A BIOGRAPHY OF DONALD M. DICKINSON

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This is to certify that the

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ABSTRACT

A BIOGRAPHY OF DONALD M. DICKINSON

by Robert Bolt

Donald M. Dickinson was born on January 17, 1846, in Port Ontario, New York, a small town located on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario. Two years later he moved with his family to Michigan, graduated as Bachelor of Laws from the University of Michigan in March, 1867, and on May 2, 1867, was admitted to practice as Attorney and Counsellor at Law.

In 1872 Dickinson began his political career by serving as secretary of the Michigan Democratic State Central Committee. When Horace Greeley was decisively defeated at the November election, Dickinson resigned his position, blaming some of his fellow Democrats for Greeley's defeat because they had not wholeheartedly supported the Democratic nominee. By 1876 Dickinson had returned to the Democratic party as chairman of the Democratic party in Michigan, and led the party in procuring in four years the largest Democratic gain in any one state.

In 1880 Dickinson was chairman of the Michigan delegation to the Democratic national convention. In 1884 he sought the nomination and election of Grover Cleveland. Dickinson became a trusted advisor of President Cleveland, especially concerning patronage

in Michigan. Dickinson was confirmed as Postmaster-General in January, 1888, and held this post until the end of Cleveland's first term. As Postmaster-General Dickinson was credited by Congressman William L. Scott with "establishing the precedent that any railroad having a contract with the Government for the transportation of the mails is bound to transport them and to afford the public proper mail facilities in its line."

During these years Dickinson also rose to be a nationally recognized lawyer. In 1883 Dickinson appeared before the Supreme Court winning a favorable decision in the Leroux v. Hudson case--a case which strengthened the position and jurisdiction of state courts. In 1891 Dickinson county was created in the Upper Peninsula largely because of Dickinson's efforts as an attorney in saving the homes of several hundred homesteaders in northern Michigan. It was during these years after he had served as Postmaster-General that Dickinson was mentioned as a possible nominee to the Supreme Court.

Dickinson labored diligently for the nomination and election of Cleveland in 1892. At the Democratic national convention he was floor leader of the Cleveland forces; and after the convention he was named Chairman of the Democratic National Campaign Committee. Although during Cleveland's second term, Dickinson was

not a member of the President's official family, he did remain a close associate of Cleveland. Cleveland appreciated Dickinson's efforts, once writing, "I wish there were about twenty Dickinsons in the country." When the Democratic party split in 1896 on the money issue, Dickinson supported Cleveland. Dickinson's failure to support Bryan ended his career as an influential state and national political figure.

Although 1896 saw the end of Dickinson's influence in the Democratic party, he was appointed Chief Counsel for the United States before the Bering Sea Claims Commission and served in this capacity until a settlement was reached in 1897.

Dickinson continued corresponding with Cleveland until Cleveland's death in 1908. In 1912 Dickinson's activities were severely curtailed by illness. On October 15, 1917, he passed away at his home in Trenton, Michigan.

A BIOGRAPHY OF DONALD M. DICKINSON

By

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PREFACE

The subject of this dissertation first came to my mind after a visit that I made to the Michigan Historical Commission Archives. About the time that I chose to begin my dissertation, a substantial collection of Dickinson Papers that had never been previously used for historical research was loaned to the Archives in Lansing by George Wiskeman. Along with this collection of letters, diaries, and memos of the Dickinson family, the Archives also acquired a series of twelve Dickinson Scrapbooks containing mostly newspaper clippings concerning the public life of Donald M. Dickinson.

After initially discovering this manuscript collection, I found that no extensive research had been done on the activities and contributions of Dickinson. Probably the most significant summaries of Dickinson's career were two short biographical sketches--one by Arthur Pound in the book Michigan and the Cleveland Era and another by Everett Brown in the Dictionary of American Biography.

Further research revealed that Dickinson merited more than had been done. He was one of the foremost Michigan Democratic leaders during the late nineteenth

century. He became a national political figure when Grover Cleveland was elected President in 1884. Cleveland and Dickinson soon after Cleveland's election became close associates. In 1887 Dickinson was appointed Postmaster-General by Cleveland. Dickinson adroitly handled the problem that arose when railroad strikes threatened to disrupt the flow of mail in 1888. After Cleveland was defeated in 1890, Dickinson continued to work for his nomination and election in 1892. At the 1892 Democratic convention he was the Democratic floor leader. After the convention he was named Chairman of the Democratic National Campaign Committee and saw his efforts rewarded with the election of Cleveland. Although Dickinson did not serve in any official capacity during Cleveland's second term, he continued to correspond and visit the President. It was during his second Administration that Cleveland paid Dickinson a high compliment when he wrote, "I wish there were about twenty Dickinsons in the country."

Dickinson also made significant contributions in the field of law. As a lawyer, Dickinson also became nationally known, appearing before the United States Supreme Court on several occasions. Stephen J. Field who was an associate Justice for over thirty years strongly urged that Dickinson allow himself to be nominated to the nation's highest court. Dickinson never acceded to this.

His efforts as an attorney on behalf of homesteaders in the Upper Peninsula who were threatened with the loss of their homes resulted in the creation of Dickinson county in honor of Donald M. Dickinson.

Final conviction that Dickinson's life required more research came after a visit that I had with Arthur Pound in Ann Arbor and a letter that I received from Allan Nevins. Both agreed that Dickinson was worthy of lengthy research.

I must use this opportunity to acknowledge the labors and contributions of those who in a special way have enabled me to complete this dissertation. I owe much to Dr. Madison Kuhn. In directing the research and writing of this dissertation, he has contributed much time and energy in a sincere effort to make this dissertation a success. I am grateful for his counsel. I also much acknowledge the kindness of Mr. George Wiskeman in allowing me to use the Dickinson Papers which he owns. Without his generous contribution, this dissertation would not have been as complete as it now is. The State of Michigan's Archivist Miss Geneva Kebler has gone far beyond the call of duty in her efforts to help me in telling the story of Don Dickinson. Lastly, although it may seem trite, I must sincerely recognize the efforts of my wife who has spent countless hours typing and reading the manuscript. I express my appreciation for her patient forbearance and assistance.

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CHAPTER I

HEREDITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Although Donald Dickinson was a resident of Michigan most of his life, he was born in Port Ontario, New York on January 17, 1846. The move of the Dickinson family from their home along the eastern shore of Lake Ontario to Michigan seems to have been partially motivated by a favorable impression that Donald's father Asa C. Dickinson received of the Detroit area during the early 1820's. It was during those years that Asa travelled about the Great Lakes area as a young voyageur. These were years when the fur trading business was still one of the principal businesses in Detroit.[1]

When young Donald Dickinson was two years old, the Dickinson family left New York and established a new home on a small island in the St. Clair River delta approximately thirty miles north of Detroit. This island lying northwest of the larger Harsen's Island has ever since been known as Dickinson Island. Although the Dickinson family appeared to enjoy life

[1]Fred C. Hamil, When Beaver Was King (Detroit, 1951), p. 19.

on an island, it was rather inaccessible so that after living four years on Dickinson Island, the family moved to Detroit. One important factor causing this move was the fact that public schools for all children had been established in Detroit in 1842. Thus when young Don was six years old, his parents felt they should move to a place where he could be properly educated.

When the Dickinson family moved to Detroit, they found Detroit to be a bustling cosmopolitan city of over twenty-one thousand.[2] The introduction of steam navigation on the Great Lakes and the opening of the Erie Canal had done much to change Detroit from an outpost dependent on the fur trade to an expanding industrial city. A city of this size provided entertainment and cultural opportunities that were unknown in many other communities. One visitor to Detroit in 1842, Henry Barnard, declared that he had never seen "more elaborate entertainments anywhere, and the standards of etiquette were also of the highest."[3]

Many Detroiters thought that amusements should have some educational value. Thus, concerts, art galleries and "well-regulated" theaters were encouraged.

[2]Floyd R. Dain, Detroit and the Westward Movement (Detroit, 1951), p. 20.

[3]Kenneth N. Metcalf, Fun and Frolic in Early Detroit (Detroit, 1951), p. 9.

Dickinson benefited from a community to which many learned men had migrated.[4] Evidence of the fact that there were people interested in learning can be seen by the number of literary societies that erupted--societies such as the Detroit Lyceum and Judge Woodward's society.

All evidence indicates that Asa Dickinson was one individual who was concerned with more than his immediate environment or merely making a living for himself and his family. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, he was greatly interested in national affairs. His correspondence and diaries reveal him to be strongly opposed to Abraham Lincoln and the Republican party even though he did not seem opposed to the war itself. He was perturbed because he felt Lincoln had no fixed policy.

A letter written shortly before the outbreak of the war to his son, Dewitt, illustrates this well. The father explained that only God knew what the policy of Lincoln would be. "I begin to think Old Abe an Old Humbug--without any fixed purpose of his own in particular," he commented. The older Dickinson went on and charged that Lincoln could not decide which is nearest right and of the most consequence, the Constitution and Union, or the Chicago plat-

[4]K. Metcalf, Fun and Frolic in Early Detroit, p. 10.

form."[5]

When Donald Dickinson later became a leading political figure, he often illustrated a point with some anecdote that he had heard. He and his father seemed to be alike in this. For instance, to illustrate Lincoln's indecision, Asa Dickinson wrote to Dewitt that Lincoln was "precisely in the predicament of the drunken man who was holding on to the lamp post when accosted by a policeman." The inebriate explained that he was in a quandary. "If I let go, I shall fall into the gutter and if I don't, I shall _____ in my breeches." Explained Asa Dickinson, "Poor old Abe actually don't know whether to hold on to the Chicago platform, or whether to let go. He is in a quandary."

Asa Dickinson seemed sincerely concerned that the nation prosper and emerge from the Civil War, not torn and broken, but united with both sides willing to make every effort to heal the deep wounds which had been inflicted by the Civil War.

Donald Dickinson's father was convinced that even though the Republican administration had been successful in guiding Northern forces to victory, it did not have the leadership to effect a successful Reconstruction. The same anti-Republican spirit which pervaded

[5]Asa C. Dickinson to Dewitt Dickinson, May 23, 1861, Dickinson Papers, Michigan Historical Commission Archives. Hereafter DPMHCA. Papers made available through the courtesy of George Wiskeman.

his writings during the Civil War was even more evident when he spoke of the "Black Republicans," as he invariably called them, after the war.

On October 1, 18 6, he wrote at length in his diary concerning Republican Reconstruction policies. He vigorously denounced the bill "to establish a military despotism in ten states of the American Union." He hoped that "every man of common sense and common patriotism" would arouse himself "to the danger that is impending over the length and breadth of our beloved Republic and its once fine institutions." He charged that the majority in Congress and the leaders of the Republican party "are traitors to the Constitution and Union and enemies to the form and institutions of our free republican government as founded by our fathers and as administered from the beginning through 3/4ths of a century of unprecedented success and prosperity."

The father's thoughts and words affected the political thinking of his sons. A letter from Jerome Dickinson to his father illustrates that Jerome may not have reasoned as logically as his younger brother Don; but it does show that Jerome had learned from his father that to be an honest, useful citizen, one certainly had to be a Democrat. Wrote Jerome in a rather clipped style, "The Lieutenant Governor of this state lives here. Is a fine man. Has been in the office several times and talked with me! In

operating we have to have a boy to turn a crank which pumps the air. One day we was getting election news and had no boy. He took hold and turned for an hour. So you see he is a Democrat. He asked if my father was not. Said knew he was. Told him was proud to say he was and so was his son."[6]

Although war threatened and finally began when Don was fifteen years old and though his father was vitally concerned with the affairs of the nation, Dickinson's childhood and early school days seem to have been spent much as any carefree, normal boy of the day would have spent them. Years later Dickinson recalled that he often took a "licking" from his brother Wane, but was always delighted when his sister Martie "made Wane fly like a bumble bee stinger." The first time he tried riding horseback he had just been dressed by his mother for "company." Jack, his horse, pitched young Don over its head "into the soft hog wallow down by the waterfence below the big pear tree" which made him appear quite unfit to meet the "company." He had a similar experience the first time he learned to milk as the cow "kicked me head over heels down the hill."[7]

After attending the public schools in Detroit,

[6]Jerome Dickinson to Asa C. Dickinson, December 1, 1850, DPMHCA.

[7]Dickinson to his sister Martie, August 5, 1888, DPMHCA.

Dickinson moved to Ann Arbor where he enrolled at the University of Michigan. From a letter that Don wrote home while a collegian on the Michigan campus, one gains the impression that college students have changed little. Like many students away from home, he did not always write home as soon or as often as he should have. "I should have written before and thanked you and Martie for the large and complete assortment of goodies sent in the satchel, but I haven't had any time. . . ." Like most boys, he enjoyed eating. "The raisins and nuts were very nice when my friend came in with a hankerin' or I hankered myself." Dickinson took pride in his dress throughout his entire life. As a university student this characteristic was apparent for he wrote to his mother that he was much obliged for the extraordinarily immaculate shirt bosoms. "If snow were put by the side of them, it could melt out of shame and confusion at its own audacity in attempting to vie with their whiteness." He found that university life was not all fun. "I am reciting forty pages of tough book law and four lectures per day."[8]

For a time Dickinson pursued courses in the Literary Department of the university. He seemed to enjoy creative writing and composed one poem entitled "The Hills of Washtenaw." After deciding that he

[8]Dickinson to his mother Minerva Holmes Dickinson, n.d., DPMHCA.

wanted to make the law profession his life's work, Dickinson changed his course and entered the Law Department. He graduated as Bachelor of Laws in March, 1867, and on May 2, 1867, was admitted to practice as Attorney and Counsellor at Law.

By the age of eighteen, young Dickinson had developed an interest in politics. He wrote to his father concerning a Captain Ward whose big "grab" had been exposed ruining his prospects for the gubernatorial chair. "Of course," Don explained, "he disgorged, but everybody, with but few exceptions, believe in the fraud, and the fact of his having 'shelled out' convicts him clearly beyond doubt."[9]

In the letter to his father, Dickinson predicted that the Republican Party would "probably split on A. Lincoln at the coming convention. It looks like it. The name is to be changed again to the "True Union" party.

While a student at the University of Michigan, Dickinson wrote to his mother shortly before a November election that he would like the honor of putting his shoulder beside his father's "on Tuesday and of proving at the polls that the Dickinson clan which pulled so long and so gloriously in victory so unflinchingly, so unwaveringly in defeat, shall still

[9]Dickinson to Asa C. Dickinson, February 14, 1864, DPMHCA.

hew to the will and vigor of Auld Lang Syne grown young again: Time passes on but--

Years ne-er cool the Douglas blood."

This election seemed to stir Dickinson's whole soul for as he wrote he grew more impassioned for he continued, "No matter how I may waver and grow indifferent in time of peace, no matter how tempted by mincing sophistry and the voice of favor, yet when I hear the sound of blows dealt upon the seamed and sacred frontlets of the brave old guard, my blood will boil! My heart will spring!"

With all the enthusiasm and vigor of youth, he vowed to go on fighting for the Democratic party. "Here my Father fought . . . here will I fight. And when Columbia calls the roll although some names may be missing yet closing up firmly, when arms are passed down the line, let the answer come strong and brave, and undaunted as of yore--Here! Staunch and true!"

Dickinson's growing interest in political affairs and the energy that he expended to prepare for his life's work did not deter him from a serious courtship. On June 15, 1869, he married Frances Platt, daughter of Dr. Alonzo Platt, a prominent Grand Rapids physician. In the years that lay ahead, Fannie, for so Dickinson called his wife, proved helpful in aiding her husband in achieving a successful political

and legal career.[10]

From a letter written by Dickinson and from a diary kept by his bride, one gains a fairly accurate picture of what things intrigued this young couple for they have described in some detail the trip that they took following the marriage. One of the first spots visited by the two young lovers was the traditional haven of honeymooners, Niagara Falls. About ten miles from the Falls, the Dickinsons boarded the "neat little steamer City of Toronto and sailed down the river "passing the ground of Queenstown where Brock fell" in the War of 1812.[11] They sailed across Lake Ontario to Toronto. "The bay is quite pretty, but there is nothing remarkable to be observed about the city." From Toronto, the journey continued on a larger cabin steamer "down the Lake for Kingston and St. Lawrence." The Thousand Islands and the Rapids of the St. Lawrence especially captivated the honeymooners. Said Dickinson concerning the Thousand Islands, "They are very fine and are in number about 1500--some say 1900--and range in size from a few yards square up to

[10]For example, the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library has a collection of letters which Mrs. Grover Cleveland addressed to Mrs. Dickinson. They indicate that the two families had frequent social contacts, and that each family esteemed the other. Mrs. Dickinson seemed capable of moving graciously in Washington society.

[11]Dickinson to "My dear Saidie," June 23, 1869, DPMHCA.

large Islands. They are all rocky and beautiful. . . . Of course, the Rapids are the great excitement in 'going down the St. Lawrence'. They certainly are worthy of all that has been said and written of them. You know that they were formerly considered impassible and canals were built around them all, but now pilots guide any craft through them." He described the waves as rolling as "high as any I have ever seen in a storm and in some places the course of the boat lies between rocks between which there is barely room for her to pass. The sensation is novel going down hill on the water. The boat pitching down at more than an angle of 40° and careening every way in a nervously unsteady movement."

In Dickinson's correspondence and oratory, bits of humor frequently present themselves. On the tour following the marriage of Donald and Frances Dickinson, the new bridegroom could not resist reporting that "there are as many as half a dozen couples on the boat, some of whom we had seen at Niagara who were in a condition similar to our own in a higher degree." These couples amused themselves by "watching every other couple commenting on their wholly uninteresting appearance individually and collectively and in smiling contemptuously at their perfectly flat behavior towards each other as husbands and wives." Don, with sly wit, commented that "Frances was particularly severe on some of them for looking at each other in such a sentimental

way and called my attention to it by taking my hand and leaning on my shoulder as she spoke of it."[12]

If Asa C. Dickinson had created an interest in politics and the Democratic party in the mind of his young son, this interest was further nurtured by Donald Dickinson's affiliation with the law firm of Moore and Griffen which had its offices in Detroit. The senior partner of this firm was William A. Moore who had been state chairman of the Democratic party in Michigan during the Civil War and from 1868 until 1876 was national committeeman from Michigan. Dickinson followed in the footsteps of his senior partner holding the same positions a few years later.

In 1872 Dickinson grasped the first opportunity to work on an official basis for the Democratic party. Chosen as a delegate from Wayne County, he attended the Democratic state convention at Lansing which convened on July 2. The chief purpose of the convention was to select state delegates to the Democratic national convention. Dickinson was given a place on the Committee on Credentials while William Moore, who also was a delegate from Wayne county, was named to the Committee on Resolutions.[13]

At the Wayne county convention both Moore and

[12]Dickinson to "My dear Saidie," June 23, 1869, DPMHCA.

[13]Detroit Free Press, July 3, 1872.

Dickinson had supported the candidacy of Horace Greeley as Democratic Presidential nominee. Although in the minority at this county convention, the Greeley forces were definitely in the majority at the state convention; and the state convention chose a delegation which was pledged to support Greeley at the Democratic national convention with William A. Moore easily defeating William W. Wheaton in the contest for first delegate-at-large.

With this turn of events, Wheaton, Chairman of the State Central Committee, resigned along with the other members on the Committee. A new Committee was then selected with Foster Pratt of Kalamazoo named chairman and Donald M. Dickinson named secretary of the State Central Committee.

At the Democratic convention in Baltimore, Greeley was nominated by an overwhelming majority on the first ballot. The Democratic platform left little doubt that corruption in the Grant administration would be one of the main issues of the campaign. One plank read, "We therefore regard a thorough reform of the civil service as one of the most pressing necessities of the hour." Other planks also intimated reform and the necessity of more integrity and honesty in government.[14]

Fuel to feed the demand for reform had been fur-

[14]Detroit Free Press, July 11, 1872.

nished on the state level in Michigan when a petition was presented to the state house of representatives requesting an investigation of the conduct of the Commissioner of the State Land Office Charles A. Edmonds. After an exhausting investigation of the transactions of the Land Office, the state house of representatives resolved to impeach Edmonds by a vote of seventy-nine to five.[15] Eleven articles of impeachment were presented charging the Commissioner of the Land Office with withholding large tracts of land for the benefit of land dealers and for "private pecuniary consideration to himself" at the expense of genuine settlers, other dealers and the state. Other articles accused him of such things as buying state land while he was employed by the state, of employing dishonest clerks who sold valuable information contained in the land office, of drunkenness and adultery.

Although the state senate acquitted Edmonds after hearing the case for twenty-four days, the reverberations shook the state and made it evident to many that there had to be a change in the administration of the state.[16]

Ill feeling between the Republicans and Democrats was not lessened when the issue of reapportionment came before a special session of the legislature in

[15] Detroit Free Press, March 29, 1872.

[16] Detroit Free Press, May 25, 1872.

1872. The task confronting this special session was that of carving out three new Congressional districts, for the Michigan representation in the House of Representatives had been increased from six to nine. The Republicans seemed intent on creating districts in a way that would preclude the probability of electing any Democratic representative. One senator denounced the Republican plan saying, "Let the senators bear in mind one fact at least. At the last election the Democracy of Michigan came within 15,000 as many votes as the 'great' Republican party, yet it appears to be the main purpose of the legislature to so district the state as to deprive that large minority of the possibility of electing a single representative."[17]

In the March 26 editorial the Detroit Free Press made a similar charge saying that the districts were "cut up without any regard to the contiguity of the counties, and without the question of a harmony of interest receiving more than a passing consideration." The Detroit newspaper cited the case of the counties of Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Monroe which seemed to be closely bound by "harmonious interests yet with the exception of Wayne county were placed in districts which usually went heavily Republican "so that they, as far as Congressional representation from Michigan is concerned, might as well be in

[17]Detroit Free Press, March 23, 1872.

the state of Wisconsin."

That there was need for drastic shake-up in Michigan seemed to be vividly illustrated when Austin Blair, the well-known Republican Civil War governor, deserted the ranks of the Republicans and agreed to run on the Democratic ticket for the same office. Explained Blair, "I have been in Washington for five years past, and I know that this administration is the most corrupt one this country ever had."[18]

The Free Press in an August 23 editorial enthusiastically proclaimed, "As a representative of the sentiment which animates all who are today in opposition to the one-man power, Governor Blair has scarcely an equal in the United States, certainly none in Michigan."

With the state slate chosen and with Election Day slightly more than two months away, the campaign began to intensify. Blair campaigned vigorously declaring that "the Republican party has taken to itself some of the worst rascals in the country, and instead of shaking them from it, cherishes them still closer."[19] In September Governor Horatio Seymour of New York visited Michigan declaring in a speech at Utica, Michigan, "I ask our Republican friends if things have been right in the Federal government.

[18]Detroit Free Press, August 23, 1872.

[19]Detroit Free Press, August 24, 1872.

Let us have a man in the Presidential chair who will lay them bare. Then if they are correct you will feel a pride and satisfaction in your party that you can never gain in any other way. . . ." Seymour proposed that nothing be left unexposed and "if these things are laid bare, and as a result the public mind be aroused, public morality be elevated, and both parties brought to higher standards, I ask you if you as well as we will not be benefited."[20]

Approximately three weeks prior to the election the Democratic State Executive Committee of which Dickinson was new secretary addressed all Democratic and Republican liberals throughout the state of Michigan. The statement was filled with hope. It pointed out that during the first half of October, elections had been held in six states, "In four of these states we have been victorious." The statement analyzed each state and found reasons to be optimistic.

"Reform," continued this address, "is the paramount issue of the hour. It swallows up other issues. Its necessity is apparent. It must come and come quickly."

In ringing tones the Executive Committee called for the support of the Democratic and Republican liberals. "Liberals of Michigan," the Executive Committee pleaded, "we cannot afford to be idle or indif-

[20] Detroit Free Press, September 24, 1872.

ferent spectators of a political movement so pregnant with important consequences to ourselves." The Committee warned liberals to be alert for corruption even as the election neared. The charge was made that there was abundant evidence of a Republican attempt "to colonize in Detroit and Wayne County, Canadian negroes enough to overcome the majority of that city, county and Congressional District."

The lengthy address closed, reaffirming "reform as the purpose of the party. It is inscribed on our banners. Let us carry it gallantly to the front." It expressed the desire that when the sun went down on the fifth of November "we may return to our friends confident that the virtue and the intelligence of a free people can never be aroused in vain, and that our long distracted country is once more returned to her old paths of purity and peace."[21]

As the day of decision drew nearer, rallies throughout the state of Michigan grew in number and enthusiasm. One who helped to promote the cause of Greeley and Blair by speaking on their behalf throughout the state was William A. Moore.

With corruption seemingly an important issue both on the national and state level and with liberal Republicans joining with Democrats because of this issue, it seemed to many Democrats that some

[21] Detroit Free Press, October 16, 1872.

dent could and would be made in the majorities that Republicans had been attaining since the Civil War. The Detroit Free Press in an October 11 editorial entitled "Now for Michigan" expressed this hope saying, "It is almost impossible for us to lose anything in this State, but, on the other hand, we have much to gain, and we should and must gain it. Earnest work from now until election day and the polling of the united Liberal and Democratic strength will cut down the administration's majority to a mere fraction of what it was four years ago, if not entirely obliterate it."

In spite of this optimism, there were factors that also were working against the Democratic party--factors that some Democrats like enthusiastic young Donald Dickinson apparently did not deem as important as the election later proved them to be. For example, the fact that the Democrats had nominated Austin Blair for governor was not graciously accepted by some old time Democrats. Blair had been a Republican governor at one time and these Democrats had not forgotten. As far as Horace Greeley was concerned, many felt as Freeman Norvell did. Norvell was the editor of the pro-Democratic Detroit Free Press when Greeley was nominated for President on the Democratic ticket. When this nomination was made, Norvell retired from the editorship which he had held for several years "rather than endorse or advocate the recent attempt

at Baltimore to transfer the Democratic party to the support of avowed life-long enemies of that party, who neither before nor since the nomination have even pretended that they are or ever can be Democrats."[22]

Early in September a "Straight" Democratic convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky. The convention repudiated Greeley and nominated Charles O' Conor for President.[23] In Michigan the "Straight" Democratic movement culminated in a convention held on September 27 at Jackson. This convention chose Presidential electors plus a state control committee and nominated a state ticket headed by William M. Ferry of Grand Haven. The person presiding over the convention was the man who formerly had been chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee William W. Wheaton. He declared that a "Straight" Democratic ticket was essential in order to get genuine Democrats to rebuke "the dishonest trickery, which has been attempted to be forced upon the party by false-hearted and weak-minded wirepullers."[24]

On the fifth of November all hopes that the Democrats had were dashed when the Republicans won an overwhelming victory. In Michigan Grant collected nearly 60,000 more votes than Greeley and a total of

[22]Detroit Free Press, July 14, 1872.

[23]Detroit Free Press, September 6, 1872.

[24]Detroit Free Press, September 28, 1872.

62.66 per cent of all votes cast for President. In the gubernatorial race the Republican nominee John J. Bahley garnered 61.84 per cent of the 222,511 votes cast for governor.[25] Austin Blair received 36.38 per cent, William M. Ferry, the "Straight" Democratic nominee got 1.18 per cent while the Temperance candidate Henry Fish obtained a scant .6 per cent. Only one Democrat was elected to the state senate as against thirty-one Republicans, and in the state house of representatives the Republicans were in the majority by a ninety-four to six count. All nine Congressional districts sent Republicans to Washington.

Being youthful, perhaps overly optimistic, and not accustomed to disappointments and frustrations that come to nearly every politician, Don Dickinson accepted defeat bitterly. He placed much blame on members of his own party who had refused to support the ticket led by Horace Greeley. Although one cannot ascertain of what importance this factor was, the Free Press gave some credence to Dickinson's belief when it hinted before the election that some Democrats might stay home on Election Day because "the leaders of the 'Straight' Democratic movement might urge a stay-at-home policy as a means of concealing the real weakness of the movement."[26] Eight days after the

[25] Michigan Almanac (Detroit, 1873), p. 85.

[26] Detroit Free Press, October 25, 1872.

election the Free Press in recapitulating what had occurred said, "But we need go no further than Michigan to find an apt illustration of the fact that a large number of voters abstained from voting and that of this number a great number are opposed to Grant and the principals and of the party which supports him."[27] The paper went on citing some statistics which seemed to support this claim.

On the twenty-ninth of November, Horace Greeley died--dead of a broken heart, Dickinson later wrote. Already disillusioned by the Democratic setback earlier in November, Dickinson now was determined to forsake the party for which he had labored diligently during the months prior to defeat. On the last day of 1872, he expressed his feelings in a letter to Dr. Foster Pratt, the chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee.

He began by saying that he had fully made up his mind, "the death of Greeley having confirmed me in the determination, never to vote or act with the Democratic party as an organization again." He blamed the Democratic party for Greeley's defeat declaring that "the party passively or actively, as its members may please to say," defeated Greeley. In so doing, Dickinson felt that "any link which might still have bound the progressive men of the old organiza-

[27]Detroit Free Press, November 13, 1872.

tion to it" was broken.

Dickinson professed great admiration for Greeley. "Personally, I revered and loved him, and not all the slanders and bitter things that were said of him during the campaign swerved me a hair's breadth from my regard for him." A conviction that Greeley was made to pay for criticisms that he had made of Democrats in early days was expressed by Dickinson. Rather than support their candidate said he, "They have chosen to bicker over the truths told of their ignorance and corruption of other days, by Mr. Greeley, and to revenge the telling of them on their country." Caustically he expressed more hope in thieves "than of the stolidly ignorant who sway about the feet of truth, crying, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!'"

Dickinson concluded his letter by resigning from the Democratic State Central Committee and promising to "await the new party, which shall take up and carry forward the living principles of our dead leader."[28]

At this juncture, it seemed that Donald M. Dickinson's political career had ended scarcely before it had begun.

[28]New York Times, August 15, 1886.

CHAPTER II

REACHING THE TOPMOST ROUND OF THE LADDER

After resigning from the Democratic party, Dickinson for a time gave undivided attention to his labors as a lawyer. Even though he would shortly return to the political wars, and although there is little doubt that he enjoyed his endeavors in politics, the law profession always remained dear to his heart. In fact, he once wrote that "all the events that I consider noteworthy in my life have occurred in my professional career."[1]

As has been demonstrated in his reaction to the 1872 Democratic defeat, Dickinson had an overwhelming desire to succeed. Driven on by this ever present drive to excel, Dickinson at this point began to climb rapidly towards a position which would make him one of the leading lawyers in the nation. On February 13, 1873, Richard Dixon, a close friend of the Dickinson family, wrote to Donald Dickinson's mother commenting, "Don is going 'way beyond any of the

[1]Dickinson to Rossiter Johnson, March 14, 1888, Donald M. Dickinson Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter DPLC.

name.' I rejoice continually the more I see and hear of him, and if he retains his health, he will reach the topmost round of the ladder."

Other comments gleaned from Richard Dixon's letters indicate that the young lawyer was doing well. Already in 1871 Dixon wrote, "I am rejoiced to learn that your 'youngest' whom you always said was 'very promising' has again won a great legal victory."[2] Early in 1873 Dixon wrote, "Judge Memy . . . says 'a generation does not produce but one Don Dickinson.' Alfred Russell, the best lawyer in Michigan, says he is the 'most formidable opponent in Detroit.'"[3]

About a year later Richard Dixon apparently felt that the topmost round of the ladder was closer than ever for he stated, "I heard a very influential gentleman say to a number of prominent lawyers--his name was Hatch of the firm of Hatch and Cohen--that 'Don Dickinson of Detroit was the ablest lawyer of his age in this country, and that he regarded his counsel as valuable as that of any lawyer in the city of New York.'"[4]

[2]R. Dixon to M. H. Dickinson, Dec. 27, 1871, Dickinson Papers, Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

[3]R. Dixon to M. H. Dickinson, Feb. 13, 1873, DPMHCA.

[4]R. Dixon to M. H. Dickinson, Mar. 9, 1874, DPMHCA.

Although Dickinson was proving to be a successful lawyer, he found that the world of politics was too fascinating to forsake forever. Thus, he broke the vow that he had made after the 1872 campaign to "never vote or act with the Democratic party as an organization again." By 1874 he again was eager to throw himself into the struggle to make the Democratic party more competitive in the state of Michigan. Perhaps realizing that there was much truth in what Dickinson had charged concerning Democratic support of Greeley, the Democratic leaders in Michigan were quite willing to welcome Dickinson back into their ranks. In 1874 Dickinson played an active role in a campaign which resulted in a startling Democratic comeback.[5]

The Democrats were blessed in 1874 with a number of issues that aroused many citizens. The platform adopted at the Democratic state convention meeting in Kalamazoo on September 10 outlined these issues. The platform began by arraigning the Republican party for its "unexampled extravagance and corruption, and for its unconstitutional and dangerous usurpations of powers not delegated to the Federal government." More specifically the Democrats demanded an end to

[5]The statement that Dickinson "virtually ran the 1874 campaign" is made by Arthur Pound, "Donald M. Dickinson," Michigan and the Cleveland Era, eds. Earl D. Babst and Lewis G. Vander Velde (Ann Arbor, 1948), p. 118.

"all efforts to rule the States for corrupt party purposes by an infamous alliance of carpet baggers, scalawags, and bayonets." The Salary Grab was denounced with a demand for immediate repeal of the law increasing salaries. Equally strong criticism was levelled against "wholesale appropriation of the public domain to Credit Mobilier and other corrupt corporations."[6]

Besides corruption in government, the Panic of 1873 was an issue. To prevent recurrences the Democratic party in Michigan recommended measures such as the repeal of the Legal-tender Act, a tariff for revenue only, and more equal and just distribution "of the taxes and imposts required to raise the needed revenues."

On the state level, the party in power was condemned for its management of state finances because it failed to reduce the tax burden even though there was a large surplus in the state treasury. At the same time, money was loaned "to the pets of a political ring, for which no adequate security is required." The state Republican-controlled legislature also had refused to compel a thorough examination of the "books and accounts of the State Treasurer" to which the Democrats felt the people of Michigan were entitled.[7]

[6]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 11, 1874.

[7]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 11, 1874.

During the weeks prior to election, the Detroit Free Press maintained a steady stream of editorials chiefly concerned with corruption or mismanagement in government; at the same time, it called for the election of Democrats who, the Free Press believed, would improve governmental operations.

Although the Detroit newspaper had been a pro-Democratic organ prior to 1874, it seemed especially concerned that the Democratic party do well in 1874. Evidence of this can be gathered from an editorial "The Convention Today" published the day the Democratic convention convened in Kalamazoo. The Free Press expressed the opinion that this convention in many respects was "the most important political gathering which the Democratic party of the State has been called upon to hold for years." The editorial explained by continuing, "With each year that has been added to its roll, the party in power has grown more arrogant in its assumptions, more ruthless in its encroachments upon the rights both of the states and of the people, more reckless in its expenditure, and more corrupt in its administration of the affairs of government." It seemed apparent that the people were becoming aware of this and this belief appeared to spur on the Free Press as election day neared.

Along with the Free Press, Democratic leaders such as former Democratic State Chairman William A. Moore, the Democratic candidate for governor Henry

Chamberlain, William B. Moran and Donald Dickinson seized the iniative and throughout the campaign vigorously attacked the Republicans and their record all along the line. This time these efforts were not unrewarded.

The Republicans suffered a sizable loss in the state legislature. The final returns revealed that the Republicans had lost thirteen seats in the state senate, reducing the number of seats they held from thirty-one to eighteen. The senate now was much more equally balanced for fourteen Democrats were elected state senators. In the lower house the Republican membership declined by forty-one with the Republicans electing fifty-three representatives whereas previously ninety-four had sat in the state house of representatives. At the same election the Democrats carried the first, fourth and sixth Congressional districts. This equalled the total number of Democrats that had been elected to the House during the previous twenty years. The Republican candidate for governor John J. Bagley narrowly edged Democrat Henry Chamberlain garnering but 50.46 of all votes cast for governor; in 1872 the Republican candidate had coasted to an easy victory by receiving a comfortable 61.84 percentage.[8]

[8]Harriette M. Dilla, The Politics of Michigan, 1865-1878, Studies in History, Economics and Public Law edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University, XLVII, No. 118 (New York, 1912), p. 171.

Although there were several factors contributing to the Republican setback, most observers and politicians agreed that the depression and the charge of corruption had hurt the party in power. The November 4 issue of the Evening News claimed that the election "is the popular judgment upon the past six years of Grantism, and must be accepted as proof that the people are so sick of the whole concern that they are willing to seem to encourage a restoration of the Democrats to power." Republican governor John J. Bagley blamed "the late panic and the continued financial depression" for the Republican showing.[9] Zachariah Chandler put the finger on "the usual charges of malfeasance in office, corruption of officials and so forth."[10] William A. Moore who had worked energetically for the Democrats blamed Republican Reconstruction policies as well as a desire on the part of the people for "honest currency, based on gold and silver; a revenue tariff in which the 'protective' idea shall be only incidental, if it exists at all, local self-government, and an honest administration."[11]

When in January, 1875, the Democrats combined with anti-Chandler Republicans in the state legislature and were thus able to thwart Zachariah Chandler's

[9]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 6, 1874.

[10]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 6, 1874.

[11]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 6, 1874.

bid for a fourth term in the United States Senate, it seemed as though the Republican hegemony in Michigan state politics was beginning to wane. In Chandler's stead, Judge Isaac P. Christiancy was elected to the Senate. He seemed to favor less centralization of power in the federal government and leaned towards a reduction of tariffs.[12] The Free Press was well pleased with the selection of Christiancy for he was opposed to military interference with civil governments except in the manner expressly proscribed in the Constitution.

Dickinson's efforts and influence in the 1874 campaign were recognized when he was chosen chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee in 1876. The state chairman of a major political party in Michigan was more powerful and influential in 1876 than he became after the direct primary law went into effect in 1909. Adoption of the direct primary in Michigan made a potential candidate for governor less dependent on the state chairman for nomination since a party convention no longer chose the nominee. The party conventions often were controlled by a unified party hierarchy headed by the state party chairman.[13]

It had been expected that Dr. William Brodie

[12]Detroit Evening News, Jan. 22, 1875.

[13]John W. Lederle and Rita Feiler Aid, "Michigan State Party Chairmen: 1882-1956," Michigan History, XLI (September 1957), 258.

would be Dickinson's major opponent in the contest for state chairman.[14] However, in spite of the fact that Dickinson was only twenty-eight years old, a real struggle never developed for the large Wayne county delegation supported him strongly and the sentiment seemed to prevail that the party needed vigorous, young blood to wage a successful campaign. William P. Wells acknowledged in nominating Dickinson that Dickinson was "a Democrat from the sole of his foot to the topmost hair of his head."[15]

The Detroit Free Press was pleased with the selection commenting that "the enthusiastic unanimity with which Mr. Dickinson of this city was chosen chairman shows that no mistake was made in presenting his name to the convention; and no one who knows him can doubt for a moment that under his management the campaign will be conducted with activity, earnestness, sagacity, and efficiency."[16]

Dickinson wasted little time for almost immediately he called a meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee which took place on June 7 in Dickinson's office. The majority of this committee, like Dickinson, were young and ambitious. Under Dickinson's guidance the party leaders proposed to generate

[14]Detroit Evening News, May 24, 1876.

[15]Detroit Free Press, May 24, 1876.

[16]Detroit Free Press, May 25, 1876.

enthusiasm by organizing Democratic clubs in every town and ward in the state no matter how few Democratic votes had been obtained in prior elections.

"The young and vigorous men to the front" was to be the motto in the appointment of committees from the Congressional districts down to the smallest election precincts. A complete system of correspondence was to be inaugurated and was to operate incessantly until the day of election. The State Central Committee agreed that there should be no townships where the Republican candidate would run unopposed.

