

and Dane counties on the east, and extending north to Lake Superior.

Mr. Washburn had been raised as a Whig, and always took great interest in political matters. On the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by Congress in 1854, he partook of the intense hostility to that measure which characterized the old Whigs and Free-soilers of Wisconsin. He was then in private life, in charge of extensive business operations, with no thought of entering into politics. The friends of Mr. Washburn, knowing his excellent business qualities and great firmness and integrity of character, made a movement, having in view his election to Congress. The idea originated in Rock County, and several of the prominent citizens of Janesville wrote a letter asking him to become a candidate for that office. Mr. W. replied to that letter on the 9th of August, 1854, expressing surprise that his name was mentioned for Congress. He could not then promise to accept a nomination on account of business engagements, but if the tender came with unanimity on the part of the convention, he would consider the propriety of accepting it. He soundly indorsed the principles of the Republican party that had just been organized in Wisconsin. The suggestion of the name of Washburn for Congress received great favor throughout the district, and at the convention, he received the nomination, without effort or even desire on his part, and was elected a member of the 34th Congress; and, on the 4th of March, 1855, the three brothers met in Washington, representing three different States in the house of representatives, each having been elected at the age of thirty-six years.¹ These three brothers occupied

¹ Mr. Eastman, the predecessor of Mr. Washburn in Congress, had voted against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, but did not identify himself with the anti-Nebraska party in the State. A friend well acquainted with the history of the time, gives the following information, that may prove of historical interest: "It is a singular fact, but a part of the unwritten political history of Wisconsin, that the Democratic congressional convention for the district was held at Mineral Point in August, 1854, to nominate a candidate for Congress to succeed Mr. Eastman. This gentleman's course on the Nebraska question had offended many leaders of the party, who were determined to beat him for re-nomination. The first thing to be done was to make a platform upon which he refused to accept a nomination. The convention then sent a committee to wait on Cyrus Woodman, the former partner of Mr. Washburn, and to offer him the nomination. Mr. Wood-