

Lincoln

A Striking Parallel

Cleveland Leader
Aug. 22nd '77

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013

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The Republican Situation To-day Compared With That Existing in 1860.

A Review of the Party Exigencies Which Led to Lincoln's Nomination.

The Signs of the Times Pointing to Lincoln's Son as the Candidate in 1888.

[Contributed.]

When Abraham Lincoln was nominated in 1860, the one question which the delegates to the convention asked themselves, was: "Who can poll the most votes as the candidate of the Republican party?" It was by no means certain that any candidate could be elected; indeed the probabilities were clearly the other way. The party had never elected a President. In 1856 they had carried only eleven States out of thirty-one. These were Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Ohio. New York was carried only through the fact that Mr. Fillmore, a citizen of the State, was the candidate of the American party and polled nearly one-fourth of the entire vote. Pennsylvania gave a majority of 85,000 against the Republican ticket and more than 1,600 over Fremont and Fillmore combined. Two new States had been added—Minnesota with four electoral votes and Oregon with three. It is true the tide of popular feeling had been setting somewhat in favor of the new party, as indicated by the gubernatorial and Congressional elections which had intervened. Still there was, admittedly, little hope for the Republican party except through Democratic schism.

The real exigency of the situation is readily apparent to one who obtains his knowledge of that epoch solely from a study of the returns of the election which followed. In only three States, representing twenty electoral votes, was the success of the Republican ticket the direct result of Democratic dissensions, but it is almost impossible at this time to fully estimate the effect of divided counsels upon the Democratic

States that gave an absolute Republican majority. Perhaps it will be best appreciated by recalling the fact that Mr. Lincoln lacked nine hundred thousand votes—almost one-fifth of the entire vote cast, and nearly one-half as many as he received—of a popular majority.

The Democratic party was not then so completely united as it is now. It was divided into many factions, and the only man who could unite them was Abraham Lincoln. He was the only man who could give the party a candidate who would receive the greatest harmony within the party and afford least occasion for attack from without.

The fact is that the Republicans relied upon the record in the nation's campaign chief element of their own success. For the first time they had an actual positive hope in a national contest. The result of the election was not in doubt. There was no doubt that Mr. Lincoln was by a large majority the choice of the party. I noted nothing of the kind in the day's work of the nomination, and since I was a leader.

There is nothing of the kind of a question about it. There is no doubt that Lincoln is the foremost man of the Republican party at this time. Yesterday I read in the New York Herald that Mr. Lincoln was the choice of the party. I noted nothing of the kind in the day's work of the nomination, and since I was a leader.

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... hundred and
... will be counted
... New York, Indiana,
New Jersey, and California have all Demo-
cratic Governments. In all of them, it
may well be added, the chances
are equal. The "Temper-
ance" and "Prohibition" parties constitute
the most reliable factors
of the contest. The former, more largely
Republican than is generally sup-
posed, and the Democratic party is
much more likely to enter into its
demands than the former. Allowing
for deals and alliances, it must be
admitted that the Democrats will injure the
Republican party in the Demo-
cratic year is a possibility. About three-
fourths of the Republican Pro-
hibitionist vote is for President
with considerable "swing"
wumps are all of their anteced-
ent affiliation. They are not many, but
they were enough to turn the scales in New
York in 1884.

In order to win it is evident that the Re-
publicans must make gains. So far as now
known, if only the reliable, staunch, and
recognized supporters of the party in the
States named stand up to be counted in its
favor, they are not enough to elect a Presi-
dent. In order to secure success, the Repub-
licans must make considerable gains or the
Democrats must suffer considerable losses.
If the Republicans make gains, they must
secure them either from the Dem-
ocrats themselves, or from the floating, un-
attached elements we have named. The
Democracy holds the Federal Government
with its patronage and machinery. It con-
trols the administration in most of the for-
mer States. New York has long Democratic
four times since it was Republican. The
Standard Oil Company business which once
had a factor in an election in Indiana, and
having now a representative in the Cabinet,
will unquestionably become an active force
in the coming campaign.

Will there be any serious Democratic de-
fection? There is yet no indication of schism
or revolt. There are individuals here and
there, who in the aggregate may number a
good many, but that for it may as well be
admitted that they are hard to find and
may be still more difficult to hold.
The big order and the pennant votes
have supported every soldier, and
the sons of veterans, or whose mo-
tives are obscure, the Presidential vote has
been split. On the other hand, they have acquiesced
in the course of the Government's expan-
sion, and who think that the only way to
consolidate the South is to give them all they
cry for even before they ask it. The days
of the "Prohibition" party are over, not be-
cause they do not cross the party line, or

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