After Samuel J. Tilden had been nominated by the Democrats to be their Presidential candidate in 1876, Dickinson in personal consultation with him mapped the Michigan campaign. Dickinson found that Tilden was an able, intelligent political organizer with forty years of experience in the world of politics. Tilden's biographer Alexander C. Flick claims that the Republicans had more politicians in control of their cause than did the Democrats, but none were as shrewd as Tilden.[17] Tilden knew what methods to employ to generate publicity and understood the psychology of advertising. Tilden fully realized the worth of newspapers, pamphlets, and circular letters as effective publicity. That the young politician Donald Dickinson took some of the ad-

[17]Alexander C. Flick, Samuel Jones Tilden: A Study in Political Sagacity (New York, 1939), p. 300.

vice from this veteran campaigner and put his ideas into practice is evidenced by a report from the August 20 Detroit Free Press which said "no better indication could be had of the hopefulness with which the Democracy of Michigan have entered upon the work of regenerating the state than the zeal shown in circulating documents and literature."[18]

That Dickinson planned to make reform a prime issue in the 1876 campaign became quite evident when Dickinson as chairman of the State Central Committee issued a statement announcing a Democratic state convention for August 9. The purpose of this convention was to select a slate of state officers as well as electors for President and Vice President.

In calling county conventions Dickinson urged that the local leaders "invite all citizens irrespective of past party affiliations, who are opposed to continuing the corrupt rule of the past four years and to the control of bad men at the seat of government, to unite with us in the primaries held to elect delegates or nominate candidates."

Dickinson reminded Republicans who were interested in reforming the party from within that Benjamin H. Bristow, "the candidate demanded of the late Republican convention by nine-tenths of the honest masses of the party--he who had made a well-defined

[18]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 20, 1876.

record as a fighting enemy of corruption--received at no time but 126 out of 756 votes in that Convention." Dickinson went on to challenge the Republican leaders to deny convincingly the assertion that "the governing element of that Convention wanted no success for the party which would place at the head of government a positive, uncompromising and active foe of dishonest men and dishonest government."[19]

At the June 7 meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee, the Democratic leaders had urged the inauguration of political clubs throughout the state of Michigan. This movement began to achieve momentum in July when a group of prominent Democrats including Dickinson formed the Central Reform Club of Detroit. One of the prominent Democrats who spoke at this organizational meeting was an old associate of Donald Dickinson, William A. Moore. Moore recognized that the Democratic party had been "kept in the background" since 1860. Moore placed most of the blame on poor tickets that had been chosen by the Democrats. This year was to see a change according to Moore. "Thanks to the St. Louis convention we have no such load to carry now, and with the universal desire of the people for reform, for a change, for return of prosperity, the 4th of next March will witness the inauguration of Samuel J. Tilden as President of the

[19] Detroit Free Press, June 29, 1876.

United States. . . ."[20]

The organization of this club in Detroit seemed to act as a stimulus for soon reports began filtering in from all parts of the state describing the formation of reform clubs.

The Free Press in an editorial July 7 affirmed that organization for the campaign had already begun in the more thickly populated areas of the state. An appeal was to be made to "let the same work be done all over the state." The editorial urged the formation of clubs "for the circulation of documents, the dissemination of sound doctrine and the arousing of every individual voter to a full comprehension of his responsibility." As the weeks went by, this kind of organization was effected in many parts of the state as reports came from various areas describing the formation of reform clubs.

That Dickinson was rapidly becoming an experienced, poised, and polished politician was evidenced by his words and behavior at the state convention held August 9 in Detroit. Dickinson opened the convention by informing the delegates that Mr. Daney had never allowed the Whitney Opera House to be used for a political gathering prior to the Democratic state convention. Dickinson, in good humor, related to his audience that Mr. Daney had been told not to be

[20]Detroit Free Press, July 2, 1876.

concerned for Democratic conventions behaved much better as a rule than church congregations.[21]

With introductions and formalities out of the way, the convention went about the serious work of selecting a slate of nominees for the state ticket. William L. Webber, who had been chairman of the Michigan delegation at the national convention in St. Louis, was chosen to head the ticket as gubernatorial nominee.

Hoping to send each delegate home in good spirits, Dickinson arranged an elaborate reception at his home the same evening that the slate was chosen. At this reception the delegates met those who had been nominated for state offices during the day's proceedings. That evening the guests passed through an entrance surrounded by huge flags. Within, the rooms were decorated with flags and flowers with a large portrait of Tilden occupying a conspicuous place in the library. The exterior of Dickinson's home had been artistically trimmed with Chinese lanterns of red, white, and blue. The garden glowed, being illuminated by torches. To help relax those who perhaps had had their nerves strained performing the business accomplished at the convention, the 22nd Infantry Band played carefully selected pieces of classical music.[22]

[21]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 10, 1876.

[22]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 10, 1876.

With the coming of September, the campaign was intensified as both parties strained fervently to obtain every available vote. As one reads the newspapers of the eight weeks prior to the November election, the word "reform" recurs again and again. Reform clubs continued to be formed throughout Michigan. Seeking to persuade readers to register for the November election, the enthusiastically Democratic Detroit Free Press urged, "Let Every Democrat and Reformer Heed This Solemn Duty." Another headline a few weeks later read, "The Reformers Organizing for Victory All Along the Line." Dickinson kept this theme alive by lashing out at the Republicans saying, "On account of these long-continued inequities the people of the United States demand a change. Across the length and breadth of Michigan, from Detroit to Grand Haven, from the southern tier to Keweenaw Point, comes the cry, 'We want a change.'"[23]

Specifically the Democrats charged that the Grant administration had whitewashed wrongdoers such as Belknap and Babcock. The Grant administration had tried to usurp powers belonging to the state. Said Alpheus S. Williams, Democratic Congressman from Wayne county, in a speech opening the Democratic headquarters in Detroit, "Federal bayonets are sent by the President into sovereign states to overthrow legis-

[23]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 11, 1876.

latures and place partisan favorites in supreme authority, as was instanced in the state of Louisiana."[24] In the same speech Williams charged that the federal government had squandered money under the Republican administration. Williams pointed out that net ordinary expenses of the government had risen from slightly over sixty-nine million in 1860 to between one hundred sixty and one hundred seventy million. Eight hundred million dollars had been lost on the internal revenue tax on whiskey "divided between election frauds, dishonest distillers and fraudulent government officials."

Large, enthusiastic crowds turned out for Democratic rallies throughout the state. On October 31 a very large crowd estimated to be between twenty and twenty-five thousand by the Kalamazoo Weekly Gazette assembled in Kalamazoo.[25] The Democratic candidate for Vice President, Thomas Hendricks, was the chief attraction which helped to account for this massive gathering. In Detroit the final political rally of the campaign assembled the evening before Election Day at the Detroit Opera House. Dickinson called the meeting to order. The Democrats seemed in high spirits

[24] Detroit Free Press, Sept. 21, 1876.

[25] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 31, 1876. The Detroit Free Press claimed that it was the largest public gathering ever assembled in western Michigan.

and very confident. During the course of the evening Dickinson read messages from Abram S. Hewitt, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Daniel Magone, Chairman of the New York State Central Committee, assuring Dickinson and Michigan Democrats that New York would certainly place its electoral votes in the Tilden column. Magone confidently predicted, "I assure you that New York is as certain to cast her electoral vote for Tilden and Hendricks as the rising of tomorrow's sun."[26]

Although Michigan gave her electoral votes to Hayes on Election Day, Dickinson and the state Democratic organization could take pride in the fact that Michigan achieved the distinction of procuring the largest Democratic gain in any one state in the Union. In 1872 Grant had polled 63.86 per cent of the popular vote in Michigan. The 1876 election gave Hayes a little over 52 per cent with 166,901 votes to 141,595 for Tilden. The number accumulated by Tilden nearly doubled the total that Greeley had been able to obtain four years prior.

Said the Detroit Free Press in an editorial exactly one week after the election, "Nothing but the hardest work upon the part of the Michigan Democracy, a well organized campaign, efficiently and energetically conducted, and a chairman of the State Commit-

[26]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 7, 1876.

tee who threw his heart into the work as devotedly and spent as freely of his time and money as Don M. Dickinson did could have kept the Republican majority down to what it is."

Perhaps better evidence that Dickinson had substantially contributed to the significant Democratic gains came from the Detroit Evening News which had steered an independent course during the campaign supporting neither Hayes nor Tilden. Although this newspaper was not particularly fond of Dickinson and at times was very critical of him, the August 10, 1876 issue complimented him and the Democratic management of the campaign. "Their state canvas has thus far been managed with a degree of good judgment, thoroughness in work, and moderation in expression, as remarkable in Democratic campaigning as it is creditable." After the campaign was over, the same Evening News pointed out that although Dickinson was being criticized by some in his own party because of the election results, this sniping at Dickinson was not justified. "Never," said the Evening News, "was a political campaign in this state managed with more tact and energy than the recent one by Don M. Dickinson, esq., of this city, chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee. Had it resulted differently, and had the state been carried for Tilden, Mr. Dickinson's political fortune would have been made. As it is, the unfortunate chairman is only subjected to calumny and

abuse. He was confident and sanguine, as every chairman should be, and now all lost bets are laid at his door."[27]

Later the achievement of the Democratic organization in Michigan seemed even more impressive when it became known that Dickinson had not asked for a dollar from the National Committee. The National Committee had requests for money from every state except Michigan. Dickinson explained that if the Democrats could not win without capturing the Michigan vote, the Democrats would lose so he advised that all the money the National Committee could spare be used in doubtful states.[28]

Dickinson remained chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee until July, 1878. Apparently feeling that he had served long enough in this capacity, he resigned from the post after the Democratic state convention, which convened at Lansing on July 10, had selected a slate of state candidates for the election scheduled for November.

Prior to the state convention, Wayne county had selected him as "at large" candidate to the state convention.[29] At the convention Alpheus S. Williams, Democratic Congressman from Wayne county, complimented

[27]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 26, 1876.

[28]Detroit News, Oct. 17, 1917.

[29]Detroit Free Press, July 4, 1878.

Dickinson predicting that if the township organizations could be brought to the same relative degree of efficiency as the state organization the Democracy would carry Michigan by a five to ten thousand majority. N. H. Stewart moved that the thanks of the convention be tendered to Dickinson for his services. The Detroit Free Press reported that "a unanimous rising vote showed the appreciation in which the retiring Chairman is held."[30] Loud calls for a speech brought Dickinson to the platform from where he thanked the convention for manifesting such good will towards him.

After Dickinson had briefly addressed his fellow Democrats, the Free Press reported "prolonged applause." "The compliment paid to Mr. Dickinson," continued the Free Press, "is almost unprecedented and the convention acknowledged his services in the most emphatic manner."[31]

The day after the convention the Free Press published an editorial simply entitled "Hon. Don M. Dickinson." This editorial asserted that if all the Democrats in Michigan had been assembled at Lansing the day before "when the State Convention by a rising vote, tendered its thanks to Hon. Don M. Dickinson, the retiring Chairman of the State Committee, for the

[30]Detroit Free Press, July 11, 1878.

[31]Detroit Free Press, July 11, 1878.

zeal and efficiency with which he has acted in that capacity, they would have risen as one man in indorsement of the resolution of their representatives." The Detroit newspaper praised Dickinson saying that no Democratic chairman "ever had worked harder, more faithfully or accomplished more with the same means at command than Mr. Dickinson has done."

Although Dickinson voluntarily resigned from the Democratic State Central Committee in 1878 seemingly amidst much good will, early in 1880 Dickinson's leadership was being repudiated by Democrats in his own Wayne county. The Evening News which had praised Dickinson's effort in 1876 accused him "of a lack of judgment and tact." His chief weak point, said the Evening News, "is his overwhelming ambition to 'run things.'" The newspaper elaborated, "He must have his hands in every pie; his influence must be felt in every convention; every office holder must owe to him his place--and so the rank and file of the party who dislikes of all things one man power are gradually acquiring the habit of sitting down on everything that appears to originate with him."[32]

This may have been one reason for the nomination by the Wayne county Democrats of Alexander W. Copland for delegate-at-large to the national Democratic convention rather than Dickinson. In 1880 the Democratic

[32]Detroit Evening News, May 31, 1880.

party in Michigan was allowed to send twenty-two delegates to the national convention. Four were to be chosen by the state convention as delegates-at-large. Traditionally Wayne county had been given the privilege of nominating one and this nomination usually was tantamount to election. At the Wayne county convention Dickinson's bid for endorsement by his home county was beaten back as Copland received twenty-one votes to fifteen for Dickinson.[33] This endorsement of Copland was repeated on the eve of the state convention by a caucus of the Wayne county delegation to the state convention.

On June 8 the Democratic state convention convened at East Saginaw. The business of the convention was carried out in routine manner until it came time for the nomination of delegates-at-large to the national convention. When the floor was opened for nominations, W. W. Duffield of Wayne county seized the initiative. Roared Duffield:

> I present for one of the delegates-at-large to the National Convention from the First Congressional District a gentleman, a prominent member of the Detroit Bar. He holds a position as the equal of any of the oldest and most experienced members of his profession. He labored for the success of his party in 1876, holding the important position of Chairman of the State Central Committee, and his power was clearly exhibited on that occasion in the great work which was done. The Democracy of Michigan in that year polled 5,000 more votes than ever before. He has never sought office. When office was sought to

[33]Detroit Evening News, May 29, 1880.

> be thrust upon him, he steadfastly refused it, preferring to fight in the ranks rather than share in the spoils of victory. We of the First District would now respectfully present his name to the convention. We appreciate the great service he has rendered, and we ask the Democrats of the state to elect him as one of the delegates of the Democratic party. We ask this with confidence because we know that others recognize his great ability, his sound sense and discretion. He is most eminently fitted to take the position of delegate-at-large; and in return for the services which he has already rendered, we ask you to place him in a position where he can aid us more and help us with his sound sense and wise discretion. For services well rendered, I present for your consideration the name of Don M. Dickinson.[34]

When Duffield had finished, R. A. Montgomery and L. H. Salsbury both gave seconding speeches and it seemed for a moment that the Dickinson tide would roll without much difficulty.

However, at this point Fred A. Baker from Wayne county gained the floor in an effort to rally the Copland forces. Baker agreed that Dickinson had performed distinguished services but that "it has been customary for Wayne county to have one of the four delegates-at-large, and I appeal to the justice of this convention and ask that you give us the man we want." Baker went on to describe the victories won by Copland both in the Wayne county convention and the pre-convention caucus. Concluded Baker, "We ask that the man for whom a preference has been expressed

[34] Detroit Free Press, June 9, 1880.

shall be chosen."[35]

Peter Yost of Manistee, who couldn't resist informing the convention that his county was the strongest Democratic county for its size in Michigan, was undeterred by Baker's reasoning and strongly backed Dickinson. C. P. Black in supporting Dickinson reminded Baker and his followers that the delegates-at-large were chosen by the state convention to represent the whole state and not any single locality. Black asserted that there seldom had been a Democratic state convention without some differences from Wayne county. Making light of the present difference, he said that having a state convention without a division in Wayne county would be comparable to producing the play Hamlet with Hamlet left out.

Other speeches seconding Copland and Dickinson followed with John Miner, Chairman of the Wayne county delegation, explaining just before the choice of the first delegate-at-large that at the pre-convention caucus fifty-eight out of the sixty delegates from Wayne county were present. Thirty-four voted for Copland with the twenty-four not voting insisting that they were not bound by the caucus.

The Democratic state convention in no way repeated Wayne county's repudiation of Dickinson's bid for delegate-at-large. Dickinson overwhelmed his op-

[35]Detroit Free Press, June 9, 1880.

position by drawing four hundred and forty votes to forty-eight for Copland with George Lothrop getting forty-one votes.[36]

When the Democratic delegation from Michigan assembled at Cincinnati in late June, Dickinson was chosen chairman of the Michigan delegation. On June 23, in a caucus to decide whom Michigan would support for Presidential nominee, there was division amid the Michigan delegation with Chairman Dickinson supporting Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field, although most of the Michigan delegates seemed inclined towards Henry B. Payne. There still appeared to be some feeling of dissatisfaction with Dickinson within the Wayne county delegation, for Edwin F. Conely from Dickinson's own district delivered a ringing endorsement of Samuel Tilden, while at the same time blasting Field for his anti-Negro opinions.[37]

The fact that Dickinson backed Field's candidacy caused some to say that Dickinson was not sincerely interested in seeing Field nominated but merely wished to block any chance that Tilden might have had. Circumstances give little credence to these motives ascribed to Dickinson--motives which Dickinson characterized as "absurd lies."

[36]Detroit Free Press, June 9, 1880. Both the Detroit Free Press and Detroit Evening News contain extensive accounts of the state convention.

[37]Detroit Evening News, June 23, 1880.

John Bigelow, a close associate of Tilden, writes in his biography of Tilden that after 1876 Tilden's health failed steadily and that Tilden's medical advisers only hoped to retard a disease that they considered to be incurable.[38]

Bigelow relates that one day early in the spring of 1880 he was assisting Tilden in one of his "vexatious litigations." As they worked together, Tilden seemed to lack full command of his resources so he suggested that they go for a ride. As they rode, Tilden spoke of his declining health and finally said, "If I am no longer fit to prepare a case for trial, I am not fit to be President of the United States."

Bigelow believed that from that day forward Tilden "had satisfied himself that he did not wish to be a candidate for the presidency, and was determined not to be a party to any proceedings designed to make him President."

Tilden himself substantiated the fact that his health was a factor that weighed heavily in his decision not to seek nomination for the Presidency. In a letter delivered by his brother Henry Tilden to the New York Democratic delegation present for the 1880 national convention, Tilden wrote, "Having now

[38]John Bigelow, The Life of Samuel Tilden (New York, 1895), II, 264.

borne faithfully my full share of labor and care in the public service, and wearing the marks of its burdens, I desire nothing so much as an honorable discharge. I wish to lay down the honors and toils of even quasi party leadership, and to seek the repose of private life. . . . I have accorded as long a reserve of my decision as possible, but I cannot overcome my repugnance to enter into a new engagement which involves four years of ceaseless toil."[39]

Dickinson pointed out that Henry Tilden had assured him that Samuel Tilden approved of his advocacy of Field.[40] Henry Tilden, who had been entrusted with the letter in which Samuel Tilden renounced any intention of again running for President, accompanied Dickinson to Detroit after the convention and was a guest in the Dickinson home for several days. There were no strained feelings, apparently, between Dickinson and the Tildens. Dickinson felt that the cordial relations established between him and Tilden during the 1876 campaign remained so until Tilden's death in 1886. Tilden apparently reciprocated this feeling for he spoke well of Dickinson to John Bigelow only a short time before his death.[41]

[39]Bigelow, Life of Tilden, II, 269-270.

[40]Detroit News, Oct. 17, 1917.

[41]After the death of Tilden, Dickinson paid tribute to him in a letter to William A. Furey dated

After the 1880 Democratic national convention, the Detroit Free Press published an editorial entitled "The Glorious Work in Michigan." It concluded with, "On with the glorious work! Every Democratic heart is in it."[42] This editorial created an impression of solid Democratic support unified for the coming campaign. Future developments, however, were to belie this.

That there was still disharmony amongst Wayne county Democrats was revealed by an editorial which the Detroit Free Press printed about three weeks later. This editorial concluded by saying, "One thing more that is especially needed in this district is harmony. Without this, organization is impossible. If the county and the district are to be carried for the Democratic candidates, there must be an entire abandonment of all real or fancied grievances, and a complete subordination of individual feelings and preferences to the common good of the party."[43]

Dickinson was "conspicuously absent" from the Wayne county convention which nominated William C. Maybury for the House of Representatives. There was

January 25, 1888. Dickinson praised him as "one of the greatest of modern men, in an age which required statesmen to deal with new needs, new dangers, and a new future."

[42]Detroit Free Press, June 30, 1880.

[43]Detroit Free Press, July 22, 1880.

friction between Maybury and Dickinson. Thus, Dickinson displayed little enthusiasm for Maybury. The independent Evening News explained that Dickinson's opposition stemmed from the fact that if Maybury were elected, he would probably be the only Democratic Congressman from Michigan. If Winfield S. Hancock, the Democratic Presidential nominee, also won, Maybury would have a great deal to say concerning federal patronage in Michigan, and Dickinson hoped that someone other than Maybury would be the one who would help divide the "spoils."

In August Dickinson did attend the Democratic state convention which chose the nominees for the state ticket. He was placed on the Resolutions Committee and served as chairman. When the Resolutions Committee was asked for its report, Dickinson obliged by reading it to the convention. In the report, the Resolutions Committee asked that the platform adopted by the national convention be reaffirmed and approved "especially on the subjects of centralization, sumptuary laws, home rule, honest money, a free ballot and a fair count." The Committee also denounced the Republican state convention held the previous week, which the Committee charged, sought "to transmit to another generation a tradition of hate." Dickinson's report attacked the "continued interference with the administration of justice in the state court by Federal officials." The Committee declared that the

House of Representatives should take steps to check this evil. Also demanded was the reduction "to proper sums and percentages the expenses of advertising tax sales and legal notices, the interest charged upon delinquent taxes, the sums paid for official salaries to those filling newly created offices and the numbers employed therein." Finally Winfield S. Hancock, "the Hero of Gettysburg," was strongly endorsed. "We pledge to Hancock and English our enthusiastic and earnest support, and will make any and every sacrifice in an honest effort to secure for them the electoral vote of the Peninsular State."[44]

Dickinson's chairmanship of this committee constituted his chief contribution during the 1880 campaign for he played a less prominent role at this time than he had in 1876. In November, the Republicans again trounced the Democrats in Michigan. The final official count gave Hancock 131,301 votes which was far short of Garfield's 185,336. Republican David H. Jerome had a smaller majority in the race for governor, but he also won easily gaining 178,944 votes to 137,671 for Democrat Frederick M. Holloway.[45] The Democrats failed to elect a single Congressman.

Dickinson's reluctance to play a major role in the state Democratic party continued during the 1882

[44]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 13, 1880.

[45]Michigan Almanac, 1881, p. 55.

campaign. There were friends and supporters of Dickinson who hoped that he would run for governor, but he reacted very coolly to any such proposals.

At their state party conventions held in August, 1882, the Democratic party and the Greenback party decided to combine their efforts and set up a Fusion ticket choosing Josiah W. Begole as candidate for governor.

During the negotiations that eventually led to an agreement between the Democrats and the Greenback party, Dickinson had little to say. Although he had been active in previous campaigns, he seemed oblivious to the contest that went on during the autumn of 1882.

Even though Begole was successful in his bid for the governorship, there is evidence that Dickinson disapproved of the merger in this campaign. He later said that he regretted the association with the Butlerites, as he called them. In the spring of 1884 some Michigan Democrats spoke favorably of General Benjamin F. Butler's candidacy for President. When Dickinson was approached concerning his feeling, he adamantly refused to support Butler. He bluntly acclaimed, "Put me down in these words. I do not favor General Butler's candidacy for the Democratic nomination." When asked to give reasons for his stand, Dickinson said that "it would take too long a time to tell them." When an inquiry was made re-

garding the likelihood of Butler's election, Dickinson reflected upon the 1872 campaign and answered, "He would probably make such a run as Greeley did--considerable enthusiasm at first, which would die out before the time for election came."[46]

Although Dickinson appeared to be relatively inactive in politics during the early 1880's, he was very active as a lawyer. Possibly the most significant case in which he was involved during the late 1870's and early 1880's was one concerning the bankruptcy law. Dickinson, intrigued by the United States Constitution, spent much time studying it carefully. He realized that this document protected personal and individual rights and thus admired it. He also strongly felt that one should always be on guard against it becoming so powerful that the rights and powers of the states would be impinged. He conceived of himself as a Jeffersonian Democrat and to him this meant that any unnecessary infringements upon the autonomy of the states should be checked.

Dickinson felt that such an infringement was being effected by the federal government under the bankruptcy law. Under this law all manner of controversies concerning property seized as assets of a bankrupt by United States marshals were drawn into bankruptcy court. These federal courts prevented

[46]Detroit Evening News, May 5, 1884.

parties from using the state courts when it was felt that the marshals might have erred in seizing property.

Dickinson's philosophy is illustrated in Ex parte Schwab[47] and Leroux v. Hudson.[48] He became involved in Ex parte Schwab when certain creditors of Schott and Feibish, a Detroit concern, initiated bankruptcy proceedings against this company in the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Michigan. At the same time these creditors obtained a provisional order for the seizure of certain goods which were alleged to have been disposed of in violation of the bankruptcy law. The order to seize these goods was put into the hands of the marshal of the district, Salmon S. Matthews, and he carried out the seizure.

When Samuel Schwab filed suit in the Superior Court of Detroit against the creditors, the marshal and the appointed assignee in bankruptcy of Schott and Feibish, Joseph L. Hudson, the defendants asked that Schwab be enjoined "from further prosecution of said suit so pending in the Superior Court of Detroit, or from the prosecution of any other or further suit in regard to the seizure of said goods, save in this (the circuit) court or in the bankruptcy court."

[47]Ex parte Schwab, 93 U.S. 240 (1878).

[48]Leroux v. Hudson, 109 U.S. 468 (1883).

Such an injunction was granted by the judge of the District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. When Dickinson argued for Schwab that a mandamus should be issued which would force the judge to set aside such an injunction, the Supreme Court ruled that injunctions might be granted to prevent proceedings in the courts of a State "in cases where such injunction may be authorized by any law relating to proceedings in bankruptcy."[49]

This decision was contrary to Dickinson's philosophy of the power of federal courts. Five years later he found himself again before the supreme tribunal in Leroux v. Hudson. This case also involved the bankrupt firm of Schott and Feibish. Certain goods had been transferred by this company to Joseph P. Leroux and Max Schott. Other creditors of Schott and Feibish claimed that this transfer violated the bankruptcy law and the District Court of the United States of Michigan ordered Marshal Salmon S. Matthews to seize the goods that Leroux and Schott had obtained. When this seizure was accomplished, Leroux filed suit against the marshal and his deputies in the Circuit Court for Bay City to recover damages for breaking into this store at Bay City, for seizing the goods and preventing Leroux and Schott from carrying on business for three days. Matthews and his

[49]Ex parte Schwab, 98 U.S. 240 (1878).

deputies along with Joseph L. Hudson, who had been appointed assignee in bankruptcy of Schott and Feibish, filed a bill of equity petitioning that "Leroux and Max Schott be enjoined from further prosecuting their suit, or any other suit in a state court, for damages in regard to the goods seized by the Marshal; and that if they should claim any interest therein, they should proceed to establish their claim in the Circuit Court of the United States or in the District Court in Bankruptcy." An injunction was granted against Leroux and Schott just as it had been against Schwab. Leroux appealed this ruling.

In this case, the Supreme Court ruled against Marshal Matthews and his deputies "notwithstanding what was said by this court in Ex parte Schwab." Justice Blatchford in delivering the opinion of the court elaborated saying, "The provisional warrant being one merely commanding the Marshal to seize the property of the debtors, it was for the Marshal to determine for himself whether the goods seized were legally liable to seizure under the warrant, and the Circuit Court could afford him no protection against the consequences of an erroneous exercise of his judgment in that determination. He was liable to suit in any court of competent jurisdiction for injuries growing out of his mistakes. The state court in which the suit for trespass was brought was such a court, and that suit was an appropriate suit. The

parties bringing it were entitled to proceed with that suit in that forum."[50]

This decision was significant for it more clearly defined the jurisdiction of state courts in cases similar to Leroux v. Hudson. Dickinson was pleased with the Supreme Court's decision in Leroux v. Hudson for it strengthened the position and jurisdiction of the state courts. In a letter to Rossiter Johnson summarizing his legal career, he especially made mention of this case explaining that in a long series of litigations this case "resulted in the setting aside of the claim and exercise of jurisdiction by the Federal courts under the Bankruptcy Laws to enjoin proceeding in State courts. This was done after ten years' general exercise of the jurisdiction throughout the country on the only appeal ever taken to the United States Supreme Court on the question. . . ."[51]

The year 1884 saw Donald Dickinson more active than ever in the political arena. In New York, Governor Grover Cleveland was achieving prominence as he sought to give the state of New York an honest administration. When Cleveland crossed swords with John Kelly and Tammany Hall by informing Kelly that he, Grover Cleveland, objected to Senator Grady's

[50]Leroux v. Hudson, 109 U.S. 468 (1883).

[51]Dickinson to R. Johnson, Mar. 14, 1888, DPLC.

bid for re-election to the United States Senate, Democrats in several states began to see in Cleveland their nominee for the Presidency in 1884.[52] Here was a man about whom not only Democrats of integrity could rally, but many independents and liberal Republicans as well.

By 1884, the rift in the Wayne county Democratic organization that Dickinson had felt keenly in 1880 had apparently healed for Dickinson was unanimously chosen delegate-at-large to the state convention by the Wayne county convention held approximately one week prior to the state convention.[53] At this time Dickinson also would have had no trouble being nominated by Wayne county Democrats to be delegate-at-large to the national convention. W. W. Wheaton was eventually chosen, but indicated that he would not have sought the honor had Dickinson desired it.[54] Dickinson was pleased that his nominee for the State Central Committee, John J. Enright, was elected with little difficulty.

Dickinson's star glittered as it never had before when the state convention convened. Immediately

[52]Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage (New York, 1932), p. 135. Nevins says that the letter to Kelly from Cleveland stating Cleveland's opposition to Grady "marked the beginning of Cleveland's marvelous career as a national leader."

[53]Detroit Evening News, June 12, 1884.

[54]Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1884.

he was named temporary chairman of the state convention. He was soon confirmed as permanent chairman and in this position wielded a great deal of influence.

Upon assuming the chairmanship, Dickinson, at his best on occasions such as this, warmly praised Samuel Tilden by painting a picture of an old soldier who had fought for right and had retired leaving the righteous struggle to others. He described Tilden in these glowing terms. "Pure and unselfish in his life, a grand and noble figure in history, yielding to years and bodily infirmity, he has laid down the staff of leadership; and it is a sacred trust to us to choose one worthy to carry the banner in the great war of right against wrong, in which he has so often led us to victory." Borrowing words from St. Paul, Dickinson assured his fellow Democrats that Tilden had finished his course. He has "fought a good fight." He has "kept the faith."[55]

After beginning with these kind, complimentary statements concerning Tilden, Dickinson launched an all-out attack on Blaine and the Republicans. "A plumed knight! A plumed knight," he sneered. "We remember when the feathers that he wore were plucked from a bird that was not white, a bird that is defined by the naturalists as one that feeds upon cor-

[55]Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1884.

ruption and is called a vulture. We remember when his plumes were somewhat bedraggled and he crawled at the feet of Mulligan. We remember and have always remembered, that when this doughty champion of the nodding plumes has been weighed in the balance against hard cash, his manhood has always kicked the beam."[56]

Dickinson went on to criticize the Republicans for picking a man like Blaine for their standard bearer when the Republican party had other men who "tower above James G. Blaine as Mount Washington rises above a wart. . . . Yet over the heads of these, ignoring all, this yelling concentration of small men at Chicago have raised up this strutting pigmy, a pigmy still."

Dickinson pointed out that although the majority of Republicans had succumbed to nominating a man like Blaine, he was confident that his party would not do the same. "Let us not be afraid at that convention at Chicago to express Democratic principles. The people are ready to receive them. Let us not insult the intelligence of the laborers and the soldiers, and other men who vote by catch words and clap-trap. Let us take a decided stand, Democratic principles are the principles which must govern this land; the greatest good to the greatest number; domestic self-government and the striking down of John

[56]Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1884.

Adams' theory that men are divided into two classes, gentlemen and simple men. . . ."[57]

Secretly Dickinson must have been pleased with results of this state convention. In the election for delegates-at-large to the national convention men who favored Cleveland's candidacy had been chosen. With harmony prevailing once again it looked as though 1884 might be the year Michigan Democrats had been seeking a long time.

Dickinson again was being recognized as a prominent leader in Michigan politics. Although he did not seek the position, his name again came to the fore as possible state chairman. The Detroit Free Press expressed the attitude of many Democrats. "The feeling on the whole is to confer the honor upon Mr. Dickinson in recognition of his splendid abilities and as a testimonial to the excellent work which he did for the Democracy when serving in that capacity in the Tilden campaign."[58] However, in 1884, it appears that Dickinson desired the position of National Committeeman from Michigan more than the chairmanship of the state Democratic organization. With Wayne county Democrats again solidly behind him, he had little difficulty in being named to the National Committee.

[57]Detroit Free Press, June 19, 1884.

[58]Detroit Free Press, June 18, 1884.

On October 23, a political gathering described as the "greatest Democratic rally of the campaign" was held at White's Opera House in Detroit. Such prominent state Democrats as William P. Wells, Jerome Eddy, John G. Parkhurst and William Maybury were there. For the evening's festivities, Donald Dickinson had been chosen chairman. Bubbling with enthusiasm, he pictured the Democratic party as an army fighting a crusade against a foe that stood for evil and corruption. Introducing Senator George H. Pendleton from Ohio, he remarked, "Three hundred and eighty thousand of the men of Ohio send you a greeting"! Dickinson realized that not the entire number were Democrats, but that they were all "friends and allies in the great contest we are waging against James G. Blaine and in aiding the election of Grover Cleveland." Continuing to portray the Democrats as a "grand army," Dickinson pointed out that Republicans had been attacked and that Blaine, a false knight, had been driven "down the country roads and along the highways" and that he had been penned up "in the 'boodle' strongholds--the cities of Ohio." From reports that he had heard, Dickinson was very confident that Ohio would "assist in the triumphant election of Grover Cleveland and Thomas A. Hendricks. . . ."[59]

[59]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 24, 1884.

When the Senator had finished speaking, Dickinson continued to whip up the crowd to a greater degree of enthusiasm by calling for three cheers for Senator Pendleton that could be heard all the way to his home state of Ohio.

Also present at the rally was the father of General George Custer. The old man arose to receive a tremendous ovation from the crowd. When the aged father of General Custer had again found his seat, Dickinson could not resist throwing out this final remark. "I have only to say that every drop of blood that flows from that heart and every beat of that heart is for Grover Cleveland."

Realizing the political worth of military heroes, Dickinson next turned to General W. S. Rosecrans. Reminding those present of Rosecrans' Civil War record, he introduced the old soldier in this manner. "Do you remember the first battle of the rebellion that we won--Rich Mountain--and who fought it? Do you remember the great means to that great end--the surrender of Lee? Do you remember the hero of the great Tennessee campaign? Do you remember Stone River"? By this time cries of "Rosy, Rosy" were being heard from all sides. Dickinson, by now a very clever politician, realized with the sounds "Rosy, Rosy" ringing in his ears that he had performed his task of arousing the Democrats present to do battle eagerly during the last few days of the

campaign.[60]

On election eve, November 3, Dickinson, as chairman of the final big Democratic rally of the campaign in Detroit, again expended all his organizational and oratorical talents as he made every effort to stir Democrats from all parts of Detroit for the very significant struggle that the party faced the following day. The election of Cleveland was very dearly sought and desired especially by Dickinson and reports indicated that Democratic chances in 1884 were better than they had been for some time. Thus, Dickinson looked forward to the evening's activities with anticipation, ready to give his all for the cause.

White's Opera House had been leased for the evening and the stage from which Dickinson and other leading Democrats spoke that night had been appropriately decorated. At the back of the stage hung a huge portrait of Grover Cleveland with American flags draped on either side. Below the picture was an unfurled banner which had this call to battle inscribed, "Tomorrow the battle is on. Democracy's standards are all freighted with the party's pledges to reform, retrenchment, and the right of rich and poor to be protected alike, and millions will carry

[60] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 24, 1884.

those standards on the morrow to certain victory."[61]

Dickinson, brimming with confidence, presided after being presented by Judge Cornelius Reilly. Before introducing the speakers for the evening, Dickinson himself made a few remarks. He told his audience that the Detroit Post had carried a story a few days prior, describing a reception which one thousand clergymen had accorded Blaine upon his return to New York. Actually, said Dickinson, only sixty-one of the thousand were genuine clergymen for the servants had made a mistake and admitted all those who wore chokers and black coats. "As a result," said Dickinson, "we had there first and foremost the Reverend Jay Gould." Dickinson mentioned other Democratic leaders that were present prefacing each name with the title "Reverend." Finally Reverend Burchard, truly a member of the clergy, turned to Blaine and addressed him on behalf of the clergymen present. Blaine was told by Burchard, said Dickinson, that he "was the representative of all virtues of this enlightened country, and that the other candidate represented the party of rum, Romanism and rebellion." Dickinson fully realized the Republican blunder. Like a boxer striving to knock out a staggering opponent, Dickinson threw this challenge to the opponents. "Well, the party of rum, Romanism, and rebellion led by such men as Samuel

[61]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 4, 1884.

J. Tilden, Winfield Scott Hancock, George William Curtis, John A. Andrew and coming nearer home, the Honorable George V. N. Lothrop and Ashley Pond will present its compliments tomorrow to the party of Boodle, Blasphemy and Blaine led by such leaders as Jay Gould, Brady, Elkins, Clayton and the rest of the Boodle gang. . . ."[62]

Throughout the evening's festivities, Dickinson was in top form and perfectly at ease before this large throng. His introductions were witty and spiced so that enthusiasm did not lag during the program.

When introducing C. J. O'Flynn, Dickinson had a story concerning Blaine and Roscoe Conkling. "Some time ago," commented Dickinson, "a distinguished jurist undertook the defense of Blaine in this city. When the great Roscoe Conkling was implored to make just one speech in favor of Blaine, he answered that he was not engaged in criminal practice."

Attending this meeting was a former mayor of Detroit William G. Thompson. Thompson had supported the Republican party most of his life, but had switched his allegiance and vowed to vote for Cleveland in 1884. When the throng shouted for Thompson, Dickinson replied, "You shall have him, you shall have him, but let me tell a story first." The story that followed related a tale of a gentleman who when

[62]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 4, 1884.

crossing a bridge fell into a morass. A servant ran for help shouting, "My master has fallen in." "How deep is he in?" came a reply. "Up to his ankles," retorted the servant. "What are you yelling for, you fool?" questioned those who would help. "But he is in head first."

Dickinson proceeded to demonstrate that William G. Thompson knowing the dishonesty of James G. Blaine could not vote for him, and in coming over to us only meant to come to the depth of his ankles, but he has made a mistake and come over head first.

With finesse Dickinson varied his techniques throughout the evening. At times he would rap his opponents vigorously causing the crowd to cheer wildly. At other times he would amuse his audience with anecdotes which he sprung upon his hearers at the appropriate moment.

He introduced Judge J. Reilly by telling an anecdote of a lord who was told by his servant that a friend was coming up the road. This friend was such a bore that the lord did not wish to see him at that time. "Shall I say you are out?" inquired the servant. "Oh, no--give an evasive answer," instructed the lord. After a short time, the lord peered down from his window and saw his supposed friend leaving in great anger. He asked the servant, "What did you say to him?" "Faith, sir, and I gave an evasive answer. He asked if you were in, sir, and I

told him 'Go to hell, sir.'"

"Now," said Dickinson, "the gentleman who is about to address you has been asked to support the Republican candidate for Congress because he was an Irishman, and returned an evasive answer. Cornelius J. Reilly."[63]

For several days following the election, the most significant contest, which would result in the Presidential office for either the Republicans or the Democrats hung in the balance. On Thursday, November 6, the Detroit Free Press ran a caption "We've Won." Above this caption a strutting cock was pictured while below a smaller headline proclaimed, "The Tentacles of the Republican Octopus Loosened from the Ship of State." Actually on this Thursday these statements were misleading for the election hinged on returns being tabulated in the state of New York. No one was certain which way New York would go for the vote there was extremely close.

