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***THE REPUBLICAN
PARTY***

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The Republican Party

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INTRODUCTION

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This is a History. It is not a political treatise or special plea. It is, in brief form, a review of the history of the Republican party of the United States from its origin to the present time. It aims to present a concise, coherent narrative of events and achievements, with only such explanation and comment as may be necessary to make the relation of cause and effect clear to the reader's mind and thus to indicate what the Republican party has stood for in the life of the American nation, what it stands for to-day and what it promises for the future. If, as the authors frankly desire and expect, the net effect of this presentation shall be to incline a greater number of the voters of this country, and particularly of the millions of new and newly-enfranchised citizens, to the support of the Republican party, this result will be accomplished, not by persuasiveness of rhetoric or passion of partisan appeal, but rather by the irresistible logic of facts which are matters of record.

It is also the hope of the authors that these pages will convince a vast number of those who are about to exercise for the first time the full privileges of American citizenship that it is their duty to affiliate themselves sincerely and loyally with one or the other of the two great parties which have so long existed in American politics. Politics is the

science of government. Nicholas Murray Butler has well said: "Politics is not office-seeking; politics is not the use of devious arts of the demagogue or the self-seeker to secure power over men. Politics is one of the noblest and finest words in our language. It is nothing but the doctrine of how to live together happily and helpfully in organized society. In an autocracy, whether imperialist or socialist, there will be no need for politics. In an autocracy our politics will be made for us by some one else. In a democratic republic we make our own politics. In a republic every good citizen is or should be an active politician, because free government will not take care of itself. American institutions will not preserve themselves. They need the care, they need the devotion, they need the protection of thoughtful, high-minded and patriotic men and women who are deeply interested in politics and deeply concerned about politics."

American government is a government by political parties. It was so intended at the foundation of our constitutional system. The very genius of our institutions requires that there shall be two great parties, one to exercise the authority and bear the responsibility of conducting the actual government, the other to serve as check and critic, not obstructive but constructive, the two alternating in power as their respective policies and theories of legislation and administration may from time to time best serve the varying needs of the nation. It is in this way that the best results of constructive statesmanship have hitherto been attained and the greatest progress made in the science of government.

This system was gradually developed from the time of the Revolution until 1832 it assumed its present form, with popular nominating conventions for elective officers and with party platforms, or declarations of principles and programmes of action, announcing to the electorate the issues to be determined and the policies purposed to be pursued. This system of representative and responsible party government has become firmly established as fundamental to the American Republic. It is true that our history teems with the records of "independent," "third party" or other like movements, some of which for a brief space have had a more or less spectacular career. But the great lesson which their record teaches is their general futlity, if not at times actual mischief.

It is a literal fact that not one such party has ever succeeded either in perpetuating itself or in justifying its existence by accomplishing its aims. Thus the Abolition party arose in 1840, but exercised no dominant influence in a single state. In 1844, however, it did draw enough votes away from Henry Clay to defeat him and to elect James K. Polk, thus actually injuring the cause which it professed to serve. It was left not for that or any like organization but for the Republican party finally to abolish slavery. So the "Anti-Masonic," the "Know Nothing," the "Constitutional Union" and other parties before the Civil War ran their little courses, caused some agitation, often mere irritation and at all times more evil than good. They disappeared without a single enduring and beneficent achievement to their credit. In like manner there have been many similar organizations or so called parties since the civil war, such as: Greenback,

Liberal, Silver, Populist, Socialist, Social Labor and Prohibition. Not one of them has ever even approximated control of the government. Not one has ever achieved its purpose. One of the most notable and most recent examples has been that of the Prohibition party which has existed for many years but which at the end entered into a decline and saw the very work which it had vainly striven to do performed by the two great parties against which it had indiscriminately waged its futile warfare.

With this instructive record of minor party inefficiency and failure before them, American citizens would be blind indeed if they did not perceive the path of duty. That duty is to choose intelligently and on principle between the two great parties which alone are capable of patriotic efficiency; to affiliate themselves loyally with the party of their deliberate choice; and to participate actively in its management and conduct. It is generally recognized to be the duty of every American citizen to vote at elections. Similarly it is the duty of every one to participate in the primary elections of his or her party. If citizens of the Republic were generally to abstain from voting we should expect the affairs of the country to be neglected and abused. So if members of a party abstain from interesting themselves in its direction it is bound to suffer abuse. It is from such neglect on the part of citizens that the evils of party management have arisen.

No rational and loyal American citizen thinks of asserting his "independence" of the Republic or of setting up a rival government. Even if he wishes to have changes and reforms made in the government, he seeks to make them "from the

inside." Since, then, it is the established principle of the nation that its government shall be conducted through the agency of two major parties, it becomes scarcely less incumbent upon citizens to recognize those parties, to exercise their political activities in them and through them, and, if ever they desire changes in them, to make them "from the inside." To assert independence of all party affiliation and to support only such party candidates and measures as may occasionally appeal to us would be only a little less illogical and reprehensible than to withhold complete allegiance to the government itself and to support it only when it particularly pleases us to do so.

The essential fallacy and futility of minor parties can be perceived in their very nature and purpose. They are designed to serve some special interest, either temporary or local. No governmental policy worthy of the name can be based upon such issues. It must be comprehensive of all parts of the nation and of permanent or at least enduring application. For example, the construction of a Pacific Railroad or an Isthmian Canal was a great project, worthy of advocacy in a national party platform. But it would manifestly have been absurd to found a political party upon such an issue. The same may be said of the various issues of the present day. They are of indisputable importance, but to base a party upon any one of them alone would be futile and absurd. They must be dealt with by a party which takes a comprehensive view of them all and which will not dispose of them in accordance with some special, local or temporary interest, but will act in conformity with the general and permanent interests of the whole nation.

