctly a Democratic "bolt." It declared that Congress had no more power to make a slave than to make a king; and although it sought the co-operation of anti-slavery men of all parties, and the Liberty Party did merge in it, its appeal to anti-slavery Whigs availed but little. As their party had nominated a slaveholder, the leading anti-slavery Whigs hesitated for a time, somewhat inclined to support the Democratic "bolt," but such men as Horace Greeley finally led the way to Taylor, rather than engage, as Seward expressed it, in "guerrilla warfare" under Van Buren.

When the late Edward M. Sheppard wrote his friendly but critical biography of Van Buren, published by Houghton-Mifflin in 1897, he made some interesting observations about Van Buren and his Free Soil candidacy. They are not without political value at the present juncture. This, for example:

> It is mere speculation whether he had thought his election a possible thing. That he should think so was very unlikely. Few men had a cooler judg-

ment of political probabilities; few knew better how powerful was party discipline in the Democratic ranks, for no one had done more to create it; few could have appreciated more truly the Whig hatred of himself. Still the wakening rush of moral sentiment was so strong, the bitterness of Van Buren's Ohio and New York supporters had been so great at his defeat in 1844, that it seemed not utterly absurd that those two States might vote for him. If they did, that dream of every third party in America might come true—the failure of either of the two great parties to obtain a majority in the Electoral College, and the consequent choice of President in the House, where each of them might prefer the third party to its greater rival. Ambition to reënter the White House could indeed have had but the slightest influence with him when he accepted the Free Soil nomination. Nor was his acceptance an act of revenge, as has very commonly been said. The motives of a public man in such a case are subtle and recondite even to himself. No distinguished political leader with strong and publicly declared opinions, however exalted his temper, can help uniting in his mind the cause for which he has fought with his own political fortunes. If he be attacked, he is certain to honestly believe the attack made upon the cause as well as upon himself. When his party drives him from a leadership already occupied by him, he may submit without a murmur; but he will surely harbor the belief that his party is playing false with its principles. In 1848 there was a great and new cause for which Van Buren stood, and upon which his party took the wrong side; but doubtless his zeal burned somewhat hotter, the edge of his temper was somewhat keener, for what he thought the indignities to himself and his immediate political friends. To say this is simply to pronounce him human. His acceptance of the nomination was given largely out of loyalty to those friends whose advice was strong and urgent. It was the mistake which any old leader of a political party, who has enjoyed its honors, makes in the seeming effort—and every such political candidacy at least seems to be such an effort—to gratify his personal ambition at its expense. Van Buren and his friends should have made another take the nomination, to which his support, however vigorous, should have gone sorrowfully and reluctantly; and the form as well as the substance of his relations to the canvass should have been without personal interest.

The Free Soil Party, big with promise in August, 1848, polled barely 10 per cent of the popular vote at the election, and got not a single vote in the Electoral College. Four years later its popular vote fell off nearly 50 per cent, and as a distinct party it then vanished from politics.

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The sentiment against slavery extension, which the Liberty Party at first, the Free Soil Party later, had represented by independent political organization, and which was strong in both the Whig and the Democratic parties, grew under continued aggressions of the slave oligarchy, the prototype of our plutocracy, until it gave birth in 1856 to the Republican party—the same Republican party against which the Progressive Party of today is in revolt.

The Republican Party was distinctly a new party. It formed itself. That is to say, such Whigs, Democrats and independents as were opposed to the extension of slavery sprang into and organized the movement as by a common impulse. It was neither Whig nor Democrat in leadership, nor in political color.

Instantly there was no other party except the Knownothing Party, organized out of a secret society and figuring only in that campaign, and the Democratic Party. Into the latter all the pro-slavery elements were thus driven, other than those that joined the Knownothings; and as the Whig Party dropped out, the Democratic Party became distinctively the champion of property rights in men, the Republican Party the new party of democracy.

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From that time until the present, no party has displaced either the Republican Party or the Democratic. New parties there have been since then, and in considerable numbers, but none have achieved permanency.

The Liberal Republican Party, a "bolt" from the regular Republicans in 1872, nominated Horace Greeley and was endorsed by the Democrats, but passed back into the Republican Party after a single campaign.

A temperance party formed in 1872 became in 1876 the Prohibition Party, which is still a side party.