Dickinson was determined to see that New York was not "stolen" by the Republicans. Hastily a sum of fifty thousand dollars was collected from Michigan Democrats with Dickinson contributing five thousand dollars himself. With a draft of fifty thousand dollars in his pocket, Dickinson hurriedly traveled

[63]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 4, 1884. The Detroit Free Press carried a very extensive account of this pre-election day rally.

to New York. Realizing that Roscoe Conkling was an implacable foe of Blaine, Dickinson immediately contacted him and retained him. With Conkling on the alert and scrutinizing the election boards and ballot boxes of districts which would determine whether Blaine or Cleveland would win, there was little chance for dishonesty.[64] Cleveland squeezed out a narrow margin in New York and with this victory in New York, he had won the Presidency.

On Saturday night, November 8, the Democrats in Detroit held what was termed "a big jollification meeting" by the Detroit Free Press. The joyous Democrats in Detroit met at the Detroit Opera House to celebrate their victory. In Michigan, Democrats were elated over the fact that only four of eleven Congressional districts were sending Republicans to Washington as a result of the Tuesday election. Although Michigan had not elected a Democratic governor, the Republicans were to be the minority party in the state legislature.

Presiding at the celebration of happy Democrats was Donald Dickinson. Democrats in Michigan recognized the role that he had played throughout the campaign. Said Judge C. J. Reilly in presenting him as chairman for the evening, "On behalf of this meeting I propose for its Chairman that Democrat whose match-

[64]Detroit News, Oct. 17, 1917.

less energy and strict integrity is largely due our victory in this district and state--Don M. Dickinson." Dickinson received a rousing welcome from those assembled.

Dickinson had anticipated this moment for a long time. He had been but ten years old when the Democrats had last elected a president. Exuberantly he reminded his listeners that on election eve he had predicted "the party of rum, Romanism, and rebellion would present its compliments next day to the party of Boodle, Blasphemy, and Blaine." Said Dickinson tersely, "We have so paid our compliments." With sarcasm dripping from every word he continued, "Jay Gould says he will concede Cleveland's election. Good, kind Jay Gould. He is like the ancient king who kindly granted his people the privilege of drawing their breath. We do not need Jay Gould's concession."[65]

In his concluding comments, Dickinson explained what he felt the election to mean. They illustrate well Dickinson's Jeffersonian approach to government. "This great victory means, foremost, the final decision of the sovereignty of the people. It means the banishment of the hateful theory that all power not especially given by the Constitution to public officials and bodies is inherent in the people. It means that honesty is the best policy and condemnation

[65]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 9, 1884.

of Blaine's dishonest methods."

On a night like that night all animosities and old rivalries were forgotten for the moment. An example of this was the introduction accorded Representative William Maybury elected from the First Congressional District. Days had passed and days would come again when these two Democratic leaders would not look upon each other with favor. However, on this occasion Dickinson wittily introduced Maybury by informing the crowd that Maybury's name had been changed. "We no longer call him 'Maybury', but 'Didbury.'" It was obvious that victory tasted good to all Democrats.[66]

The year 1884 was a significant year for the United States and the Democratic party. After many fruitless years the Democrats had proved that they were still alive as a party and that they could still muster enough strength to elect a President. The two party system which Americans had long cherished still existed and was given a formidable uplift through the election of Cleveland.

The year was no less significant in the life of Donald Dickinson. The election of Cleveland was to alter his life considerably in the years that lay ahead. By 1884 he became a leading figure in Michigan politics and with the election of Cleveland he was

[66]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 9, 1884.

soon found among the leaders in national politics. There is little likelihood that he would have achieved such prominence had Cleveland not been elected.

This important year reached its climax for Dickinson personally shortly after the election. Ten leading Michigan Democrats including the editor of the Detroit Free Press William E. Quinby recognized the role that Dickinson had played in the recent campaign. Wrote this committee to the men they wished to honor. "When a free people has become victorious after a life and death struggle to overthrow the vast and dangerous power of a party of corruption and monopoly long in control of its government of affairs, it is eminently appropriate that all good citizens should rejoice over their conquest, and also that fitting tribute should be rendered to the one of their number who has been foremost in the fight; whose appreciation of the imminent danger to free institutions if corrupt politicians retain their power and whose devotion to the cause of the people has led him to the unselfish performance of great labor therein."[67]

The committee of ten which had been chosen by "many of your fellow citizens, friends, and neighbors, as well as co-workers in behalf of good government in this country" wished to express "deep and sincere ap-

[67]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 18, 1884.

preciation" for the arduous service that Dickinson had performed. These highly complimentary phrases were followed with an invitation to a public reception at White's Opera House scheduled for November 20, where "more mutual and personal congratulations may be given and received."

Dickinson was highly gratified by this show of admiration. He reflected upon recent events and expressed the sentiment that "the journey of life is by a road that does not all lie through a weary and barren land." Dickinson likened his and the Democrats' recent good fortune to a toiling pilgrim who comes to green meadows, sweet flowers, and bright waters. He enjoys these thoroughly and "goes thence refreshed and gladdened."

In spite of his pleasure over the kindness that his friends and associates had rendered him, Dickinson felt constrained graciously to decline this honor. "I wish to impress upon you and upon them that my appreciation of this evidence of the regard of my fellows and of their belief in my honesty of purpose and sincerity of conviction is most heartfelt. I am the more anxious to make this impression because I feel that I must decline the honor which has been tendered me."[68]

Life was not all rosy for Dickinson during these

[68]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 18, 1884.

years which saw this young lawyer advancing both in politics and in the legal profession. Sudden tragedy struck the Dickinson family; five children were taken by death in one year through the deadly disease spinal meningitis contracted during a summer vacation in Canada. Although the letters of Dickinson say little concerning this stunning blow, those who knew him and his wife reveal that it burdened the souls of both him and his wife a long time. Excerpts from letters, written by H. L. Holmes to Dickinson's mother after the deaths of these children reveal the anguish of the parents. "Has Don yet become reconciled? I trust that he feels by this time that his darlings are 'not lost'--only gone before."[69] A few months later Holmes wrote concerning Mrs. Donald Dickinson, "Fannie writes me she does not feel well these days and says it is hard work to compose her thoughts and write a letter."[70]

Three years later this sorrow had not been erased for on February 12, 1882, a letter addressed to "Mother and dear ones at home" made reference to this tragedy and indicates that the Dickinsons were still grieving. The writer promised to pray for Don and his wife and expressed the hope that they soon would

[69]R. Dixon to M. H. Dickinson, June 15, 1879, DPMHCA.

[70]R. Dixon to M. H. Dickinson, Nov. 27, 1879, DPMHCA.

find "sweet peace in resting on the strong arm of Jesus." The sympathizer was confident that "their darlings" were "safe in the arms" of Jesus and had "escaped the trials and temptations of the world." Of this the author was very confident and he was certain also that it would be of comfort to "dear Don and Fannie if they would only believe."

What effect this tragedy had upon Dickinson and his career is difficult to judge. He was not completely crushed nor did this blow prevent him from pushing forward both as a politician and lawyer, although it may help to explain the fact that he was not as active in the world of politics in 1880 and 1882 as he had been prior to this tragedy. It is evident from Dickinson's letters that he had a deep attachment for his surviving children which seems to have been partially fostered by his earlier loss. He disliked being away from home for extended periods. Very likely this was a factor in his declining positions that Grover Cleveland would have preferred he accept for he knew that this would have meant still fewer moments at home.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

Grover Cleveland was the first Democratic President to be elected since James Buchanan had achieved victory in 1856. For nearly thirty years the Democrats had been thwarted in Presidential elections. When Cleveland was elected, Democrats all over the United States were eager to share in the spoils; Michigan was no exception. Although Michigan Democrats had not been able to swing the state into the Cleveland column, they, with the support of the Greenbackers, had been able to win seven of the eleven Congressional seats. The Michigan Republicans had only four members in the House, but they did retain both seats in the Senate.

Traditionally, members of the President's party in the House were recognized as being influential as far as postal appointments within the state were concerned while Senators from the same party were given preference in all other appointments. Since there were no Democratic Senators from Michigan, certain House members from Michigan felt that they should be recognized in more than just postal appointments.

However, as time went on President Cleveland began to admire Dickinson and respect his judgment more and more so that ofttimes when a decision had to be made regarding the filling of a federal position, a person supported by Dickinson was chosen. As time passed, the issue of federal patronage in Michigan created friction between Dickinson and the Michigan state Democratic organization on one hand and certain Democratic Congressmen led by William C. Maybury on the other.

In January, 1885, Dickinson accompanied seventeen prominent Michigan Democrats to Buffalo in order to introduce them to Cleveland. Included in the group were such prominent men as George Lothrop, who would soon be sent to Russia as United States Ambassador; W. H. Quinby, the editor of the Detroit Free Press; the former Chairman of the Michigan State Central Committee, Orlando M. Barnes; and the man who then held the same position, Jerome Eddy. No prominent Michigan Democratic Congressman seems to have been included in this group.

There were rumors that Dickinson was the only Michigan Democrat being considered for a Cabinet post in the incoming Cleveland administration. The stories had circulated to such a degree that Dickinson himself felt constrained to say in February, "There is no truth in it. My friends well know that there is no political position within the gift of the

people or the President which I would accept."[1]

Dickinson also continued to be recognized within his county and state as the leader of the Democratic organization. On February 25 the Democratic state convention convened for the purpose of selecting candidates to run in the spring election. George P. Sanford was addressing the convention when Dickinson entered to take his seat with the Wayne county delegation. His arrival caused such loud applause that Sanford had to suspend his remarks momentarily. State Chairman Jerome Eddy invited Dickinson to the state which only invoked greater acclaim and enthusiasm. Dickinson rose to decline the honor, but the convention would not hear of this. Finally he ascended the platform and addressed the gathering briefly, promising his fellow Democrats that a new leaf had been turned and that the Democrats would "make history" under the chapter commencing with the election of Cleveland.[2]

Shortly after the inauguration of Cleveland, both Dickinson and Representative William Maybury visited Cleveland in Washington. Maybury quite bluntly stated that his purpose in seeing Cleveland

[1]From unidentified newspaper clipping found in the first scrapbook of a series of twelve scrapbooks containing press clippings relating to the public career of Donald M. Dickinson. Scrapbooks in possession of the Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

[2]Detroit Free Press, Feb. 26, 1885.

was to obtain some federal appointments for people of his choice. Dickinson was not quite as direct, but he did state that he was not at the moment taking part in local politics nor was he interested in the site for a public building which had been a point of controversy in Detroit. Although Cleveland had just taken office, the Detroit Post foresaw that a breach was already developing between Maybury and Dickinson for it headlined the story of these Washington visits, "Two Rivals." The concluding statement of this news story said that although Dickinson and Maybury had come to Washington together, they had kept "wide apart since they have been in the city."[3]

There could be little doubt that Dickinson had won the first round in his struggle to secure federal appointments that he felt would do honor to the Cleveland administration and the Democratic party. Soon after the visits of Dickinson and Maybury, the first major federal appointment involving a Michigan man was made when Martin V. Montgomery of Lansing was named Commissioner of Patents. That it was clearly a victory for Dickinson is evidenced by a letter from Dickinson to Cleveland. "There is a young man named Stewart now in Washington who was a candidate for Commissioner of Patents and was endorsed for that

[3]Newspaper clipping from the Detroit Post, March 17, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, Michigan Historical Commission Archives. Hereafter MHCA.

position by the Michigan Congressmen. I was not aware that his application was on file or of his candidacy when I had the honor to suggest the name of Mr. Montgomery. With that knowledge, however, I should have made the suggestions I did make."[4]

In an editorial entitled "Ave Caesar" the Detroit Post correctly summed up this appointment by saying, "The selection of Montgomery, if not Dickinson's work, is at least on Mr. Dickinson's side; and it looks very much as if Mr. Dickinson's new name was to be Boss."[5]

Dickinson seemed to be growing more popular with the President. In his home state, he was consolidating forces behind him that would make him more formidable. Newspaper talk indicated that he was getting the upper hand in the very important matter of federal patronage. Undoubtedly, these developments did much to spur Congressman Maybury into calling a meeting early in April of the eleven Democrats who had run from the eleven Michigan districts the previous November. These eleven, some successful, others not so successful, met in Maybury's Washington office for the purpose of securing concerted action of

[4]Dickinson to Cleveland, Apr. 27, 1885, Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter CPLC.

[5]Newspaper clipping from Detroit Post, March 20, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

various federal appointments.[6]

In order to exert as much pressure as possible, they agreed that any differences concerning appointments should be ironed out before suggestions were made. When a recommendation was made, the eleven agreed that all of them would solidly support it.

It was also decided to request of Cleveland that those defeated Democrats be regarded as if they had been elected when it came time for recommendations concerning federal jobs. These Democrats seemed a bit belligerent by intimating that they would not endure outside interference in the distribution of offices within their own particular district, and in making clear to the President and heads of federal departments that they felt no one man in the state should occupy a position that a Senator would when it came time to dole out federal appointments. Following this, they drew up a slate of individuals that they felt should obtain the better federal positions that would be available.[7]

A few days after this conference the spring elections were held in Michigan. The only statewide races involved one for a Michigan supreme court justiceship and two for university regents. Thomas M.

[6]Detroit Evening News, April 3, 1885.

[7]Detroit Evening News, April 3, 1885.

Cooley, who had been a Republican supreme court justice for twenty years ran for re-election once again and headed the ticket. In itself the election was not of great significance. However, both parties were eager to see how the people of Michigan would react in the first state election since the Cleveland victory.

The results of the April election revealed that the tide was still running in favor of the Democrats. The numbers that turned out amazed both parties. A total of 307,580 votes was cast for supreme court candidates. Only once before had so many persons turned out for an election not involving national offices. Cooley was crushingly defeated as Democrat Allen B. Morse easily won by nearly thirty thousand votes. Never before had a Democratic state candidate achieved such a margin over a Republican.

Prominent Republican leader Tim Nester gave much credit to Dickinson. Said he dolefully, "I just wish we had a Don Dickinson or two in our party. I think he is a dandy and a man, to get ahead of him, has to get up when the day is mighty young."[8]

Dickinson attributed the Democratic victory to the fine beginning that the Administration had made in fulfilling the promises of good government and reform. He also explained that the independent voters

[8]Unidentified newspaper clipping, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

had supported the Democrats, and the Democrats had worked hard motivated by the fact that a good majority in Michigan would be an endorsement of the new Cleveland administration.[9] One could readily ascertain that Dickinson was highly pleased with what had happened in Michigan.

When on May 8, 1883, it was announced that George V. N. Lothrop had been appointed minister or ambassador to Russia, many were surprised. Michigan had been strongly Republican for years, and it was expected that such important posts would go to men from states that had been more faithful in supporting the Democratic party. There is no doubt that in this nomination Dickinson's choice had been favored. In December of the same year he wrote Cleveland, "Your own good judgment from your own impression of him made prompt use of the suggestion of the Lothrop name, and it probably was in your mind before."[10]

In Michigan almost all Democrats, including Maybury, applauded the appointment of Lothrop. He was well qualified for the position, and it was expected that he would represent the United States well. Michigan Democrats opposed to Dickinson realized that to accept the appointment of Lothrop un-

[9]Newspaper clipping from New York World, April 7, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

[10]Dickinson to Cleveland, Dec. 12, 1885, CPLC.

graciously would hurt themselves. Michigan had been honored by the choice of Lothrop, and he was so highly esteemed that to accept his nomination coolly or to show resentment would have made it too evident that the Michigan Congressmen were seeking only their own political ends.

The appointment of a Michigan man as ambassador to a major nation such as Russia made individuals outside of Michigan take note that Dickinson was rising rapidly as a Cleveland confidant. On May 17, 1885, the Omaha Herald acknowledged that Dickinson was one of the rising men of the Middle West. The Omaha newspaper credited him with early asserting leadership because he is a man of "character, brains, admirable self-poise and polished manners. . . ." The Omaha Herald was pleased with Dickinson's ascent and considered it a "good omen for the future of the Democracy of the best governed state in the Union that such men as Dickinson, strong at home, are influential at Washington."[11]

John H. Oberly, Chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee in Illinois, also recognized that Dickinson must have had some hand in Lothrop's appointment. He met Dickinson soon after the announcement and sarcastically inquired, "How do you pronounce

[11]Newspaper clipping from the Omaha Herald, May 17, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

that name of the man who goes to Russia? Lothrop or Lathrop?"

When Dickinson said nothing, Oberly pointed out that Lothrop hadn't voted a Democratic ticket in five years. This provoked Dickinson who fired back with, "You will learn more of Michigan men and how to pronounce their names if you live longer."

When Oberly wondered aloud who the Democratic Senators from Michigan were, Dickinson proud of the Democratic showing in the 1885 spring election retorted, "Thirty thousand Democratic majority in Republican Michigan and our God-bless-you to the President."[12]

Although the appointment of Lothrop had been acclaimed by all important Michigan Democrats, the nomination of Orlando W. Powers of Kalamazoo to the supreme court of Utah was bitterly opposed by the anti-Dickinson Congressional faction. This appointment marked the real beginning of a rift that became greater as time went on. The announcement of the appointment was made about a month after Montgomery had been named Commissioner of Patents. Events and comments that followed indicate once again that Orlando Powers had the full support of Dickinson, while Maybury and his followers were determined to prevent the confir-

[12]Newspaper clipping from the Detroit Post, May 9, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1. MHCA.

mation of Powers which in effect would also have been defeat for Dickinson.

Extended newspaper reports and comments concerning the rift between Dickinson and Michigan Congressmen indicate that the Powers' appointment had ignited a real feud in the Michigan Democratic party. On May 1, 1885, the Detroit Post reported that it had interviewed an unidentified Democrat who likened the Dickinson-Maybury relationship to that between Russia and England. These two nations, said the Democrat, were exchanging very courteous communications while at the same time each was preparing to war upon the other. He termed any reports of political peace between Dickinson and Maybury as "absurd."

On May 5, the Detroit Post reported that "a prominent Michigan man who was at the White House with the party this morning said that he positively knows that Cleveland and each and every member of the Cabinet place more reliance upon Dickinson's advice than upon that of the whole Democratic contingent in Congress combined."

Two days later the Post facetiously printed this "report." "It is understood that Mr. Dickinson has consented to allow Mr. Maybury's candidate for chimney sweep at the White House to be appointed, the late incumbent of that office having been removed for offensive partisanship."

The Detroit Post was not a pro-Dickinson organ.

In fact, at this time it was very pro-Republican. It is interesting to read this newspaper's comments on why Dickinson was prevailing over Maybury in the struggle for influence in federal patronage.

The May 1 issue of the Detroit Post reported certain Democrats felt that Dickinson had been presenting names of men who had been identified "with the Democratic party as workers rather than . . . spoils seekers." The men recommended by Dickinson were competent, Democrats from principle "who have never trimmed or shifted with an eye to political preferment. They are such men as Cleveland's policy calls for, and Dickinson in urging their claims has an influence that the organizer and chief fugler in the ring can never acquire with the Administration."

In its April 24 edition the Detroit Post reported an interview with a prominent Democrat who pointed out that the Democrats had ridden to power in 1884 promising reform. The Michigan Congressional clique, less intent on reform, had formed a "machine for the purpose of squeezing various coveted offices out of the President." When asked whether the President was aware of this and thus might confide more in Dickinson, the reply was that Dickinson would be heard "for the President and his friends in the Cabinet are intimately acquainted with his work and appreciate it as that of a man who holds the principles enunciated by the head of the government."

Along with this, Dickinson possessed a tactfulness that Maybury seemed to lack. The report of the April conference in Maybury's Washington office was one indication of this. It appeared that Cleveland would not be bullied into giving federal jobs to men favored by Maybury and the Congressional syndicate. Said the Detroit Post on May 7, 1885, "Mr. Maybury is said to lack both precision and elegance. . . . He mutiliates like a meat ax instead of cleaving like a cimeter [sic]. . . . Mr. Dickinson's conversation on political topics, especially on filling the offices, is said to be delicately deadly, like a miasmatic malaria, which kills with imperceptible subtleness. Listening to his mellifluent counsels, the victim is said to relax gradually into a condition of nerveless lassitude before sinking into imbecility and death."

Although it seemed that Dickinson was gaining the upper hand as far as federal patronage in Michigan was concerned, he hated to see the party split in such a manner that would hinder it from effectively opposing the Republicans. Thus, on May 13, 1885, Dickinson wrote a letter to Cleveland which he hoped would make clear to the President his feeling on what was becoming a major point of controversy in Michigan. In his letter, Dickinson pointed out to the President that "on precedent and authority" in the absence of a Senator the member of the National

Committee and the Chairman of the State Committee were considered as having the influence of Senators in recommendations for all positions except the postmasterships. In spite of this, said Dickinson, "Mr. Eddy and myself prefer that any and all precedents resting on machine methods be disregarded; and we are agreed that the competition for place should be open to all, and that, the question of fitness once settled, care should be taken to recommend those whose appointment would give satisfaction to the greater number in the locality to be affected."[13]

Dickinson sought to smooth over differences by pointing out that although the Congressmen's method of selection "was very objectionable" and had led to "much irritation among our people" and "while their assumption in naming candidates was erroneous, . . . yet the Congressional delegation, have in the large majority of cases, presented candidates for petitions who are quite unobjectionable." Hoping to get the Michigan delegation wholeheartedly behind the new Administration, Dickinson said, "We recognize too, and most earnestly consider the relations of Congressmen to the new Administration, and wherever, of their recommendations, a fulfilment would not work absolute demoralization at home, and injury and scandal to your Administration, we prefer to concur with the

[13]Dickinson to Cleveland, May 13, 1885, CPLC.

delegation."

Efforts at this time to heal wounds that were breaking open failed. The appointment of A. P. Swineford as governor of the territory of Alaska was only another indication to Michigan Congressmen that Cleveland would only hear Dickinson when it came to appointments of any significance. When in May, the recommendations of the Congressional group were accepted and Lewis N. Minnie was named consul at Sarnia, the protests raised were of such grave character that the commission was withheld. Cleveland warned the Michigan delegation to exercise greater care, "if you desire that I shall give any consideration whatever to your recommendations."[14]

In his letter of May 13 to Cleveland, Dickinson had agreed that most of the recommendations of the Democratic Congressmen had been acceptable. However, he had gone into detail in criticizing the recommendation of the Congressmen regarding the position of Collector Customs at Port Huron. In Michigan three Collectors of Customs were due to be appointed. Dickinson pointed out that he had not made any recommendations "in conflict with those of the Congressmen except in the case of Huron District." The person favored by the Congressmen, especially Congressman Ezra C. Carleton from Port Huron, was a man with

[14]Newspaper clipping from the New York World, May 19, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

the name of Jenkinson. Dickinson favored William L. Bancroft for the position and requested that Cleveland appoint him. Dickinson wrote that he firmly believed "that not to appoint Mr. Bancroft would do us great harm." He advised Cleveland that Bancroft had been "a tower of strength in Michigan for you." Even though a few had charged him with certain evils, "the charges I know to be false," testified Dickinson.[15]

Apparently Cleveland was convinced for in June Bancroft obtained the appointment. Representative Carleton was quite disgusted when he heard the report. He commented, "I endorsed the Michigan delegation's candidate and we were prepared to press our choice and oppose any other. The power of appointing a successor to General Hartsuff remained with President Cleveland, and if he considers he is acting wisely in rejecting the Congressmen and allowing himself to be governed by Mr. Dickinson, he must accept the results."[16]

From the first, Cleveland had favored Dickinson by naming persons to appointive offices that he had suggested. On October 11, 1885, the President favored him again by sending a message stating that "the time

[15]Dickinson to Cleveland, May 13, 1885, CPLC.

[16]Newspaper clipping from the Port Huron Daily Telegraph, June 18, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

has now come when you are called upon to make a sacrifice for your country." With this, Cleveland requested that Dickinson assume the post of Civil Service Commissioner. Cleveland explained that "this is the first offer I have made of the plan to any member of my party and I think it is the best position in the country to do good--to say nothing about gaining fame." Cleveland expected to reorganize the Civil Service Commission entirely with Dickinson at the head with "two first-rate assistants."[17]

Dickinson was very happy that Cleveland had given him this note of confidence. Nevertheless, October 14 he sent a telegram to Cleveland explaining why he had to decline the position. He stated that this appointment might be used unfairly in order to undermine the sincerity of the Administration. The message continued by saying that "in a vigorous and belligerent majority I have been to some extent a leader: not merely a strong and devoted Democrat, but a hard bitter and a contentious partisan." He went on to explain that within the state lines his opponents knew his "consistency and actually have confidence in my honesty of purpose." However, Dickinson was afraid that his partisan record would go throughout the land and hurt the cause of reform which the Cleveland administration sought to pro-

[17]Cleveland to Dickinson, Oct. 11, 1885, CPLC.

mote. Dickinson so highly esteemed Cleveland that he averred, "If through me . . . the slightest reflection should be cast upon this Administration, I shall want to die." Perhaps reflecting upon the political struggles in which he was engaged both within and without the party, Dickinson concluded with, "Your confidence in, and consideration for me, is valued beyond expression and will be my chief pride as long as I shall live. The best thoughts of my mind are with you, and the highest devotion of my heart is to you."[18]

As 1885 wore on, the lines were drawn more clearly as far as the controversy between Dickinson and the Congressional delegation was concerned. The opposition began to center around the Powers' appointment along with Bancroft's. Also, it became more evident that not all the Democratic Representatives were equally irked by or envious of Dickinson's influence. On the other hand, those who were opposed seemed even more intent on stopping Dickinson once and for all.

That not every member of the so-called Michigan syndicate was opposed to Dickinson is evident from a letter to Cleveland dated January 2, 1886. In this note to the President, Dickinson expressed concern by saying that he believed Cleveland had been "misled as

[18]Dickinson to Cleveland, Oct. 14, 1885, CPLC.

to the attitudes of the Michigan Congressional delegation." According to Dickinson, the strong men in the Michigan delegation were Spencer Fisher, Judge Edwin B. Winans and Nathaniel B. Eldredge. All three were fine men and devoted to Cleveland in Dickinson's opinion.[19]

This analysis by Dickinson seemed to be verified by the Port Huron Sunday Herald which said that the report stating that Dickinson had destroyed the influence of the seven Michigan Democratic Representatives in Congress was "absurdly untrue." The report continued by revealing that Congressmen Fisher, Eldredge, and Winans were "entirely in accord" with Dickinson.[20] The only members staunchly opposed to Dickinson included Congressmen Maybury, Carleton, and Charles Comstock from Grand Rapids. Comstock had the same complaint about Dickinson that Maybury and Carleton did. Comstock in his "Reminiscences," said, "My advice has sometimes been asked for and at all times been ignored except when not opposed by Dickinson." Comstock's views of Cleveland were not "favorable." "Perhaps," said Comstock, "unearned and unexpected success has caused him to become egotistical rather than proud and with his seeming reliance upon destiny

[19]Dickinson to Cleveland, Jan. 2, 1886, CPLC.

[20]Newspaper clipping from the Port Huron Sunday Herald, Oct. 31, 1885, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 1, MHCA.

has led him to disregard the traditions of the party." This Congressman called Cleveland's ignoring "the chosen Representatives of the people . . . as great an insult to the constituency as to the members of Congress."[21]

By December the struggle between Dickinson on the one side and Maybury and Carleton on the other had intensified as the Representatives sought to discredit Bancroft and Powers and prevent confirmation by the United States Senate. A good indication that the rivalry between Dickinson and those opposed to him had become more embittered is a letter from Dickinson to Cleveland dated December 12, 1885.[22]

Earlier the same year, Dickinson had sought to minimize any differences between the Congressmen and him. There is none of this in this later letter. In this letter Dickinson came to the defense of Bancroft. To evaluate Bancroft's standing in Michigan, Dickinson suggested "the most unfavorable test for him." He explained to Cleveland that Bancroft "has been a strong partisan and is politically hated by leaders of the Republican party." Nonetheless, Dickinson suggested that if Cleveland were to call in either or both Republican Senators from Michigan, "you will, I am sure,

[21]Reminiscences of Charles C. Comstock. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan.

[22]Dickinson to Cleveland, Dec. 12, 1885, CPLC.

find that nothing unfavorable can be said." In the course of the letter Dickinson reiterated that Bancroft towered above Carleton's choice of Jenkinson "as Mount Washington is above a wart." Dickinson pleaded that the party could afford to have a Republican Senate reject Bancroft, but "it cannot afford to have the Representatives of our first success discredit him within the party. This would create a want of confidence in the stability of things in the steadiness of decision which would be disastrous."[23]

Dickinson could not resist elaborating on his feelings concerning Maybury and Carleton. "Maybury's ideas of politics," said he, "are essentially Republican as to method and purpose. To be a Democrat with him is to secure a means to an end. I doubt if either gentleman can tell you the difference in fundamental principle between the two parties. Mr. Maybury is the more cunning of the two and Carleton is guided by him in all things."

In November, 1886, mid-term elections were scheduled. The Democrats realized that these would be significant for they should give some indication as to how the citizens of the United States were reacting to the first Democratic administration in many years. With this in mind, one might have expected a closing of the ranks so that the Democrats would have every

[23]Dickinson to Cleveland, Dec. 12, 1885, CPLC.

chance of making a good showing in November. In a strong Republican state like Michigan this would be very essential.

In spite of this, the year 1886 opened with the split in Democratic ranks as wide as ever. In January, Edwin F. Conely, the Democrat who had strongly opposed Dickinson's original choice for the Presidential nomination in 1880, went to Washington to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee against the confirmation of Orlando Powers as judge of the supreme court of Utah. There was a general feeling that he had gone as "the representative of the Michigan Congressmen who did not fancy the way Don M. Dickinson was manipulating appointments." More evidence that the Congressmen were behind Conely was revealed when Conely declared that it was a "private matter entirely" in answer to a query concerning the part played by the Congressmen in his coming to Washington.[24]

The friction increased so that many appointments not only by the federal government, but also within the state Democratic party were considered victories or defeats by one side or the other. For instance, when Jerome Eddy resigned as Chairman of the State Central Committee in March, 1886, John J. Enright was named to fill his spot. This was con-

[24]Detroit Evening News, Jan. 25, 1886.

sidered to be a triumph for Dickinson for Dickinson and Enright were close associates. Enright was a young, hard working Detroit politician who seemed eager to engage the Republicans in the forthcoming campaign. He intimated that Dickinson might be an excellent choice as gubernatorial candidate.

During the first year of the Cleveland administration, it seemed that Donald M. Dickinson could not lose. Cleveland had favored his recommendations. He himself had been offered the chairmanship of a revised Civil Service Commission. The naming of Enright to the State Central Committee met with his warm approval. However, in April, nearly a year after Orlando Powers had been nominated to Utah's supreme court, his name was withdrawn by the President. This was a major setback for Dickinson because he not only had recommended Powers, but had continued to back him in the face of much opposition. Most interesting is the newspaper comment concerning the withdrawal of Powers' name. Powers was the principal in this affair, but the newspapers attached greater significance to the effect that it would have upon Dickinson and his position as an influential advisor of the President. Some speculated that Dickinson's usefulness as far as Cleveland was concerned had ended. In an editorial entitled "Bossism Always Disreputable," the Detroit Tribune quoted a New York newspaper which explained the withdrawal of Powers'

name as "official notice that Mr. Dickinson has been kicked out of the President's confidence."[25] The Tribune itself commented on the report asserting that there were "several thousand earnest and honest Democrats in Michigan who hoped this to be true--as there is every reason to believe that there is."

Another Detroit newspaper, the Detroit Sunday News, was convinced that peace between Dickinson and Maybury would no longer be possible and that it would be "war to the knife."[26] This newspaper regarded Dickinson to be the chief advisor to the President on Michigan appointments up to the withdrawal of Powers' nomination. However, this defeat had increased the "hopes and anticipations of the Michigan Congressmen," said the paper, "whom Dickinson heretofore frustrated and mortified by his superior influence." When the opponents of Dickinson convinced the President that Powers was not worthy of the position to which he had been named, "the result was to Dickinson a stunning blow between the eyes--almost a knockout."

There can be little doubt that Dickinson was disheartened by what had happened to Powers. Nonetheless, had the newspapers had access to a letter that Dickinson received from Cleveland in February, there would have been less speculation regarding the

[25]Newspaper clipping from Detroit Tribune, April 16, 1886, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 3, MHCA.

[26]Detroit Sunday News, April 25, 1886.

Cleveland-Dickinson relationship after Powers' name had been withdrawn. Because of rising opposition to the Powers' appointment, Cleveland intimated to Dickinson that he was prepared to withdraw the name of Powers and "appoint another good Michigan name, if you approve." The President concluded his letter with a statement that must have been some consolation to Dickinson for he said, "Whatever happens I beg you to believe that I have not lost a particle of my confidence in you."[27]

As far as Dickinson was concerned, he retained implicit faith in the judgment of President Cleveland and there appears to have been no strain in the relations between these two Democrats. In an interview with a reporter from the New York Tribune, he said that Cleveland had done the correct thing in withdrawing the nomination for "the President always does the right thing."[28]

After the President had offered Dickinson the chairmanship of the Civil Service Commission and Dickinson had refused it, he realized that Dickinson was not seeking any government post for himself. However, it seems that Cleveland did desire outwardly to show that his relations with Dickinson had not been

[27]Cleveland to Dickinson, Feb. 11, 1886, Dickinson Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[28]Newspaper clipping from the New York Tribune, April 30, 1886, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 3, MHCA.

strained or altered by the Powers' affair. Therefore, in May, he appointed him Visitor to the Naval Academy. It was purely an honorary position which accounted for Dickinson's acceptance of it. The Detroit Free Press in reporting this appointment concluded that the appointment "is an exceedingly graceful recognition of the esteem in which he is held by the President."[29]

The President may have held Dickinson in high esteem, but Dickinson realized that all Democrats in Michigan did not feel the same for the factional fight continued on throughout the summer with Dickinson's forces seemingly increasing in strength. In early August, Congressman Carleton, who had opposed the nomination and confirmation of William L. Bancroft, was defeated in his bid for re-nomination. Lewis F. Atkin, who had directed and organized Carleton's campaign for re-election was bitter. He predicted that a split would develop for the Carleton supporters "will not support Mr. Stevenson or any other figurehead for Mr. Dickinson.[30] Referring to Bancroft, Atkin charged, "A clique organized and schemed to knife Carleton. They had all the influence of the custom house behind them." On August 10, the Evening News expressed the belief that Elliot S.

[29]Detroit Free Press, May 28, 1886.

[30]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 6, 1886.

Stevenson was the leading candidate for Carleton's spot saying that "Congressman Carleton's scalp had been taken by Don M. Dickinson's local brave, Elliot C. Stevenson."

The anti-Dickinson Democrats sought to rally their forces. Charles E. Stuart, a former Democratic Senator from Michigan, denounced Dickinson's influence saying, "Don M. Dickinson has neither official position, statesmanship, political influence nor experience that entitles him to such overmastering influence with the appointing power, especially in opposition to the wishes of those chosen by the people to represent them."[31]

Nathaniel E. Stewart, a Democratic leader in Kalamazoo and one who had hopes of receiving a government job when the Cleveland administration came into power, was an outspoken critic of Dickinson. He believed that Dickinson had caused the Congressmen to be made "laughing stock." "He has belittled them in every way possible. He has built up a Dickinson dynasty--a Dickinson hierarchy--and has sought to make himself dictator." Quite naturally, this faction of the party also was opposed to Cleveland. When Stewart was asked whether he felt the Administration would fare well before the state convention, he replied that much work was being done to secure a

[31]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 12, 1886.

Dickinson delegation. This would insure support for Cleveland. "The outside Democrats," said Stewart, "believe that the Administration is a failure. The fact is, Cleveland hasn't the intellect to grasp party principles, to take in the needs of the east and west."[32]

Foster Pratt, Democratic State Chairman during the 1872 Greeley campaign, also aligned himself against Dickinson. It was at this time that he produced for all to see the letter which Dickinson had written after the 1872 campaign in which he vowed never to support the party again, while at the same time denouncing certain Democrats who had not wholeheartedly supported the Greeley ticket. Obviously, it was a move to discredit Dickinson.

Although Dickinson did lose a battle on August 5 when the Senate rejected the nomination of W. L. Bancroft[33] to be Collector of Customs at Port Huron, he and his forces were winning control of the Democratic convention. The Detroit Evening News, which was more sympathetic with Maybury than Dickinson, admitted that "the county convention was as thoroughly controlled by Mr. Dickinson's friends as if that gentleman had appointed every man who sat in it."[34]

[32]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 12, 1886.

[33]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 5, 1886.

[34]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 13, 1886.

That the Dickinson faction was in control can be detected by examining the proceedings. Daniel S. Campau, a Dickinson man at this time, was elected chairman. John J. Enright nominated Dickinson to be first delegate-at-large and leader of the county delegation to the state convention. Among those to be delegates-at-large were Enright, Dickinson's former law partner William A. Moore, and Campau.

One week later the state Democratic convention convened in Grand Rapids. For several days prior to the convention there was much speculation regarding the actions of the convention for their meeting was regarded as another test of strength between the two factions in Michigan. On August 17, the independent Evening News reported that the Cleveland administration would not be fully endorsed according to an agreement reached by the State Central Committee. The newspaper reported that this sentiment would be a heavy blow to Dickinson.[35] The Detroit Tribune also stated that there would be no endorsement. The Tribune added that "Cleveland's amazement at news of this sort from the home of Mr. Don M. Dickinson will simply be overwhelming and he cannot fail to construe it as significant of the action of the state in the national Democratic convention in 1888."[36]

[35]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 17, 1886.

[36]Newspaper clipping from the Detroit Tribune, Aug. 18, 1886, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 3, MHCA.

During this time Dickinson was not idle. He realized that the Democrats would need all the help that they could muster in November so he wisely endorsed George L. Yaple for governor.[37] He had been elected to Congress on a Fusion ticket in 1882 and appeared to be acceptable to many Democrats as well as the Greenback party. Dickinson's confidence was justified for both parties did nominate this man.

The evening before the convention he was the "central figure of the Democratic hosts." By now a very masterful politician, he greeted rural delegates with a handshake and a "hello, there." Being cordial, but at the same time not "slopping over," he was aiding his own cause by creating goodwill among those who would be transacting business the next day.[38] The next day Dickinson's preparations paid off. He was elected permanent chairman, with loud applause and great enthusiasm greeting the announcement of his name.[39]

There had been predictions that the convention would fail to endorse Cleveland. This Dickinson wanted to prevent at all costs. He made this very clear as he began his speech upon taking over the chairmanship. In his opening remarks he mentioned

[37]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 17, 1886.

[38]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 18, 1886.

[39]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 19, 1886.

that he had listened to the invocation with "bowed head and responsive heart." However, he found that there was one sentiment the "revered gentleman" had failed to utter. "One sentiment upon a subject as to which I shall having nothing more to say, and that was, I say to this convention of Democrats, God bless, save, and keep that Democrat of Democrats, the noblest one of them all, Grover Cleveland, President of the United States."

Dickinson would not find this omission when the Committee on Resolutions reported. Any hint that the convention would not endorse Cleveland vanished when the second resolution said:

> Resolved, That the administration of Grover Cleveland, by its vigor and thoroughness; by the precedence it has given to considerations affecting public service over those merely partisan; by its practical denial of the legitimacy of governing by means of federal appointments; by the discouragement of office-seeking through political intrigues; by its endeavors to preserve the public land for actual settlers; by restoring by practical administration the great principle "a public office is a public trust," commends itself to the judgment and approval of all honest people.[40]

Dickinson now was in control. In the wrangle that developed over election of a State Chairman, Dickinson remained calm. Finally, Isaac M. Weston was named to succeed John Enright who refused to serve again. The choice then was Weston or Maybury, with Weston getting the nod.

