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HISTORY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES

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# Political Parties in the United States

## 1846–1861

BY

## JESSE MACY, A.M., LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN IOWA COLLEGE AUTHOR OF "THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION "

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## PREFACE

This book may be described as a study of the American party system. The references to the party systems in other States are for the purpose of making clear, in the first place, the relation of the political party to despotic governments, and, in the second place, to show that in each State where Democracy is far enough advanced to give rise to political parties the form of organization is determined by its political institutions. The peculiar American system arises from peculiar American institutions. The old Federal party died because it was un-American in the form of its organization. Under the party names of Whig and Democrat the system reached a high degree of perfection; but there was a maladjustment between the party machinery and public opinion, the parties went to pieces, and the Civil War was the result. This volume treats especially of the great Whig failure and its consequences. Since the disruption of the Union there have been two rather distinct periods of party history, equally deserving of special study. The first ends with the withdrawal of the troops from the last of the Confederate States in 1877. This is emphatically the abnormal period of our

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## PREFACE

party history. Armies were then substituted for party organizations, and a political party supported by an army ceases to be a normal political party. It was during this abnormal period that the spoils system reached perfection, and the control of the party organizations passed into the hands of professional managers, supported by special interests in more or less conscious conspiracy against the people. During the period following the end of "carpet-bag" rule in the South, our party history has been characterized by a series of efforts on the part of the people to regain possession of their parties as organs of public opinion.

There are many passages in this book that are sure to give the impression that I am an advocate of our party system. Nothing is farther from my purpose. Yet I do advocate the use of our parties to secure the ends of good government until some better agency is discovered.

In the preparation of the manuscript I have received many valuable suggestions from Professor Ely, the editor of the Series.

JESSE MACY.

GRINNELL, IOWA, September 5, 1900,

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