The Independent National Party of 1876, growing out of a Labor Reform Party of 1872, became the Greenback-Labor National Party in 1880. Peter Cooper was its Presidential candidate in 1876, James B. Weaver in 1880, and Benjamin F. Butler in 1884. It then died, leaving its doctrines and general characteristics as a legacy to the People's Party, commonly called Populists. Neither of these parties was ever a new party in any such necessary sense as implies permanent national displacement of an existng principal party. Although the Greenbackers sent Representatives to Congress, and the Populists carried States as well as Congressional districts, the Republican and the Democratic parties remained respectively either first or second in the national field. The Greenbackers of the earlier period and the Populists of the later, were always an extremely bad third in national elections. Inevitably, therefore, these revolts

dwindled to a permanent side party which exists now only as a dilapidated skeleton.

In 1896 there might have been a new party of magnitude, a "bolt" from the Democratic Party, if those Democrats whose attitude was then that of the bolting Republicans now, had not captured their party. Bryan accomplished that year what Roosevelt failed in this year. By this capture they drove plutocratic Democrats over to the Republicans in mass, except for a few who formed a side party for that campaign alone.

In 1900 the Democratic Party was again held by the democratic elements in it, but in 1904 it was recaptured by the plutocrats. Recovered by democratic Democrats in 1908, it was defeated at the election of that year by the Roosevelt-Taft-Hearst coalition, a side party having been organized by Hearst for the purpose. During those twelve eventful years the spirit that makes new parties was struggling inside the Democratic Party with varying success, upon the theory that it is better to gain control of an established party if possible than to try to manufacture a new one, which is usually not possible.

In all that time until the present year, vast numbers of democratic Republicans, party bound, made no vigorous move to control their own party against plutocracy, or to defeat it by supporting the Democratic Party at the polls when its democratic elements dominated it. But the sheep-and-goat separation process, which began in the Democratic Party sixteen years ago, has now begun in the Republican Party.

In consequence, the Democratic Party, still held by its progressives, though "by the skin of their teeth," and with a genuinely progressive Presidential candidate in Governor Wilson, is confronted on the one hand with a Republican "bolt" under Roosevelt, appealing to progressives of all parties, and on the other hand, under the leadership of Taft, by the same political lodging-house for plutocracy which the Republican Party has been these twenty years past.

What will the outcome be? Read "The Lady and the Tiger." What is it likely to be? Reflect upon the history of new parties in American politics.

He who wanders widest lifts
No more of beauty's jealous veils
Than he who from his doorway sees
The miracle of flowers and trees.
—Whittier.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, August 13, 1912.

The Roosevelt Party.

Continuing its sessions on the 7th the Roosevelt convention at Chicago adopted a platform, nominated candidates, and adjourned, having been in session on the 5th, 6th and 7th. The official name is "The Progressive Party," the word "National" preceding the word "Progressive," as proposed by the platform when reported, having been struck out in the convention. [See current volume, page 751.]

The platform declares for—

the "principle of government by a self-controlled democracy, expressing its will through representatives;" direct primaries for nominating State and national officers; nation-wide preferential primaries for Presidential nominations; direct election of United States Senators; the short ballot; the Initiative, Referendum and Recall; "a more easy and expeditious method of amending the Federal Constitution;" national jurisdiction over "those problems which have expanded beyond the reach of the individual States;" "equal suffrage to men and women alike;" limitation of campaign funds and detailed publicity both before and after primaries and elections; registration of lobbyists; publicity of committee hearings except on foreign affairs, and recording of all votes in committee; exclusion of Federal appointees from political activities; referendum on court decisions nullifying State legislation; reforms in legal procedure and methods, with particular reference to injunctions; "an enlarged measure of social and industrial justice," including legislation regarding industrial health and accidents, child labor, wage standards, women's labor, hours and days of labor, convict labor, industrial education, and industrial research; "the organization of the workers, men and women, as a means of protecting their interests and of promoting their progress;" a Labor seat in the President's cabinet; "the development of agricultural credit and co-operation," and agricultural education; information about and correction of high costs of living; consolidated Federal health service without discrimination as to conflicting curative schools; national regulation of inter-State corporations through a permanent Federal commission; reform of the patent laws; physical valuation of railroads by the Interstate Commerce Commission and abolition of the Commerce Court; currency reform and opposition to the Aldrich bill; extension of foreign commerce by subsidies; conservation of natural resources; extension of good roads and rural postal delivery; opening