[40]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 19, 1886.

Both Dickinson's friends and opponents realized that he had won the day. The Evening News which earlier in the week hinted that the convention might not endorse Cleveland and, thus, rebuke Dickinson as well, was forced to admit that Dickinson was a "bigger man than old Chandler." The editors confessed that Dickinson controlled both the Greenback and the Democratic conventions "as smoothly as if they were greased. He forced down the throats of the Democratic crowd a warm endorsement of the Administration, and he got the Greenbackers to cheer it--and thus practically adopt it by acclamation--when it was read to them."[41]

Perhaps the clearest evidence that Dickinson was entirely satisfied with the accomplishments of the convention was the announcement the next day that the 1886 campaign fund had been started by a five thousand dollar contribution from none other than Donald M. Dickinson.[42] Also, he pledged to play a very important part in the forthcoming months.[43]

Although Election Day was less than three months away, intraparty strife continued. About a week after the state convention the Evening News headlined an article in bold black print, "Don Is Boss." This headline was caused by the withdrawal of William C. May-

[41]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 19, 1886.

[42]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 20, 1886.

[43]Detroit Free Press, Aug. 21, 1886.

bury from the race for renomination to Congress. The Congressional Convention was scheduled for September and Maybury had expected to be a leading figure as he sought renomination. It was evident that Maybury would have accepted the renomination under different circumstances. This seemed obvious when he wrote, "That such a nomination would occasion pride is conceded, but only when it came as an offering freely made and not as booty secured by political scrambling. The situation in this district, if I may judge from what I hear, precludes the possibility of the honor of a third candidacy devolving on me without an unseemly contest, awakening bitter animosities and jealousies."[44]

There were mixed feelings regarding this withdrawal. Some, including the Evening News viewed this withdrawal as a victory for Dickinson saying, "Maybury came down to Don M. Dickinson like a coon came down to Davy Crockett."[45] Others, such as Alexander W. Copland, were not convinced that this was true nor that John J. Enright, a Dickinson supporter, would automatically be the Democratic candidate from the First District.

In September the Wayne county Democrats chose Judge John Logan Chipman to be candidate for the House

[44]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 25, 1886.

[45]Detroit Evening News, Aug. 26, 1886.

from the First District. Dickinson was instrumental in bringing about a compromise between those who had supported Maybury and those, like himself, who wanted Enright. That an open split had been averted along with the fact that Chipman, though an independent man, adhered to many of the principles supported by Dickinson pleased Dickinson.

Thus, he was quite willing to stand beside Edwin Conely, one of Maybury's staunchest supporters, and address the convention that selected Chipman. Sounding much like an old Roman orator, he said, "Friends of the brotherhood of Democrats: If any loose hatchets remain unburied, here let them be buried. All honor to Maybury and Enright for burying their differences. It is a noble act. It will give us the state ticket. I am authorized to state in behalf of Enright that if there is a Democrat here who has been his enemy, up to this time, being a Democrat he is his friend. I can say for myself that if there is any man here who up to this time has been my enemy, if he is a Democrat, he is my friend." With this he shook hands with Conely and continued, "It was a noble concession on the part of both the young men. Any position or honor that may be given to either William C. Maybury or John J. Enright will be an honor to the Democratic party. To your tents, gentlemen and Democrats; let us carry the district, let us carry

the legislature, and let us carry the state."[46]

Conely replied with a few remarks concluding with, "It gives me great pleasure to say that the differences between the Democratic party are buried forever. I can reciprocate all that my brother Democrat, my professional brother and my friend has just said."[47]

On election eve a gigantic Democratic rally was held in Detroit at which Dickinson acted as chairman. During the course of the evening a letter was read, addressed to Dickinson which expressed the hope that the Democrats on the morning of November 2 could "point with pride to the leaders of the Republican party and say to them, 'Behold the sun of Austerlitz.'"[48]

Unfortunately for Dickinson and the Democrats, Election Day would not see them playing the role of Napoleon. The Republicans defeated the state ticket nominated by the Greenbackers and the Democrats with Republican candidate for governor Cyrus G. Luce obtaining 181,474 votes to 174,042 for George L. Yaple. The Republicans increased their number of Congressmen from four to six which gave them a majority of six to five. The majority that the Republicans held

[46]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 9, 1886.

[47]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 9, 1886.

[48]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 2, 1886.

in the state legislature was significantly increased. In the state house of representatives the Republicans elected sixty-two representatives, to thirty-eight for the opposition.[49] This was an increase of ten for the Republicans. In the senate, the number of Republicans increased from eighteen to twenty-two.

Democrats sought to minimize and provide excuses for the defeat. Dickinson pointed out that the margin of victory was small "when in old time the State gave from 25,000 to 60,000 majority." He also pointed out that the Republicans had brought in big guns like Senators Sherman and Blair besides James C. Blaine himself. The Democrats, on the other hand, had "made a purely domestic fight without a man or a cent from outside." He also mentioned that Republican "desperation and demoralization" was shown by "their fusion with Knights of Labor, Greenbackers and free traders in my district and elsewhere."[50]

State Chairman I. M. Weston attributed the defeat to some causes that Dickinson also mentioned.[51] Besides, he pointed out, 1886 is the "off year in politics. As a rule, elections go against every Ad-

[49]"Michigan," Annual Cyclopedia, XI (1887), 560.

[50]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 11, 1886.
Dickinson to Cleveland, Oct. 21, 1886, CPLC.

[51]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 8, 1886.

ministration two years after it is put into power." Another significant factor alluded to by Weston was the fact that there had been some disharmony in Democratic ranks. Dickinson had minimized this by saying "there was some inevitable straining of relations in the changes about offices, but this always occurs."[52] Weston attributed more importance to these intra-party squabbles saying, "Unfortunate differences and jealousies over the nominations in two or three of our Congressional districts contributed largely to reduce our vote."[53] He specifically mentioned the Sixth District where Congressman Carleton had been defeated for renomination and probably had in mind the First where the Maybury and Dickinson factions had fought each bitterly until the compromise nomination of Chipman was effected.

Weston's view that disharmony did cost votes seems to be a better appraisal than Dickinson's belittling of it. In the Sixth District there had been discord with Dickinson's lieutenants L. E. Rowley and R. A. Montgomery being charged with using "boss" methods by forcing the nomination of John M. Potter.[54]

One must also consider that Dickinson had been

[52]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 11, 1886.

[53]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 8, 1886.

[54]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 13, 1886.

involved in the fight between the Congressional delegation and the so-called Dickinson faction. Sincerely desiring to see the Democrats win, he would be one of the last to admit that the fray in which he was engaged was so serious that he had injured the party's chances in November, 1886.

The least partial of the Detroit papers, the Evening News, also indicated, as had Weston, that the party disharmony had cost votes. In a lengthy editorial entitled "It Might Have Been" the Evening News reminded its readers of an open letter that it had addressed to Maybury and Dickinson on the 26th of the previous November. In this letter the Evening News expressed the belief that the Dickinson-Maybury quarrel threatened to divide the party and called for peace between the two factions for "neither side can 'down' the other except by 'downing' the party at the same time. Each has plenty of faithful friends who will stick to the bitter end, and lower their flag, if the fight continues, only in mutual destruction."

The editorial concluded that this advice was not followed. "The split extended throughout the state; and while the majority of Democrats, as they always do, whether pleased or displeased with the management, voted the ticket enough, voted the other one or stayed away from the polls to give the unfor-

tunate state ticket its coup de grace."[55]

There was some speculation that the Democratic setback would end the political influence of Don Dickinson. Weston was queried regarding this and replied that he had "a large scrap book at home nearly filled with regular political obituaries of Dickinson." He was confident that just as these dire pronouncements had been incorrect before, they would be at this time.

It was soon apparent that Weston was right. When the 1887 legislative session opened in January, many Democrats wished to reveal that they still regarded Dickinson highly by making him their Democratic nominee for United States Senator.[56] Dickinson, however, strongly requested that this not be done. In February he was given the honor of escorting a number of prominent Democrats to Washington in order to introduce them to President Cleveland.[57]

As far as Cleveland was concerned, Dickinson remained a trusty lieutenant. Early in 1887 Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act hoping to check some of the evils that the certain railway companies were committing. Cleveland was duly aware that the effectiveness of this new legislation would depend

[55]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 4, 1886.

[56]Detroit Evening News, June 5, 1887.

[57]Detroit Evening News, Feb. 3, 1887.

largely upon the members of the new Interstate Commerce Commission which it was his duty to choose. His eye fell on Thomas M. Cooley of Michigan for the man he hoped would be elected chairman. Cooley had acquired a national reputation as a distinguished jurist.[58] He possessed the kind of character that would be necessary in a position where he would face much opposition. Perhaps most important of all, Cleveland was sure that the confidence of the people in the administration of the law would be obtained if Cooley accepted the position.

After deciding that Cooley was the man he wanted, the President had only to persuade Cooley to accept. For this task he selected Don Dickinson. On February 13, 1887, Dickinson visited Cooley at his home. He was to discover Cooley's feelings regarding the position and to convince him to accept if Cooley seemed reluctant. After the visit, Dickinson immediately wrote a letter to the President expressing Cooley's reluctance, but also his statement, "Yet if the President of his own mind should tender me a place on this Commission, I should not feel at liberty to decline. Concluded Dickinson, "I am confident, therefore, that the Judge would accept."[59]

[58]Lewis G. Vander Velde has summarized Cooley's career well in his chapter on Cooley in Michigan and the Cleveland Era, pp. 77-106.

[59]Dickinson to Cleveland, Feb. 13, 1887, CPLC.

With this assurance, Cleveland tendered the position to Cooley sincerely entreating, "I earnestly ask you to consent to serve us all in the capacity mentioned."[60] As Cleveland had hoped, the Commission chose Cooley as its first chairman. Cleveland was not disappointed in his choice for Cooley aided greatly in shaping the policy of the Interstate Commerce Commission and thus helped to launch it successfully.[61]

Dickinson received the most publicity during these years from his participation in the well-known Telephone Cases which were argued before the Supreme Court during late January and early February of 1887. A number of telephone companies had appealed to the Supreme Court contending that Alexander Graham Bell was not the true inventor of the telephone, and thus the Letters Patent in possession of the American Bell Telephone were invalid. Or as Dickinson himself stated the case before the Court, "The issue is simply, Did Alexander Graham Bell or Daniel Drawbaugh first conceive and apply this principle, and clothe the conception in substantial forms which demonstrated at once its practical efficacy and util-

[60] L. G. Vander Velde, Michigan and the Cleveland Era, p. 26.

[61] A. C. McLaughlin, "Thomas McIntyre Cooley," Dictionary of American Biography, IV (1930), 292-293.

ity."[62] Dickinson represented the People's Telephone Company and the Overland Telephone Company in their attempts to show that Daniel Drawbaugh invented the first practical telephone.

Dickinson argued that the earliest possible date of Bell's invention was June 2, 1875. On the other hand, Drawbaugh had the first idea of "transmitting articulate speech over a telegraph wire in 1859-60" and refined his instrument "down to the finished and nice-adjusted-mechanism" prior to the date of Bell's telephone.

The truthfulness of this, Dickinson maintained, was evident from the fact that "over two hundred persons testify" to the fact that they knew Drawbaugh's telephone existed before the date of Bell's invention, that over seventy talked through the machine and over one hundred and thirty saw the machines of Drawbaugh.

Dickinson performed masterfully pointing out that although all the witnesses could not remember all the various parts and details of the instrument, "they are agreed in memory of the great, conclusive fact, THAT THIS MACHINE DID TALK." He pointed out that "the lives of all the witnesses are clean, their characters for truth and veracity unassailed."

When the lawyers for the American Bell Tele-

[62] People's Telephone Co. v. American Telephone Co., 126 US 1 (1887).

phone Company argued that Drawbaugh was not a learned man and, therefore, could not have invented the telephone, some of Dickinson's Jeffersonian spirit revealed itself when he answered, "So far as the learning is concerned, it can be shown that successful inventors are not the product of the universities, but of natural conditions and of tendencies common enough in American civilization. Genius is innate, and the man possessing it is the man who must advance in its use."[63]

Dickinson's allotted time before the Supreme Court was one hour and forty-two minutes. At the end of this period, Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite informed Dickinson that his time was up. Dickinson had argued so cogently that two other lawyers representing the same side, George F. Edmunds and Lysander Hill, immediately arose and yielded their time.[64] Dickinson accepted the offer of Hill and spoke for approximately three hours.

One of the justices who heard the case was Stephen J. Field. He seemed especially impressed with the qualities and thinking of Dickinson. In 1893 he wrote to Dickinson urging that he push himself forward as a candidate while at the same time paying him

[63] People's Telephone Co. v. American Telephone Co., 126 US 1 (1887).

[64] Detroit Free Press, Feb. 2, 1887.

this compliment. "Gresham of Illinois, Putnam of Maine and yourself of Michigan I have heard mentioned. Admitting the ability and fitness of the two former--my choice of the three is decidedly for yourself. . . . May such good fortune fall to my county, as certainly would by your accession to the Supreme bench."[65]

As he had refrained from seeking elective positions and had preferred to serve Cleveland in an unofficial capacity, so also upon the death of Justice Samuel Blatchford, he did not promote himself as a candidate as Field suggested he do. His letters and actions indicate that he did not covet an appointment to the Supreme Court and preferred that Cleveland name some one other than he.[66]

The election of Cleveland in 1884 marked the beginning of a long association between Dickinson and Cleveland. As time went on, an association based on mutual interests gradually ripened into a friendship that continued until Cleveland's death in 1908.

There were several factors that seem to have caused the bond between these two men to grow. Both, of course, were vitally interested in politics and

[65]Field to Dickinson, July 13, 1893, DPLC.

[66]Field to Dickinson, July 12, 1893, DPLC.
Dickinson to Henry T. Thurber, Aug. 22, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

the Democratic party. Cleveland recognized Dickinson's abilities as a politician and appreciated the efforts put forth by Dickinson in recreating a Democratic party in Michigan that was more alive and vigorous.

Allan Nevins points out that "men expected Cleveland to display not an excursive boldness, but simply a greater honesty and earnestness than his predecessors, and he understood this perfectly."[67] Cleveland himself summed up his philosophy on this subject when he said, "Let us be steadfast in our beliefs, unmoved by clamor; and untempted by an inordinate desire for success at any cost of principle and consistency. Thus will we serve our country best; thus shall we know the joy that mere success can never know."[68]

Cleveland possessed a type of courage and conviction that never seemed to wilt or bend. He had rather dramatically displayed this characteristic early in his political career by vetoing such bills as the Five Cent Fare bill when approval would have meant nothing but greater popularity for him.[69] It was not surprising that Cleveland saw in Dickinson

[67]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 189.

[68]Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland: The Man and the Statesman (New York, 1923), I, 72.

[69]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 115.

the same courage and conviction that he had.[70]

There were other traits that Cleveland found in Dickinson which helped to mold bonds between them that would last a lifetime. Both were energetic, untiring workers driven on to accomplish successfully the goal set up. Their careers ran parallel in many ways. Both had chosen law as their vocation. Both enjoyed the challenges that this work presented and strove to meet these challenges boldly. Cleveland had a "genius for application, and a resolute purpose to master every question which came before him."[71] The Leroux v. Hudson case in which Dickinson had played such a prominent role was only one example of the perseverance that marked his own legal career.

Both men found pleasure in their occupations as attorneys. At the same time, neither could resist the lure that the world of politics thrust out at

[70]An incident which illustrates this occurred shortly after the November, 1884 election. Local Democratic politicians in Detroit sought to void certain Republican votes because of some technical errors. A commission was established by the canvassing board to determine what should be done. Dickinson was called to testify before this commission. Even though his own party would suffer, Dickinson expressed the conviction that if the mistakes were merely clerical or technical, corrections should be made so that the intent of the voter would not be thwarted. Dickinson concluded with the words, "Whoever is affected--whatever the result--let nothing be done to defeat the popular will. That is all I have to say, gentlemen."

[71]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 67.

them. At an early age, both enlisted under the banner of the Democratic party and both had been successful in climbing to positions of prominence. While Cleveland had risen from his first elective office as ward supervisor in Buffalo, New York, at the age of twenty-five to the Presidency of the United States, Dickinson, not choosing to run for elective offices, had moved from one who had been placed on the State Central Committee as a substitute in 1872 to a nationally recognized Democratic leader at the time of Cleveland's election.

Both Dickinson and Cleveland also adhered to a rather strict Jeffersonian approach to government. In Leroux v. Hudson, Dickinson argued against federal court encroachment upon state courts. He feared that too much government would injure the common citizen in America. Cleveland, too, was what one might term a Jeffersonian Democrat. Said Cleveland in his annual message to Congress in December, 1884, "Our mission among the nations of the earth, and our success in accomplishing the work God has given the American people to do, require of those intrusted with the making and execution of our laws perfect devotion, above all other things, to the public good."

He continued saying, "This devotion will lead us to resist strongly all impatience of constitutional limitations of Federal power, and to check persistently the increasing tendency to extend the scope of

Federal legislation into the domain of State and local jurisdiction, upon the plea of subserving the public welfare. The preservation of the partitions between proper subjects of Federal and local care and regulation is of such importance under the Constitution, which is the law of our very existence, that no consideration of expediency or sentiment should tempt us to enter upon doubtful ground."[72]

Common interests and sympathetic ideas regarding the philosophy and nature of government were instrumental in drawing these two men together. However, all factors that have thus far been elaborated upon would not have created a mutual understanding and friendship had either man possessed personality quirks that would have repelled the other. Quite the opposite was true. Cleveland respected the judgment and good sense of Dickinson, thus consulting him increasingly as time went on. Although Cleveland was President, he never belittled Dickinson. As has been seen, Dickinson had much to say regarding federal patronage in Michigan. In matters such as federal appointments Cleveland appears to have had implicit faith in Dickinson even when some of the appointments were vigorously assailed by others. Cleveland also appreciated Dickinson's attitude in

[72]George F. Parker (ed.), The Writings and Speeches of Grover Cleveland (New York, 1892), pp. 97-98.

rendering advice. The President never seemed to feel that he was being harried by Dickinson; quite the opposite was true, for the President usually sought out Dickinson when he needed his counsel.

Dickinson never forgot that Cleveland was the Great Chief, as he called him. While respecting and admiring him, he did not become a mere puppet--something Cleveland would have despised. When he was convinced that what he sought was just and right, Dickinson stood up vigorously for it. At the same time, Dickinson labored to prevent friction within his party when a just compromise could be effected. These characteristics and traits were revealed early in the Cleveland-Dickinson relationship and help to explain the fact that Dickinson remained a trusted advisor and friend as long as Cleveland lived.

CHAPTER IV

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL

During the first years of the Cleveland administration, Donald Dickinson successfully resisted all attempts to entice him into any official government position. He, however, had not entirely closed the door on accepting such a position when the appropriate time came. He once mentioned that he was "going out of politics." Nonetheless, he explained to Cleveland that "by 'going out of politics' I do not mean that I would not at any time, under any circumstances of personal sacrifice, by night as well as by day, serve the President." He went on to assert that he could best serve Cleveland out of office. "This last reply to your kindly repeated suggestion about 'coming down there.'"[1]

Nevertheless, Cleveland did not accept this as Dickinson's final word, and in November, 1887, he persuaded Dickinson to accept the position of Postmaster-General in his Cabinet. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, many factors drew Cleveland and

[1]Dickinson to Cleveland, Feb. 20, 1886, Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter CPLC.

Dickinson together. Undoubtedly, some of these were significant when Cleveland sought a successor to William F. Vilas who was reluctant to relinquish the Postmaster-Generalship, but did so upon the request of Cleveland who regarded Vilas as "the very best and safest successor in the Interior Department." However, there were other considerations besides the fact that the Cleveland-Dickinson bond was strengthened as time progressed.

The logical choice to many and a man who desired the position vacated by William F. Vilas was First Assistant Postmaster-General Adlai E. Stevenson.[2] With Cleveland, nevertheless, remained the responsibility of choosing a new Cabinet officer. He disregarded Stevenson and sought out Dickinson.

Cleveland had been generally pleased with the suggestions that Dickinson had made concerning those best suited to fill federal jobs. As Postmaster-General, Dickinson would be a chief dispenser of federal positions. Cleveland realized that the distribution of federal patronage required much finesse. He wanted it done as efficiently and honestly as possible. The President had been an advocate of civil service reform, and his efforts could be greatly nullified if the new Postmaster-General bungled his job

[2]Dorothy G. Fowler, The Cabinet Politician: The Postmasters General, 1829-1909(New York, 1943), p. 199.

in the matter of federal patronage.

Michigan had not been able to boast of a great number of Cabinet officers in its history. Lewis Cass had served under Jackson and Buchanan. Under Franklin Pierce, Robert McClelland had held the post of Secretary of the Interior, while Zachariah Chandler had held the same post under Grant. Thus, to choose Dickinson was an honor to the state of Michigan. Michigan no longer was a state that could be counted on to place its vote in the Republican column no matter who ran for office. With Michigan recognized in this way and with Dickinson being able to use patronage more widely, the state might be shifted into the Democratic column.

Dickinson was motivated to accept chiefly by his intense loyalty and devotion to Grover Cleveland. This appears to be overpowering for Dickinson had many reasons that might have persuaded him not to accept had he not admired Cleveland in the way that he did. He was by this time one of the nation's leading lawyers with his salary several times the eight thousand dollars which the position of Postmaster-General offered.[3] Thus, an acceptance of this job would entail a drastic cut in salary, while he served in the capacity of Postmaster-General. Dickinson was a person who would give his all for Cleveland and the

[3]Detroit Evening News, Jan. 2, 1888.

country refusing to supplement his salary by engaging in his profession while in the Cabinet. Evidence of this fact is a letter to Charles R. Stuart in which Dickinson revealed, "All my private matters have been sacrificed, and I have been unable to give the slightest attention to private business since I have been here. If at home, I think I would be in a position to aid you; but as it is, I must say with very much regret that I cannot take this matter upon my shoulders."[4]

He also was reluctant to leave Michigan for an extended period at a time when he felt that he could do more to make it an organization that would be alive and fighting. Although indirectly he remained a power in the state Democratic party, he realized that the situation could not be the same if he were Postmaster-General. He expressed these sentiments when he wrote, "Since I have been here, I have had many requests including a large number from gentlemen in whom I took no special interest, and some from those to whom I was very warmly attached. To all these I have invariably replied that, at my distance, I could not form a judgment as to what was best; that it be in the highest degree improper for me, occupying the position I do under the Federal administration to

[4]Dickinson to Stuart, Aug. 8, 1888, Dickinson Papers, Library of Congress.

attempt to influence local action."[5] He wrote to William E. Quinby that he felt himself "crippled and encumbered by this harness on my back" and even at the last minute would have been happy if he had "escaped the yoke" in order to better serve the state Democratic party.[6]

Perhaps Dickinson's and Cleveland's feelings on the appointment are best summed up in a letter written by Dickinson himself. In it he related that he had told the President that if the decision to appoint him to "this high place" had been motivated by a desire to honor him, he "would positively decline." "At the same time," said Dickinson, "I need hardly deliberate when you already so well understand that the confidence alone which you have in me fills the highest measure of my desires and ambitions." He went on to express his feeling that he owed "no higher duty than that I owe you and all you represent" and that if Cleveland still thought it advisable that Dickinson accept the position in spite of what had been said, "I must then consider your judgment conclusive of what is best."[7]

[5]Dickinson to "My dear Judge," Mar. 31, 1888, DPLC. This letter appears to have been sent to Judge Lambert Tree.

[6]Dickinson to William E. Quinby, Jan. 23, 1888, DPLC.

[7]Dickinson to "Dear Judge," n.d., Dickinson Papers, Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

To this Cleveland replied with no hesitation, "I have settled the matter in my favor and in favor of the country and shall look for you at the time already indicated."[8] Thus, Dickinson was nominated on December 6, 1887.

At the time of Dickinson's appointment Cleveland made two other major appointments. William F. Vilas was named Secretary of the Interior, and Lucius Q. C. Lamar who had occupied this position was nominated to fill a Supreme Court vacancy. There seemed to be general satisfaction with the appointments of Dickinson and Vilas. However, some Senators such as John Ingalls, John Sherman and George Edmunds fought desperately to prevent the confirmation of Lamar.[9] Lamar had drafted the Mississippi Ordinance of Secession in 1861 and had served with the Confederate Army for two years. Although Lamar had served ably as Cleveland's Secretary of the Interior, some Senators could not forget the fact that he was on the "wrong" side during the Civil War. Hence, several members of the Senate suggested that Dickinson and Vilas be approved at once while delaying that of Lamar. Dickinson declared that he would only accept the position of Postmaster-General if Lamar were confirmed. When the hassle continued on into January, Dickinson offered

[8]Cleveland to Dickinson, Nov. 11, 1887, DPLC.

[9]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 339.

the President the privilege of withdrawing his name if in any way it would end the strife over the confirmations which Cleveland was seeking.[10] Cleveland refused to withdraw any name; and when several Western Republicans failed to go along with efforts to defeat the Lamar nomination, all three appointments were confirmed on January 16, 1888. Dickinson was sworn in as Postmaster-General the following day.

An incident that occurred shortly before his confirmation made it quite evident that Dickinson planned to operate the Post Office Department in a way that would place the interests of the public first. Dickinson had become quite upset shortly before assuming his duties by the behavior of a day watchman working in the Post-Office Department. The watchman, not recognizing Dickinson, had been very curt when Dickinson had sought entrance to the Department after two o' clock, the time the Department was closed to the public. When the watchman was informed by Dickinson that he had business, the new Postmaster-General was told, "I said it was closed." "Don't know," was the reply to a question concerning how admission might be obtained. When he was asked regarding the time that one could enter the next day, the watchman replied, "You will have to find out for yourself, sir."

A short time later Dickinson called the watch-

[10]Detroit Evening News, Jan. 9, 1888.

man into his office. He was ashamed when he recognized Dickinson, but he defended his actions by saying that "so many men come that we are greatly annoyed and become very tired." Said Dickinson, "That is undoubtedly true, but you should remember that the government pays you for being annoyed and weary. . . . I would have very much preferred that you had offended a Senator than to have failed to be courteous to the veriest stranger that ever asked admission to the department."[11]

One of the first steps that Dickinson took to carry out his aim of better service for the general public was the successful negotiation of a contract with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company. This contract provided for a more efficient fast mail service between Chicago and Council Bluffs, Iowa, with daily service both east and west. The departing time was to be controlled by the Post Office Department on either end. With this arrangement California mail leaving San Francisco in the evening after business hours and arriving in Council Bluffs the afternoon of the third day could be placed aboard the new fast train and reach Chicago in time for the first morning delivery on the fourth day from the Pacific Coast. Eventually the Post Office Department hoped to provide service that would speed letters from San

[11]Detroit Free Press, Jan. 21, 1888.

Francisco to New York in one hundred and twelve hours. Dickinson considered this contract significant for it was the only contract ever entered into by which the Post Office Department could control the departure of mail trains which was essential in providing better mail service.[12]

Dickinson faced the biggest challenge of his term as Postmaster-General less than two months after he had been sworn into office. This crisis began on February 27, 1888, when locomotive engineers and firemen on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad went out on strike demanding an abandonment of the system of classification and a new wage scale.[13] Dickinson and the Post Office Department became involved for it seemed that the transportation of mail would be seriously hampered by this strike which threatened to become more serious if engineers and firemen from other railway companies refused to engage in moving cars belonging to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy system.[14] It was feared that in this case the railway companies would discharge those en-

[12]Newspaper clipping from the New York Herald, Feb. 11, 1888, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 5, MHCA.

[13]J. R. Commons et. al., History of Labor in the United States (New York, 1918), II, 474.

[14]Dickinson to T. E. Nash, March 10, 1888. Letter included in a single volume of Dickinson correspondence in the Clarke Historical Collection, Central Michigan U.

gineers and firemen who refused to handle the cars of the Burlington company.

No precedent had been set by the Government for the situation that existed when the strike was called. The owners of the railway companies hoped that the United States government would enable the company to break the strike by insisting upon the transportation of mail which would necessitate engineers and firemen remaining at their posts. However, Dickinson gave no indication that such action was contemplated so the railroad came to Dickinson saying, "We come before the Post Office Department in order that we may have a fair understanding as to what we may expect in the future."[15]

In his reply Dickinson made it very clear just where he and the Government stood on this matter. Dickinson began in a friendly but firm tone pointing out that an efficient mail service rested primarily on cordial co-operation between the Post Office Department and the owners and operators of the railroad companies. At the same time, Dickinson felt it was

[15]Reply of Donald M. Dickinson in the matter of the application of the Michigan Central Railroad Company, the Pennsylvania Railway Company, the Pennsylvania Lines West of Pittsburgh, the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railway Company, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company, the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad Company, the Chicago and Northwestern Railway Company, the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway Company, Mar. 1, 1888. Clarke Historical Collection. Hereafter cited Reply of Donald M. Dickinson . . . , Mar. 1, 1888.

"a grave defect in our system" that the railroad companies were not compelled to carry the mail by law.

The one lever that the Post Office Department did have was the right of the Postmaster-General to levy fines and deductions "for every failure to perform service whether from fault or from unavoidable accident." Dickinson's belief was that the intent of this was not to exercise this power "to their utmost limits," but "to make the right to discipline for actual delinquency certain, quick, and unappealable as a disciplinary force; a force which would be wholesomely respected, even if passive, because its exercise and the right to use it might not be delayed or questioned."

When Dickinson spoke of not pressing the power to impose fines and deductions to the limit, he cited examples of this. He did not believe that railroads should be fined if mails were delayed by reason of an act of God such as a heavy blizzard. Besides this, Dickinson said, "I am of the opinion that no fine or deduction should be imposed for delay caused by a broken axle, hot box, or any similar accident against which, in the common knowledge of railroading, the highest degree of diligence and care have not been able to guard against."[16]

[16]Reply of Donald M. Dickinson in the matter of the application of the Michigan Central Railroad Company . . . , Mar. 1, 1888.

On the other hand, Dickinson reminded the railway companies of their duties asserting that "thousands of people and thousands of interests depend or are involved in the delivery of the mails. The passenger traffic or freight of a single train involve infinitesimal interests in comparison with a heavy mail and must in no case be given precedence. . . ." Dickinson firmly asserted that if railway companies did not honor this and disregarded this philosophy, "the penalty in such cases should be heavy enough to make it thoroughly understood and remembered."

The chief matter that interested the company was the Government's view concerning a strike against a railway company. Dickinson answered this bluntly stating, "I do not conceive that a strike of railroad employees can afford any excuse for failure to carry the mails. There has been no case where men and facilities could not be found sufficient to carry the mails; and if cases occur where the contractors either will not or cannot take other business in addition, it can be no ground for refusal or failure to proceed with the Government business alone."[17]

Thus, under Dickinson, the Post Office Department refused to get involved in any strike other than insisting that there should be no interference with

[17]Reply of Donald M. Dickinson . . . , Mar. 1, 1888.

the mail and the transportation of it. It was the responsibility of the employer and the employee to work out an agreement that was mutually acceptable. The Government had no obligation to pay special compensations to the railroad companies because of inconveniences created by the strike.

A real crisis loomed when all the companies acquiesced with this theory except the Atchison, Topeka, and the Sante Fe system. The firemen and engineers struck this railroad company on March 15, 1888. This was purely a sympathy strike.[18] The employees on the Santa Fe system hoped to aid the striking firemen and engineers on the Burlington road. The engineers and firemen on the Santa Fe railway were willing to carry the mail and to do so regularly and promptly. However, the company insisted that the mail would not be forwarded unless other freight and passengers were also transported. The company also claimed that the Government should pay extra compensation during the strike "for doing what they are by contract and by duty bound to do, and when the help is offered to do it."[19] For a moment the nation wondered what move would be forthcoming for Dickinson gave no indication that he would back down from his declared position. A major show-

[18]C. H. Salmons, The Burlington Strike (Aurora, Ill., 1889), p. 340.

[19]Newspaper clipping from the Chicago Sunday Times, Mar. 18, 1888, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 5, MHCA.

down was averted when the strike ended only a few days after it had begun.[20]

During this period Dickinson's words and actions had been carefully observed by citizens throughout the United States. If his policy can be judged by results, it was sound for the mails did get through without resort to force or court injunctions even though the Burlington strike continued until January, 1889. Congressman William L. Scott singled him out saying that Dickinson had handled the matter "very ably." He elaborated, "It was an extremely delicate matter to handle and it required great tact on his part to accomplish what he has done in establishing the precedent that any railroad having a contract with the Government for the transportation of the mails is bound to transport them and to afford the public proper mail facilities on its line."[21]

Dickinson faced the big corporations again when a rider was appended to the Postal Appropriations bill. The Senate amended the Postal Appropriation bill providing a $800,000 subsidy to steamship companies carrying the mail to South and Central American ports, plus those in the West Indies. Dickinson was vigorously opposed to such a subsidy for he felt it would benefit only a few large corporations while harming

[20] Detroit Free Press, Mar. 19, 1888.

[21] Detroit Free Press, Mar. 20, 1888.

the interests of all others using the mails and at the same time force the taxpayer to pay the subsidy.

There was one hope of defeating the amendment and this could only be done if Dickinson could persuade the House to reject the amendment. With this in mind, Dickinson wrote a lengthy formal letter to Chairman James J. Blount of the House Committee on Post offices and Postroads. In this letter, Dickinson, using the same type of logic he had so successfully employed as a lawyer, pointed out clearly what the disadvantages would be and why this amendment should not be passed.

He listed his reasons for opposing the amendment. He explained that even without the subsidy mail steamers had numerous benefits such as the right to discharge their cargoes immediately; they had the right to sail at any hour, day or night, and could not be detained for any pretext. The Postmaster-General declared that preference had been given to American ships "at four times the cost of carriage as competing foreign ships. However, there were times when foreign ships had to be employed on the principle that the first duty of the department to our citizens under the law was to give them the best, most expeditious and certain mail facilities within its resources."

The legislation proposed would limit the Postmaster-General "to contract with American built or American registered steamships for the transporta-

tion of mails to the parts of Central and South America and the West Indies for a period of not less than five years, and with a compensation for each outward trip of one dollar per mile." This would stifle any competition. "In the present conditions the proposed law might as well name the few persons to whom this money is paid." Dickinson stated that after analyzing the proposed legislation, "it would seem to exclude the exercise of any power of any representative of this government to provide for this mail service in the interest of the people. . . ." This went counter to Dickinson's sense of right for he felt the Post Office Department "should be independent and should at all times be enabled to send the mails by the most expeditious routes, and make use of the best facilities afforded for that purpose from among all carriers offering."

Again bearing in mind that the Post Office Department belonged to all the people, Dickinson presented statistics revealing the cost of the subsidy which probably would result in poorer service because foreign ships could not be employed. Concluded Dickinson, "I feel confident that such administration will result only in a very great pecuniary benefit to a dozen individuals at the expense and embarrassment of good service, and of inconvenience, injustice and material injury to the great body of the people whose money will be used in the purchase of those results."

This was too contrary to Dickinson's belief of the greatest good for the greatest number.

This long communication was also interesting for it concluded with Dickinson's views on the subsidy, not as to how it would affect the Post Office Department particularly, but as to its usefulness in seeking to build up commerce with other nations. Here, Dickinson and Cleveland seemed so in accord. Cleveland had strongly urged reductions in tariff. Said Dickinson, in words that Cleveland certainly approved, "Cargoes out and cargoes back are needed for the creation of a merchant marine. The cargo out will not be bought unless we buy in exchange, and it will be bought if we are willing to trade. Until these conditions come, subsidies will maintain a line so long as the subsidy lasts, and then the line will go down for want of legitimate trade."[22]

Dickinson followed debate on this bill carefully. On July 12, he wrote another more personal message to Chairman Blount. He noted that Senator Preston B. Plumb had made the statement that the subsidy amendment "left it discretionary with me to contract for less than the amount of one dollar per nautical mile." Dickinson, however, found that he would have no power to negotiate for less because of

[22]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, pp. XXXIV-XXXVIII.

the mandatory provision to contract "with the men that will see that I am compelled to pay them the maximum." Dickinson wrote Blount that it reminded him of the story of a farmer who proposed to test his son, a college graduate, concerning his knowledge of business. This farmer sent his son to town to buy a cow instructing him to buy it for twenty-five dollars if possible, but to go as high as fifty. This son went to the owner of the cow who immediately asked how much the boy would give for the animal. He told the owner that he would like to pay twenty-five dollars, but if he couldn't get it for that sum, he would go as high as fifty dollars. "It is needless to say," concluded Dickinson, "that the bargain was struck at the maximum figure."[23]

In Dickinson's mind the subsidy amendment had to be defeated. He told Blount that there was no truth in a report that he would be satisfied with a modified version of the subsidy. Dickinson was very explicit saying he wanted to "rout the subsidy people, horse, foot and dragoons."[24]

In this fight to prevent this rider from being attached to the Postal Appropriation bill, Dickinson was successful. On July 18, the Detroit Free Press headlined one of its leading news articles, "Senators

[23]Dickinson to Blount, July 12, 1888, DPLC.

[24]Dickinson to Blount, July 12, 1888, DPLC.

Surrender." The article began, "Postmaster-General Dickinson is the David that slew the subsidy Goliath." The previous day the Senate had agreed to drop the subsidy amendment and the Postal Appropriation bill had passed, "freed from this incubus."[25]

Grover Cleveland, coming to power with his emphasis on reform, was greatly encouraged when his efforts for civil service reform were rewarded substantially by the placing of employees of the railway mail division in the classified service. This reform, labeled by the Civil Service Commission as one of "the most important changes made in the rules during the year," was initiated when Dickinson issued an order placing employees of the Railway Mail Service under civil service.[26] From that time forward no person would be admitted "into any place not excepted from examination by the civil service rules. . . ."[27] This order dispatched on the last day of December, 1888, went into effect May 1, 1889.

Other steps that the Post Office Department took under Dickinson to improve service included the signing of parcel post conventions with the British Hon-

[25] Detroit Free Press, July 18, 1888.

[26] U.S., Congress, House, Sixth Report of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1889, Ex. Doc. 1, p. 3.

[27] U.S., Congress, House, Sixth Report of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, 51st Cong., 1st Sess., 1889, Ex. Doc. 1, pp. 61-62.

duras and Mexico. The first parcel post convention concluded by the United States with any foreign country had gone into operation on October 1, 1887. Under Dickinson these agreements were expanded to the countries mentioned while plans were made to conclude conventions with still more South and Central American neighbors, so that the time would not be long in coming "when the 'Three Americas' will be embraced in one grand parcel post union. . . ."[28] Under these conventions, parcels up to eleven pounds could be carried through the mails. Into Mexico all parcels up to two feet in length and four feet in girth would be carried while into the British Honduras the limit was three feet, six inches in length, while the greatest length and girth combined was six feet. The highest possible charge for a parcel weighing eleven pounds was to be $1.76 which compared very favorably with the fees exacted by foreign express companies. The principal advantage of these new agreements, however, was the fact that "the former slow and expensive method of meeting the custom house requirements" was eliminated.

The convention with Mexico was especially important for prior to the parcel post convention it was forbidden to send through the mails any article of merchantable value between the United States and her

[28]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, p. 829.

southern neighbor. It was believed that the parcel post convention would do much to strengthen trade relations between the United States and Mexico which was the largest and nearest southern neighbor with whom a parcel post convention had been concluded.[29]

Shortly before Dickinson assumed office a postal convention was signed with Canada which "virtually makes one postal territory of the United States and Canada."[30] Under the old convention uniformity of postage rates had been established, but no merchandise of any kind was allowed to be sent through the mails. This restriction was removed by the new convention and merchandise, with few exceptions, could be sent to Canada "at the rates of postage applicable to fourth-class matter in the United States."

