

## PART III

### THE PARTY SYSTEM—*Continued*

#### CHAPTER LV

##### COMPOSITION OF THE PARTIES

THE less there is in the tenets of the Republicans and Democrats to make their character intelligible to a European reader, so much the more desirable is it to convey some idea of what may be called their social and local, their racial and ecclesiastical complexions.

The Republican party was formed between 1854 and 1856 chiefly out of the wrecks of the Whig party, with the addition of the Abolitionists and Free Soilers, who, disgusted at the apparent subservience to the South of the leading northern Whigs, had for some time previously acted as a group by themselves, though some of them had been apt to vote for Whig candidates. They had also recruits from the Free Soil Democrats, who had severed themselves from the bulk of the Democratic party, and some of whom claimed to be true Jeffersonians in joining the party which stood up against the spread of slavery.<sup>1</sup> The Republicans were therefore from the first a Northern party, more distinctly so than the Federalists had been at the close of the preceding century, and much more distinctly so than the Whigs, in whom there had been a pretty strong Southern element.

The Whig element brought to the new party solidity, political experience, and a large number of wealthy and influential adherents. The Abolitionist element gave it force and enthusiasm, qualities invaluable for the crisis which came in 1861 with the secession of all save four of the slave-holding States. During the war, it drew to itself nearly all the earnestness, patriotism, religious and moral fervour, which the North and West con-

<sup>1</sup> The name Republican was given to the new party, not without the hope of thereby making it easier for these old school Democrats to join it, for in Jefferson's day his party had been called Republican.