With this conception of the party and of the citizen's duty to the party before us, this history of the Republican party is presented in confidence that its facts of record will afford convincing reasons to multitudes of voters for affiliating themselves with it as the party the better calculated to serve the best interests of the American people. Its very name is auspicious of that fact. There were others before it, two of them, which bore the same name; applied to them without special significance, as has been the case with many other party designations. Jefferson called his party the Republican, in contradistinction to the Federalist, though indeed the names would have been far more logically and fittingly applied if they had been exchanged. Again the name was used for a few years by the party opposed to Jacksonian Democracy, until it was merged with the Whigs. Neither of those short-lived organizations had in its purpose or in its achievements anything particularly to justify its use of the name. That was reserved for the present party which has now endured through a triumphant career twice as long as the united ages of its two predecessors.

Republican: The Party of the Republic. Republic: The *Res Publica*, the Common Wealth. The derivation of the name denotes its purport. It is the party not of a class or of a section or of a period, but of the general and lasting good of the whole people. It means the party which knows no sectional divisions on geographical lines, but has regard for North and South, for East and West, alike. It is the party which recognizes no distinctions of caste or class or social rank, but serves equally the interests of rich and poor, of employer and employe, of capital and labor, of domestic

industry and external commerce; acting always upon the impregnable principle that the whole is greater than any of its parts, and that to promote the welfare of the whole nation is the best possible means of promoting the welfare of all the parts. It is the party which aims at once at progress in the arts of civilization and in all the beneficent conditions and circumstances of human life, individual and social, and at the conservation of those fundamental rights of person and of property which are essential to the durability of all government and even civilization itself.

These are the things for which a party called Republican must unceasingly stand, if it is to be worthy of its name. It is for the reader of these pages to judge, from the written record, how faithfully and efficiently the present Republican party has stood for them for now more than threescore years, how truly it stands for them today and how trustworthy is its promise to stand for them in the future. Upon such judgment will rest his or her decision to become or not to become affiliated with the Republican party.

Origin

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THE FORMATIVE PERIOD

CHAPTER I

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ORIGIN

The Republican party was organized in 1854. That was the time of the third great crisis in the domestic history of the nation. The first had occurred in the very establishment of our constitutional system. The second had its culmination in the Missouri Compromise of 1820, when, by giving formal recognition and assent to sectional lines, it was hoped to allay the rising menace of sectionalism against nationality. For a generation that compromise endured, though the inexorable logic of events was steadily working against its perpetuity. Its principle had been to divide the United States west of the Mississippi River on the geographical line of 36°30' north latitude, with free territory at the north and slave territory at the south, and to admit a state from one side concurrently with a state from the other, so as to keep the balance even between the two at Washington. That seemed like an extension of the provision of the Ordinance of 1787 which made the Northwest Territory—afterward Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin—free soil, while leaving the Southwest—Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Gulf States—to slavery.

Before a dozen years had passed, however, it became apparent that there was more territory for free states north of the Missouri Compromise line than for slave states south of it. So Texas was annexed and a vast region was taken from Mexico to provide material for more slave states. But this operation proved disappointing. Texas remained one

single state instead of being divided into the five that had been expected; California came in as a single free state instead of being divided into two, one free and one slave; and New Mexico and Arizona would obviously not be ready for statehood for many years. With Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon and other northern territories rapidly preparing for entrance into the Union, each having claims based upon fitness that could not be denied, it was evident that the Missouri Compromise could not prevent the free states from soon outnumbering the slave.

Therefore in 1854 the Pro-Slavery party, with its last control of Congress, enacted the Kansas-Nebraska bill. That measure was a virtual repeal of the Missouri Compromise in that it permitted slavery and slave states north of the line which the latter act had established. It did not, it is true, command the existence of slavery nor declare the power of Congress to require its extension in the northern territories. But it established the principle of "Squatter Sovereignty," under which the residents, even temporary, of any territory might determine whether it should be free or slave. This was in the face of the constitutional provision that Congress should make all laws for the government of territories before their admission to the Union as states as well as in violation of the compromise of 1820.

The result was the precipitation of the final conflict over sectionalism, with a complete breaking up of the old parties and a general political realignment. The Democratic party was rent asunder, a large proportion of its members in the North refusing to sanction the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The Whig party practically went out of existence. The radical

Free Soil party arose in considerable strength. Obviously the time was ripe for a new national organization which should grapple with the great issues rising dominant above all others which had been matters of contention between Whigs and Democrats. These latter issues had, indeed, existed from the beginning of the nation and were in themselves of great moment. They included questions of the tariff, banking, internal improvements such as roads and canals, the power of the President's veto and strict or liberal construction of the constitution. Some of them dated from the days of Hamilton and Jefferson; some of them have persisted until the present time. But at the middle of the last century far-seeing and thoughtful men perceived that all these were subordinate, for the time, to the two supreme issues of liberty and union. There was little use in debating what should be the policy of the nation until it was positively and permanently determined whether there was to be one nation or two. And if it was to remain one nation, all questions of economics must be held in abeyance to that of whether it was to be a nation of free or of slave labor. So, during the protracted debate in Congress over the Kansas-Nebraska bill, there arose an immeasurably wider and more significant discussion throughout the free states of the North as to what should be done to meet the menace of that measure.

The logic of events drew together men of three parties: Democrats, Whigs, and Free Soilers; together with many humanitarians who had not been closely affiliated with any party. Among the Democrats were Nathaniel P. Banks and George S. Boutwell of Massachusetts, Oliver P. Morton of