When Dickinson came into office, there was much complaint from American seedsmen that Canadian seedsmen provided unfair competition because Canadian domestic rates of postage on seeds was one cent for one ounce or fraction thereof. While the agreement read as it did, Dickinson carried it out even though it was not popular with Americans.[31] Meanwhile, he opened

[29]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, p. 829.

[30]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc 1, p. 828.

[31]Detroit Free Press, Mar. 30, 1888.

negotiations with the Postmaster-General of Canada A. W. McLelan and in April, 1888, amended the postal convention which provided for uniform rates of postage on all third and fourth class matter.[32]

With the inauguration of conventions with both Canada and Mexico, thousands of packages had been exchanged during the first year it had been in effect with ninety per cent of the parcels originating in the United States. It appeared to have stimulated trade in a way that was very beneficial.

While Dickinson was Postmaster-General, registered mail was more safely handled than ever before.[33] Statistics of 1888 revealed that the number of losses had decreased twenty per cent while the number of pieces handled had increased six and one-half per cent over the previous year. There was a considerable increase in both domestic and international money orders; domestic money orders increased eight per cent while international orders increased twenty-three per cent. Although the number of orders increased appreciably, the total amount increased a less impressive three and one-half per cent or $4,810,378.06. In his annual report to Congress, Dickinson recommended that the maxi-

[32]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, pp. 828, 845.

[33]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, p. X.

mum amount of an international money order be upped from fifty to one hundred dollars. There were several advantages in so doing, including the reduction of expenses in post offices, as well as in the Department, for one form would take the place of two on sums between fifty and one hundred dollars. Also, raising the maximum amount to one hundred would bring uniformity between domestic and international money orders. A bill providing for this change was signed by Cleveland January 30, 1889.[34] The postal deficit decreased although the Post Office Department did more business. One economy move was effected when the Department discovered that from 250,000 to 300,000 mail bags had accumulated in the Washington and New York post offices because they needed repairs. Before Dickinson came into office, the repair shops had been under the charge of the postmasters in those two cities. Dickinson ordered these repair shops to be placed under the direct supervision of the Second Assistant Postmaster-General. All the mail bags which needed repairs were sent to the shop in Washington which resulted in a saving of sixty thousand dollars. This had been so successful that a repair shop for locks and keys was also recommended.

Besides the fast mail contract previously alluded

[34]Dickinson to the Sec. of State, Feb. 4, 1889, Postmaster-General Letterbook No. 26, National Archives, Washington.

to, others were negotiated which caused the General Superintendent of the Railway Mail Service to say, "The improvements in this service during the past fiscal year and up to date have been more extensive than perhaps during any previous year in its history. A noticeable feature in the improvements is that they have been more general and distributed over a greater area of country than has heretofore been found practicable, embracing New England, the Southern and Middle States, the transcontinental service between Chicago and San Francisco, and also the northwestern section traversed by the Northern Pacific Railroad."

In his efforts to correct abuses arising from the franking privilege Dickinson was less successful. Dickinson soon discovered that unauthorized persons were using the franking privilege. In some cases it seemed Congressmen were allowing the unauthorized use of their franking privilege, while in others unauthorized individuals were forging the names of those who were authorized to use it.

Thus, on February 29, 1888, Dickinson came to grips with this delicate problem and sent a message to the president of the Senate saying, "The right to send matter in the mails under unofficial frank has by recent legislation been considerably extended, and opportunity largely increased for the abuse of this privilege." Dickinson continued by explaining that "the

placing of official names upon public or private matter by others than the officers on whom the right is conferred is easy, difficult of detection by postal officials, and under present statutes not explicitly declared punishable."[35]

In his report to the Congress, Dickinson proposed a solution which he felt would eliminate the abuses and, at the same time, would be very equitable. He suggested that the franking privilege be abolished; and, instead, a yearly allowance be given to each Senator and Representative for the purchase of postage stamps, which would place each one "upon an exact equality." "No one could make use of the mails beyond his own allowance, and no unauthorized person could make use of the mails to forward unofficial matter."[36]

Dickinson's proposal on this touchy subject was not met with much enthusiasm. Apparently, the members of Congress wanted no intrusion on this privilege for no attempts were made to introduce legislation following the lines of Dickinson's suggestions.

Actually, Dickinson was Postmaster-General for a rather brief period of less than fourteen months. However, during this brief span a much greater personal

[35]Dickinson to the President of the Senate, Feb. 29, 1888, Postmaster-General Letterbook No. 24, National Archives, Washington.

[36]U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888-1889, House Ex. Doc. 1, p. XXIV.

bond was established between Dickinson and Cleveland. Prior to this time Dickinson had met Cleveland several times, but it usually had been to discuss business.

When Dickinson became Postmaster-General, there was opportunity for informal visits or outings. For instance, Cleveland loved to fish and Dickinson sometimes accompanied him.[37] This association, both officially and unofficially, turned what formerly had been chiefly a business relationship into one that was warmer and more intimate.[38]

Cleveland continued to recognize Dickinson as an influential political leader, especially in his home state. In January, 1888, an obscure politician from Kentucky named Thobe challenged the seat of Speaker John C. Carlisle. This man claimed that he had been rightfully elected, producing certain affadavits to prove that he had been elected.[39] Although the House Committee on Elections had rejected Thobe's claim, the House itself acted very slowly. It seemed that certain members of the House sought to embarrass Carlisle and Cleveland, too, for Carlisle had fought hard for the Cleveland legislative program, including the con-

[37]Detroit Free Press, July 27, 1888.

[38]Evidence of this can be seen in the correspondence between Mrs. Dickinson and Mrs. Cleveland. These letters exist in the Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[39]New York Times, Jan. 15, 1888.

troversial tariff program. Although the Republicans seemed to be the chief instigators of opposition, some Democrats also seemed disgruntled with Carlisle's leadership. Cleveland, who later chose Carlisle as his Secretary of the Treasury, wanted him seated as quickly and with as little difficulty as possible. In a letter to Dickinson, he intimated that Dickinson could be of some help in swaying the Michigan delegation.[40] How much pressure Dickinson exerted at this time, one cannot determine. However, Carlisle's title was cleared on the same day that Cleveland wrote a letter on the subject to Dickinson.[41]

Dickinson continued to be influential in the matter of federal patronage. John J. Enright and William L. Bancroft, both citizens of Michigan and associates of Dickinson, received responsible positions within the Post Office Department. Outside the Post Office Department, perhaps the most significant appointment that Dickinson influenced during his term as Postmaster-General was the nomination of John G. Parkhurst as minister to Belgium.[42]

Dickinson felt that his experience as Postmaster-General allowed him to make two suggestions which he termed "radical reforms in postal administration."

[40]Cleveland to Dickinson, Jan. 23, 1888, CPLC.

[41]New York Times, Jan. 24, 1888.

[42]Dickinson to Cleveland, Dec. 12, 1885, CPLC.

Thus, shortly after he retired as Postmaster-General, he published an article in the North American Review entitled "Progress and the Post" which outlines these suggestions.[43]

The first reform proposed by Dickinson would provide for a "distribution of the powers and responsibilities of the post office establishment." He explained that "no agency of government, State, national, or municipal, so touches the individual citizen in domestic affairs and in his going and in his coming." Yet the Post Office Department had no officials near the people who had enough authority and responsibility to effect better service when it was necessary which could have been accomplished had the authority been granted. All complaints of service, Dickinson informed his readers, had to go through the department at Washington to be remedied. Dickinson proposed to remedy this situation with a re-organized system of territorial division clothed with the power and responsibilities which at the time only the Postmaster-General possessed. In matters relating to the more universal interests of the country, the Postmaster-General would remain the superior.

Dickinson's second suggestion stemmed from the experience that he had had in dealing with railway companies which were under contract to carry the mail, but

[43]Donald M. Dickinson, "Progress and the Post," North American Review, CXLIX (October, 1889), 399-412.

had been confronted with strikes. During Dickinson's tenure there had been no serious interruptions of mail service, but Dickinson could foresee dangerous possibilities unless the laws were altered. "It is a startling proposition," he wrote, "that the only alternative, in case any great trunk line should refuse to renew its contract for carriage, is that set out in the act of Congress, hereafter quoted, which authorizes the Postmaster-General in such case to send forward the mails by 'horse-express, or otherwise'!" He was convinced that Congress had the constitutional authority to compel the keeping of a contract by a railroad company besides the power to fine and deduct. Failure to transport the mail went contrary to public interests and "when one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good to the extent of the interest he has thus created."

In spite of what had occurred, Dickinson concluded that "it may still require a few more striking illustrations of the fact that the railroad carrier, and not the Government, is master of the situation, to transform the suggestion for revision, frequently presented to Congress, into an imperative demand from the source of power."

Dickinson's last suggestion went unheeded and his concluding prediction came to pass in 1894 during the

Pullman strike. In this situation the striking American Railway Union indicated, as had the striking firemen and engineers in 1888, that they would allow the hauling of mail upon certain roads and would supply the men to do so provided no Pullman cars were attached. However, in this case the railroad companies refused to allow the trains to move "without the full complement of cars."[44] According to the view that Dickinson had expressed in 1888, the railroad companies would be obligated to have the mails under the conditions stipulated by the striking employees. Nevertheless, no law had been passed designating what exactly constituted a mail train. Any passenger train could be requested to transport mail, but did this mean that every car that normally was part of a mail train could never be separated. If this were true, striking employees would be at a tremendous disadvantage. Unlike 1888, the Government became involved in the Pullman strike. This interference was instrumental in finally breaking the strike. Had Dickinson's suggestions been followed, had a law clearly defining the duties and obligations of both railway companies and the employees been enacted prior to the great Pullman Strike, the disorders and bitterness engendered at that time might have been avoided.[45]

[44]Almont Lindsey, The Pullman Strike (Chicago, 1942), p. 150.

[45]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 627.

Because of his position of Postmaster-General, Dickinson played a less conspicuous role in the 1888 political campaign than if he had not held this post. In a letter to W. E. Quinby soon after his nomination to the position of Postmaster-General had been approved, he wrote, "You cannot conceive of how anxious I am about the State. . . . I do not think we at home have appreciated the space which Michigan occupies in the mind of the Great Chief, or comprehended the hope for support from her which is grounded upon the intelligence, and honesty of our people."[46] In the same letter he complained of "this harness on my back" which he felt could hamper him in the 1888 campaign. Other evidence that Dickinson planned to participate less than he might have is derived from a letter to State Chairman I. M. Weston written February 4, 1888, in which he granted Weston his proxy on the National Committee. "The giving of the proxy will be a practical nomination for service until the next National convention, unless you should prefer to serve temporarily by proxy, and in that case you could hold it and retain the Chairmanship."[47]

Because of his position as Postmaster-General and because he wished to give the Republicans no opportunity to charge the Cleveland administration with

[46]Dickinson to Quinby, Jan. 23, 1888, DPLC.

[47]Dickinson to Weston, Feb. 4, 1888, DPLC.

hypocrisy in the matter of reform, Dickinson refrained from attending the Democratic convention. He explained that although there was actually nothing to forbid a federal official from "the exercise of his individual influence as a citizen in favor of the views which he holds in the same manner as if he were not in office, yet, in view of the disgraceful abuses heretofore adverted to, it is a matter which suggests itself to the good taste and judgment of sensible men, whether the indecencies heretofore practiced should even seem to be imitated by the appearance of Federal officials of this Administration at conventions."[48]

Dickinson reiterated on several occasions that he did not wish to dictate specifically those who should be delegated to attend conventions or nominated for elective offices. Shortly before the Democratic state convention in May, he wrote a letter to the State Chairman I. M. Weston advising that he "have a platform prepared." Dickinson continued by saying that he hoped there would be "an emphatic endorsement of the President's message in reference to the lines of reform and reclamation of the public lands, and a commendation of his prudence and safety, and care of business interests." However, as to endorsing delegates, Dickinson stated flatly that although he had received several letters to support Yaple as delegate-at-large

[48]Dickinson to A. Charles, May 9, 1888, DPLC.

to the national convention, he didn't "wish either publicly or privately to attempt to assume powers of dictation as to the personnel of the delegation." He merely expressed the hope that the state convention would send "staunch friends of the President" to the national convention.[49]

This sentiment of non-interference in local nominations was repeated by Dickinson late in the campaign. On August 20, he wrote to Samuel Burroughs, "I have no time, inclination, or disposition, to make even a suggestion as to candidates for local offices, and were the conditions otherwise I certainly would not interfere with your political ambitions."[50] Four days later he wrote in a similar vein to M. C. Dowling explaining that since he had been in Washington he had received "many requests including a large number from gentlemen in whom I took no special interest, and some from those to whom I was very warmly attached." Dickinson wrote to Dowling that it would be "improper" for him to interfere in local nominations, "however, I might desire the success of any friend." He pointed out that his place in the Federal administration prohibited such activity.[51]

Dickinson did what he could to quash efforts to

[49]Dickinson to Weston, May 3, 1888, DPLC.

[50]Dickinson to Burroughs, Aug. 20, 1888, DPLC.

[51]Dickinson to Dowling , Aug. 24, 1888, DPLC.

place his name before the national convention as a candidate for Vice President. There was some speculation that he would be nominated for that position. The New York Graphic came out strongly for him. Michigan Democrats wished to endorse him for the Vice Presidency, but he insisted that the Michigan delegation go uninstructed on this matter to the national convention.[52] He wrote a letter to one supporter saying, "I am sorry it would give you pleasure to see me commit such a folly as to be a candidate for that place. . . ."[53] He continued by avowing that no higher honor could be conferred upon him than being an individual in whom the President had confidence. This he already had from a man whom Dickinson called "the foremost figure of the time."

The fact that Dickinson had been named to Cleveland's Cabinet enhanced his stature amongst Michigan Democrats. Even though he felt that he could not be as active as he might have were he not Postmaster-General, he remained the state's leading Democrat. On May 3, the Wayne county Democratic convention passed a resolution stating, "We say that the President did credit to himself and honor to the state of Michigan and especially Wayne county when he appointed

[52]Fowler, The Cabinet Politician, p. 202.

[53]Dickinson to D. C. Budsall, Feb. 13, 1888, DPLC.

as Postmaster-General Don M. Dickinson."[54] One week later the Democratic state convention meeting in Grand Rapids passed a similar resolution.[55]

In July the Democrats convened again in order to pick a slate of candidates for state offices. This convention was held at the Detroit Opera House. Across the upper half of the stage was a large streamer upon which were engraved the names of Cleveland and Thurman with a picture of each in crayon. On the stage were steel engravings on easels of Cleveland and Thurman. To the left of the stage was a large portrait of Dickinson with two flags crossed above it.[56] Michigan Democrats made it obvious that they considered Dickinson one of the leading political figures from their party.

Dickinson did make some campaign appearances prior to the election. On September 26, he made his first official appearance in Michigan since becoming Postmaster-General. The occasion was a huge political rally held in Detroit. He was scheduled to be one of the main speakers. Upon his arrival the whole audience rose to its feet shouting, "Dickinson! Dickinson!" The Detroit Free Press described the response to the chairman's proposal of "three cheers for Don M.

[54]Detroit Free Press, May 4, 1888.

[55]Detroit Free Press, May 11, 1888.

[56]Detroit Free Press, July 20, 1888.

Dickinson" in this fashion. "The enthusiasm was boundless. The ladies in the gallery were infected with the spirit, and fluttered their tiny handkerchiefs and smiled the rarest of smiles. The roof was almost raised by the volume of sound. Even the two handsome bouquets which stood on the little table in front of Mr. Dickinson quivered in sympathy."[57]

In his speech Dickinson centered his thoughts around a favorite subject, President Grover Cleveland. He informed his large audience that "this President of ours has been all the time, since March 4, 1885, President of the United States." There had been "no usurpation of Executive functions upon his part. No trenching upon Executive privileges, no pruning of the powers of the Chief Magistrate, no encroachment upon the official rights of the chosen of 60,000,000 of freemen has been tolerated or permitted."[58]

Dickinson continued by declaring that he was speaking on "a plain subject, Grover Cleveland." For a time there were some politicians in Washington that could not understand this and considered Cleveland "a puzzle, an enigma" because they were accustomed "to the old condition of things." He illustrated his point by telling a story of an abnormal season of rainy weather in Zululand. The weather remained so long that

[57]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 27, 1888.

[58]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 27, 1888.

the natives became accustomed to it. One day a light like fire blazed up to the zenith and down to the horizon from a common center. The king, his court, and the wise men of the land all differed on what this meant. Some said it was the beginning of the world; others that the moon had fallen. Finally, "a plain old fellow from the backwoods came along and said, 'Why, friends, it is just going to clear off, and that that you see is the familiar, old-fashioned, God's sunshine and the glimmer of the blue vault of heaven.'"

Dickinson emphasized Cleveland's honesty and forthrightness throughout his speech. When the Senate first sought to "crowd" him, they found they could not and complained that he treated them as if they were the Common Council of Buffalo, and he fit to be only a small town mayor. Later, they said, "Oh, he is a man of some ability, he has a certain low cunning, he is a bold, bad man. Still later he rose in their vocabulary of epithets to the dignity of usurper."

Dickinson reminded his audience that Washington and Jackson were reviled and assailed, "yet these two names continue to grow in luster as time rolls on, while the posterity of the men who trained them, thank God that the memory of their ancestors has rotted upon the annals of time." He concluded by predicting: "Against the horizon of the history of the times, my friends and neighbors, there will be no more noble figure in the life of this republic than Grover Cleveland.

It will be written of him that he was an unselfish American statesman, and that he served the people."[59]

Dickinson promised to return to Michigan during the closing days of the campaign. He kept his promise, and on October 27 appeared before a crowd in Grand Rapids, which the Free Press described as "the greatest political demonstration Grand Rapids has ever had." Describing Dickinson's reception, the Detroit newspaper elaborated, "Grand Rapids in its time has welcomed the little giant of Illinois, Stephen A. Douglas, and that favored leader of Democracy, Thomas A. Hendricks, but the reception that she gave those great leaders was dwarfed by the magnificent ovation that she gave today to the chivalric leader of the Northwestern Democracy, Don M. Dickinson. . . ."[60]

At this rally Dickinson was the main speaker. Whereas in his Detroit speech Dickinson had praised Cleveland, this speech was a bitter denunciation of James C. Blaine, claiming that Harrison would be the titular President while "the unspeakable man from Maine would be regent." Some charges that he made against Blaine included the corruption of the young men of that generation, and the maligning and slandering of "the pure public men of his own party" including Roscoe Conkling.

[59]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 27, 1888.

[60]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 28, 1888.

Other excerpts from his speech illustrate the comtempt which he held for Blaine. "It is true of Blaine, as of no other man, that while all honest men are not his enemies, all dishonored public men have been his friends. . . . This is the man who goes about the country slandering others in the language of untruth and unrighteousness. . . . It is not for me to condemn the belief, or the want of belief of any man, and I do not presume to judge that distinguished and brillian infidel for his infidelity. . . . He never originated a measure for the good of mankind. His name is connected with no policy to advance the interest or renown of America."

With this introduction, he became more specific and sought to disclaim certain statements that Blaine had made concluding with these words:

> And now, fellow citizens, I do not believe that falsehood and fraud are to prevail. I have faith in the intelligence of the people, faith in their understanding of the questions which affect them. This is not the battle of Grover Cleveland, it is not the battle of any party. It is one for you and for me, and for the great masses of the people against the pernicious theory that if the rich are made richer they will take care of the poor. I have great faith in the intelligence of the people of Michigan, and, having that faith, I believe that her duty will be done when the sun sets a week from next Tuesday. As you advance to the contest my heart beats responsive to your music; and my eyes gleam at the sight of your banners; and so to your tents, oh Israel, and God save the right.[61]

On election eve Dickinson made his last appear-

[61] Detroit Free Press, Oct. 28, 1888.

ance of the campaign before a rally at White's Grand Opera House. Many prominent Democrats from Michigan had assembled, including such men as G. V. N. Lothrop, William Maybury, J. Logan Chipman, and William E. Quinby. Dickinson spoke briefly at this meeting using his time to defend the tariff reductions sought by Cleveland. He averred that Cleveland realized "that a reduction of the tariff was the only method by which the prosperity of the working people could be maintained, and he relies upon the intelligence of the working people to understand this and support his efforts."[62]

The next day the nation went to the polls and Dickinson's beloved Great Chief went down to defeat in an election which saw Cleveland achieve a greater popular vote than his opponent. The reaction of Dickinson was interesting. His party had suffered earlier defeats which caused him to become very downcast. He and Cleveland would suffer defeats later in which he would react as he did after the Greeley debacle. However, to this defeat his response was anything but pessimistic. Several letters written soon after the 1888 election reveal this to be true. On November 17 he wrote, "We must simply reform the line and advance the standard. I have no doubt whatever of ultimate success

[62]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 6, 1888.

because we are right."[63] Two days later he expressed similar sentiments saying, "I see no reason for dismay. The only thing to do is to reform and advance the standard. Remember the historical overthrow of Van Buren, and our magnificent triumph four years later; the disheartening defeat of 1880 and the election of Cleveland in 1884. There is no demoralization here."[64] Dickinson would live to see his optimism rewarded by a smashing 1890 Democratic victory in Michigan and the successful campaign of Cleveland in 1892.

[63]Dickinson to John Power, Nov. 17, 1888, DPLC.

[64]Dickinson to M. H. Chamberlain, Nov. 19, 1888, DPLC.

CHAPTER V

YEARS OF TRIUMPH

Midway through his term as Postmaster-General, Dickinson wrote that "there is nothing so bright to me in the future as the peace of unofficial life."[1] After his term ended in March, 1889, he did return to the kind of life he preferred. However, he seemed to be as busy as ever for Cleveland wrote to him in May saying, "Of course, I was not surprised to learn that you were tugging away in the harness, for it is your nature, and as long as you are willing there will be plenty to put on the load."[2]

That this was true was evidenced the following month when Dickinson became involved in a legal case which was one of the most arduous, as well as significant, of his entire career. In this case the Lake Superior Ship Canal, Railway and Iron Company, (hereafter called the Lake Superior Canal Company) was pitted against certain homesteaders living in the Up-

[1]Dickinson to O. M. Barnes, Sept. 14, 1888, Dickinson Papers, Library of Congress.

[2]Cleveland to Dickinson, May 10, 1889. Photocopy of original exists in Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

per Peninsula who were seeking to prevent ejection from their homes.

Dickinson explained how he became involved in a letter to Tim Nester dated October 27, 1890, "I was not then in any of the homestead litigations, and never expected to be, but I fully realized the danger, as before stated, from erroneous contraction of the Forfeiture bill, and knowing the powerful aid for the benefit of the homesteaders that a construction of the Act in their favor by this great state would have. . . , I wrote to Mr. Randall, and that letter appears upon House Journal pages 1958 and 1959."[3]

In this letter to state representative James A. Randall, Dickinson stated that he could hardly believe there could be any hesitation in passing a resolution "removing the cloud of any possible State claim from the titles of Michigan homesteaders in the railroad lands recently forfeited by act of the last Congress." He briefly described the history and what he believed to be the intent of the Forfeiture bill. A general Forfeiture bill affecting homesteaders in other states besides Michigan had been proposed and then killed by Congress; and, then, said Dickinson, "Michigan alone through the indomitable pluck and sleepless watchfulness of a few men on the ground, hurriedly framed and

[3]Michigan, Journal of the House of Representatives, III (1889), 1958-1959.

pulled out of the wreck this special act for the relief of her citizens on the last legislative day of the session." He admitted that this act which then pertained only to Michigan homesteaders "was not such an act as was originally drawn for the settlers," but it was the "best that could be got, steered as it was necessary to steer it to get any justice, among the rocks, pit-falls and traps placed in its way by cunning corporate greed." In spite of this, he maintained that only through "hostile construction" of the act could a settler's title or home be taken away. Concluded Dickinson, "It will accomplish the end sought as to these poor men and families, unless the same old influence shall again dominate in construing the law."

Because the Secretary of the Interior seemed uncertain as to the aim of the bill, Dickinson urged the Michigan legislature to pass a resolution stating that the intent of the Forfeiture Act was explicitly to make "good the title of settlers under the homestead and pre-emption laws of the United States . . . and for no other purpose."

This, Randall sought diligently to do. However, this the state house refused to execute and Randall's proposal was rejected on what Dickinson called a partisan basis. The Republicans being in the majority were able to muster sufficient votes to prevent adoption.

This was just the beginning as far as Dickinson was concerned. The signing of the Forfeiture Act was one of Cleveland's last official acts as President; it had gone into effect on March 2, 1889. Although many felt the bill had been passed to protect the homesteader, within a short time suit had been initiated in court to eject homesteaders from lands which the Lake Superior Canal Company claimed. The federal court in Marquette ruled against the homesteaders and eviction proceedings were begun. Although Dickinson's efforts to obtain backing for a resolution favorable to the homesteaders had failed in the state legislature, he did win a victory when he gained a new trial by which he hoped to offset the decision granting the Lake Superior Canal Company the right to evict the homesteaders.[4] On July 27, 1890, the United States Circuit Court for the Western District of Michigan found for the homesteaders and ruled that the settlers could not be evicted.[5]

While Dickinson was fighting this case, a Jackson newspaper reported that "in the cabins of the Homesteaders of the Upper Peninsula Mr. Dickinson's name is a household word, and he is revered by them as the one man who at all times and places has proved

[4]Lake Superior Ship Canal, Railway and Iron Co. v. Cunningham, C C Michigan, 44 F 587 (1891).

[5]Lake Superior Ship Canal, Railway and Iron Co. v. Cunningham, C C Michigan 44 F 587 (1891).

their true friend."[6] These sentiments seemed to express their feeling correctly for in 1891 after the Democrats had won control of the state's lower house, a county was created in the Upper Peninsula and named Dickinson county in honor of the man who had saved the homes of hundreds of homesteaders.[7] Dickinson refused compensation for the part that he played in this case; however, he was highly pleased with this honor. He later wrote that in 1891, the year he probably could have been elected United States Senator, the "Legislature honored me more to my satisfaction than a brief term in the Senate, in carving out from three of the richest counties in the State, thus creating the richest and most respected County (save Wayne alone) in Michigan" and naming this county after him.[8]

[6]Newspaper clipping from the Jackson Industrial News, Mar. 28, 1890, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 2, Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

[7]Michigan, Public Acts (1891), No. 89.

[8]Dickinson to Percy Ives, Feb. 3, 1906, DPMHCA.

Dickinson county was carved from Marquette, Menominee and Iron counties in the Upper Peninsula. Iron mining was an important industry in all three. The 1893-94 Michigan State Gazetteer reported that Iron Mountain, the county seat of newly organized Dickinson county, "is the location of the famous Chapin iron mine, the largest and best in the Upper Peninsula, producing a very rich hematite ore, from which is made the best Bessemer iron and steel. Nearby were "iron mines of equal richness "which were the principal industries of the place."

In 1900, the United States Bureau of the Census reported a population of 17,890 for Dickinson county. In 1900 the two cities in Dickinson county were Iron Mountain with a population of 9,242 and Norway with 4,170. The Bureau of the Census also reported a large

Although Dickinson was "rewarded" in 1891 by this honor, the case that he fought for the homesteaders was not climaxed until December 10, 1894. On that day the United States Supreme Court concurred with the United States Circuit Court's decision in favor of Dickinson and his clients saying that any homesteader on the land on May 1, 1888, was "within the Act of March 2, 1889," and, therefore, "a bona fide claimant of a homestead."[9]

Although Donald Dickinson remained vitally interested in politics and the Democratic party and though he no longer was deterred by holding an official position within the United States Government, he played a less prominent role in the 1890 mid-term campaign than he had in 1886 and 1884 campaigns and than he would in the 1892 contest. This was especially evident in intraparty activities for he attended neither county nor state conventions prior to the election. As one reads the newspapers of the period, one finds few references to Dickinson until the month prior to the election. These papers never speak of the Dickinson faction or Dickinson supporters as they had in previous campaigns and as they would in following campaigns.

number of foreign born for the county in that year. Out of a population of 17,890, 8,530 were foreign born. The four largest groups were those from Italy, Sweden, England and Austria.

[9]Lake Superior Ship Canal, Railway and Iron Co. v. Cunningham, 155 U.S. 354 (1894).

There seems to be a combination of reasons for this.

First, this was only a state election with no national offices involved. In 1888 Grover Cleveland had run, and he would run again in 1892. Although Cleveland himself gave no indication that he would run again until shortly before the 1892 convention, Dickinson was convinced by 1890 that no man could serve the United States as President in a better way than Cleveland. Thus, he was eager to exert all his energies for the campaign to nominate and elect Cleveland President of the United States. The state election of 1890 was of much less significance in comparison.

Also, Dickinson was kept very busy during the year by engaging in important legal cases that would have a direct bearing, not upon a few private citizens, but a large number of inhabitants of Michigan. As has been seen, Dickinson gradually became more involved in the plight of the homesteaders who were seeking to ward off eviction. Besides this case, he fought to save the law which provided for a secret ballot in Michigan. The case testing this law involved the Detroit City Council and Peter Rush, the Controller of the city of Detroit. The law sought to insure a secret ballot by prohibiting the outer attachment to any ballot or ticket "any impression, device, color, or thing, designed or liable to distinguish such ballot or ticket from other legal ballots or tickets, whereby the same

may be known or designated."[10] No ticket was to be used at any state election unless furnished by the Secretary of State. All ballots were to be of the same width and length. Booths were to be constructed where a voter could vote secretly.

Peter Rush refused to advertise for bids to construct election booths as the law directed. Thus the Detroit common council sought a writ of mandamus to force Rush to do so. Rush continued to refuse, claiming the law was unconstitutional and that "the booths and railings will cost a large sum of money, and that no provision has been made by the law for paying the expense."[11]

Dickinson along with Alfred Russell represented the common council claiming that the law was not unconstitutional. The court fully agreed saying:

> When power is conferred upon the Legislature to provide instrumentalities by which certain objects are to be accomplished, the sole right to choose the means accompanies the power, in the absence of any constitutional provision prescribing the means. The finding by this court that the law impeded, hampered or restricted the right to vote, and is therefore void, would be a clear assumption of, and encroachment upon, legislative power,--a substitution of our judgment, for that of the Legislature.

In nullifying Rush's objections to compliance with law, the Michigan supreme court reviewed the evils that had sprung up causing the law to be enacted,

[10] Common Council v. Rush, 82 Mich. 532 (1890).

[11] Common Council v. Rush, 82 Mich. 532 (1890).

and finally declared, "The secrecy of the ballot is the great safeguard to the purity of elections. The vote by ballot implies secrecy."

The court answered Rush's second objection by specifically stating, "It is of no consequence that expense must be incurred, and that the statute is silent upon the question of payment. Whenever an active duty is imposed upon municipalities, the duty imposed carries with it the obligation on the part of the municipality to perform the act, bear the expense, and provide for its payment." The Michigan supreme court ruled that "the writ of mandamus must issue."[12]

Dickinson may have felt that he contributed more to the Democratic cause by successfully defending the law providing a secret ballot than he might have in some other way. A few days after the court had ruled, Dickinson said that this decision had made the Democrats more hopeful in Michigan.[13] He went on to elaborate that the Republicans had been against the law and had done what they could to defeat it. "I had the pleasure of appearing for our side in defense of the law," he said, "and you may be sure that I was much gratified at the outcome."

He described Michigan as "a great State for 'boss' politics" with the Republicans usually in the majority

[12]Common Council v. Rush, 82 Mich. 532 (1890).

[13]New York Times, Oct. 13, 1890.

and applying pressure on voters. "We have suffered a great deal from this in years past, and now that we consider that we have secured a preventive of it we expect that persons who have been kept from voting our ticket in former years through fear of losing the situations in which they have been employed will come to us this year."[14] After Dickinson saw the returns in November, he certainly must have felt that this assumption was correct.

Whether the state Democratic party's 1890 stand on free coinage of silver perturbed Dickinson is difficult to say. He told a New York Times reporter that in Michigan the major issue was the tariff. "No side issue comes in to any extent."[15] This seems to have been an understatement. For instance, in the Democratic platform adopted at the state convention in September, the sixth plank of the platform condemned the high tariff policy while the one immediately following said, "We believe in free and unlimited coinage of gold and silver. . . ."[16] The Democratic candidate for governor Edwin B. Winans also favored free silver.

In 1890, Dickinson made little of this issue. In just a few years free silver would become a burning issue, and then Dickinson lined up solidly with Grover

[14]New York Times, Oct. 13, 1890.

[15]New York Times, Oct. 13, 1890.

[16]Detroit Free Press, Sept. 11, 1890.

Cleveland in opposing it. The evidence available does not indicate how he felt in 1890. One thing is certain; he did not think it important enough in 1890 to create a split in the Democratic party for he did support the Democratic ticket chosen by the state convention.

On election eve Dickinson made his only major political appearance of the 1890 campaign. That evening Detroit Democrats closed the campaign with a large political rally at which Dickinson presided. He assumed his position as leader for the evening by informing the audience that he had "some good news for you tonight and from it a lesson for Democrats tomorrow."[17] The news that Dickinson had was the report from Tim Nester, a former Republican and ex-mayor of Marquette, that the Upper Peninsula was going to vote Democratic in 1890. This was significant as far as the Democrats were concerned for the Upper Peninsula had traditionally been strongly Republican. In fact, Dickinson reminded his hearers that in 1884 the Democrats "went to the Straits" with a good majority, but that it had been overcome by the mining vote.

He concluded his remarks by denouncing the McKinley tariff which, as he had intimated before, seemed to remain the major issue of the campaign. Said he concerning the tariff, "The McKinley bill is

[17]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 5, 1890.

with us always; at the table, at the bedside, in the kitchen, in the barn, in the churches and to the cemetery. Grover Cleveland, God preserve him till 1892, told the truth when he said the tariff was a tax."

On election day the Michigan Democrats scored a tremendous victory over the Republicans--one that was unequalled since the Republican party had been formed. The Democratic candidate for governor Edwin Winans along with the remainder of the Democratic state ticket rode roughshod over the Republican opposition. The citizens of Michigan also elected a legislature which was strongly Democratic.

As with almost any election, the causes for this dramatic Democratic win were varied and often hard to distinguish. Again the factor that this was an off year election, plus the fact that President Harrison was not a dynamic leader and had incurred a certain amount of hostility was of some significance. However, Michigan Democrats had had similar factors working for them before and had been unable to win. What other assets did they have in 1890? The McKinley tariff appears to have been one piece of legislation which the Democrats capitalized upon very successfully. Many seemed aware that the average citizen did not benefit from it. They revealed this feeling not only in Michigan but throughout the nation for the Democrats were generally successful. For example, the elections resulted in a strong Democratic majority in the House of

Representatives.

In Michigan the Democrats had emphasized that their gubernatorial candidate was a farmer and naturally was interested in farm problems. He supported free silver. This seems to have lured a number of votes from the generally pro-Republican farm population.

The state Democrats who had for years longed for the day that finally came in 1890 could not restrain the impulse to celebrate this victory with a monstrous victory rally in Detroit--a rally described by the Free Press as Fourth of July, Christmas, New Year's Day, St. Patrick's Day, German Day plus all other glorious days rolled into "one grand twenty-four hours."[18] With victory certain, the event took place three days after the election. Before the evening meeting began, a bomb was ignited which also seemed to inflame the Democrats for the evening. The Free Press described the scene thus, "With the bursting of this as a signal there arose a simultaneous flight of sky rockets, roman candles and other aerial pieces of pyrotechnics, until the whole sky in the vicinity of the rink was lighted."

Although Dickinson had not been extremely active in pre-election campaigning, there was little doubt that he still was looked upon as a Democratic leader.

[18]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 8, 1890.

The Evening News, for example, in its edition on the day of the rally said concerning Dickinson, "There will also be present that Democratic cyclone, Don M. Dickinson, the leader of the state Democracy, whose soul is entirely impregnated with the idea of seeing Grover Cleveland justified for sticking to democratic principle by nominating him for President in 1892."[19] One could also see that Dickinson continued to be a popular leader by observing the banners that hung over the state the night of the rally. One read, "Hail to the Pride of Democracy, Don M. Dickinson." His fellow Democrats also honored him by calling upon him to preside at this occasion; an occasion at which many a Democrat would have enjoyed being the leading figure.

After Cleveland had been defeated in 1888, he retired from political life for a time. He seemed to enjoy private life for he wrote, "You cannot imagine the relief which has come to me with the termination of my official term. There is a good deal yet which seems to result from the Presidency and the kindness of people in a social way which keeps me in remembrance of Washington life, but I feel that I am fast seeking the place I desire to reach--the place of a respectable private citizen."[20] He wrote to Chauncey F. Black

[19]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 7, 1890.

[20]Cleveland to W. S. Bissell, April 13, 1889, from Allan Nevins (ed.), Letters of Grover Cleveland (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), p. 203. Hereafter cited Nevins, Letters.

in September, 1889, "Present personal interests are all against my appearing in the political field. I cannot get business nor do business in that way; and I feel that I must try in every way to get on in the profession to which I have returned."[21]

In spite of these sentiments, Cleveland gradually again became involved in national political affairs. In a letter to one of his former Cabinet officers, William F. Vilas, Cleveland gave some inkling as to why he became involved even though he wanted his "discharge from public and political life." He explained, "I am unable to lose sight of the possibility, or to forge that a contingency may arise, in which duty to my country and my party may require in me the elements of a popular candidacy."[22]

As time wore on, it became more evident to Cleveland that such a contingency was arising. As he viewed the actions of the Harrison administration, he became increasingly convinced that it was giving way to those who sought the benefit of special privilege at the expense of the country's best interests.[23] The election of 1890 in which the Democrats scored a decisive victory seemed to vindicate Cleveland's stand on the

[21]Cleveland to Black, Sept. 26, 1889, from Nevins, Letters, p. 213.

[22]Cleveland to Vilas, Aug. 17, 1890, from Nevins, Letters, p. 230.

[23]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 460.

tariff. Cleveland himself seemed to feel that this was true for he later said, "At the Waterloo of 1890, tariff reform had its vindication, and principle and steadfast devotion to American fairness and good faith gloriously triumphed over plausible shiftiness and attempted popular deception."[24]

About two months later on Jackson Day, Cleveland spoke at the banquet of the Young Men's Democratic Association in Philadelphia. This speech was very critical of the Republicans. The tariff again came under fire, Cleveland charging that it banished "from many humble homes the comforts of life, in order that, in the palaces of wealth, luxury may abound."[25] The plight of the farmer was described by Cleveland, and he promised that the farmers were entitled "to our best efforts for their restoration to the independence of a former time." Criticism was also leveled at the Government's extravagance and selfishness on the part of public officials leading to abuse of the "people's franchise."

All in all, it appeared from this speech that Cleveland was quite perturbed about the situation in Washington and seemed ready again to become an active campaigner for the Presidential office. In spite of

[24]Parker (ed.), Writings and Speeches of Grover Cleveland, p. 324.

[25]Parker (ed.), Writings and Speeches of Grover Cleveland, p. 266.

this, he gave no indication during 1891 that he would seek the Presidential nomination. At times it seemed that he cared not for his chances of renomination for the Presidency. A good example of this was the famous "silver letter" to E. Ellery Anderson. Many Democratic leaders were aligning themselves behind the movement for unlimited coinage of silver. In fact, in January, 1891, a bill had been passed by the Senate in favor of free coinage with the Democrats voting strongly in favor.[26]

In spite of this sentiment, Cleveland in February wrote to Anderson, "If we have developed an unexpected capacity for the assimilation of a largely increased volume of this currency, and even if we have demonstrated the usefulness of such an increase, these conditions fall far short of insuring us against disaster if, in the present situation, we enter upon the dangerous and reckless experiment of free, unlimited, and independent silver coinage."[27] There was an immediate outcry against this attack on free coinage. Daniel Lamont, a former private secretary of Cleveland, urged him to modify his stand so that the masses would not think him "the representative of the ultra anti-

[26]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 467.

