

might have been." Professor Macy defends this course upon the ground that the principal purpose of historical study is to enable us to avoid in future the crimes and blunders that have resulted in disaster in the past. Nevertheless, speculation as to what would have happened, if that which did happen had not happened, is capable of no positive proof and can result merely in the balancing of probabilities.

Professor Macy's principal contention is that the Civil War might have been averted had the Whig party in 1848 and thereafter taken strong ground against the extension of slavery to the territories, and made a strictly constitutional opposition to slavery a paramount issue. From this view we must wholly dissent. The Whig party furnished little ground for hope. It was a party of dead issues and passing political leaders. It was a coalition of incongruous elements, the protectionists of the North and nullifiers of the South. It had disclaimed any principles in the campaign of 1840, and received a deserved punishment in the accession of Tyler. The success of 1848 was temporary and due solely to the personal popularity of a politically colorless candidate. Had the Whig party embraced its great opportunity by taking a strong stand against the extension of slavery, it would have been immediately abandoned by its Southern wing and have become as sectional as the later Republican party. It might have saved itself, but would not otherwise have greatly changed the course of history. The opposition to a rejuvenated Whig party might have been less bitter than the opposition to the new Republican party, but the difference could not have been great enough to avert the war. The reasons why the war could not have been averted are strongly stated by Professor Macy himself.

"We are told that the Mohammedan child is taught to lisp the word 'infidel' with all possible spite and venom. It is made a part of his religion to hate and despise the infidel. . . . A similar training led abolitionist and Southern 'fire-eater' to hate and despise each other. In many a Northern family children grew up believing that life in the South was typified by the bloodhound, the auction-block, and the mob. And the children of the plantations were in their turn made to regard the pure-minded, self-sacrificing, anti-slavery philanthropists as malignant aggressors, delighting in stirring up the negroes to exterminating warfare against the white South. . . . A generation had grown up, honestly believing that the institution of slavery possessed all moral and constitutional sanctions. They could not understand the grounds of Northern opposition; and no more could the North understand the Southern position respecting slavery. For a whole generation a false system of moral instruction in North

POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES.*

Professor Macy's contribution to the "Citizen's Library" was announced as a "History of Political Parties in the United States." The title-page, however, reads "Political Parties in the United States, 1846-1861." The book is not an outline history of the rise and growth of parties and the development of party machinery, as we expected it to be, but is a sort of running commentary on the political history of the United States with special reference to the period designated.

The discussion throughout is characterized by breadth and liberality of spirit and by clearness of insight into the "view-points" of opposing forces. Much space is devoted to "what

* POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1846-1861. By Jesse Macy, Ph.D. New York: The Macmillan Co.

and South had stifled the spirit of brotherhood and sown the dragon's teeth of misunderstanding and misrepresentation."

This chasm between the sections was a slow and gradual development from the earliest times. It could have been bridged, if bridged at all, only by going at least as far back as the abolitionist agitation, and by substituting for it a moderate and reasoning anti-slavery movement which would not have excited the counter-revolution in the South. But such a substitution was scarcely within the range of possibility, so that affairs were bound to come, as they did, to such a pass that a war between the sections, to use the phrase of the late General Jacob D. Cox, "was essential to the re-establishment of mutual respect."

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