

had been going on for some years, growing in intensity and spreading among all classes of society, resulted, in the decade between 1845 and 1855, in the final disruption of the old Loco Foco and old Whig parties and the formation of the Democrat and Republican parties out of their fragments. The Republican party devoted to the support of free soil, free speech, free press, free men, gathered to itself from all sides those who believed in its principles, whatever their views upon tariff, finance, internal improvements, foreign policy or temperance may have been; while those who believed slavery was by the constitution national and not sectional, and that the "peculiar institution" had equal rights in the territories with free labor, gathered under the banner of Democracy. It is not necessary to this illustration to recapitulate the history of the late war, which grew out of the struggle between these two parties thus formed. It is sufficient to say that at the close of the "reconstruction period," which followed the suppression of the rebellion and the entire extinction of human slavery in the United States, these two great political parties were composed of men differing upon almost every other question except the one which had absorbed their attention and engaged their support with an intensity seldom witnessed in modern times.

The close of the "reconstruction" found the political parties practically without a question dividing them. It is true that tariff, paper money expansion, silver coinage resumption were in a certain sense questions; but there were free traders among the Republicans and protectionists among the Democrats, and upon these questions there were factions among the Republicans agreeing more nearly with the Democrats than with their own party, and there were factions among the Democrats agreeing more nearly with the Republicans than with their fellow-Democrats.

The enormous foreign immigration which began about the close of the war, and continued with little abatement in volume till 1884, brought into the country a prodigious increase in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. In 1857 the total consumption of such beverages in the United States was less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ gallons per capita, while in 1877 it had increased to more than 8 gallons per capita—over 350 per cent. With the increase of drinking came, as a matter of course, an increase in the number of places where liquor was sold, and an increase of those inevitable results of demoralization and ruin which follow in its train. Appalled at this state of affairs and alarmed at the power which the saloon had gained in the administration of the Government and the control it had acquired over political parties, temperance men and women renewed the agitation for prohibition, which, beginning in 1832, had grown and increased, till in 1857 fourteen states had prohibitory laws on their statute books, when the movement was smothered by the tremendous struggle for the freedom of the slaves.

In 1873, when the renewed prohibition movement began to take form and attract public attention, in all but three of those fourteen states the prohibition laws had been repealed, and in two of these three but feeble attempts were made to enforce the law. As the agitation for prohibition spread and increased in intensity, it engaged the attention of political parties, and the Democrats, recognizing the power of the liquor interest in the country, and its present supremacy in politics, declared its opposition to "all sumptuary laws" and its support of "personal liberty"; while the Republican party, equally subservient to the liquor traffic, but more politic, declared that all "industries demand and require the protection of equal laws."

The gathered power of the agitation for prohibition has wrested from both parties some concessions. In six