[27]Cleveland to E. Ellery Anderson, Feb. 10, 1891, from Nevins, Letters, pp. 245-246.

silver sentiment."[28]

During this time Dickinson continued to hope that Cleveland would permit his name to be entered in the contest for the Presidential nomination. Even though Cleveland in 1891 did again speak forth more freely on political matters than he had since retiring from the White House, his followers realized that he might step aside if a candidate acceptable to Cleveland began to arise. However, the year 1891 saw Governor David B. Hill of New York loom up as the most significant challenger for the Democratic Presidential nomination. Cleveland, along with many of his supporters including Dickinson, was much opposed to this man's ambitions. Cleveland realized that if Hill were nominated and elected his chief principles of "sound money, tariff reform and civil service reform and departmental efficiency" would be buried.[29]

In January, 1892, the Democratic National Committee met to select the time and place for the national convention. Dickinson foresaw that the Hill group would seek New York City as the locality for the convention. On January 19 he wrote to a Cleveland Democrat in Michigan that he was enclosing some extracts from the morning papers showing "what a desperate effort will be made by the Tammany and Hill fol-

[28]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 468.

[29]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 477.

lowers to bring the National convention here" for, said Dickinson, the pro-Hill faction planned to "whoop it up" for Hill in order to overwhelm the Cleveland sentiment by "sheer noise and furor." He was convinced by this time that this clique "will scruple at no means fair or unfair to beat the only man our cause will unite. . . ."[30] He suggested that steps be taken in Michigan to "head off a few hot-heads who are captured with Hill's questionable audacity and present success."

At about the same time Dickinson wrote a letter to William Vilas urging him to unite delegates from the West and South so that the convention would not be held in New York. This was accomplished; Chicago was chosen as the location and June 21 the date for the Democratic national convention.[31]

In a very short time the New York State Democratic Committee countered by announcing that a state convention would be convened on February 22 at Albany for the purpose of electing delegates to the national convention. Not in twenty years had a state convention in New York been held prior to April 20. It was obvious that this "snap convention" would work against the Cleveland interests and for Hill because delegates to this February 22 convention would be chosen by

[30]Dickinson to S. L. Smith, Jan. 19, 1892, DPLC.

[31]Fowler, Cabinet Politician, p. 225.

caucus meetings of small town politicians allied with Hill. Few farmers from up-State would be able to attend because of inclement weather. It was also hoped that this early New York convention would ignite Hill support throughout the country before anti-Hill Democrats could begin any strong movements for other candidates.[32]

Forthwith a cry of protest ascended from all parts of the country. Almost all the Democratic newspapers denounced the action of the New York Democrats. Supreme Court Justice Lamar wrote that the South had been aroused against the methods used to promote Hill's candidacy. In New York an "anti-snapper" movement gained momentum with anti-Hill Democrats formulating plans for a convention of "anti-snappers" at Syracuse.[33]

In view of all of this, Dickinson was convinced that the time was ripe not only to take a decisive step in upsetting Hill's drive for nomination, but also to begin Cleveland's bid for nomination. With this in mind he laid careful plans. He persuaded Cleveland to come to Ann Arbor and address students at the University of Michigan on the very day that the "snap convention" convened in New York. Dickinson hoped that Cleveland would detail his ideals and principles, and thus pro-

[32]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 483.

[33]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 483-484.

vide the keynote for his bid for a renomination.[34]

Cleveland accepted Dickinson's bid and on February 22 did just what Dickinson had hoped in his speech entitled "Sentiment in Our National Life."[35] Perhaps with the New York "snap "convention" in mind, he advised the Michigan students, "Interest yourselves in public affairs as a duty of citizenship; but do not surrender your faith to those who discredit and debase politics by scoffing at sentiment and principle, and whose political activity consists in attempts to gain popular support by cunning devices and shrewd manipulation."

Several years later Dickinson wrote to Cleveland concerning his appearance in Ann Arbor. He told Cleveland that even before this speech, citizens who admired him were already working for his renomination.[36] Dickinson explained:

> I remember how, becoming enthusiastic as we succeeded, after the winter of '91 we inveigled you

[34]George H. Knoles, The Presidential Campaign and Election of 1892, Stanford University Publications: History, Economics and Political Science, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Palo Alto, 1942), pp. 216-220.

[35]Parker (ed.), Writings and Speeches of Grover Cleveland, pp. 352-362.

[36]Already in July Cleveland's former Secretary of State Thomas Bayard had written to Dickinson that he saw "nothing really formidable as yet to Cleveland and that the disrepute gathering around Harrison "only deepens the channel of public opinion that leads to Cleveland's nomination and election." Bayard to Dickinson, July 11, 1891, DPLC.

> out here to make that classic speech at the university, and then succeeded in getting the Ass. Press to send out your speech and the account of all our doings here so as to be printed ahead of the proceedings of the 'Snap convention' held on the same day. It was the only mean trick I ever played you, but you can't imagine how it strengthened the good fellows even then at work.[37]

Dickinson realized that the account of the "snap convention" and Cleveland's speech would appear in the papers almost simultaneously. Thus, special care was exercised in seeing that many newspapers and magazines were supplied with copies of the speech.[38] The contrast between the actions of the pro-Hill faction in New York and the words of Cleveland in Ann Arbor convinced many Democrats that Cleveland should be their nominee in 1892. Instead of beginning a Hill boom, the New York convention had done Hill more harm than good.[39]

After his Washington's Day address at Ann Arbor, Cleveland Democrats began to pressure him ever increasingly, urging that he declare himself available for the Presidency. Edward S. Bragg, who had originated the phrase, "We love him for the enemies he has made," wrote one of these letters warning of the dangers to the nation if the Democratic party failed to carry the country in November. He requested that

[37]Dickinson to Cleveland, Sept. 24, 1903, Cleveland Papers, LC.

[38]George F. Parker, A Life of Grover Cleveland (New York, 1892), p. 146.

[39]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 486.

Cleveland reply affirmatively to the call of his country and party and announce his willingness to serve again.[40]

A few days later the nation knew that Cleveland would run once more when his reply to Bragg was published for all to see. In answer to Bragg's request he began by admitting, "If, in answering your question, I might only consider my personal desires and my individual ease and comfort, my response would be promptly made, and without the least reservation and difficulty."[41] Nevertheless, Cleveland continued, that if Bragg were right in his judgment then "private and personal considerations" were made "entirely irrelevant." The letter closed with an earnest concern for the success of the Democratic party.[42]

In March, Hill made a tour of the southern states hoping to gain support in an area where there was much opposition to Cleveland's money views. This tour proved a big disappointment to Hill and his followers. In Atlanta the rally for Hill was described as a "dismal failure."[43] The editor of the Chattanooga News wrote to Cleveland, "Hill's canvassing jaunt has weakened beyond the shadow of a doubt even the little en-

[40]Knoles, Campaign of 1892, p. 12.

[41]McElroy, Grover Cleveland, I, 332.

[42]McElroy, Grover Cleveland, I 333.

[43]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 24.

thusiasm that has been aroused in the South. . . . His receptions were cool, in fact, almost chilly."[44] Thomas Bayard wrote to Dickinson describing Hill's swing around the South, "From my point of view there never was a greater burlesque than the journeys of of Mr. Hill in the role of President seeking." He wondered aloud whether Hill took "his countrymen for fools or worse." Bayard predicted that if his "own state of feeling" were indicative, "the machine will receive a dislocation at the next convention from which it will never recover."[45]

Both within the state of Michigan and within the national Democratic party, Dickinson continued to work for this "dislocation" of which Bayard spoke. On April 30 the Wayne county convention met. In a news article the following day the Detroit Tribune headlined the story of the convention, "It was Mr. Dickinson's Day."[46] It certainly seemed to be, for Dickinson was chosen to head the Wayne delegation to the state convention. Grover Cleveland was strongly endorsed and Dickinson was nominated for delegate-at-large to the national convention and recommended to be chairman of the Michigan delegation. In so honoring him, the convention

[44]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 24.

[45]Bayard to Dickinson, Mar. 15, 1892, DPLC.

[46]Newspaper clipping from the Detroit Tribune, Mayl, 1892, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 6, MHCA.

noted that Michigan had been honored when Cleveland selected "its foremost Democrat and citizen for a place in his Cabinet and made him one of his most intimate friends and advisers."

In January, Dickinson had expressed a wish that he "could help some" in the fight against Hill.[47] Dickinson saw a real opportunity to do just that when the state convention convened at Muskegon on May 4. Evidence indicates that he was able to accomplish all he set out to do.

Dickinson's first victory was scored when he was nominated and elected first delegate-at-large and chairman of the Michigan delegation to the national convention. After winning a unanimous vote, he spoke briefly to the assembled Democrats. He quickly indicated that he stood squarely behind Cleveland by saying that he "took great pride in the expression of myself as the first delegate-at-large from my state." "But," he continued, "I quite appreciate that your hearts go out not so much for me upon this occasion as to the Great Chief, in whose official family I had the honor to serve."[48]

There could be little doubt as to where Dickinson stood. Victory was complete for him that day when George Robison read the platform. Loud applause

[47]Dickinson to S. L. Smith, Jan. 14, 1892, DPLC.

[48]Detroit Free Press, May 5, 1892.

greeted the statement, "We, therefore, instruct our delegates to the national convention this day chosen to vote in that convention as one man for the nomination of Grover Cleveland to the presidency of the United States." Cleveland may well have breathed a "Well done, Dickinson" when he received a telegram that same evening from Michigan Chairman Daniel Campau describing the action taken by the Michigan convention and declaring, "In this action the delegation will express the exact sentiment of the Michigan Democracy which is for Cleveland and victory."[49]

About a week after the Michigan state convention, Cleveland wrote Vilas saying, "I cannot do less than say to you that some very warm friends think there should be a touching of elbows among those who think as you do on the Presidential question."[50] When William C. Whitney returned from Europe on May 18, plans were made for a conference prior to the Democratic national convention. In planning this conference of influential Cleveland Democrats, Dickinson seems to have been quite prominent. He wrote to Vilas that it had been decided to hold a larger conference than first anticipated and "endeavor to reach a decision as to treatment of all matters likely to come

[49]Detroit Free Press, May 5, 1892.

[50]Cleveland to Vilas, May 12, 1892, from Nevins, Letters, p. 284.

up."[51] Such matters as organization, nominations, treatment of contesting delegations, and platform would be decided, wrote Dickinson to Vilas.

Two days later Dickinson wrote again to Vilas saying that Cleveland had written suggesting that the conference be held after the Republican convention in Minneapolis with the ninth of June being the earliest possible date.[52] At the same time he suggested the home of Whitney.

He continued by revealing that the suggestion had been made that he, Dickinson, send out notices calling the conference, "but I thought it . . . better for W. to have done it and have so written him."

On the same day Dickinson wrote Whitney that he considered the ninth of June a "very good" date for the conference. At the same time he commented, "In names there are some omissions in the West and South." He advised adding them, "as I think I have been in a way to know them during the past two months."[53]

On the ninth of June twelve representatives from ten states rendezvoused at Whitney's home on Fifty-

[51]Dickinson to Vilas, May 30, 1892, Vilas Papers, Wis. Hist. Soc. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Commission, U. of Mich.

[52]Dickinson to Vilas, June 1, 1892, Vilas Papers, Wis. Hist. Soc. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Commission, U. of Mich.

[53]Dickinson to Whitney, June 1, 1892, Whitney Papers, Library of Congress.

seventh Street in New York. Those attending besides Dickinson were Judge William G. Ewing of Illinois; William F. Harrity of Pennsylvania; Samuel P. Honey of Rhode Island; Bradley B. Smalley of Vermont; Samuel E. Morse of Indiana; William F. Vilas of Wisconsin; William L. Wilson of West Virginia; John E. Russell, Nathan Matthews, and Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts; and Francis Lynde Stetson of New York. Whitney presided over the meeting while George F. Parker acted as secretary.[54]

It was extremely inclement weather, but by 11:00 A.M. all those expected had arrived. At this significant conference, detailed plans were made for the forthcoming convention. The make-up of important convention committees was discussed and decisions were made as to whom should be included on these committees.[55] William L. Wilson was to be supported as temporary chairman while former governor of Ohio James E. Campbell, whom Dickinson wanted to include at the parley, was selected to be candidate for permanent chairman. Men were chosen for making the nominating speeches and arrangements were made for future meetings as well as establishing headquarters in Chicago.[56]

[54]Parker, Grover Cleveland, p. 156.

[55]Parker, Grover Cleveland, pp. 157-158.

[56]Dickinson to Whitney, June 1, 1892, Whitney Papers, LC.

When the Democratic national convention convened in Chicago, it had been established that Dickinson would be the floor leader of the Cleveland forces.[57] He, who had a lawyer's flair for this type of assignment, planned his actions well. He made his first major move the second day of the convention as William F. Vilas was reading the first paragraph of the proposed platform. Vilas began, "The representatives of the Democratic Party of the United States in National Convention assembled to re-affirm their allegiance to the principles of the party as formulated by Jefferson and exemplified by the long and illustrious line of his successors in Democratic leadership from Madison to Cleveland. . . ."[58] When Vilas pronounced the name of Cleveland, it ignited one of the greatest demonstrations ever seen at a political convention heretofore.[59] Quickly Dickinson grasped the Cleveland banner of the Michigan delegation; and while the band played the national anthem, he led a procession, "with the set face of a devotee, swinging the big censer high above his head while the crazed delegates gazed with eyes of longing and shouted with throats of brass at the swinging picture."[60]

[57]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 490.

[58]New York Times, June 23, 1892.

[59]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 84.

[60]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 84.

For twenty minutes this continued and it seemed that every delegate was on his feet except "the little squad from New York," seated near the Michigan delegation but "silent in the cheering mass."[61] Dickinson and his Michigan delegation had touched off a wave that would sweep Cleveland in on the first ballot.

After the platform was formally adopted, the next order of business was the choosing of a Presidential candidate. When Arkansas yielded to New Jersey, Govvernor Leon Abbett of that state nominated Cleveland. As soon as Abbett mentioned "Cleveland," a demonstration was touched off with the Michigan delegation again leading the way. When the Michigan's Cleveland banner passed New York's delegation, Daniel Sickles, a staunch supporter of Hill, pushed it aside. For a moment it seemed that Dickinson and Sickles would physically clash for as Dickinson "expostulated," Sickles rose to his feet, "shook his crutch aloft, brandished his fist, and for a few minutes he assumed a belligerent attitude."[62] The noisy uproar continued for fifteen minutes; Abbett then started anew and upon finishing the New York Times correspondent reported "the convention went wild again. The white silk banner of the Michigan delegation was again hoisted by an enthusiastic Wolverine. Three men stood on chairs

[61]New York Times, June 23, 1892.

[62]New York Times, June 23, 1892.

and waved it aloft until their arms ached. The band struck up a lively tune, and a thunderstorm which broke at the moment lent its music to the great uproar. Umbrellas were raised, hats were thrown in the air. Pandamonium reigned for another ten minutes."

The last maneuver on the part of the Tammany pro-Hill group came just before balloting was to begin. At that point Bourke Cockran of New York arose and requested that the convention be adjourned until the following morning, thus giving more time to stem what seemed to be an irresistible Cleveland tide. Dickinson realized this and, as floor leader of the Cleveland forces sullenly shook his head.[63] The convention followed Dickinson's lead. Cockran then made one of the best speeches heard at the convention. Nevertheless, it was not enough, and Cleveland was nominated on the first ballot, getting 617 1/3 votes. Hill was a distant second obtaining only 114 votes.

An interesting sidelight to Dickinson's activities immediately before and during the convention involved the influence which an organization which called itself "a secret religio-political order" sought to exert upon Dickinson.[64] This group, although

[63]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 490.

[64]The Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library has a series of eight letters which were sent to Dickinson by this organization dating from June 18 through June 23, 1892.

never identifying itself, appears to have been a segment of the American Protective Association which had been organized in 1887 as a violently anti-Catholic secret organization. Instead of nominating its own candidates as the Know-Nothings had done, this group "took the more direct method of capturing the machinery of one of the existing parties."[65]

On June 14 the first of this series of letters written on Palmer House stationery was sent to Dickinson. The author began by identifying himself as "Chief of a secret religio-political order" which had had "certain advance information" during the Republican national convention. The writer related that this information had been placed in the hands of Republican leader John C. New "which at the proper moment beat the Quay, McKinley Blaine Papal programme." Dickinson was informed that he had been chosen to receive information because "you are non-Catholic and because you have been for certain reasons satisfactory to our order, selected as the channel through which to pass our information." The information would "probably benefit the candidacy of Hon. Grover Cleveland." The letter closed by saying that communications to Dickinson would "be signed merely C. D. meaning Chief Deputy mailed to your hotel here or left by sure hands."

[65]Hemphrey J. Desmond, The A. P. A. Movement (Washington, 1912), pp. 7, 27.
John Higham, Strangers in the Land (New Brunswick, 1955), pp. 80-87.

Three days later Dickinson received a mysterious note saying that secret agents of the organization seemed quite certain that Cleveland would not be nominated on the first ballot and that the purpose "of this letter is to put into your hands the same weapon so successfully and cautiously used by John C. New at Minneapolis." The letter signed by the "Chief Deputy" advised that "the Catholic element remain with you unconscious however of this programme." The writer felt the country would be safe if "whether Cleveland or Harrison is elected as neither can be improperly swayed by the Catholic political propaganda." Dickinson was told that "the Catholic support of Cleveland" could not be relied upon. The letter concluded with strong advice to "use the secret religious weapon of Protestant against Catholic (American for Grover-Ireland for Hill)" and to "make certain of 2/3rds on 1st ballot before you allow any test vote in convention."

The following day Dickinson was advised to allow the Catholic wing to choose James E. Campbell for permanent Chairman. Dickinson was told to get Campbell to pledge for Cleveland "publicly as possible." At the same time a "private agreement" should be made with Indiana that "though they go for Gray on 1st ballot or part Gray, they go solid for Cleveland at night time." At all costs Roswell P. Flower was to be kept off the ticket. "We have certain information of his Papal deal with the Lieut. Gov. through Murphy of Troy."

Advice and warnings continued to be sent Dickinson's way. On June 20 "C. D." warned against "the Whitney policy of concession towards Tammany." The author of the letter reported that Sheehan had been heard to say to two other Catholics "that they had your forces stopped and that 'Whitney's policy was an evidence of Cleveland's weakness.'" Dickinson was advised to throw his strength "to a ticket upon which Flower is left off." The two Democratic leaders Arthur P. Gorman and David B. Hill apparently were men that had to be watched carefully for they were expected to throw their support behind Morrison and Flower.

On June 21, the day the convention began, a letter dated "Noon" informed Dickinson that "our work is now done and we cannot further assist you." "C. D." predicted that "if the ballot could be taken today before 6 P.M., Cleveland would be Pres. nominee and Gray V. Pres. nom. beyond all peradventure." However, the organization supplying Dickinson with information was afraid that forty-eight hours and a half million dollars would make much difference. An urgent plea was made to "make sure of Cleveland's nomination" on the first ballot. "After the 1st ballot 'comes the Deluge.'"

This note closed saying that it would be the final one. A card was enclosed with the name of a man that Dickinson could reach "at any future time you may

wish to reach us." The writer asked nothing from either party "save to down the Catholics."

Although the letter dated at noon of June 21 proposed to be the last one, Dickinson continued to receive messages. The same day word was passed to Dickinson by "C. D." saying that "the presence here of that half million which we learn is here for use within the next 48 hours (if Cleveland can be stopped) make results more uncertain than appear on the surface."

At ten o'clock the next day a note was written by "C. D." criticizing Dickinson for two mistakes. One was in "not securing Ohio by taking Campbell for permanent Chairman (as we advised if he was well and publicly pledged for Cleveland)." The second mistake was "in leaving the Indiana Gray men fearful they get nothing." (Isaac Gray had been a Presidential candidate.) Dickinson was warned that anti-Cleveland forces would strive to delay nomination and if these forces were successful in delaying, and "C. D." predicted they would be, "then Morrison and Flower or Flower and Morrison will be the Catholic Ticket." Unfortunately for Hill, said Dickinson's informer, Sheehan and Tammany backed him. "Both are odious to all clean Democrats (not Catholic)."

The letter ended rather ominously. "The Half Million 'is in it.' Tomorrow there will be no nomination on 1st ballot. Today there might be. After 1st ballot Cleveland's chances <u>are much poorer</u>."

On June 23 Dickinson did truly receive the last of this series of letters. The tone was completely changed from that of the day prior. It began, "Our order congratulates your forces upon 'casting the die' before dawn of June 23rd, upon repairing any breaks in Indiana and Illinois, upon having Mr. Voorhees become suddenly sick, thus through Morse substituting English. The face of Edward Murphy, Jr., was a study for a painter at the close of English's remarks."

The Democratic party was praised for its fearless stand on free trade "whether right or wrong." The Chief Deputy predicted that both Cleveland and Harrison would be compelled "to draw nearer to the people, to protect them from the ravanges of the gold bug" or face the possibility of rise of a third party which "will bowl out both and hold the balance of power."

"We are glad to have been able to serve the cause of the people though we have incidentally helped both Harrison and Cleveland," concluded this final message.

There seems to be no evidence that Dickinson replied to these missives or made use of the "secret information" in any way. Both Dickinson and this anti-Catholic group strongly desired the nomination of Cleveland. This may have been one reason for directing them to Dickinson. In all of Dickinson's writings or speeches there does not seem to be a strong anti-

Catholic bias which might explain the fact that he was chosen as the recipient.

After the conclusion of the national convention, Dickinson continued as one of the leaders of the Democratic national campaign. A month after the convention he wrote his wife that he had "been all day with the Chief" and was still at the home of "Whitney getting some things in shape at his request."[66]

To have Whitney as the leader of "the committee to manage the national campaign" was considered by Cleveland to be very necessary for success.[67] Thus, he urged those whom he thought most influential to write or speak with Whitney so that Whitney would agree to perform this task. Those whom he requested to influence Whitney included his old friend Wilson S. Bissell, William Vilas and Dickinson.

Dickinson was more than willing to do this. However, Whitney resolutely refused to accept the chairmanship of the National Committee. Dickinson sought to persuade others to write Whitney, but Whitney could not be moved although he was not turning his back on the Democratic campaign. C. H. Jones of St. Louis wrote that Whitney had informed him "that he can accomplish more by being a free lance, unburdened with

[66]Dickinson to his wife, July 21, 1892, DPMHCA.

[67]Cleveland to Bissell, June 30, 1892, from Nevins, Letters, p. 288.

the details that fall upon the chairman, than by accepting the chairmanship."[68] Whitney, though not accepting an official position, provided inestimable service all during the campaign and became the unofficial leader of Cleveland's campaign.

When Whitney refused to be considered for the national chairmanship, there were fears on the part of some that Calvin Brice, who had been National Chairman in the unsuccessful 1888 campaign, might be again selected. For example, C. H. Jones went on in his letter of July 13 commenting that whoever was chosen should "not be simply a Plutocratic figure-head, but whose leadership will be an inspiration to the rank and file of the party. For twelve years the chairman of the National Committee has been a burden for the Democratic party to carry instead of help."

Jones asked for other possible choices for National Chairman. He urged that Dickinson and "others of the party's wise counsellors" prevent mistakes "in this matter of officering of the National Committee."[69] On July 18 Vilas wrote Dickinson telling him that an attempt was quietly being made "to retain the control of the Committee by Hill and Brice by keeping B. on as Chairman."[70] Vilas was confident saying, "I do not

[68]C. H. Jones to Dickinson, July 13, 1892, DPLC.

[69]C. H. Jones to Dickinson, July 13, 1892, DPLC.

[70]Vilas to Dickinson, July 18, 1892, DPLC.

doubt we'll be able to defeat it." A struggle as to whom should be National Chairman never actually arose. Brice graciously withdrew saying he would not accept the chairmanship again. Whitney nominated William F. Harrity of Pennsylvania and he was elected without opposition.[71] Cleveland was apparently satisfied with the outcome for he wrote on July 29 to Whitney, "If things shape up as we expect, the campaign work will be in the hands of Harrity, Quincy, Dickinson and Whitney--four Cleveland men if there are any--and we shall have the prestige of a united party."

About two weeks later Dickinson was chosen by the National Committee to be head of the Democratic National Campaign Committee. Perhaps the most significant work that Dickinson did in this capacity was the establishment of a Western branch of the campaign organization. Cleveland had urged the forming of such a branch telling Vilas of Wisconsin that "such a thing would help in our effort to carry your State and Illinois, etc."[72] He continued by saying that Illinois was eager for it and that Dickinson had planned to urge it before the National Committee. The same day he wrote Bissell that he had scarcely been consulted concerning the campaign, "but I mean to favor the scheme

[71]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 131.

[72]Cleveland to Vilas, July 24, 1892, from Nevins, Letters, p. 294.

of a Western branch to the very utmost."

On August 18 Cleveland's suggestion was carried out when the Campaign Committee appointed Dickinson, Ben T. Cable of Illinois and E. C. Wall of Wisconsin as a subcommittee to open headquarters in Chicago. Dickinson was chairman ex-officio of the subcommittee while Cable was placed in charge of the headquarters. The states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Iowa and the two Dakotas were assigned to the special care of this group.[73] One of the important things this group accomplished during the campaign was the obtaining of translators who translated Democratic campaign literature for the benefit of the large number of foreign groups in this area. In an effort to carry Illinois the committee appointed a special advisory body of Illinois Democrats which, judging from results, seemed to have been a good move.

Although Cleveland felt Whitney invaluable as a campaign leader, he disliked the fact that Whitney wished to go all-out in reconciling the Tammany group. He described Whitney as being as "true as steel" and one who worked day and night. "But his labor is altogether in the line of pacification and everything he does tends to persuading the men of Tammany Hall and those who belong to their gang to vote the Democratic

[73]Knoles, The Campaign of 1892, p. 133.

ticket."[74] Cleveland preferred to remain aloof and run without the support of Tammany Hall if necessary.

Finally, however, Whitney did induce Cleveland to meet with certain leaders of Tammany Hall in order to effect a policy of conciliation. Apparently Cleveland felt that Dickinson was more in accord with his thinking concerning Tammany Hall and those who had been aligned with Hill. Cleveland had good reason for so thinking for Dickinson had written him prior to the convention that Whitney was considering giving some influence to Arthur P. Gorman which Dickinson felt "would probably be a beautiful compromise with shame." Gorman had been allied with the Tammany group and Dickinson vowed that he was "out" if Gorman were to be given a place of influence by Whitney.[75]

It seems that Cleveland found a certain solace in confiding in Dickinson prior to the scheduled meeting with the Tammany leaders. On September 5, three days before the meeting, he wrote a confidential letter to Dickinson expressing his inner feelings.

"I received a letter from Whitney a few days ago and had a talk with him Saturday. As a consequence of these combined incidents, I am thoroughly miserable and depressed and feel very much like doing a desperate

[74]Cleveland to Bissell, July 24, 1892, from Nevins, Letters, p. 295.

[75]Dickinson to Cleveland, June 13, 1892, CPLC.

thing. I am thinking very hard, and the thing that troubles me more than all others is the duty I owe to such good sincere friends as you. I feel as though I must see you."[76] Cleveland went on to say that he wanted Dickinson to visit him. "I know I am a very great trouble to you, but if I can have a good talk with you perhaps we can remedy the condition."

In the last paragraph of this note Cleveland poured forth his reluctance to have anything to do with Tammany Hall, saying: "And, my dear fellow, if you do come, I beg you to come in a mood to believe that I am not always wrong and that I ought to be allowed to emerge from this campaign still deserving, in some degree at least, the respect of those whose good opinion I prize more than any office or honor, and still preserving to some extent my self-respect." It seemed at this stage that even a man who was running for the highest office in the land was anxious to confide in someone for the last sentence read, "If you cannot come or prefer that I come to you, I will do so promptly on hearing your desires."

When Cleveland three days later attended the well-known Victoria Hotel conference, Dickinson was at his side.[77] The Tammany leaders present included Richard

[76]Cleveland to Dickinson, Sept. 5, 1892. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[77]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 496.

Croker, Edward Murphy, Jr., and William F. Sheehan. When Sheehan demanded more influence and recognition with the Administration in the event Cleveland should win, Cleveland simply replied, "No promises."[78] As the talk continued and Murphy "kept up a rumble of supporting growls in the background," Cleveland became angry and declared he would rather withdraw from the race than make unethical concessions to Tammany Hall. The meeting broke up, but Cleveland's stand was rewarded for Tammany supported Cleveland in spite of what had occurred.

When Election Day came and restored the Presidency to Cleveland, he was warmly congratulated by many of his admirers. However, there were important Democratic leaders who also recognized that Dickinson had done a fine job as head of the Campaign Committee. Thomas Bayard, Cleveland's former Secretary of State and ambassador to Britain during his second Administration, complimented Dickinson saying he could imagine the joyous confusion at campaign headquarters "wherein three months you have exhibited such force, tact, and good temper and vigilance in the great cause in which we were all enlisted. . . ."[79] William G. Ewing, one of prominent Democrats present at the Whitney conference on June 9 and a leader of Democratic

[78]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 497.

[79]Bayard to Dickinson, Nov. 12, 1892, DPLC.

forces in Illinois wrote, "I have been near enough to the camp of the great Commanders to know that to no one more than yourself is due the credit of our wonderful triumph. Illinois is indeed a 'rainbow' filled with hope and promise. Our people are grateful that you chased it."[80] C. H. Jones, editor of the St. Louis Republic, sent a message saying, "You have done gloriously."[81]

A short time after the election, Dickinson received a note from the President-elect.[82] Cleveland, who should have felt as elated as any Democrat, confided to his close friend Don Dickinson, "I don't feel altogether comfortable, but there is no reason why I should bother you with my troubles. I only wish God would put it in my power to make known to the Democratic party what the last election means." The Great Chief seemed to foresee some of the difficulties that he would face during his second term.

[80]W. G. Ewing to Dickinson, Nov. 9, 1892, DPLC.

[81]Jones to Dickinson, Nov. 10, 1892, DPLC.

[82]Cleveland to Dickinson, Nov. 21, 1892. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

CHAPTER VI

LOSING OUT TO SILVER

After the 1892 Democratic victory, Cleveland began the task of forming a Cabinet. Although Dickinson had indicated that he was not interested in any recognition for services and preferred not to serve in any official capacity in the second Cleveland administration, Cleveland hoped to lure him into his Cabinet once more, and thus offered him "places in the Cabinet."[1] Nonetheless, Dickinson was determined not to yield and turned down a position in the Cabinet, an opportunity to become ambassador to Great Britain, and shortly after Cleveland's inauguration he declined a position as one of the Government's directors of the Union Pacific Railroad. In this last instance Dickinson wrote Cleveland, "I shall hold the fact that you named me for the place first, as you did, as one of the pleasantest, and most gratifying things that have come to me in my public life."[2] He went on to explain his position of not

[1]Dickinson to D. M. Cooper, May 8, 1906, Dickinson Papers, Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

[2]Dickinson to Cleveland, May 8, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Library of Congress.

wanting to accept "any place in the public service" and that he would feel "perfectly miserable if I merely attended to the duties in a perfunctory way. . . ."

Cleveland was not the only Democratic leader that regretted Dickinson's decision. Judge Lambert Tree of Illinois, ambassador to Belgium and also to Russia during Cleveland's first administration, wrote Dickinson a lengthy letter saying that the more he thought of Dickinson's decision not to accept a Cabinet post, "the more I experience a sense of sincere regret at your conclusion."[3] He sought to persuade Dickinson to reconsider explaining that Cleveland's administration would be "too much of a reform administration" to expect "that he will not from time to time, encounter adverse currents. With your ability, zeal, knowledge of public affairs, politics and men, and your affectionate devotion to Mr. Cleveland, you could not fail, in my judgment to be one of the most central figures in his administration."

Editor C. H. Jones sent a message, "Regretting that you are not yourself to be one of the President's political family--in the entire country there would not be one objection to that."[4] On the first day of the

[3]L. Tree to Dickinson, Jan. 5, 1893, Dickinson Papers, Library of Congress.

[4]Jones to Dickinson, Feb. 15, 1893, DPLC.

year, W. G. Ewing expressed the wish that Dickinson would take the post of Secretary of State.[5]

Because Dickinson had by this time become a trusted friend of the President-elect and because he in his campaign work had become so well acquainted with party leaders throughout the United States,[6] Cleveland did consult with him concerning the choice of members of his Cabinet, even though Dickinson himself did not choose to be one of them.[7]

Dickinson wished that Cleveland would give the post of Secretary of State to a man from the Middle West. After Thomas Bayard refused to serve again, Cleveland sought Judge Walter Q. Gresham of Indiana, a Republican who had been Secretary of the Treasury under Arthur, but had supported Cleveland during the 1892 campaign. He, like Cleveland, was a firm believer in the gold standard and low tariffs. Gresham was reluctant to accept. Cleveland employed Dickinson, as he had used him to convince Thomas Cooley to accept a position on the Interstate Commerce Commission, to persuade Gresham to serve as Secretary of State. After first refusing, Gresham reconsidered and became Secretary of State, contrary to his wife's wishes. She admitted that although Gresham had full faith in Cleve-

[5] Ewing to Dickinson, Jan. 1, 1893, DPLC.

[6] Fowler, The Cabinet Politician, p. 227.

[7] New York Times, Dec. 19, 1892.

land's integrity and patriotism, she was afraid his motives would be misjudged and maligned and did her utmost to thwart Dickinson's mission.[8]

During the weeks preceding the inauguration, Dickinson conferred with Cleveland at different times. There is no doubt that Cleveland appreciated having him as an advisor for he wrote Daniel Lamont during this time, "I am constantly wondering why there are not, within the circle of my life, more Lamonts and Dickinsons."[9]

What turned out to be excellent advice was Dickinson's suggestion of Henry T. Thurber for the post of private secretary to Cleveland. This spot, held by Daniel Lamont during the first Administration of Cleveland, was one of responsibility. The private secretary to the President answered much of the President's mail besides meeting in person a great number of people who wanted to speak with the President. It was at times like these that the private secretary diplomatically had to steer the majority to other government officials, offending as few as possible. He also represented the President on some occasions when the Chief Executive could not be present. The private secretary also served as a link between the President

[8]Matilda Gresham, Life of Walter Quintin Gresham (Chicago, 1919), II, 680.

[9]Cleveland to Lamont, Feb. 19, 1893, Nevins, Letters, p. 319.

and legislative leaders.[10] Dickinson told Cleveland that his law partner Henry Thurber possessed the qualities needed for this position and was "just the man for the position of private secretary."[11]

Dickinson admitted that he would not give up Thurber "on any other demand than that of the chief." However, because Cleveland called, he promised to "keep his office, his chair, and his desk ready for him." He explained that Thurber was particularly well suited to be private secretary to the President explaining, "He has an extra sense--tact; and that temperament of his is a sure comfort to all about him in time of perplexity and trial."[12]

Four days after expressing a desire for more Dickinsons, Cleveland wrote to Lamont that he had accepted Dickinson's man with thanks.[13] Near the end of his second Administration Cleveland revealed how highly pleased he had been with Henry Thurber. He thanked Dickinson for his suggestion with these words, "As to

[10]Fred G. Dewey, "Henry T. Thurber," Michigan and the Cleveland Era, L. Vander Velde and E. Babst (eds.), pp. 249-250.

[11]Fred G. Dewey, "Henry T. Thurber," Michigan and the Cleveland Era, L. Vander Velde and E. Babst (eds.), p. 250.

[12]Fred G. Dewey, "Henry T. Thurber," Michigan and the Cleveland Era, L. Vander Velde and E. Babst (eds.), p. 255.

[13]Cleveland to Lamont, Feb. 23, 1893, from Nevins, Letters, p. 319.

Mr. Thurber, I can honestly say that of all things you have done for me, I regard your suggestion of his selection as private secretary the most useful and fortunate." He complimented Thurber crediting him with "plenty of ability, good discretion, a pure heart and conscience, unquestioned honesty, sufficient tact, and is as loyal and devoted helper as I ever had about me."[14]

Shortly after Cleveland's second inauguration, Dickinson wrote to Thurber, "Thousands here and all over the country say orally and write that they know that my relations with the President are such that if I say the word the desired appointment will follow and so on and so forth."[15] He continued by saying that "he was tired of it all" and longed for "complete and lasting oblivion after the seating of the President." When he wrote this letter, Dickinson seemed depressed, and the hopes that he expressed concerning oblivion and a complete retreat from the political battlefield were not fulfilled in the succeeding months even though he did not assume any official position during Cleveland's second term.

Early in April it certainly must have been ob-

[14]Cleveland to Dickinson, Feb. 18, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[15]Dickinson to Thurber, Mar. 24, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

vious to Dickinson that he could not completely sink into political oblivion immediately for he wrote Thurber that "there are many applications for letters of introduction from me to the President."[16] Most of these requests Dickinson refused. However, he wrote that he had acceded in a few cases, but directed Thurber not "to make any special provision as the ordinary method of treatment in the cases will do perfectly well. . . ." Besides this type of request, Dickinson received messages asking that he use his influence not just for introductions, but directly, to secure a job. The following is an example.

"Please wire Mr. Thurber requesting my appointment. Am financially embarrassed."[17]

Whatever Dickinson's wishes may have been concerning an embroilment in political activities, he soon found that the strife over federal patronage after Cleveland's first election was to swirl about him once again as Cleveland's second term was launched. When Cleveland assumed office in March, 1885, the Michigan Democratic party had been split over federal patronage. The Congressional delegation and Dickinson as National Committeeman from Michigan were constantly

[16]Dickinson to Thurber, April 5, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[17]Johnnie Shea to Dickinson, Mar. 31, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

at odds. After the Democrats achieved the Presidency once again in 1892, the same grasping for federal jobs and influence amongst the Democrats began all over again.[18] However, in Michigan the struggle within the Democratic party for patronage presented a new alignment of forces. Whereas eight years earlier Dickinson, the National Committeeman, had opposed the Congressional Democrats, now Daniel Campau, the National Committeeman, aligned with four Michigan Democrats in the House against Donald Dickinson.

This alliance was accomplished as Michigan Democrats continued to see Dickinson's influence upon federal appointments. Michigan Democrats realized that Dickinson had been instrumental in Thurber's appointment. A March 19 Evening News headline read, "Don M. Dickinson's Powerful Influence Seen Everywhere."

A few days later this story seemed to be confirmed for the announcement was made that Judge Allen B. Morse had been appointed as consul to Glasgow and Dickinson's brother, Asa D. Dickinson, was to be consul to Nottingham. Morse had been favored by Don Dickinson and the appointment of his brother was viewed "as the personal act of Mr. Cleveland as a compliment to the Detroit leader, who will take nothing."[19]

Seemingly the appointments that had been made

[18]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 515-516.

[19]Detroit Evening News, April 4, 1893.

and fear that Dickinson might leave very little for other Michigan Democratic leaders forced the Michigan Congressmen and Campau to combine forces. The first action taken was a meeting of Campau and the Michigan Congressional delegation in Washington on April 11. At this conference one of the most important questions decided was just what part the Congressmen and Campau should take in controlling appointments. By the end of the meeting it had been decided that Campau would be given supervision of all the appointments in districts which had a Republican Congressman.[20] This meant seven out of twelve districts. The Democratic Congressmen, who proved to be less antagonistic toward Dickinson than Campau was, seemed not to begrudge Campau this authority because "it will entail great vexation in straightening out local contentions for small offices." Almost as an afterthought the Evening News reported that Dickinson was "taking little or no part in the question of apportioning offices."

This meeting provoked the Evening News to publish a cartoon of an office seeker before two idols; one was labelled Dickinson, the other Campau.[21] Above the caption read, "Somewhat of a Dilemma," while below the newspaper put these words into the of-

[20]Detroit Evening News, April 11, 1893.

[21]Detroit Evening News, April 12, 1893.

fice seeker's mouth, "Which Boss Shall I Worship."

The day after the conference, the group was received by the President with Campau and Congressman Chipman leading the delegation walking arm in arm.[22] As far as the meeting with Cleveland was concerned, it was not as successful as these Democrats had hoped even though they were received cordially by Cleveland. When someone asked Cleveland if he would state his policy as to requiring the endorsement of Campau and the Congressmen for a federal appointment, one of those present told an Evening News correspondent that it was a bit embarrassing for Cleveland responded by saying he had no rules, and wanted to get all the information he could regarding appointees.

It was quite apparent that Campau was not at all certain that Cleveland would co-operate fully with him when he made suggestions for federal appointments. Evidence of this is the fact that he left Sam Robinson, one of his associates on the executive committee of the state committee, in Washington when he and the Michigan Congressional delegation left the capital. Robinson was assigned to note the "purposes of the Administration in recognizing the recommendations of the state organization, or of appealing to private parties for advice."[23]

[22]Detroit Evening News, April 12, 1893.

[23]Detroit Evening News, April 20, 1893.

For a short time it seemed that there would be agreement and nothing like the hassle that occurred among Michigan Democrats after the 1884 victory. The Evening News reported that signs indicated that Campau would have much to say on appointments. A short time later the Detroit newspaper commented, "For some reason, best known to himself, Mr. Dickinson has not been conspicuous in dealing out the offices under Mr. Cleveland's administration."[24]

However, this seeming quiet was the lull before the storm. On May 11 the Evening News placed the caption "Don M.'s Board" over the report that district referees--called "political henchmen of Don M. Dickinson" by the Evening News--had been appointed in the seven districts where Campau thought he would have the say over patronage. All applications for such federal jobs as postmasterships had to pass through this board of referees before the applicants would be given any consideration in Washington.

Campau was greatly disturbed by this turn of events. In a move described as "a profoundly important step in the history of Michigan politics," Campau filed a written statement with Postmaster-General Wilson S. Bissell protesting that "secret influences are operating to control federal appointments and direct the political affairs of the state. . . ." He continued

[24]Detroit Evening News, May 8, 1893.

by charging that "the direction of Michigan's political affairs" had been given over "to private persons holding no official station with the Democratic organization of Michigan."[25]

The statement criticized the appointment of referees be made public "so that every candidate might have a hearing and a fair one." The Evening News summed up the situation saying, "Michigan Democracy Ripped Wide Open."

The day after this communication was published both Dickinson and Campau conferred with the President. Dickinson arrived late the night before and immediately went to the Post Office Department to see the letter Campau had sent. Besides Campau and Dickinson, other Democratic leaders had hurriedly assembled including Congressmen Justin R. Whiting, James S. Gorman, and J. Logan Chipman. There seemed to be a feeling of suspense amongst Michigan Democrats as they wondered what would happen.[26]

Dickinson had no comments for the press although Campau was more willing to discuss the matter saying, "The issue had to be met sooner or later, and it might as well come now as any time. It involves a question of the very existence of a Democratic organization in Michigan." He would not predict what the outcome would

[25]Detroit Evening News, May 19, 1893.

[26]Detroit Evening News, May 20, 1893.

be.

It was apparent from remarks made by Congressmen that the struggle was chiefly between Campau and Dickinson. Campau, who emphasized that he spoke in an official capacity for the state central committee, was anxious for a showdown while most of the Democratic Congressmen seemed intent in not getting involved.

After his interview with Cleveland, Campau left immediately for New York, making no comment concerning the talk he had had with the President. Although Dickinson continued to maintain "a sphynx-like silence," a friend of his, Louis E. Rowley of Lansing, explained the Dickinson side of the story.[27] Rowley first challenged Campau's declaration that he was speaking for the state committee rather than as an individual. He cited prior instances where Campau had professed to be doing this and it was not so. He also accused Campau of "laboring under an exaggerated idea of his own place and his power." The charge that Dickinson was a "private influence" holding no official relation with the Michigan state committee, Rowley refuted by pointing out that Dickinson had been National Campaign Committee Chairman and, therefore, could not serve in any official capacity in Michigan. Finally, it was claimed that Campau through his man Sam Robinson had hurt Michigan's chances of getting federal positions by

[27]Detroit Evening News, May 22, 1893.

speaking disparagingly of Dickinson since many heads of departments respected Dickinson and, thus, resented these slurs. Rowley stated that department heads had been waiting for Dickinson's advice. Because he had been ill much of the time since Cleveland's inauguration, Dickinson had not been able to do as much as he ordinarily might have.

Although there was no official word concerning the talks that Cleveland had had with Campau and Dickinson, circumstances indicated that this squabble had not affected the relations between Dickinson and Cleveland. While Campau left Washington soon after seeing Cleveland, Dickinson remained in Washington for five days. The day before Dickinson left, he spent two hours riding with Cleveland. The same day he ate lunch with Cleveland at the White House and conversed for an additional two hours. Perhaps as good an indication as any that Cleveland had full confidence in Dickinson was the appointment of William E. Quinby, editor of the Detroit Free Press, as minister to the Netherlands; Quinby had been recommended by Dickinson earlier[28] and was appointed less than a week after Campau's letter was made public. From circumstantial evidence it appeared that a friend of Dickinson was correct when he said, "Why, you could no more influence President Cleveland against Dickinson than you could move the

[28]Dickinson to Cleveland, Mar. 21, 1893, CPLC.

Washington monument from its base."[29]

Meanwhile, in Michigan, Democrats were greatly excited by what had happened, and telegrams poured in with both Dickinson and Campau receiving pledges of support. One Democratic mayor wired Campau, "I stand by you and our whole county committee is with you in this protest against Don M. Dickinson."[30]

Dickinson sought to minimize the events that had occurred in Washington. He insisted in an interview that he hadn't spoken to the President about any trouble that he had had with Campau or the state committee. He said he had come to the nation's capital to "inquire here in Washington why it is that Michigan appointments are not made to fill vacancies. . . ." He promised, "If this isn't pleasing to the people, or any one of consequence, I won't interfere any more even in this way." Appearing to be naive, he concluded the interview with "Fight? I know nothing of a fight, at least I am like the fellow sitting in a chair who was cuffed, 'I ain't a--fightin.'"[31]

Later events proved that Dickinson and Campau did not desire a deep split in the Michigan Democratic party because of this issue. Campau continued to maintain that the state committee could best judge who was

[29]Detroit Evening News, May 24, 1893.

[30]Detroit Evening News, May 24, 1893.

[31]Detroit Evening News, May 24, 1893.

most deserving of federal appointments, but, at the same time he promised that "the difference of methods pursued in this matter" would not "diminish my loyal allegiance to my party in the state, nor my humble endeavor to sustain, with every modest effort that I may put forth, the national Democratic administration of affairs."[32]

As far as Dickinson was concerned, he seemed quite dissatisfied with what had occurred and vowed no more to visit the capital on behalf of candidates for office, nor would he recommend Michigan men who were seeking federal jobs within the state. Many Michigan office seekers were not happy about this situation. As one said, "We are now in a pretty hard position. Dickinson could do something for us if he would, but he won't. Campau would do something for us if he could, but he can't." This frustrated office seeker explained that the Administration would only listen to Dickinson; and because he was no longer doing so, no one in Michigan was getting offices.[33]

During the summer of 1893 there was speculation that Don M. Dickinson would be appointed to the United States Supreme Court filling a position vacated when Justice Samuel Blatchford died. Some of Dickinson's associates thought that a change "from the hurly-burly

[32]Detroit Evening News, May 27, 1893.

[33]Detroit Evening News, June 26, 1893.

of politics to the honors and dignities of the supreme bench" would be welcomed by Dickinson.[34]

Associate Justice Stephen J. Field corresponded frequently with Dickinson during the summer of 1893. He hoped that he could convince Dickinson to allow his friends the freedom of urging his appointment.[35] Field was certain that Dickinson would stand up against the large corporations who, he felt, were attempting to grab "property and rights which are held by the States in trust."

Dickinson, however, would not allow his name to be placed forward and discouraged any movement that could promote his availability.[36] When he made this clear to Field, Field accepted his decision with reluctance.

To fill the vacancy caused by the death of Justice Blatchford, Cleveland eventually nominated William B. Hornblower of New York. Before this appointment was made, Field was much opposed. He realized that Dickinson was an influential associate of Cleveland for he wrote to Dickinson regarding Hornblower, "But the services of an unsuitable person I shall not fear when you are on the ground, and have had a conversation with the

[34]Detroit Evening News, July 10, 1893.

[35]Field to Dickinson, July 13, 1893, DPLC.

[36]Dickinson to Thurber, Aug. 22, 1893, Cleveland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

controller of the case and put him in possession of the great interest at stake. . . ."[37]

Dickinson, at the time, thought as Field did regarding Hornblower and wrote Cleveland describing his sentiments. Cleveland responded by saying that he was "disturbed" by what Dickinson had written.[38] He continued saying that he wanted "to agree with you in all things of this kind," but that on Hornblower "your ideas and mine . . . are not in accord." At this stage Cleveland had not made up his mind completely, but he wrote that he was convinced no better Democratic lawyer existed in New York who was better qualified.

In this instance, Cleveland was convinced that Hornblower was the man that should be nominated, and thus his name was presented to the Senate for confirmation. Rather surprisingly, Field, who had been strongly opposed to Hornblower, completely reversed himself and wrote to Dickinson that he had been mistaken and that "Mr. Hornblower was free from the objection which I had supposed was applicable to him."[39] It appears that Dickinson's thoughts concerning the Hornblower nomination paralleled those of Field.

[37]Field to Dickinson, Aug. 27, 1893, DPLC.

[38]Cleveland to Dickinson, Aug. 25, 1893. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[39]Field to Dickinson, Nov. 14, 1893, DPLC.

The sequel to this story took place in January, 1894. At that time Hornblower's name came before the Senate for confirmation. Here it was that Senator David B. Hill, the man that Cleveland had defeated for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1892, led the fight against Hornblower and was able to gather enough votes to prevent confirmation.[40]

Dickinson remained a loyal friend of Cleveland throughout a second term that was filled with much discouragement and unhappiness for Cleveland. In 1893, he assured the President that his faith had not diminished. These words of encouragement followed. "As the intelligent, unselfish and reflective people of the country sustain you now, so will there be universal endorsement later on. History will repeat itself with emphasis. Jefferson passed through it. Jackson's case was very much worse. And the clamorers and villifiers nearly broke Lincoln's heart. . . ."

When Josiah Quincy resigned as assistant secretary of state in October, Cleveland appointed a close friend of Dickinson, Edwin F. Uhl, to this post. There was little doubt that the President had expressed his confidence in Dickinson once more. William Quinby seemed fully aware that this appointment had been made with Dickinson's approval when he rather bluntly wrote,

[40] New York Times, Jan. 16, 1894.

"You made, I know, no mistake in his case."[41]

In Michigan the fight over patronage seemed to subside after it had threatened to create a serious breach in Democratic lines. In the Detroit municipal campaign, Dickinson and his followers united with "anti-referee" Democrats in their efforts to unseat Mayor Hazen Pingree and elect Levi T. Griffen as Congressman to finish out the term of J. Logan Chipman.

On November 7, 1893, Detroit Democrats found that Pingree was too strong and he and the rest of the Republican city ticket were elected. The Democrats were able to salvage something when they elected Griffen. Dickinson felt that the election of Griffen did signify an endorsement of the Cleveland tariff policy for he wrote William Vilas, "I suppose you noticed that we elected our Congressman here on that issue although everything else went Republican. . . ."[42] This and the fact that the fall elections in Michigan seemed to push the patronage struggle into the background seemed to be the only consolation for the Democratic leaders.

The feud between the two factions in the Democratic party which seemingly had simmered down after the first months of the Cleveland administration livened in 1894 when plans were formulated for the mid-term elections.

[41]W. E. Quinby to Dickinson, Nov. 5, 1893, DPLC.

[42]Dickinson to Vilas, Nov. 29, 1893, Vilas Papers, Wis. Hist. Soc. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Collection, U. of Mich.

Late in June the Democrats met in Grand Rapids in order to nominate a state ticket. Although both Dickinson and his rival Daniel Campau were present, Dickinson seemed to be in control of the situation. This was evident when Spencer Fisher was nominated for governor after Dickinson had convinced him to run. Campau only reluctantly acquiesced in the choice of Fisher.[43]

The stimulation of much goodwill between the two opposing sides was prevented because the so-called "referee" wing had dominated the convention, plus the fact that Dickinson continued to be influential in getting federal appointments.[44]

Dickinson realized what this would do to the party's chances of a good showing in November. This accounted for an Evening News report on September 6 describing "an heroic effort" by Dickinson to make peace between the "referees" and "anti-referees." The Detroit newspaper reported that the faction opposed to Dickinson had been "sulking" since its "disastrous defeat" at the state nominating convention and that the supporters of the Administration had promised more federal jobs to the "anti-referee soreheads in Michigan as an inducement to forgive and forget and whoop it up for Fisher and the rest of the state ticket."

[43]Detroit Evening News, June 29, 1894.

[44]Detroit Evening News, July 16, 1894.

The occasion for the "peace" parley was a gathering of Democratic leaders for the purpose of choosing campaign managers. The Dickinson faction revealed that it wanted the support of the Campau followers by supporting and uniting to elect John Strong as chairman of the state committee. Strong was described as "Campau's old-time friend and political lieutenant."[45] It was hoped that this act would do much to restore vitally needed harmony.

However, all of this was undone when Strong refused to take the chairmanship. Then in disgust it seemed those opposed to the Campau wing selected Dickinson's law partner Elliot G. Stevenson. The Democratic campaign would be run by the "referees." Fuel was further provided for this continuing feud when Dickinson and Stevenson conferred and decided that Levi Griffen should be strongly backed as Democratic Congressional candidate from the First Congressional district. This came in the face of reports that William Maybury was favored by some Democrats opposed to the candidacy of Griffen.[46] With the endorsement of Stevenson and Dickinson, Griffen had little trouble in gaining nomination in what was described as the "quietest convention ever held in Detroit."[47]

[45]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 7, 1894.

[46]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 24, Sept. 26, 1894.

[47]Detroit Evening News, Sept. 27, 1894.

Any hope of healing the breach in Democratic lines was shattered a few days later when both Charles C. Casterlin and Samuel Robinson resigned from the executive committee of the Democratic State Committee. Both were staunch supporters of Campau, and it was believed by members of the Dickinson wing that they had resigned at the behest of Campau.

There was no speculation as to why they had resigned, however. One of the chief reasons was the appointment of the so-called referees. In his letter of resignation Casterlin stated that it had always been customary to recognize "the various committees of the party . . . as the proper bodies through which party action is taken." He charged that this had not been true since the election of Cleveland. "In their place have been substituted referees and boards of referees, having no authority from or responsibility to the masses of the party whom they assume to represent; a system undemocratic in character and destructive of all organization." Furthermore, it seemed to Casterlin that there was no indication that the system would change.

Samuel Robinson wrote in a similar vein saying, "It is a foregone conclusion that the referee system has not been abandoned and that it will continue to be in vogue. Being conscious of the fact that no effort is being made toward reconciliation or harmony, and that Mr. Fisher and Mr. Dickinson are inseparable, I owe it to myself and the democracy whom I represent to

make an open declaration of my sentiments."[48]

Another charge that both of these disgruntled Democrats made was that Spencer Fisher, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, had made an agreement with the American Protective Association in order to gain the support of this violently anti-Catholic organization.

After the resignations of these two Democrats only a month prior to the Election, any chance of a Democratic victory vanished. During this month the quarrel became worse as Tim Nester and Timothy Tarsney, both leading Democratic figures, split with Fisher. Dickinson sought to rally Democratic forces by getting Vice President Adlai Stevenson to speak in Michigan shortly before the campaign ended. However, the damage had been done and without a unified Democratic party there was no chance of victory for the Democrats were already at a disadvantage as a result of the Panic of 1893.

On November 6, a day described by the Detroit Free Press as "a complete Waterloo for the Democracy," the Democratic party suffered a stupendous defeat in Michigan. All twelve Congressional districts elected Republicans. The entire state Republican ticket led by Governor John T. Rich was victorious. Not a single

[48]Detroit Evening News, Oct. 7, 1894. This newspaper printed the letters of resignation in full and gave much detail regarding the dissension both in the October 8 issue and in several succeeding issues.

Democrat was elected to the state senate, while only John Donovan from Bay City was elected to the state's lower house.

The division that had split the Democratic party was not the sole cause for this disaster for the Republicans were successful throughout the nation. Nonetheless, the fight between the followers of Dickinson and Campau was a factor in causing the defeat to be such a crushing one. Statistics revealed that many Democrats had not voted and that apathy or passive protests had reduced the Democratic vote. The Free Press, which had minimized party differences during the campaign, indirectly admitted that these were significant when, in reporting results, it said, "Despite the fact that there was a memorable fight in the Republican state convention and factional bitterness itself in many minor conventions, the opposition stood by their party as though in perfect unity."[49] Two days later the newspaper was a bit more candid in an editorial entitled, "Democracy Beat Itself." The Free Press admitted that in Michigan there "were dissensions and seeking for revenges that had no proper place in a struggle where there was so much at stake. . . ."

During Grover Cleveland's second administration the issue of gold and silver money was a significant one throughout his entire term. Cleveland began his

[49]Detroit Free Press, Nov. 7, 1894.

second term in March, 1893, and almost immediately the nation was beset by a panic. Cleveland thought it imperative that the Sherman Silver-Purchase Act be repealed as one means of counteracting the Panic of 1893.

Thus, in August Cleveland called Congress into session requesting that the Silver-Purchase Act be repealed. Under the leadership of William L. Wilson this law was repealed in the House by a comfortable margin on August 28. After going to the Senate, the Silver-Purchase Repeal Bill became bogged down. In Cleveland's mind, members of his own party seemed opposed to the best interests of the country. It was at such times that Cleveland turned to his closest associates and revealed his inner feelings. A letter written to Dickinson during this time reveals that Dickinson was one of them. Confiding in his friend, Cleveland wrote, I am very much depressed. I feel that I am looking full in the face a loss of popular trust in the Democratic party which means its relegation to the rear again for many years if not its disruption."[50] A bit further in his letter, Cleveland remarked that one phrase in a letter Dickinson had written to him a short time before "touches me deeply." He had reference to Dickinson's statement that there were those who could help, but "pass by on the other side." Perhaps because

[50]Cleveland to Dickinson, Oct. 9, 1893, DPLC.

it seemed that there were so many of this kind, Cleveland concluded with, "I wish there were about twenty Dickinsons in the country."

In his letter to Dickinson, Cleveland had pledged that the fight would continue "until no further fight can be made." He refused to compromise and on October 28 the Silver-Purchase Repeal Act was passed by the Senate. There were many who commended Cleveland for his persistence. Dickinson, happy as Cleveland himself over this victory, commented, "Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances."[51]

After the 1894 mid-term election, the money issue began significantly to divide Michigan Democrats. Less than a month after the November election, George P. Hummer, a staunch anti-referee Democrat, called a meeting in Detroit of Democratic leaders thought to be in favor of free silver. At the meeting there was a sentiment expressed that a new independent silver party be formed outside the Democratic framework. However, this was coolly received by most of those present, and it was generally felt that a better procedure would be to reorganize the party from within. Although ostensibly not a meeting of anti-Dickinson Democrats, it was evident that this group would be just that when one delegate indicated that the proposed movement was not against any of the individual party leaders unless

[51]Ellis P. Oberholtzer, A History of the United States Since the Civil War (New York, 1937), I, 273.

"those leaders put themselves in an attitude of hostility to silver."[52] To most Michigan Democrats it was becoming increasingly clear that Dickinson stood with Cleveland on the silver issue.

Further impetus was given this movement when what was called a "grand state round-up of 'no boss' free silver men" was scheduled for December 7 at Lansing.[53] At the parley in Lansing formal resolutions were passed favoring the free coinage of silver and requesting that the Democratic State Central Committee organize the party in a manner favorable to free silver.[54] Lines were being drawn for a battle that would involve a major issue, not just the fortunes of a comparatively small number of office seekers.

Although there was speculation that the anti-referee Democrats would support Dickinson if he "were right on the silver question" and speculation that he had subordinated "his own good judgment to that of the chief executive," Dickinson said little or nothing regarding that issue in 1893. It seems he sincerely wished to stay in the background for he wrote his daughter in March that he no longer cared for "politics."[55]

[52]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 24, 1894.

[53]Detroit Evening News, Dec. 3, 1894.

[54]Detroit Free Press, Dec. 8, 1894.

[55]Dickinson to his daughter, Mar. 20, 1895, DPMHCA.

As troubles continued to beset the Cleveland administration, the President found solace in confiding his feelings to trusted and close friends. Shortly after his birthday, Cleveland expressed gratitude to Dickinson for remembering the day. The President revealed that the messages from his friends were especially gratifying at this time, partially because "I have had some occasion to feel unusually forlorn during the last year."[56]

Three days later Dickinson assured the President, history would prove the second term of Cleveland to be the most difficult period in which a President ever had to lead the country, but that history would also show "that the Chief, standing above, was great in his place, equal to every occasion, a patriot always, and in himself the bulwark that turned back the flood of destruction."[57]

As 1896 dawned, it became increasingly clear that the silver issue would be the primary one throughout that year's political campaign. Cleveland was fully aware of this and was convinced that if the Democratic party was swept along by the free silver faction, the party would suffer a tremendous setback similar to the one that had been effected by the party's stand on

[56]Cleveland to Dickinson, Mar. 20, 1895. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[57]Dickinson to Cleveland, Mar. 23, 1895, CPLC.

slavery. With this in mind Cleveland sought to rally the Democratic leaders whom he knew might have a chance of stemming the free silver tide.

During the early months of 1896 Cleveland corresponded with Dickinson frequently. In almost every case, he sought to impress upon Dickinson the seriousness of the situation and the need for leadership on the part of those who could save the party from going down the wrong road. On February 18, he wrote a letter which faintly indicated a wish that Dickinson would enter actively the 1896 campaign. Said Cleveland, "I cannot be mistaken in believing that if the Democratic party is to survive, its banner upon which shall be inscribed its true principles and safe policies must be held aloft by sturdy hands which, even though few, will in the gloom of defeat save it from the disgraceful clutch of time-serving camp followers and knavish traitors."[58]

About a month later, Cleveland wrote a note thanking Dickinson for a painting of a duck hunter. Rather morosely he reflected, "It is a very relieving picture to look at and every time my eye falls on it in these dreadfully dark and trying days, I say to myself, 'I wish I was in that old fellow's place.'"[59]

[58]Cleveland to Dickinson, Feb. 18, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[59]Cleveland to Dickinson, Mar. 19, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

In the same letter the President revealed that he was looking forward with anticipation to the adjournment of Congress and the end of his term. At the same time he was concerned about the future of the Democratic party saying, "I am positive there is but one chance for future Democratic success--a perfectly and unequivocal sound money platform at Chicago."

Less than a week later the President intimated to Dickinson a bit more directly that he hoped Dickinson would aid him by asking, "Can there not be a majority at hand of sound-money delegates sent from Michigan to Chicago?"[60]

As the days and weeks progressed and as he read letters sent to him by the President, Dickinson was slowly weakening. He wrote to his wife in March that he had received frequent letters from the Chief at the same time commenting, "I may get into the fight after all, as he has given the trumpet call. I will try to keep out, but his request you know is a great power with me. . . ."[61]

Three days after he had written to his wife, Dickinson made his decision. He informed Cleveland, "Regarding Michigan I will face about and do my best."[62]

[60]Cleveland to Dickinson, Mar. 26, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[61]Dickinson to his wife, Mar. 20, 1896, DPMHCA.

[62]Dickinson to Cleveland, Mar. 31, 1896, CPLC.

Dickinson's reply to Cleveland's call indicated that he had felt inclined to concede the 1896 convention to the silverites; he hoped that a bad defeat of a free silver candidate winning on a free silver platform "would enable us to rally under the banner of sound principle, and re-organize the party after the election."

Dickinson also reminded Cleveland that after the 1892 campaign from which he had emerged "grey and bald and old" he had "determined to get out and stay out for good and all." There seemed little doubt that Dickinson's boundless affection and respect for Cleveland had moved him to become a crusader for Cleveland and his cause once more. He expressed his true motives saying, "I did, and do want a humble place in the political history of the time, and that is to have it said that I never failed or faltered in loyalty to the President, elected, defeated, and elected, who was the only Democrat who could have been elected since the war, and who stood for and filled the type of all that was good in the Democratic party. . . ."

The letter concluded with Dickinson promising, "I will do my part which shall be my best." There would be many obstacles, "But," said Dickinson like any good soldier, "we will buckle to and do our duty from now on as you see it."

The Michigan Democrats held their state convention exceptionally early in 1896. This convention scheduled for April 29 was deemed important by national

Democratic leaders who were confident that the action taken by the Michigan convention would give some indication as to where the Middle Western states would stand on the currency issue. Thus, when the convention convened in Detroit, Democratic leaders throughout the nation eagerly awaited the outcome.

Dickinson prepared well for what was to be his last major political victory. On Saturday, April 25, the Wayne county Democrats strongly supported Dickinson and the Administration. Dickinson received the gratitude of his fellow Democrats in a formal resolution, expressing full approval "of his course as leader of the Democracy of Michigan."[63] Perhaps more important to Dickinson was the fact that a resolution favoring free silver was defeated by a large majority and a delegation was chosen from Wayne county that solidly backed the Administration's stand on sound money.

Although he had been highly successful in thwarting the silver faction at the Wayne county convention, Dickinson well knew that the big test would come at the state convention a scant four days later.

When Democratic leaders from all over the state of Michigan began to congregate on the eve of the convention, feelings were running high. The day before the convention the Evening News depicted Dickinson and

[63]Detroit Evening News, Apr. 28, 1896.

George P. Hummer, a leader of the free silver forces, running after a ball hit into the air labelled "Dem Convention." Above the cartoon the caption read, "A Collision Inevitable." When it was rumored that sound money Democrats sought a compromise, Hummer, as well as others opposed to the gold Democrats, vowed that it was "Sixteen to one or bust and no quarter." This belligerent attitude, reported the Evening News "is why every train coming into Detroit last night brought in parties of silver and anti-silver braves, all in full war paint and carrying scalping knives."[64] Another example of the tension that was building was an episode that occurred in the lobby of the Hotel Cadillac in which two former judges were involved. In the midst of an exchange between former Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court John W. McGrath and former Judge C. J. Reilly, McGrath accused Reilly of being a liar when Reilly charged, "You never were a Democrat and never believed in honest money."[65]

Dickinson spent most of his time the day prior to the convention around the anti-silver headquarters. When asked whether he thought the free silver Democrats had enough votes to control the convention, he replied, "We do not think so." The free silver forces had claimed a sizable majority, but Dickinson said it re-

[64]Detroit Evening News, Apr. 29, 1896.

[65]Detroit Evening News, Apr. 29, 1896.

minded him of the story about the frogs. He went on to relate how a man came to a hotel keeper seeking to make a sale of a carload of frogs. The hotel keeper couldn't handle that amount, nor even a wagon load, but did finally agree to buy a bushel of frogs. "In due time," continued Dickinson, "the man came around with a pillow case in his hand and turning it over he dumped just fourteen frogs out on the floor." When the hotel keeper reminded him that he had first spoken of bringing in a carload and had actually brought much less than a bushel, he explained, "Well, you see it was this way. When I came across that swamp the frogs made so much noise that I thought there were 14,000,000 of them, but when I got down to catching them, that was all I could find."[66]

The following day Dickinson performed what was termed a "miracle."[67] The first step permitting this miracle came when a motion was made in favor of referring to the Committee on Resolutions all resolutions coming before the convention. Those in favor of unlimited coinage of silver felt that resolutions that would favor their stand would be quashed by the Committee and thus opposed the motion. However, the motion carried and it helped prepare the way for a resounding defeat of the silverites. Following this, Elliot Ste-

[66]Detroit Free Press, Apr. 29, 1896.

[67]Mark D. Hirsch, William C. Whitney: Modern Warwick (New York, 1948), p. 487.

venson easily defeated John McGrath, a strong supporter of free silver, in the contest for first delegate-at-large and chairman of the Michigan delegation to the national convention. After all the delegates to the national convention had been chosen, those favoring free silver were outnumbered seventeen to eleven.

Perhaps the most bitter for the silverites was the platform which endorsed the Cleveland administration and his fiscal policy. The Michigan delegation also was instructed to vote as a unit on all questions coming before the national convention. This would mean that the entire twenty-eight man Michigan delegation would be aligned with Cleveland and sound money.

Although Dickinson had not seemed to assume a position of leadership, it was apparent from newspaper comment and correspondence that he still had power and influence in the Michigan Democratic party. Cleveland wrote to him two days after the convention, "I steal a moment from working hours to write this, because I feel I cannot longer refrain from expressing my thanks, as a citizen and a Democrat, to you and those who worked with you for the splendid achievement . . . in Michigan."[68] The President seemed jubilant in ex-

[68]Cleveland to Dickinson, May 1, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

pressing his appreciation and "how much prouder than ever" he was of Dickinson's friendship. Secretary of the Treasury John Carlisle wrote in a similar vein congratulating Dickinson "on your magnificent victory." He predicted that the fight for sound money would be "more vigorous and determined than ever."[69]

The April 30 edition of the New York Herald entitled the story of the Michigan Democratic convention, "Don M. Dickinson Wins." The New York Sun published the following poem describing the exploits of Dickinson. It was entitled, "The Destruction of Michigan Silverites."

Don Dickinson came down like a wolf on the fold,
His cohorts all gleaming with sound-money gold,
And the sheen of their votes was like stars on the sea,
That is, as near yellow as starlight can be.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
His host with their banners in Detroit were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
Were the silverites after the result was made known.

For the voters of Don spread their wings on the blast,
And flapped in the face of the foe as they passed;
And the eyes of the silverites waxed deadly and chill,
And their nerve but once heaved, and forever was still.

And there lay one leader; a slug in the neck
Had left him in such a condition of wreck
That he couldn't have told you, with any regard
For the truth, what it was that had hit him so hard.

And there lay another, distorted, and pale,
With a bug in his ear and a twist in his tail;
And the others were scattered around on the floor,
With Don and his cohorts still hunting for more.

[69]John Carlisle to Dickinson, Apr. 30, 1896, DPLC.

There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,
And Don sitting down on the proud silver wreath,
And the sun, which had shone with a bright silver light,
Grew golden and shone like the moonshine at night.

For the silverites sadly the battle bewail,
For their idols are smashed in the temple of Baal;
And some of them swear that the party shall split,
While the others, grown wiser, respond to them, "Nit."[70]

The victory spurred Dickinson on. He wrote to William F. Vilas, who then was a Senator from Wisconsin, wishing that someone would challenge the "southern blackguards on the floor of the Senate and nail their hides up after flaying them alive." The Southern Senators had been opposing the President, but Dickinson reminded Vilas that "the President is still close to the hearts of the men who do the voting."[71]

During the weeks preceding the national convention, Dickinson and Cleveland were in constant contact. On May 22 Dickinson informed Cleveland that he had written a letter to National Chairman William F. Harrity suggesting that committees of "substantial men" be formed to act as pressure groups upon delegations to the national convention. Dickinson was convinced that "substantial men of character and standing, having a stake in the right decision of public questions" would

[70]Newspaper clipping from the New York Sun, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 10, MHCA.

[71]Dickinson to Vilas, May 2, 1896, Vilas Papers, Wis. Hist. Soc. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Collection, U. of Mich.

be very influential in swaying the average delegate. "With proper organization of this kind," Dickinson concluded, "we could turn even a minority with a firm two-thirds."[72]

Cleveland replied that he "so fully approved of Dickinson's suggestion" that he began to "agitate the subject in question where I thought it would effect the best results."[73] Cleveland went on to elaborate that he was disappointed in the reaction of some who seemed already willing to concede the convention and Presidential nomination to the forces of free silver. "Michigan seems to be the only State where work was needed and forthcoming," confided Cleveland.

In spite of a number of defeats in state conventions, Dickinson continued to work and hope. With less than a month left some "outside delegations of good men" had been formed as Dickinson had suggested. He also believed that opponents of the Administration such as Benjamin R. Tillman and John P. Altgeld of Illinois would "be worth everything to us in discrediting the opposition, and in shaming their delegations into coming over to decency."[74]

As the time drew near for the Democratic show-

[72]Dickinson to Cleveland, May 22, 1896, CPLC.

[73]Cleveland to Dickinson, June 10, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[74]Dickinson to Cleveland, June 12, 1896, CPLC.

down, Dickinson feverishly sought to rally the pro-Cleveland supporters. Cleveland on June 17 wrote Dickinson for advice concerning Senator John Ransom who "seemed indifferent" as to whether or not he should attend the Democratic convention.[75] "What do you want us to do about him?" asked Cleveland. The President seemed fully cognizant of Dickinson's efforts and wholeheartedly approved of them for he complimented him by expressing a view that the party could be saved with a "few more Dickinsons."

In the same letter Cleveland made mention of William Whitney, the man many thought could do much to save the Administration's cause at the national convention if he was so determined. However, Cleveland said he had "no idea how Whitney will be 'hitched up' and with whom if he goes."

The very day this letter was written Whitney decided to call off a proposed trip to Europe and help lead the sound money forces at the Chicago convention.[76] Dickinson, perhaps remembering Whitney's conciliatory gestures towards Tammany Hall in 1892, was suspicious of Whitney's motives. Dickinson charged that the National Committee had a majority of ten in favor of sound money, but that the efforts of the gold Democrats "were paralyzed by the reincarnation of the Bunco-

[75]Cleveland to Dickinson, June 17, 1896. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[76]Hirsch, William Whitney, p. 488.

Steerer by Mr. Whitney."[77] The "Bunco-Steerer" appeared to be Calvin Brice of Ohio or Arthur P. Gorman of Maryland, both of whom by this time Dickinson bitterly opposed. In fact, he went so far as to assert that he would rather support Hill than the man he accused Whitney of promoting. Hill, in Dickinson's mind at least, worked openly against Cleveland while "the other man is an assassin."

Dickinson was wrong in so mistrusting Whitney. Cleveland was happy to have Whitney again so actively engaged on his side.[78] Dickinson himself tacitly admitted he was wrong in judging Whitney's motives when he boarded a special train of eastern sound money leaders which Whitney had sponsored. This train, bound for Chicago, was used to plan the strategy that would be employed in an effort to nominate William E. Russell, the leader of sound money forces in New England, to the Presidency.

Upon arriving in Chicago, Whitney, hoping to duplicate his success of 1892, arranged a conference of sound money leaders including David B. Hill, William Harrity, William Russell and Don Dickinson, all sound money men.[79] Although the gold Democrats seemed to be outnumbered, there was no indication that they were

[77]Dickinson to Cleveland, June 20, 1896, CPLC.

[78]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 298.

[79]Detroit Evening News, July 4, 1896.

ready to concede to their opponents.

Dickinson expressed the sentiment of the anti-silver group well when he was asked what the sound money backers hoped to accomplish. He responded by saying they hoped to stand together and fight to the finish.[80]

During the days immediately preceding the convention, the disgruntled silverites from Michigan began a movement to disqualify a number of the gold Democrats in the Michigan delegation. Led by W. P. McKnight and George P. Hummer, the Michigan insurgents sought to rally support amongst Democrats that were in sympathy with their cause. From comments that were dropped, it seemed that there were delegates who were fully as eager to fell Dickinson as to promote the cause of silver.

Dickinson drew "first blood" reported the Evening News before the convention convened. The basis for this report was the fact that the National Committee agreed that the Michigan delegation as it had been chosen should be allowed to sit at least until the convention was permanently organized. Also, the night prior to the opening of the convention, Elliot Stevenson had been chosen to be national committeeman over Daniel Campau by a sixteen to eleven count in a caucus held by the Michigan delegation.[81]

[80]Detroit Evening News, July 5, 1896.

[81]Detroit Evening News, July 7, 1896.

At 12:53 P.M. on July 7, National Chairman Harrity called the convention to order. The first major test came almost immediately when the contest for temporary chairman opened. Although David Hill, a gold Democrat, had been proposed by the National Committee, he was rejected in favor of Senator John W. Daniel of Virginia by a vote of 556 to 349.[82]

The tide that would eventually sweep in William Bryan now began to flow rapidly. On the second day of the convention the silver-controlled Committee on Credentials unseated four gold Democrats from Michigan replacing them with silverites. Since Michigan was bound by the unit rule, the Michigan delegation of twenty-eight now fell into the ranks of the silver forces. At the same time the entire Nebraska gold delegation was expelled and sixteen silverites headed by William J. Bryan took their place.[83]

On Thursday the majority platform was presented by Senator James K. Jones. Free silver was vigorously upheld while the policies and Administration of Cleveland were so vigorously assailed so that even many of the silver delegates seemed stunned.[84]

It was now a foregone conclusion that some Democrat favoring free silver would win the Presidential

[82]Hirsch, William Whitney, p. 501.

[83]Hirsch, William Whitney, p. 502.

[84]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, p. 701.

nomination. On Friday, July 10, Bryan was nominated on the fifth ballot. With the nomination of Bryan the Cleveland Era had ended.

Even before the Democratic national convention had adjourned, there was talk of a bolt by the gold Democrats. During July and August this movement grew with New York sound money men acquiescing, but Midwesterners William Vilas of Wisconsin, John M. Palmer of Illinois and Don Dickinson of Michigan leading the way.[85] On August 7 a call was issued for a convention to be held in Indianapolis on September 2. When the convention gathered, a National Democratic party was born endorsing sound money and low tariffs.[86] John M. Palmer was nominated for President and Simon B. Buckner of Kentucky as Vice Presidential candidate.

Exactly what Dickinson did in an effort to divert votes to this third party is difficult to say. He did spend some effort in establishing sound money clubs throughout the Middle West. That Dickinson did play an active role in the new National Democratic party is evidenced by a letter from Abram S. Hewitt to Dickinson informing him that $32,500 had been raised by Hewitt "to supplement an equal amount to be raised by you for the expenses to be incurred in Michigan, Indiana, and

[85]Horace S. Merrill, William Freeman Vilas: Doctrinaire Democrat (Madison, Wis., 1954), p. 237.

[86]Merrill, William F. Vilas, p. 238.

Kentucky."[87] The goal of the splinter group was evident when Hewitt concluded, "I trust that you will be able to secure the remainder of the money imperatively needed to insure the defeat of Bryan."

Although on Election Day the party polled only 135,000 votes, it did at least partially achieve its purpose by diverting enough votes in some states so that McKinley was able to capture them.[88]

Before 1896, Dickinson's enemies had predicted his demise, but he had always been able to bounce back as strong as ever. For many years he had been the most powerful and influential figure in the Michigan Democratic party. At the April 29 Michigan Democratic convention he had seemed almost invincible when the convention backed the Administration, the gold standard and, thus, Don Dickinson, too. However, the end of Dickinson's power and influence in his party came quickly. When, at the national convention, four Michigan delegates were expelled in favor of the silverites, when Cleveland and his Administration were repudiated and finally when, as a result, these same gold Democrats including Dickinson, bolted the party, Dickinson was finished as the leader of Michigan Democracy. When it was suggested later that the party be reorgan-

[87]Hewitt to Dickinson, Oct. 6, 1896, DPLC.

[88]James A. Barnes, "The Gold-Standard Democrats and the Party Conflict," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XVII (1930), 445-446.

ized along the lines that Cleveland would have liked, ponderous old Ollie M. James of Kentucky summarized the feelings of many Democrats when he declared, "Judas Iscariot would have had as much right to have been clambering over the hill of Calvary after his Master's Crucifixion attempting to reorganize the believers in Christianity as Grover Cleveland, John Carlisle or Don Dickinson have to rush forth to reorganize the party they betrayed."[89] In Michigan Timothy Tarsney politically buried Dickinson--this time for good--saying, "You will hear no more of Dickinson in Michigan Democratic politics."[90]

In 1896 McKinley's plurality was over 600,000, the largest that any Presidential candidate had achieved since Grant defeated Greeley in 1872. Although there were many factors that worked against Bryan, certainly the fact that prominent Democrats such as Cleveland and Dickinson were opposed to free silver hurt Bryan's chances and weakened the Democratic party. The effect of this split continued to be felt in succeeding Presidential elections. For example, in 1900 Bryan was defeated by a still wider margin and not until the election of 1912 was the party as competitive as it had been during the years from 1876 up to 1894. The Michi-

[89]James A. Barnes, John G. Carlisle: Financial Statesman (New York, 1931), p. 503.

[90]Detroit Evening News, July 10, 1896.

gan Democratic party suffered the same fate, as the Republicans again began to roll up the majorities that they had enjoyed immediately after the Civil War.

CHAPTER VII

THE LAST YEARS

Shortly before the Democratic national convention, Cleveland wrote a letter to Dickinson requesting that Dickinson act as Chief Counsel for the United States before the Bering Sea Claims Commission.[1] Although Dickinson was busily engaged in the political campaign at the time, he accepted for the Commission was not scheduled to hold its first hearings until after the election.

The Bering Sea Claims Commission had been created as a result of the findings of the Paris Seal Fisheries Tribunal which decided that the United States owed Canadian sealers compensation for illegally seizing Canadian vessels in the Bering Sea from 1886 to 1892. This tribunal stated that "the carrying out of the Regulations determined upon by the Tribunal of Arbitration, should be assumed by a system of stipulations and measures to be enacted by the two Powers. . . ."[2] A com-

[1]Cleveland to Dickinson, June 27, 1896. Photocopy of original in Michigan Historical Commission Archives.

[2]John B. Moore, A Digest of International Law (Washington, 1906), I, 920.

mission became necessary when Congress refused to appropriate the sum of $425,000 which Secretary of State Gresham had offered Great Britain as a settlement for damages. On February 8, 1896, an agreement was concluded at Washington between the United States and Britain which called for the appointment of two commissioners, one from the United States and one from Britain. These two commissioners were to determine the claims for damages. If they could not agree, the case would be referred to a mutually acceptable umpire; or if no agreement could be reached concerning an umpire, the case would be determined by the President of Switzerland.[3]

On November 23, 1896, hearings began in Victoria, British Columbia. Assisting Dickinson as associate counsels for the United States were Charles B. Warren and Robert Lansing. The commissioner assigned by the United States was William L. Putnam while Britain's representative on the Commission was George E. King.

The atmosphere seemed cordial as the proceedings began. Dickinson referred to his British counterparts as "delightful fellows,"[4] and on Thanksgiving Day the attorneys for Britain were hosts at a dinner given for the Americans. Dickinson was in good spirits and thoroughly enjoyed this assignment. He described the op-

[3]Moore, A Digest of International Law, I, 922-923.

[4]Dickinson to his wife, Nov. 28, 1896, DPHCA.

posing counsel as "able men, fighting for credit with their Government and if any one could catch the old man napping, they would. . . . All the same, my old head never was working in better shape."

The Commission spent more than two months hearing testimony and examining witnesses.[5] On February 2, 1897, the Commission adjourned until June 16, 1897. Shortly after this Dickinson stated that a number of "shady claims" had been discovered with the worst cases being "fathered by American who had Canadians act as their dummies."[6]

The Commission met a single time at Montreal on June 16 and then adjourned again until August 25 when the oral arguments were scheduled to begin.[7]

Dickinson, still in a conciliatory mood, began his argument by saying, "I know no more fitting words to open the discussion than the words used by her Majesty's counsel, 'Peace hath its victories no less renowned than war.'"[8] He continued by pointing out that arbitration was on trial. Dickinson was desirous that the arbitration be successful. "Peace is the de-

[5]U.S., Congress, Senate, Senate Doc. 164, 55th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 58-85.

[6]Newspaper clipping from San Francisco Examiner, Feb. 8, 1897, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

[7]U.S., Congress, Senate, Senate Doc. 164, 55th Cong., 2d Sess., pp. 85-86.

[8]Inidentified newspaper clipping, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

sire of the world, but you cannot pluck peace as a child plucks fruit from the tree."

Throughout, the spirit that Dickinson had displayed in his opening remarks seemed to prevail. Although in the end the amount paid by the Americans to the British was larger than the $425,000 which Cresham had offered, the general consensus seemed to have been that the Americans had presented the case of the United States well.[9]

As early as February Dickinson had opposed claims put forth by Americans who were sailing under a British flag. Britain took the position that her rights had been infringed upon and that she could legally press for damages when anyone sailing under the British flag met with interference at the hands of another nation. Opposed to this view was Dickinson who maintained that there was a right of visitation and search when there was a suspicion that a ship flying another flag actually was a ship of the seizing nation. On this point the Commission agreed with the American viewpoint for all such claims were disallowed.[10]

[9]For example, the chief counsel for Britain, Frederick Peters, said at the conclusion of the arguments that if the British won an award "it will only be given after the most searching and minute scrutiny by Mr. Dickinson."

Newspaper headings read after the arbitration was completed, "Don M. Won," Detroit Free Press, Dec. 23, 1897, and from an unidentified paper, "Don M. Dickinson Won the Case."

[10]Unidentified newspaper clipping, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

Probably the most significant contribution made by the Commission and the American and British attorneys was the harmonious way in which the proceedings were conducted. To this Dickinson contributed with his sincere efforts to make peaceful arbitration work. Dickinson's conduct as senior American counsel appears to have gone far in making the arbitration in which he played a part successful.

Perhaps the most pleasing letter that Dickinson received regarding his efforts before the Bering Sea Claims Commission was one that he received from his former Chief, Grover Cleveland. Cleveland wrote, "I have not been entirely ignorant of the faithfulness and zeal of your service and I need not tell you how proud and gratified I have been when I have received information of your conduct." The ex-President thanked him heartily "for the complete manner in which you have vindicated the choice of counsel by the last Administration."[11]

Cleveland and Dickinson after 1896 both remained interested in politics even though both had retired from the political wars. Their correspondence indicates that they fervently hoped that the party would return to the principles for which Cleveland had stood. Cleveland wrote approximately a year after the 1896

[11]Cleveland to Dickinson, Oct. 20, 1897. Photocopy of original in LHCA.

election that he felt himself to be a political outcast, but, at the same time, he saw "that matters are brewing that may bring decent men into activity again."[12]

It seemed as though Cleveland enjoyed receiving correspondence from Dickinson for he wrote to Dickinson in 1898 that he had not heard from him in a long time and had decided "to make an epistolary attack upon you, hoping thereby to hear something directly from you. . . ." He admitted that although"public affairs and politics have gained such a start of me that I despair catching up with the procession," he still took immense interest in these activities.[13]

During McKinley's first term Cleveland was perturbed with the growing spirit of imperialism within the United States. Concerning this menace, he wrote Dickinson, "It would be strange, I think, if the sober second thought and patriotic common sense of our countrymen did not assert themselves in time to avoid disaster. . . ."[14] At the same time, he was disappointed with Democratic leadership for in writing to Dickinson about a year later he commented, "Don't you in these days sometimes pinch yourself to see if you are

[12]Cleveland to Dickinson, Oct. 20, 1897.

[13]Cleveland to Dickinson, July 31, 1898. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[14]Cleveland to Dickinson, July 31, 1898.

awake when you contemplate so-called Democratic management?"[15]

When the Democrats again nominated Bryan in 1900, it was necessary a second time that sound money Democrats such as Cleveland, Dickinson, Carlisle, Olney, and others decide whether or not to support the Democratic ticket. Although Bryan was nominated on an anti-imperialism platform, the Bryan Democrats also continued to push for free coinage of silver at sixteen to one.

Although such men as Carlisle and Olney in 1900 supported Bryan as the lesser of two evils, both Dickinson and Cleveland refrained from doing so. Many Bryanites were eager to have Cleveland support the ticket and began to draw erroneous conclusions that Cleveland was supporting Bryan because he and Bryan both agreed that United States imperialism had to be checked.[16] Cleveland, however, had no inclination of doing this as a letter to Dickinson dated October 12, 1900, makes evident. Cleveland wrote that he was nearly "pestered to death" with appeals to support Bryan and for advice as to which candidate should be supported. Apparently a large majority of his correspondents expressed wishes that Cleveland would suport Bryan for he wrote that he could not do "what the

[15]McElroy, Cleveland, II, 282.

[16]McElroy, Cleveland, II, 296.

large majority desires." On the other hand, Cleveland felt no inclination to support McKinleyism "affirmatively" and, therefore, said he, "I thought I might satisfy my conscience and avoid the accusation of open and pronounced ingratitude by keeping silence."[17]

This position Cleveland maintained all during the campaign, thus, supporting neither McKinley nor Bryan. Dickinson, until October, maintained the same aloofness that Cleveland displayed. It had been supposed by some that gold Democrats like Dickinson would support Bryan if the sixteen to one plank were eliminated from the platform.[18] However, as the campaign wore on, there seemed less likelihood that this would result.

On October 11, Dickinson began to hint that he would support McKinley and Roosevelt when he wrote a letter to Theodore Roosevelt asking him to clarify his position regarding the ice trust in New York. Dickinson explained that Bryan had charged Roosevelt and the Republican legislature with not throttling the ice trust because "he is too busy out here telling you about it."[19]

The very next day Roosevelt replied thanking Dickinson for his letter and explaining in detail his

[17]Cleveland to Dickinson, Oct. 12, 1900. Photocopy of original in MHCA.

[18]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 23, 1900.

[19]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 15, 1900.

dealings with the ice trust. Roosevelt accused the Tammany Bryanite leaders of hypocrisy explaining, "In the Tammany state convention in New York they actually denounced the ice trust in their political capacity while in their private capacity they were stockholders in it and through their counsel were doing everything to prevent its dissolution by the attorney-general."[20]

On October 23, the Detroit Free Press headlined its top news story, "Stand of a Gold Democrat." This story which was centered on page one contained a formal statement by Donald M. Dickinson explaining why he was planning to vote for McKinley. He began by revealing that he never had planned to vote for Bryan since the convention at Kansas City had nominated him. "However," said Dickinson, "I hoped for a time that I might with clear conscience stay away from the polls." The recent speeches of Bryan had changed all this and Dickinson now admitted that he was forced to vote against Bryan.

He went on to explain that he was still a Democrat and could never be a Republican. Nevertheless, Dickinson explained that he scarcely recognized "a vestige of Democratic principle in either the Chicago or Kansas City platforms." Dickinson charged Bryan with preaching the gospel of hate by appealing "to the envious, the

[20]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 15, 1900.

discontented, the improvident, the incompetent and the unworthy idle." He pointed out that the words of the old Biblical prophet Samuel aptly described Bryan and his followers. "And everyone that was in distress and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them."

After explaining in more detail his feeling regarding Bryan, Dickinson concluded with, "I take my place proudly by the side of Abram S. Hewitt, under whom I fought in the great battle for Tilden and Democracy in 1876. Waiting in confidence the call of men like him to gather for the reorganization of my party, like him I conceive it to be my solemn duty to vote against Bryanizing the Democratic party and to rid the party and country of Bryanism, and so like him, in the ranks of the true Democracy, I shall go to the polls and cast my ballot for President McKinley."[21]

Although Dickinson no longer had any standing in the Michigan Democratic party now led by Daniel Campau, Campau did realize that a person of Dickinson's stature might be very influential in swaying a number of voters to McKinley. Thus, three days after Dickinson issued his statement declaring his intention to vote for McKinley, Campau revealed that he had in his possession a letter written by Dickinson to former

[21]Dickinson's statement was published by a number of newspapers including the New York Times.

Congressman J. Logan Chipman supporting the free coinage of silver. The date of the letter was alleged to be February 16, 1892, which was the year Cleveland ran successfully for President advocating sound money.

Dickinson admitted writing such a letter, but charged that the date was fraudulent. He reminded those who would hear that he was in New York on that date seeking to bring Cleveland to Ann Arbor for what turned out to be a well-remembered address delivered on the same date that the "Snap Convention" was meeting in New York. He asserted that he did not write the letter after 1890 for that was the year which bound the United States to maintain the parity between gold and silver.

Dickinson challenged the Bryanites to produce the letter. It brought to his mind the 1872 Greeley letter which Foster Pratt had brought to light fourteen years before in an effort to discredit Dickinson. He was confident that just as that letter had not been successful in attaining its goal, this one, too, would not crush him.

The date of the letter could not be proved. On November 1, the regular Democratic organization published the letter, this time placing the date as February 16, 1891.[22] However, the letter, published in full, was merely dated February 16 with the year omit-

[22]Detroit Evening News, Nov. 1, 1900.

ted. As Dickinson had admitted, it did advocate free coinage of silver.

Beside Dickinson's letter was a speech of John B. Corliss delivered September 22, 1894, advocating free coinage. Probably the most significant aspect of the publication of the letter and speech was the fact that the Democratic organization apparently did feel that Dickinson was still influential enough to warrant spending money to publish this rather lengthy letter. In an effort to offset the effect of Dickinson's statement, below the printed letter and speech a question read, "If these men can change their opinion and positions on the old issue, why can the Democracy not change the issue to the present one of Imperialism?"

In September Dickinson had written to Cleveland that it was "a thousand fold harder to passively aid McKinleyism than it was in '96, but the alternative is 'a deep pit and he that falls therein is abhorred of the Lord.'"[23] The passive aid of which Dickinson spoke was largely that for Dickinson did no campaigning except for one speech which he delivered at a rally of sound money Democrats late in October.[24] Even though he himself announced that he would vote for McKinley, he urged Cleveland not to announce his intention to do

[23]Dickinson to Cleveland, Sept. 25, 1900, CPLC.

[24]Detroit Free Press, Oct. 28, 1900.

the same.[25] It seemed quite evident that Dickinson reluctantly announced that he would vote for McKinley solely as a protest against Bryan.

Even though there was a lack of wholehearted support, the Republicans were glad that Democrats such as Cleveland and Dickinson maintained the attitudes that they did. After a Republican victory more decisive than that of 1896, Theodore Roosevelt wrote to Cleveland, "I think now we have definitely won out on the free-silver business and therefore I think you are entitled to thanks and congratulations."[26]

Three days after the election Theodore Roosevelt sat down and wrote the following to Dickinson:

> My dear Mr. Dickinson: I feel a very keen sense of gratitude to you personally, and I hope I need not say to you how deeply I feel the debt due to the democrats who stood for sound money and civic honesty; and the responsibility which I certainly feel to them and which I hope and believe my whole party feels. In this State as Governor I think that relative to their numbers I have made rather more appointments from among gold democrats than from among the republicans, and from what I know they regard as of infinitely more consequence, I think I have handled the Governorship along the lines they believe in. I can do very little, my dear sir, but what I can do I shall most earnestly try to do in a way that will not make you, regret your part in the late election.[27]

Vice President Roosevelt was correct in assuming

[25]Dickinson to Cleveland, Oct. 23, 1900, CPLC.

[26]Nevins, Letters, p. 541.

[27]Elting E. Morison (ed.), The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), II, 1411-1412.

that he could do little to reward Dickinson while he was Vice President. However, in 1901 when he became President upon the assassination of McKinley, he honored Dickinson by naming him to an arbitration tribunal which was directed to settle a dispute between the United States and Salvador. Originally assigned to sit with Dickinson were Henry Strong, Chief Justice of Canada and David Castro, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Salvador.[28]

The dispute had its beginnings when the Salvador Commercial Company, backed by American capital, in 1894 was granted exclusive rights to establish steam navigation for twenty-five years in the part of El Triumfo, Salvador. However, in 1899 the Republic of Salvador began to take over the investment that had been made by the Salvador Commercial Company claiming that its officials had failed to abide by the terms of the agreement signed in 1894.

After carefully considering the evidence, Dickinson and Strong agreed that "the Salvador Commercial Company and other nationals of the United States . . . are entitled to compensation for the result of the destruction of the concession and for the appropriation of such property as belonged to the company. . . ."[29]

[28]U.S., Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902, p. 857.

[29]U.S., Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902, p. 857.

The opinion written by Dickinson explained that it was clearly evident to them that once the success of the venture was assured, a plot was hatched "whose object was to oust the management and control the American interest."[30] Dickinson pointed out that it had been claimed that the United States could not make reclamation for its nationals "for the reason that such citizens as so invested their money in the Republic of Salvador must abide by the laws of that country, and seek their remedy, if they have any in the courts of Salvador." Dickinson and Strong countered this by saying that this argument would be justifiable had not the Government of Salvador itself intervened to destroy the franchise and concessions granted the American-backed company. Thus, on May 8, 1902, in a settlement with which the representative from Salvador did not concur, Dickinson and Strong found that the Republic of Salvador was liable for the action taken and awarded the sum of $523,178.64 to the United States.[31]

Dickinson deeply appreciated the recognition that he received when he was appointed senior counsel before the Bering Sea Claims Commission and arbitrator in the case involving the United States and Salvador. He

[30] U.S., Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902, p. 868.

[31] U.S., Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902, p. 861.

later wrote, "As to my positions under the National Government, I esteem my professional positions in international matters, both as counsel for the United States and as arbitrator, more highly than any mere political place."[32]

Although it is quite evident that Dickinson was happy again in his legal practice, he could never lose the interest that he had in politics and the Democratic party. His optimism increased as the country's appreciation for Cleveland increased after 1900.[33] On April 24, 1903, Dickinson wrote Cleveland that in the South he had "invariably" heard Bryan's name "received with a cuss."[34] He realized that Cleveland's name was again coming to the fore commenting, "You know perfectly well all over this country men are using your name quietly." This, said Dickinson, explained the hysterics of Bryan, "the ass from Nebraska," as Dickinson enjoyed calling him.

In 1903 with public sentiment becoming more favorable toward Cleveland, talk began to circulate that he would run again in 1904. This, Cleveland had no intention of doing; and when he was invited to attend the opening of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis on April 30, he wrote to Dickinson asking

[32]Dickinson to Robert E. Doan, Feb. 6, 1907, LPMHCA.

[33]Nevins, Grover Cleveland, pp. 752-753.

[34]McElroy, Grover Cleveland, II, 317-318.

advice as to whether he should announce his firm desire not to run again. Dickinson, though himself thoroughly convinced that Cleveland should not enter the political wars once more, persuaded Cleveland to say nothing at the time concerning his intentions. Dickinson argued that this would drive friends of Cleveland into the arms of the Republicans.[35]

In 1904 Cleveland was convinced that either Richard Olney or Senator George Gray would be the best Democratic Presidential candidate, while Dickinson felt the nomination should go to Judson Harmon of Ohio. The difference of opinion did not strain relations between these two friends, however. This seemed evident as Dickinson expressed a conviction that Cleveland "can be nominated by an overwhelming majority, but the point is that it should not be done." Dickinson explained that one could not name four Presidents "whose records must live in history without naming him." Thus, no friend of Cleveland would advocate his risking such an excellent record. In summing up his position regarding Cleveland's possible candidacy, Dickinson said, "There are several men on our delegation who insist they will not vote for any one else in the convention, but I cannot aid in the policy which tends to injury, or tends to risk the record of his public career, as that record is

[35]Dickinson to Cleveland, Apr. 24, 1903, CPLC.

now made up."[36]

Both Dickinson and Cleveland were certain that Cleveland should not be a candidate in 1904. However, while Cleveland preferred Richard Olney or Senator George Gray of Delaware as Democratic nominee for President, Dickinson was sure that no stronger candidate could be put forward by the Democrats than Judson Harmon of Ohio. Dickinson admired Harmon, who also was a lawyer, for his successes in battling trusts and monopolies. "Harmon would grow with every day of the canvass, and with every addition to the knowledge of him," concluded Dickinson in a letter to George F. Parker.[37] "Take him with a Southern man like Fitzhugh Lee, and you have an unassailable ticket."

On June 27, immediately prior to the Democratic convention, Dickinson wrote to Harmon himself advising Harmon on certain procedures that he should follow and also indicating that Dickinson had begun a movement to nominate Harmon. Said Dickinson, "I think everything is going right, but the agitation must be set afoot by your friends, wherever you can put it across the border into the South and elsewhere."[38] Dickinson expressed confidence that Michigan would

[36]Dickinson to George F. Parker, June 6, 1904, DPMHCA.

[37]Dickinson to G. F. Parker, June 6, 1904, DPMHCA.

[38]Dickinson to Harmon, June 27, 1904, DPMHCA.

support Harmon and revealed that he was writing to Wisconsin "which has a favorite and a mighty weak son."[39] Dickinson advised Harmon that his record especially in the case of the United States v. Trans-Missouri and Company be given full play. In this case Harmon carried the Supreme Court by a majority of one in a case that dealt a blow to monopolies. Dickinson reminded Harmon that "trusts and monopolies are now most prominent of all ills in the people's mind." Referring to the Trans-Missouri case, he assured Harmon, "The champion panoplied in that victory will surely be the strong man."

On the same day Dickinson wrote to Jacob M. Dickinson, a Democratic leader in Chicago. In the letter he endorsed Harmon strongly. It appeared to Dickinson that there really was no outstanding Democrat and many delegates would come to the St. Louis convention "as wandering sheep." "In the South," said Dickinson, "there is less and less muscle and earnestness in the Parker movement."[40] He requested that Jacob Dickinson have a "downright strong talk" with John P. Hopkins who was leader of the Illinois delegation to St. Louis. Dickinson seemed far from lackadaisical now for he revealed, "I am after the

[39]Dickinson to Jacob M. Dickinson, June 26, 1904, DPMHCA.

[40]Dickinson to Jacob M. Dickinson, June 27, 1904, DPMHCA.

the weaklings everywhere, and you will find many from every state utterly at a loss as to a strong nominee."

Dickinson's efforts to nominate Harmon were completely unavailing. Harmon's name was scarcely mentioned as the days preceding the convention shortened. Although Dickinson had expressed optimism regarding Harmon support within the Michigan delegation, Campau was a stalwart supporter of Judge Parker and the Michigan delegation cast all twenty-eight of its ballots for him. Only one ballot was necessary to nominate Judge Alton B. Parker and Harmon received not a single one.[41]

After the convention, Dickinson commented, "Nothing could have gone better for Judge Harmon under the circumstances."[42] He was happy that Harmon had not accepted the Vice Presidential nomination. Dickinson again referred to Harmon's stand on trusts and monopolies and blamed Harmon's poor showing on the fact that Harmon and his friends had not published widely enough "the strong claim he had established in the matter of trusts and monopolies." Nevertheless, Dickinson was convinced that Harmon's name would not be forgotten for Dickinson felt he was "in the Presidential class for the future."

[41]New York Times, July 10, 1904.

[42]Dickinson to J. M. Dickinson, July 13, 1904, DPMHCA.

Although Cleveland had expressed a preference for his former Cabinet member Richard Olney or Senator George Gray, a man he had wanted to include in his Cabinet,[43] the former President was not dissatisfied with the nomination of Parker. He wrote Parker soon after his nomination, "Our best campaign material just now is--YOU." He was especially happy with Parker's strong statement in favor of the gold standard.

Dickinson was not as pleased as his old Chief. Three months before the convention Dickinson charged that Parker had in 1888 aided David B. Hill in his successful drive to be elected Democratic governor of New York, while at the same time doing as little as possible to aid the national ticket headed by Cleveland. The motive behind this, said Dickinson, was to prove that a Presidential candidate could not be elected without New York's electoral votes. The election of Hill and the defeat of the national ticket in New York would place Hill in a favorable position as far as the 1892 Presidential race was concerned. "These facts show why I do not favor Parker."[44]

Although Dickinson almost immediately apologized for this statement saying that it was incorrect, he never did back Parker as Cleveland did.

[43]McElroy, Grover Cleveland, II, 5.

[44]Newspaper clipping from the New York Sun, Apr. 16, 1904, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

Dickinson's feelings concerning this campaign perhaps can be best summed up by a letter which he wrote to William F. Vilas, the man whom Dickinson succeeded as Postmaster-General. Wrote Dickinson the day after the election, "I observe a lack of activity on the part of the late senator from Wisconsin in the recent campaign. I have always noticed his absence from campaigns conducted by Mr. Wm. F. Sheehan (Billy), Mr. David Bennett Hill . . . and I have also observed that such campaigns so conducted have always resulted in overwhelming and most disastrous defeats. The tremendous and unprecedented vote for Roosevelt I attribute largely to the atrocious attack upon the President and Mr. Cortelyou,[45] and the President's answer which have so completely obliterated Mr. Parker and his entourage from the map. I regret keenly the mistake of Mr. Cleveland in permitting his name, and even his brief activity to be associated in any way with that gang."[46]

After Dickinson's efforts on behalf of Harmon failed, he never again sought with as much vigor to influence the nomination or election of a political

[45]Just before the campaign ended Parker charged that Cortelyou, the manager of Roosevelt's campaign, had received great sums of money from interest groups because these groups were afraid that Cortelyou would expose violations that had been committed by these "malefactors of great wealth."

[46]Dickinson to Vilas, Nov. 9, 1904, LPMHCA.

candidate. Although he was not enthusiastic about Parker, he did in 1904 support the Democratic nominee for governor, Woodbridge N. Ferris.[47] However, he was not on the "inside" as he once had been, and, thus, the support given in 1904 was not what it might have been ten years prior.

In 1906, Dickinson hoped that Ferris would again run for governor even though he had not been successful in 1904. He was "grievously disappointed" when Ferris declined to try again that year. Commented Dickinson on his decision, "I should feel entirely confident of his election and think he should have had the same confidence."[48]

As time went on, Dickinson admired Theodore Roosevelt more and more. By 1908, Dickinson was already beginning to feel the effects of the illness that would incapacitate him for the last five years of his life.[49] This limited his activities, but he did in that year write a letter to President Roosevelt urging him to consider running again in 1908. He explained that he had ascertained "the sentiment of our people of both parties."

[47]Dickinson to Peter White, n.d., DPMHCA.

[48]Dickinson to John T. Winship, June 30, 1906, DPMHCA.

[49]Newspaper clipping from the New York Evening Telegram, Apr. 18, 1908, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

He argued that it would not actually be considered a third term for Roosevelt had only been elected to the Presidency once.[50] Concluded Dickinson, "You stand before them (the people) as the most fearless of all Presidents in preserving and protecting all the people against wrong, theft, and oppression."

In spite of the fact that Roosevelt did not heed Dickinson's advice in 1908, Dickinson continued to respect and admire him. Although he thought highly of Woodrow Wilson, Dickinson in 1912 again turned to Roosevelt renouncing his own party after the 1912 convention, chiefly because he failed to agree with the platform adopted.

Shortly before illness, which appeared to be similar to a stroke, completely disabled him and caused him to lose the mental alertness he once enjoyed, Dickinson wrote to Roosevelt:

> I beg to tender you my heartfelt sympathy and expression of my unfaltering belief in your lofty aspirations and acts for the benefit of this Republic. You have been the victim of the reactionary teachings of both old parties which have led to your attempted assassination. The country needs you, and separating myself from past party associations I pledge you my earnest and unqualified support for your <u>second elective</u> term as President of the United States.[51]

Dickinson always considered himself to be a Jeffersonian Democrat. Even though there were times when

[50]Dickinson to Roosevelt, n.d., Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

[51]Dickinson to Roosevelt, Oct. 16, 1912, DPMHCA.

he did not support the Democratic party's nominees, he continued to uphold and practice Jeffersonian democracy as he considered it to be.

A letter written to his wife concerning his daughter Francis illustrates a simple philosophy that Dickinson always sought to keep alive in his own life. Shortly after the election of 1896, he wrote of the pleasure he derived from hearing that his daughter was going to have a Christmas where "little girls who are not poor in anything else than mere money" would have a part. He knew that his daughter would not make little girls who were poor in material things feel inferior. "Clothes and food are all the difference, and clothes and food don't make one person any better than another. My dear daughter knows when she refers to the teaching of the Great and Gentle Teacher of the world that there are no differences like this and that in His view there are no 'poor' souls or 'poor' hearts in the sense that one soul or one heart is more valuable or of more importance than another."[52]

Dickinson had revealed a basic belief in a democracy that would uphold the interests and rights of the common man. This had been revealed by him rather dramatically in his long struggle against those who would evict the homesteaders from their farms in the Upper

[52]Dickinson to his wife, Dec. 12, 1896, DPMHCA.

Peninsula. In his support of the popular election of Senators, in his efforts to make railroads pay a fair amount of taxes in Detroit and in his support of a tariff that would favor the interests of the lower income group, Dickinson was convinced he was practicing the principles that Jefferson and Jackson had promoted years before.

Even though Dickinson after 1896 was less active politically and much less influential than he had been, he continued to uphold this Jeffersonian philosophy as he saw it. For example, he backed the movement for Initiative, Referendum and Recall.[53] He responded to one who had asked him to furnish "some sound Democratic doctrine" by advising that by reading a good biography of Jefferson or Jackson "the fundamental principles of the party" would be found.[54] He revealed his admiration for Jefferson by agreeing to serve as vice president for Michigan of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, "a corporation whose objects are 'to erect at the national capital a suitable memorial to Thomas Jefferson, and to publish and distribute literature bearing upon Jefferson.'"[55]

Dickinson in his later years not only preached

[53]Dickinson to J. L. Hudson, Feb. 11, 1907, DPMHCA.

[54]Dickinson to Ella H. Dullof, Sept. 8, 1904, DPMHCA.

[55]Dickinson to Henry M. Brightman, n.d., DPMHCA.

this doctrine, but upheld it in his dealings with others. He, though wealthy himself, had a feeling for the common man, the man who was equal with him but perhaps had not had an equal chance. One fine example that demonstrates this is a letter which he wrote to Secretary of War William Howard Taft in 1905. In this letter Dickinson made a strong plea for George Baker, a deserter from the Army, whose mother had been employed in the Dickinson home. Began Dickinson in his letter to Secretary Taft, "My interest and my duty lies in this: That the mother of the man, Mrs. Jennie E. Baker, is not supporting a large family of children including three young sons at school, by the labor of her own hands. This George Baker, her eldest son, had been accustomed to contribute from his pay to the support of his mother and her family."[56] Pleading in the letter the cause of this poor woman and her son as fervently as that of a rich client, Dickinson sought to have mercy shown.

This was not an isolated case. When Senator John T. Morgan of Alabama introduced a bill which would have aided "pauperized American sealers," Dickinson felt it his duty to support it even though, "I have not a cent's pecuniary interest and no interest except my honor as an American citizen officially knowing all

[56]Dickinson to Secretary of War W. H. Taft, July 26, 1905, DPMHCA.

the facts."[57] Dickinson felt his obligation so strongly in this case that he testified strongly on behalf of it before a Senate committee and later telegraphed Senators hoping to convince them to support the bill.[58]

After 1896, although still very active in his legal practice, Dickinson found time for things which political activities heretofore seemed to limit. His correspondence indicates that he now enjoyed more hours with his two children and wife. Although not visiting Cleveland often, he continued to correspond with the retired President until Cleveland's death. In later years Dickinson continued to offer advice to his former chief, no longer only concerning political matters, but about such things as the person with whom Cleveland should co-operate in the writing of a biography of Grover Cleveland. Concerning this matter, Dickinson advised that a man be chosen "who has the 'knack' and dexterity of stating incidents which really make a history of biography interesting." Dickinson's regard for Cleveland compelled him to say that any biographers of Cleveland should not make the biography an "avocation." "He should devote himself to it and be near you for consultation as a portrait painter is near his work

[57]Dickinson to Senator Charles W. Fairbanks, Jan. 21, 1905, DPMHCA.

[58]Dickinson to Robert Lansing, Jan. 26, 1905, DPMHCA.

to take frequent 'looks' and so get the familiar expression and so on." "A high class literary man should do it," said Dickinson. Dickinson suggested Gilder or perhaps one of Cleveland's Harvard or Princeton friends.[59] Although there is no record as to how Cleveland reacted to Dickinson's advice in 1910, Richard W. Gilder did publish Grover Cleveland: A Record in Friendship.

When Cleveland became associated with the Equitable Life Assurance Society in 1905, Dickinson gently chided his old friend explaining that he regretted Cleveland's decision because he realized "that having accepted, you would do your duty in every place, and all the time, at whatever sacrifice to health and strength by yourself."[60]

During the years that Cleveland lived, Dickinson remained active. He denied stories that he was in the least bit ill. In 1906 he wrote Cleveland, "I never was more robust, never weighed so much, never endured hard work more serenely or did so much as now. . . ."[61] The correspondence that he had, his continued interest in his family, his law practice and his home all indicate that this was true. In 1908, the year Cleveland died, he began to feel the strain of a life that had

[59]Dickinson to Cleveland, Oct. 21, 1903, CPLC.

[60]Dickinson to Cleveland, Nov. 9, 1905, DPMHCA.

[61]Dickinson to Cleveland, July 12, 1906, CPLC.

been filled with so many varied activities. Although the New York Evening Telegram erred when on April 18, 1908, it published a report that Dickinson was "at death's door," yet it is true that his activities after this time were sharply curtailed.

Although he was able in his own behalf in 1911 to appear in court and defend himself successfully against those who claimed he was incompetent to administer his own property, Dickinson by that time was only a shadow of his former self. After 1912 he went into almost complete seclusion doing much historical reading during the last years of his life.[62]

On Monday, October 15, 1917, Dickinson died quietly at his home in Trenton, Michigan. On October 17, the day of his funeral, flags flew at half mast on all post office buildings throughout the United States.[63] Although he had been inactive for several years, citizens both in high stations and low reflected upon his contributions. President Woodrow Wilson aptly described the feelings of many when he wired: "I have learned with deep regret of the death of Honorable Don M. Dickinson who in his life illustrated a very high type of American citizenship, who devoted many

[62]Newspaper clipping from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, Oct. 18, 1917, Dickinson Scrapbook No. 11, MHCA.

Dickinson liked history and was a member of the American Hist. Assoc.

[63]Detroit Evening News, Oct. 17, 1917.

years to the public service, and who leaves a memory that will be cherished and revered not only of the people of his state, but by the people of his nation."[64]

[64]Wilson to J. R. Command, Oct. 20, 1917. Telegram posted in Dickinson Scrapbook No. 12, MHCA.
This Scrapbook has a number of wires sent upon the news of Dickinson's death.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Various manuscript collections proved valuable in writing this dissertation. For the early years of Dickinson's life and for the years after 1896 the Donald M. Dickinson Papers owned by George Wiskeman and made available to me at the Michigan Historical Commission Archives in Lansing were extremely valuable. This collection not only contained correspondence of Don Dickinson but also letters and diaries of members and friends of the Dickinson family. Included in these papers are several photostat copies of letters written by Grover Cleveland to Dickinson.

The Library of Congress has six boxes of Donald M. Dickinson Papers which I used chiefly in writing of Dickinson as a political figure. This collection is not catalogued but is small enough so that one can examine it carefully. Included is extensive correspondence between Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field and Dickinson as well as correspondence with other political figures acquainted with Dickinson. One box includes mostly materials dealing with Dickinson and the Bering Sea Claims Commission.

The Burton Historical Collection in the Detroit Public Library has a smaller collection of Dickinson

material. A very fascinating series of letters sent by a violently anti-Catholic organization to Dickinson at the time of the 1892 Democratic convention is included in this collection.

The Clarke Historical Collection located in the library of Central Michigan University has a single volume of Dickinson material. This one volume was helpful in describing the role that Dickinson played as Postmaster-General during the railroad strike that occurred while he held this position.

Other collections of papers that I used include the Grover Cleveland Papers in the Library of Congress. Many of the letters sent by Cleveland to Dickinson can be found in this collection. The William C. Whitney Papers along with the Daniel S. Lamont Papers, both in the Library of Congress, were useful in developing the history of the 1892 political campaign. Also of value in describing the role that Dickinson played in the 1892 and 1896 campaigns were a number of letters which Dickinson wrote to William F. Vilas of Wisconsin. Photostat copies of these letters are in the Michigan Historical Collection at the University of Michigan. The Michigan Historical Collection also has on microfilm a large number of letters to and from Dickinson. Most of these letters that are microfilmed can be found in the Library of Congress.

Another source without which it would have been

well-nigh impossible to write this dissertation was the newspapers of Dickinson's day. The Michigan Historical Commission Archives possesses a series of twelve scrapbooks all related to the career of Dickinson. These scrapbooks contain innumerable newspaper clippings and cartoons as well as other printed materials such as pamphlets and brochures. The clippings have been taken from newspapers throughout the United States.

The Michigan State Library in Lansing has on microfilm several of the Michigan newspapers published during the late nineteenth century. The two that I used most extensively were the Detroit Evening News and the Detroit Free Press, both of which ran daily editions during the period covered by this dissertation. Some of the other newspapers on microfilm published only one issue per week. Since Dickinson was from Detroit, most of his activities as a public figure were given detailed coverage by the Detroit newspapers. Although there is no adequate political history of Michigan for the time covered by this dissertation, two monographs Arthur C. Millspaugh, Party Organization and Machinery in Michigan Since 1890 (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Baltimore, 1917), and Harriette M. Dilla, The Politics of Michigan, 1865-1878 (Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, New York, 1912), did shed some light on certain

aspects of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Michigan politics.

Of great value to me in describing the Dickinson-Cleveland relationship after 1884 were two biographies of Grover Cleveland. Probably the more helpful was Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage (New York, 1932), although the two volume biography by Robert McElroy, Grover Cleveland: The Man and the Statesman (New York, 1923), did much to illuminate the Cleveland-Dickinson association. Also of use throughout the writing of much of this dissertation was Allan Nevins (ed.), Letters of Grover Cleveland (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), which contains much of the significant Cleveland correspondence.

Earl D. Babst and Lewis G. Vander Velde (eds.), Michigan and the Cleveland Era (Ann Arbor, 1948), contains a number of sketches of University of Michigan staff members and alumni that served in the Cleveland administrations, several of whom were associated with Dickinson.

Many sources were consulted which aided in describing specific aspects or areas of Dickinson's career. Most of the government documents used could be placed in this category. One example is the U.S., Congress, House, Report of the Postmaster-General, 50th Cong., 2d Sess., 1888, Ex. Doc. 1, Part 4, which summarizes the activities of the Post Office Department during most of Dickinson's term as Postmaster-

General. The Postmaster-General Letterbooks which are found in the National Archives also reveal much of the daily business of the Post Office Department during the period that Dickinson was head of it.

Dickinson became one of the nation's foremost lawyers. Accounts of his activities as a lawyer can be found not only in newspapers but also in such documents as the United States Supreme Court Reports and Michigan Reports. One of the best sources summarizing the work of Dickinson as United States chief counsel before the Bering Sea Claims Commission can be found in U.S., Congress, Senate, Miscellaneous Reports, Doc. 164, 55th Cong., 2d Sess., 1897-1898.

In a magazine article Don M. Dickinson, "Progress and the Post," North American Review, CXLIX (October, 1889), 399-412, Dickinson outlines briefly the history of the Post Office Department and made two suggestions. He advised that there be a distribution of the power and responsibilities within the Post Office Department and that the Post Office Department be given more authority to coerce railroads to transport the mails according to contracts which had been signed by railroad companies.